

Sawdust

WINTER 2019

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



Q&A with
SFA President
Dr. Scott Gordon



STUDENT EMERGENCY AID FUND

College is meant to be a challenge, but for many Lumberjacks, these challenges can include more than research papers and exams.

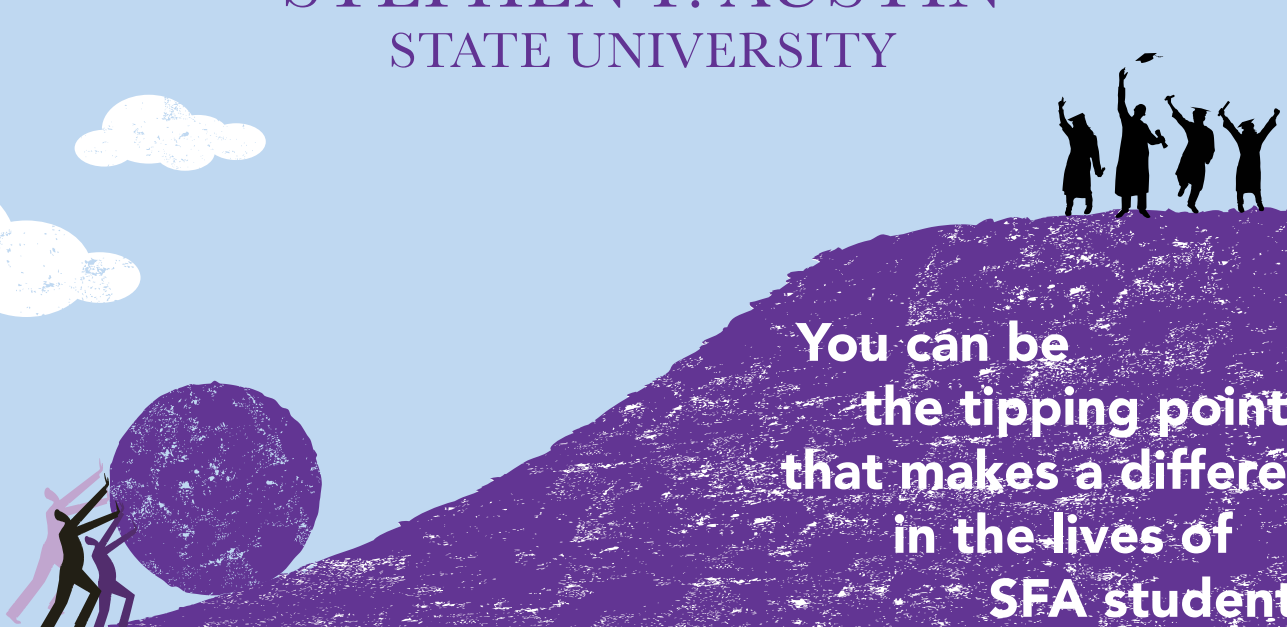
Many students are unable to pay their tuition balances and purchase books and supplies, thus putting their dream of a college education in jeopardy. Some students have no choice but to

withdraw from SFA even when they owe relatively small balances.

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**You can be
the tipping point
that makes a difference
in the lives of
SFA students.**

President's Letter



I CAN'T BELIEVE the fall semester — my first at SFA — is already drawing to a close.

Since my arrival in Nacogdoches, I have listened to as many people as possible about their hopes for

SFA's future. I have learned about so many wonderful things happening at SFA, and I am filled with optimism about what lies ahead. I also have been touched by the warm welcome and support from faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members. You made my arrival at SFA as warm as the summer sun!

I have been most impressed with the way current and former Lumberjacks find opportunities to support the university by proudly wearing purple, encouraging prospective students to attend SFA, participating in on-campus and alumni programs, and making financial contributions to a variety of campus initiatives, including building projects and scholarships.

I understand that achievements occurring throughout this past year have added to the reasons Lumberjacks are proud of their alma mater. For example, business students studied in Austria, Germany and Italy this summer, while theatre and dance students visited Scotland to perform as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. You can read more about that trip in this issue of Sawdust.

Other achievements include:

- In October, the SFA Charter School received American Psychological Association accreditation as an internship training site.
- A Hogg Foundation grant is providing real-world experiences for SFA students while addressing the mental health needs of the local community.
- The university is offering new academic programs in a variety of areas, including construction management, medical humanities, and private security and asset protection.
- SFA's Phi Beta Lambda business students were among the top award recipients at a statewide leadership conference.
- Music student Jesse Edwards' original orchestral score was a top award winner in a prestigious national competition.
- Forestry students won the Southern Forestry Conclave competition, as well as a statewide quiz bowl, and
- Dr. Mark Sanders, associate dean of liberal and applied arts, received a Western Heritage Award.

Among my most memorable experiences during the past few months was the honor of celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Janice A. Pattillo Early Childhood Research Center and the dedication of a flagpole at that facility in memory of former SFA President Dr. Baker Pattillo. The center is a jewel for SFA, the region and the state.

Another day that stands out is my first Battle of the Piney Woods football game. I was impressed with the way our team fought and look forward to the future of Lumberjack football.

Although spring is still several months away, I am looking forward to welcoming Archie McDonald Speaker Series guest Kendra Scott, an Austin-based fashion designer and philanthropist, April 20.

As we move forward to 2020, I am eager to see the construction continue on campus. At the corner of East College Street and University Drive, a new basketball performance facility is under construction at Johnson Coliseum. Plans are underway for the expansion of the Griffith Fine Arts Building, the addition of a centralized welcome center and one-stop shop for student support services, a new first-year residence hall, and a renovated dining hall.

Another exciting project is a renovation that will allow the Culinary Café to move to a historic home on Mound Street, previously owned by former U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison. These exciting developments will give Lumberjacks even more reasons to be proud as we look forward to celebrating the university's centennial anniversary.

As we prepare to say goodbye to 2019, I would like to thank you for the welcome my family and I have received. While counting my blessings this holiday season, I certainly will be thinking of the many wonderful friendships we have already made and looking forward to establishing many more. I wish all of you a happy and gratitude-filled holiday season.

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Dr. Scott Gordon
President
Stephen F. Austin State University



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2020 SFA ALUMNI FAN BUS TRIPS



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HAPPEN WHEN WE
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Sawdust

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ON THE COVER:

Dr. Scott Gordon arrived on campus Sept. 16 to begin serving as the university's ninth president. During his first few months in office, he has been busy meeting with faculty, staff, students and community members. In this issue of Sawdust, he shares some personal insights and thoughts on SFA and its future. *Photo by Hardy Meredith '81*

Q & A

with

SFA President Dr. Scott Gordon

Dr. Scott Gordon arrived on campus Sept. 16 for his first official day as SFA's ninth president. Since then, he has been busy familiarizing himself with Nacogdoches and getting to know SFA's students, faculty and staff, and community members.

He sat down with Sawdust and talked about the university, his family and his thoughts on higher education.



LEFT: Gordon joins SFA students in adding purple dye to the water surrounding Surfin' Steve during Homecoming week. Gordon said he intends to make himself accessible to students by attending as many events as possible and hosting open forums.

BELOW: During the Battle of the Piney Woods in October at Houston's NRG Stadium, Gordon and his wife, Sherri, don their purple and pose on the field showing their Lumberjack pride with the "Axe 'em, Jacks" hand sign.



WHAT DREW YOU TO SFA?

There are a host of reasons why I decided SFA was the perfect fit for me and why my wife, Sherri, and I agreed Nacogdoches was the ideal environment for us to live.

Definitely the people and the welcoming, friendly and supportive atmosphere played a major role. The university's mission also aligns with my beliefs. As a first-generation college student, I understand the importance and difference a college education provides. It transforms not only the lives of students but also their families, communities and regions. I want to be involved in that.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE CAMPUS?

As I was researching and preparing to apply for the position, I saw many photographs of the beautiful campus. After arriving for an

interview and seeing the campus in person, there were so many details that stood out. It was immediately obvious the university has invested in the future. From the new and renovated buildings to the well-maintained grounds and facilities, every feature was immaculate. As I interacted with administrators, faculty, staff and students, I was thoroughly impressed. The hospitality was genuine, and I instantly felt at home.

INTRODUCE US TO YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN.

Sherri has worked for more than 20 years as a cardiac surgery nurse. We have four children in their 20s. Lauren is a graduate of the University of Southern Indiana. She is married and has a son, Adrian, who is 9 months old. Benjamin has worked in the construction industry for three years. He is attending Ivy Tech College in Indiana. Logan is a junior at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. He is studying the music

and entertainment business. Ryan is a sophomore at Carson Newman University in Tennessee and is studying chemistry and pre-med.

PART OF LEADERSHIP IS BEING ABLE TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. WHEN DIFFERENT OPINIONS ARISE, HOW DO YOU WORK TOWARD RESOLUTION?

This is my favorite part of being in a leadership position, as my philosophy is to bring folks together who have a diversity of ideas, thoughts and opinions, and engage them in constructive discourse. It has been my experience that ideas and resolutions that result from convergence are much more solid than those made by an individual in isolation. ➔

BELOW: Gordon celebrates the university's 96th anniversary with a special purple and white cake during his first week as SFA's president.



ABOVE: Gordon and Dr. Steve Westbrook, SFA vice president for university affairs, attend the Alumni Awards in September and participate in a crosscut demonstration with members of SFA's timber sports team, the Sylvans, looking on.

WHAT DO TODAY'S STUDENTS EXPECT THEIR EDUCATION TO INCLUDE?

Students want something different. They want active-learning approaches. They want to learn by doing. This hands-on, multidisciplinary approach is key to solving real-world problems and preparing students for the workforce, graduate programs, etc. SFA offers a unique setting — small class sizes, a student-to-faculty ratio of 18:1, an environment that fosters mentorship by faculty members and networking with professionals. These factors provide the perfect foundation for meaningful student experiences. Moving forward, we will continue to grow these offerings.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION?

There are many, and they are all big. Just to name a few, we have changing demographics in several areas of the country, where the number of high school graduates and enrollment

in college are drastically declining. This has resulted in unprecedented competition among colleges and universities for traditional students. Additionally, the public perception of higher education has eroded with the recent admissions scandals, rising costs and student debt concerns.

Higher education also has seen its share of disruptors, including for-profit universities and a proliferation of online, low-cost or free higher education providers, such as Massive Open Online Courses and edX. Furthermore, in some states, community colleges are offering bachelor's degrees that compete with the traditional Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science programs offered through four-year universities. There also is a climate of increased regulatory and compliance mandates that result in the need for a larger administrative workforce and human resources staff members.

Some of these challenges present opportunities for SFA to expand its reach by offering more online programs, encouraging dual credit enrollment in rural areas, creating additional scholarships and growing our bachelor's and master's degree options across all six colleges.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO INTERACT AND BE INVOLVED WITH SFA STUDENTS?

I will be hosting open forums for students to attend, such as Breakfast with the President, and I plan to regularly meet with student leaders. I also will be in attendance at athletic and fine arts events, which will put me in the company of students, thereby providing opportunities for us to network. My wife and I also enjoy evening walks on campus, and I hope students will feel free to stop me, say hello and chat.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST CAREER MOMENT?

At the top of the list is being named president of SFA. It is an honor and privilege to serve this outstanding institution and work alongside its stakeholders as we become the model of the new American university — a nimble, entrepreneurial, student-focused, regional, comprehensive university.

BELOW: Members of the Lumberjack Marching Band surround Gordon as they prepare for their Homecoming halftime performance.



HOW DO YOU RELAX AND RECHARGE?

I like spending time with my family, long walks, and water and outdoor recreational activities. I also enjoy afternoon naps on the weekends once in a while.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST INITIATIVES YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ON AS PRESIDENT?

While I have many ideas for initiatives, I want to first meet with as many stakeholders as possible and ask them, "What is working well? What is not working so well? What are some of your ideas to make SFA better?"

I want to avoid what I call the "wet-dog scenario," where I shake off all my ideas, and then people run and duck for cover. Before I develop initiatives, I must get to know the campus community, the issues we face and the culture. Change for change's sake is never good. I plan to be deliberate, consultative and collaborative in making change.

HOW DO YOU VIEW SFA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NACOGDOCHES COMMUNITY?

In my initial discussions with folks in the community, including business, industry and government leaders, I have received positive feedback on the relationship between SFA and the Nacogdoches community. I also have learned during these discussions that there are opportunities to enhance and expand these relationships, and I will be working with area leaders to form mutually beneficial partnerships to further the success of SFA and the region.

IS THERE A PERSON WHO HAD AN IMPACT ON YOU AS A LEADER?

Although there are several people who shaped who I am — far too many to list individually — I can say for certain, my parents, Barbara and the late James Gordon, had the most influence on my life. ★



Name the last two things you read.

- "Change or Die: The Three Keys to Change at Work and in Life" by Alan Deutschman
- "Contagious: Why Things Catch On" by Jonah Berger

There will be myriad events and activities you can attend on and off campus. Where are we most likely to see you?

- **EVERYWHERE!**

Do you own much purple?

- I have a ton of purple, and I now have a special purple blazer!

What is a bearkat?

- A mythical creature Lumberjacks overpower, capture and defeat.

Keep up with Gordon on Twitter by following @SFAPresGordon.



Grandview mayor Zach Stewart '14 shows his Lumberjack pride in The Grind coffee shop, a business owned by a close family friend.

SWORN IN

Political science alum is among Texas' youngest mayors

STORY BY EMILY BROWN '17 / PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99



Left, Zach is sworn in as mayor of Grandview in May 2019 at just 26 years old. Prior to his mayoral position, he served on the city council.

GRADUATION IS ALWAYS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION, BUT ZACH STEWART '14
HAD EXTRA PEP IN HIS STEP ON HIS SFA GRADUATION DAY.
AS HE WALKED ACROSS THE STAGE AT JOHNSON COLISEUM
TO RECEIVE HIS DIPLOMA, CITIZENS IN HIS HOMETOWN OF GRANDVIEW,
ABOUT 175 MILES NORTHWEST OF NACOGDOCHES,
WERE VOTING TO ELECT HIM TO THE CITY COUNCIL.

"I tell people my graduation gift to myself was a council seat," Zach joked.

Reflecting on that milestone, Zach now has another achievement for which he is extremely proud — at age 26, he was sworn in as the mayor of Grandview in May.

As one of Texas' youngest mayors, Zach's passion for his hometown has grown stronger through the years, and so has his dedication to helping the place where he grew up prosper.

"Although I'm young, people encouraged and supported me to run for public office," Zach said. "I felt I could make a difference here, and I know the community and the issues we face. It seemed like the city was

ready for a change, and I felt I was up for the challenge."

Grandview, with a population of about 1,700, is full of charm, historic places and friendly faces. Strolling down the city's red-bricked main street, Zach is greeted by nearly every passerby. Some people simply say hello while others inquire about city planning.

"I'm still not accustomed to hearing, 'Hey, Mr. Mayor' when walking around town," Zach said. "I'm more used to being called Robert and Kathrine's kid."

Robert, Zach's dad, serves as president and CEO of Grandview Bank, where Zach also works as an assistant vice president and

information technology specialist. Zach balances his time at the bank with his role as mayor with the help of city staff members, particularly David Henley, the city manager.

"David and I work together to ensure Grandview's needs are met," Zach said. "David typically carries out the details while I focus on the big picture."

Zach and Henley's teamwork has brought about new growth to Grandview in the few short months Zach has been in office.

"It's really good to have someone like Zach with us," Henley said. "He's young and new, and he's brought innovation and knowledge to city hall, especially when it comes to things like technology." ➔

Zach's mother, Kathrine '82, is the principal of Grandview Elementary School. She and her twin sister, Ruth Meriwether Oates '82, were Twirl-O-Jacks while at SFA. Kathrine said they choreographed most of the "Wabash Cannonball" routine that is still performed today.

"I love that when I visit SFA I can see the Twirl-O-Jacks still using our routine. One of my favorite things about SFA is it's all about the traditions," Kathrine said. "And when Zach chose to attend the university, it was like he was carrying on our family's tradition."

Zach's family has strong ties to SFA. In addition to his mother and aunt being alumnae, his grandmother, Betty Stoker Meriwether '52, who was Miss SFA her senior year, met her future husband, Tom Meriwether '49, when they worked together on the staff of the Stone Fort yearbook.

After visiting the campus, Zach realized that he, too, belonged at SFA. He enrolled in 2011 as a political science major with a minor in radio/TV. He said his professors served as mentors and, through their expertise, he began to see politics in new ways that greatly influenced him.

"I can't imagine having better relationships with professors than I had at SFA," Zach said. "I benefited so much from what I learned in class and through social activities. I understand why most of my family members are Lumberjacks!"

While at SFA, Zach immersed himself in organizations that helped him grow as an individual and leader. He joined the Lumberjack Marching Band his freshman year, which provided opportunities to witness once-in-a-lifetime events — like traveling with the basketball pep band, the Roaring Buzzsaws, to San Diego in 2014 to watch the Lumberjacks defeat Virginia Commonwealth University during overtime at the NCAA tournament.

"I came back from that trip without a voice because I cheered so much," Zach said.

After his SFA graduation, he returned to Grandview to serve two terms on the city council. He said the lessons he learned at SFA taught him to look at Grandview beyond the city's limits.

"While there's really no class that teaches you how to run a city, I learned to look at

politics and issues from several viewpoints," Zach said. "I think that's helped me get where I am today."

His knowledge has helped him not to be afraid to be heard. During council meetings, Zach often introduces conversations regarding how the city might grow, from encouraging business startups to renovating brick streets.

"We are and always have been a small town, but times are changing," Zach said. "We want to keep the old-town, historic feel while bringing in some 'new' as well. I'm young, and I love it here, but I also know we have to stay current. I think Grandview can preserve its past while embracing its future. That's among my goals."

Although most individuals in their mid-20s would find the pressure of balancing an executive role at a bank and being mayor too much to manage, Zach seems to take it in stride. He said his parents' encouragement and support help him stay grounded, and the family's belief in serving the community pushes him to continue, even when challenges arise.

"Many city government jobs either don't pay very well or don't pay at all," Zach said. "People who decide to run for office or who serve on commissions or boards often do so because they want what is best for their city. I have a year and a half remaining as mayor. I don't know what I'll do after it's complete, but I hope to continue in some capacity in public service. Maybe, I'll eventually land in Austin or D.C. As long as I believe I can make a difference, I intend to keep serving." ★



ABOVE: Zach pauses a moment to visit with Grandview citizens, Gary McLain, left, and Mike Reeves, about a construction project.

BELOW: As mayor of Grandview, Zach listens to citizens' concerns during a city council meeting.



Vista Viewpoint / By Chief John Fields



JOHN FIELDS

Stephen F. Austin
State University
Chief of Police

IT HAS BEEN my honor to serve more than 26 years in law enforcement and four years in the U.S. Army, which includes my participation in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After working at Albany State University in Georgia for 11 years in two different roles — as the chief of police and assistant chief of police — I felt it was time for a change.

I began looking at other police chief opportunities in Georgia, as well as in other states, including positions at Clemson University, Virginia Union University and the Marine Corps Logistics Base. When a recruiter with executive search firm Spelman Johnson contacted me about the chief of police

opening at SFA, it immediately stood out.

I applied and was invited for an on-campus interview. My wife, Michara, who is from Houston, accompanied me to Texas, which was a huge benefit, considering I had never been to the state. The drive from Hobby Airport in Houston to Nacogdoches was beautiful, and as we drove and more and more pine trees began to dot the landscape, I wondered how the campus would look in person. The scenery was appealing to us, and the farther we drove, the more at home we felt.

Our arrival on campus did not disappoint. The surroundings surpassed anything we could have imagined, and throughout the day, I was impressed with the school spirit and hospitality offered to me by both the university and Nacogdoches communities — it by far exceeded any welcome I had received elsewhere.

Visiting with the University Police Department's staff members was exhilarating. I felt they, too, were ready for change, and the timing was perfect for us to share our expertise and grow the department together.

A few weeks later, I was offered the position at SFA, and although there were still opportunities pending with other employers, I did not need to wait to accept. SFA was an easy choice.

Before my January arrival, I hired Craig Goodman to serve as assistant chief of police. Since then, Craig and I have been working to expand initiatives on campus, including community-oriented policing. This concept involves officers becoming more up close and directly involved with the campus community. We want them to be visible on campus and interact with members of the SFA community. It also involves attendance at events where potential and enrolled students will be — events like Orientation, Showcase Saturday and athletic competitions.

In addition to working on initiatives that have the potential to positively affect the community, we are investing in the police department's staff members by providing opportunities for them to excel and reach the next level in their careers. Professional development provides opportunities for them to attend conferences that relate to their particular job. Additionally, staff members who desire to become instructors or attend emergency management training will have opportunities to do so.

Lastly, I encourage all UPD staff members to work toward a college-level degree. Policing can be very stressful. I have known many people in law enforcement who burn out, and those holding a college degree have options for their future.

As my first year at SFA is drawing to an end, I am excited to begin 2020. I look forward to working with the campus community to further enhance the UPD while serving our students, faculty, staff and the rest of SFA's stakeholders. ★

Athletics News



VOLLEYBALL

Ladyjack volleyball claimed the outright Southland Conference regular season title in November with its win against University of the Incarnate Word. The team is 26-1 for the season and 14-0 in conference with a 19-match winning streak, and its latest Southland title is the 11th in the history of the program and the third in a row. ★

HUNTER DOZIER

Former Lumberjack Hunter Dozier, who now plays third base for MLB's Kansas City Royals, is among the most valuable players on his team. Dozier concluded the 2019 season with a slash line of .279/.348/.522 and clubbed 26 home runs — the second-highest total on the team. Dozier also ranked second on the team in batting average, second in RBI (84), third in hits (146) and third in doubles (29). ★

FOOTBALL

When members of the SFA football team heard that Liam Hill, a 6-year-old who had been diagnosed with leukemia at age 3, was unable to join his local football team, the Jacks invited him to join theirs. Hill attended practice at Homer Bryce Stadium and ran for a 20-yard touchdown. The team celebrated with Hill in the end zone before inviting him to every home game throughout the 2019 season. ★



MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Lumberjack men's basketball team took advantage of an NCAA rule that allows college basketball teams to take a trip abroad once every four years. From Aug. 8 through 17, the Jacks traveled to Spain and visited Barcelona, Madrid and Zaragoza for a 10-day, once-in-a-lifetime trip that let SFA's players and coaches enjoy countless experiences while bonding as a team. SFA also played four games while abroad — two against teams from Madrid and two more against teams from Barcelona. ★

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

SFA women's basketball sophomore Stephanie Visscher traveled to the Czech Republic during the summer to captain the Swedish U20 National Team during the International Basketball Federation's Women's European Championship. Sixteen European teams competed in the championship, with Sweden finishing 12th. Visscher averaged a team-leading 8.7 points per game and finished 30th among all players in the tournament in rebounding, collecting 5.1 rebounds per game. ★

Work Space / Inside Paco Morales' Office

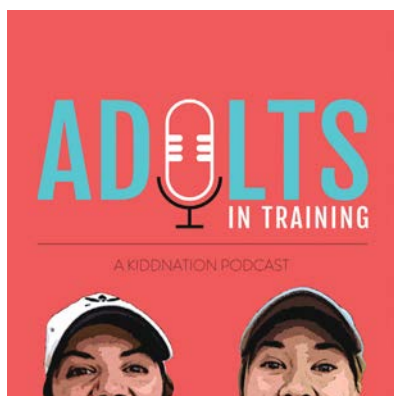


PACO MORALES
Piano Technician
School of Music

1. A poster of inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla hangs above the workbench in Morales' office. Morales has invented several tools he uses for piano repair and tuning and hopes to one day patent them. He said Tesla is his inspiration as "a gentleman, inventor and human being."
2. School of Music students call Morales the "squirrel whisperer." Morales said he rarely crosses campus without a sandwich bag filled with Cheerios to feed the squirrels. Morales has developed a special whistle, which he says the squirrels recognize and come running to him to be fed when they hear it.
3. As a hobby, Morales enjoys making wooden cutouts with a scroll saw. He particularly likes to create plaques that have musical or wildlife themes.
4. Morales is a registered piano technician, which is a classification offered through the Piano Technicians Guild, the world's premier source of expertise in piano service and technology. To acquire the RPT classification, technicians must take and pass three rigorous technical examinations — one written and two practical, hands-on exams that test tuning and technical skills. These piano action models, one for a grand piano and the other for an upright piano, were used by Morales when he took the examinations.
5. This painting of a Puerto Rican landscape was painted by Morales' father, who, in addition to being a civil engineer and land surveyor, enjoyed the visual arts. Morales said he inherited his father's creativity and love of technology. His mother was a pianist, and Morales said he inherited his love of music and musical instruments, particularly the piano, from her.
6. Morales used his computer numerical control router to create this plaque, which showcases three family names: Paco, his nickname; Morales, his father's last name; and Font, his mother's maiden name.
7. The flyers on the wall were gifted to Morales by former SFA students. The flyers are from their graduation recitals and feature two students from China and one from the Dominican Republic. Morales said he is learning to speak Mandarin, and he often forms special bonds with international students who befriend him and help teach him their language.
8. Several tools Morales uses to repair and tune pianos are displayed on the blue cloth. He invents and makes many of his tools and offered classes in 2017 and 2018 to help his colleagues learn how to make their own tools during the Piano Technicians Guild Annual Convention and Technical Institute.
9. Replacement piano strings rest atop the Yamaha baby grand piano. Morales said there are two types of piano strings: single steel wires, which are used for the treble and high treble sections, and steel wires wound with copper for use at the bass section.
10. Two piano technology books and a CD sit on the grand piano. "Piano Servicing, Tuning and Rebuilding" by Arthur A. Reblitz, RPT; "Pianos Inside Out" by Mario Igrec, RPT; and a CD by Rick Baldassin, RPT, titled "On Pitch" are considered among the best piano technology education resources for piano technicians and restorers of every level.



ABOUT: The “Adults in Training” podcast is available at kiddnation.com and on iTunes and Spotify: Growing up ain’t easy, so we consider ourselves to still be “in training” for that adult life. We are Cami and Meagan, two besties in our 20s who are still trying to figure out how the world works.



THE AIRPLANE HANGARS below grew distant, and the trees blurred into a green mass as Cami Henz '17 gently settled into the helicopter’s tan leather seats.

Life had been a bit of a whirlwind recently. Just one year before, Henz accepted a dream opportunity as an intern for the Irving-based radio program “The Kidd Kraddick Morning Show.” In April, she was hired full time. Now, just three months later, she was in Blake

To watch “The Kidd Kraddick Morning Show” live taping, visit kiddnation.com/kiddtv.



ARE YOU

KIDDIN' ME?



Cami Henz '17 and Big Al Mack

‘The Kidd Kraddick Morning Show’ was a constant during Cami Henz’s high school years; its wit and humor inspiring her eventual pursuit of a radio/TV degree at SFA. So it was surreal when, just a few short years after graduation, she found herself producing the show’s livestream video service, KiddTV.

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD '10

PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99

Shelton’s personal helicopter headed to the opening of the country singer’s newest Oklahoma bar.

The helicopter touched down in a small airport near Tishomingo, Oklahoma, and Henz exited with Big Al Mack, one of the morning show’s four emcees. Henz was tasked with filming that night — more specifically documenting Big Al’s obsession with Shelton as Big Al emceed the night’s events. When singer Gwen Stefani, Shelton’s girlfriend, stepped on stage and surprised fans

by singing one of her hit songs, “Hollaback Girl,” Henz was in heaven.

“I pinch myself a lot,” Henz said of her life as she now knows it. “I started listening to ‘The Kidd Kraddick Morning Show’ on my way to school when I was a high school sophomore. I thought Kidd was hilarious. He was energetic, witty and a true comedic genius. I wanted to meet him one day. Better yet, I wanted to work for him one day. He is why I wanted to major in radio/TV.” ➔

To watch Cami Henz '17 dance with Blake Shelton, visit sfasu.edu/sawdust.



IN THE STUDIO

With the glow of the screen lighting her focused eyes, Henz methodically mouses through the show's livestreaming software. To her immediate left are floor-to-ceiling windows looking into the studio. The show's emcees, Kellie Rasberry, Mack, José "J-Si" Chavez and Jenna Owens, are live.

Henz, a Keller native, has wrapped herself in a blanket, and a digital timer hangs above her on the wall, its bright red font tinting her dark workspace below with a light shade of rose.

As video producer for KiddTV, a livestream version of the radio show, Henz's workdays start very early. Five days a week, a preset alarm chimes well before dawn so Henz can be in the studio by 5 a.m. She then begins preparing visual content to pair with the show's live airing, meaning she needs to know what the cast intends to discuss so she can pull photos and videos to stream live while they talk.

It's fast-paced, but live entertainment production is where Henz thrives.

"During my senior year at Keller High School, I joined the broadcasting class, where I learned how to use a video camera and read the morning announcements," she said. "I also learned how to edit and think creatively. I would critique myself and fix the way I pronounced words or the way I said a sentence."

"I realized I loved creating content," Henz added. "When I applied to SFA, I immediately checked the radio/TV broadcasting box when asked what I would be majoring in. I knew it was my passion."

PASSION PROJECTS

The moment Henz walked into SFA's KSAU 90.1 broadcasting studio years ago, everything felt right with the world. She worked as the station's DJ on Wednesday nights, playing music and taking requests before reporting weather forecasts and news headlines.

"I knew it was what I was meant to do," she said. "Having to think on your feet and be quick if something goes wrong was exhilarating. It was in those moments when my interests turned into passions."

Passion — it's a word that seems to follow Henz, or perhaps deeply define her. While at SFA, she tapped into an abiding love for live production but also found a more niche passion through Driving Jacks, a free designated-driver program for students.

"I was part of Driving Jacks my entire college career, and I became president of the organization during my senior year," Henz said. "I met the most incredible and loving people, and I made best friends, whom I still see to this day. Driving Jacks was a huge part of my life."

In breaks between studying, class and Driving Jacks, Henz also worked a part-time job with the City of Nacogdoches' Main Street. In this role, she helped develop the city's popular podcast, NacChat.

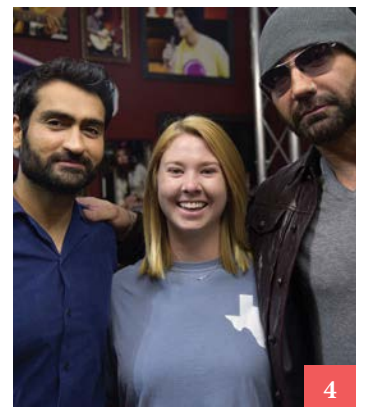
"I am just so proud of Cami," said Amy Mehaffey, Nacogdoches Main Street manager. "She had her heart set on her dream job with Kidd Kraddick, which she talked about often, and now she's living her dream. No one is more deserving."

For Henz, passion drives success.

"You have to find your passion and work as hard as you can," she said. "You have to be willing to do it for free, and if you're not willing to do something for free, it might not be your passion."



*"The Kidd Kraddick Morning Show" ensemble
(from left): J-Si Chavez, Kellie Rasberry, Henz, Jenna
Owens and Big Al Mack*



During her association with "The Kidd Kraddick Morning Show," Henz has met several celebrities, including 1) singer-songwriter Cris Cab; 2) singer-songwriter, actress and record producer Gwen Stefani; 3) Jonathan Cheban aka Foodgod; and 4) actors Kumail Nanjiani (left) and Dave Bautista.



SURREAL REALITY

When Henz applied for the Kidd Kraddick internship in 2018, she tried to stay realistic — she was, after all, vying for a spot in a highly competitive market. So when she received an interview and then an email offering her the position, she was soaring.

“I actually still have my parking valet ticket from the day of my interview,” she laughed.

When the internship ended, she was hired part-time and then, just a few months later, as a full-time video producer. Henz has been on air a handful of times, the first to read a bit she developed titled “Things I Wish I Knew Before Going to College.” Another time, she wrote and read a letter to Kidd, who passed away in 2013.

Content curation, creativity, persistence — Kidd Kraddick cast member J-Si said they’re what make Henz stand out.

“I told myself, ‘If I just get my foot in the door, I can make them see what I have to offer,’” Henz said. “What was important was having confidence in myself and in my abilities. I showed them I’d stay late and work really hard on getting things done.”

Almost immediately after being hired full time, Henz began putting together a podcast with fellow SFA alumna Meagan Beckwith ’16. On the Kidd Kraddick-affiliate podcast, titled “Adults in Training,” the alumnae cover a variety of topics, all related to the simple fact that they’re “still trying to figure out how the world works.”

The opportunities available as a Kidd Kraddick employee are versatile and thrilling. Henz has traveled to Florida with Kidd’s Kids, a program where staff members accompany children with chronic and terminal illnesses and their families on an all-expenses-paid trip to Disney World.

She’s met Shelton and Stefani and continues to hope that one day her dream guest, Shania Twain, will walk through the studio doors.

“It’s surreal and crazy. Truly crazy. There are so many people across the nation who listen to our show and love the cast so much. We get thousands of calls every day from people who have been listening for 10 or 20 years,” Henz said. “I get choked up when listeners, who are going through a hard time, call in and their only escape is the show. I’m just so blessed I get to work with such amazing people and help put together a show people rely on to get them through the day. It truly is incredible.” ★

Advising 101

‘Tis the season

BY DR. ADAM PECK

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY
AFFAIRS, DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS



THE HOLIDAY SEASON is here again. Time seems to go faster with each passing year. At the beginning of the New Year, I’ll celebrate my 12th anniversary at SFA. For those of you I’ve had the pleasure to know, it may be hard to accept that my son Noble, who was just 4 years old when we arrived in Nacogdoches, will soon receive his driver’s license. And my daughter, Josie, who was just a baby when we moved here, will start high school next year.

My time at SFA has provided more highlights than I can mention. My fondest memories all involve the students whom I have met along the way. I have been privileged to see so many students overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. The fact that my job often lets me play a role in their success is one of the greatest blessings I can imagine.

And yet, so many times in my career, I have seen students who were unable to overcome the challenges they face. An increasing number of these challenges involves paying for college. For many students, even small setbacks can put their dream of achieving an SFA degree in jeopardy. However, this also means even small assistance can make a big difference.

That is why we have created our new Student Emergency Aid Fund. This program helps students in need of one-time assistance due to a sudden financial need. Contributions of any amount are put directly to work to help Lumberjacks achieve their goal of an SFA education.

As a new year approaches, I know I will reflect on the impact so many of you have made on me. I hope it inspires you to impact the next generation of Lumberjacks.

As we enter this season of giving, I humbly ask you to join me in investing in our students’ success. Contributions to this fund make a wonderful gift — and you won’t even have to wrap it!

Visit sfasu.edu/emergency-fund for more details. ★

Lumberjack theatre students travel to Scotland

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
DR. SHIRLEY LUNA '85, '06 & '14



Brianna Hoelscher, a Corpus Christi dance major, enjoyed posing for photos with The Kelpies at Helix Park in Falkirk. Reported to be the largest equine sculptures in the world, the monuments stand 100 feet tall.

IT COULD BE called Scotland's gargantuan version of Texas' well-known Austin City Limits Music Festival, which features more than 100 bands during two weekends each year. However, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe includes more than 50,000 performances of approximately 3,800 shows, including theatre, comedy, dance, music and children's productions, occurring during three weeks each August.

Angela Bacarisse, SFA professor of theatre, has attended the festival five times, three times with SFA student performers in tow.

"Every August, Edinburgh becomes the center of the performance arts universe," Bacarisse said.

In 1947, Edinburgh leaders decided to prove the arts were not dead in Europe and invited groups from all over the continent to produce their work at an international festival. Eight theatre groups that weren't invited felt they had been slighted, but showed up anyway and produced their own works.

"Thus began the Festival Fringe, which has become the largest international theatre arts festival in the world," Bacarisse explained. "It's a great opportunity for our students to meet other students from across the country and to see working actors. It is a visible demonstration of how it is possible to create a career in the arts."

Edinburgh's population of almost 500,000 is said to double each August, with performances staged in all available venues throughout the city, including museums, hotel lobbies, restaurants and churches.

Eighteen SFA students performed "Tales of Neverland," a story of Peter Pan, which was written by Bacarisse specifically for this festival. For the first time, students from SFA's dance program were included in the journey, and Heather Samuelson, assistant professor of kinesiology and health science, choreographed the production.

"Once we had a script, we sat down and went line by line, page by page, and talked about the visual image we wanted to create," Bacarisse explained.

One of the highlights of the show was dancers joining hands to create a virtual ship ferrying several of the cast members.

"Heather had the idea to turn our 'ship' sideways and have the 'railings' kneel. It is exactly why I use collaborators — she took my original idea and made it so much better," Bacarisse said. "Heather understood what I was trying to express and used her expertise to create something stunningly evocative of a ship."

Several of the SFA students who participated in the festival had never traveled outside the U.S. or been on a plane. Especially for those students, learning to deal in pounds and pence, rather than dollars and cents, is just one aspect of a truly transformative experience.

"The SFA theatre and dance programs are incubators for many aspiring actors, dancers, playwrights, directors, designers and technicians, and involvement in this festival is an extension of our work," Bacarisse said. "Our previous Fringe participants have built life plans and careers based on their experiences, pursuing graduate degrees and producing shows of their own. It is something that will stay on their résumés for the rest of their careers — it is that impressive and prestigious in the theatre world to be involved."

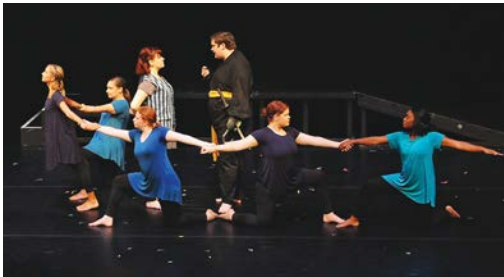
The SFA students performed their play four times, and each performance was attended by families from the local area, even one young audience member who attended dressed in Peter Pan attire. The SFA students also attended the performances showcased by other U.S. universities.

"Being able to perform professionally in another country was an eye-opening experience I would love to have again," said Brianna Hoelscher, a Corpus Christi dance major who played the role of Wendy. "It was beneficial to watch the other performances. Observation is the second best way to learn and helps you find what you need to work on yourself. It was cool to see what other people are doing and what message they want to get across."

Approximately 4,500 miles from the SFA campus, the students attended the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo performance and toured the countryside to visit Loch Lomond, a freshwater lake that crosses the Boundary Fault between the lowlands of Central Scotland and the Highlands. They explored Stirling Castle, where some buildings date back to the 1400s and where Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was crowned in 1543.

The students held fundraisers to aid in financing their 12-day trip, and additional travel assistance was provided by generous donors to the College of Fine Arts.

"We appreciate these donors and their contributions," Bacarisse said. "Thanks to their generosity, the students were only responsible for about 70% of the travel expenses. In the future, we would love to reduce that percentage, so that even more SFA students are able to participate." ★



FULL CIRCLE

NICU NURSE'S PAST HELPS SHAPE HER CAREER

STORY BY
JOANNA
ARMSTRONG '17

GEORGANNE MCCLAIN '15 is no stranger to the neonatal intensive care unit at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston.

Born approximately three months premature (26 weeks) in September 1991, McClain was flown from Nacogdoches to Houston by helicopter and spent the first few months of her life in the NICU. Today, she tirelessly works to care for premature infants in exactly the same unit.

"My mom has told me stories about her NICU experience, and many times we've both cried while talking about it," she said. "Now I can finally tell her, 'I know what it's like.'"

McClain weighed just a little more than a

pound at birth — so small her mom was afraid to hold her.

Brinda McClain, who had already lost a son who was born premature, tried to resist becoming too emotionally attached to another child she might lose. Finally, after several stressful weeks, Brinda asked the doctor about her daughter's chances of survival.

"The doctor told my mom, 'She's going to be fine. She's strong,'" McClain said.

McClain continued to grow and build strength, as her parents made the trip back and forth from Nacogdoches to Houston until her release from the NICU three months later, just two days before Christmas. ➔



Photos courtesy of Jose Hernandez, Memorial Hermann Hospital



"I NEVER REALIZED WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR MY PARENTS UNTIL I STARTED WORKING IN A NICU AND WITNESSED WHAT OTHER PARENTS GO THROUGH. LEARNING FROM MY OWN PARENTS' EXPERIENCES HAS HELPED ENSURE THAT I'M COMPASSIONATE TOWARD OTHER PARENTS WHEN ADVOCATING FOR THEM AND THEIR BABY."

GEORGANNE MCCLAIN '15

FOSTERING A PASSION FOR NURSING

Growing up, McClain knew she wanted to be a nurse and felt a particular call to work in the NICU.

"I couldn't really see myself doing anything else," she said. "I wanted a career that was hands-on and one that would allow me to help people."

After enrolling in SFA's DeWitt School of Nursing, McClain instantly fell in love with the program, from her classes to her classmates and instructors.

"I loved the environment and the people," she said. "It was small enough that I really got to know my professors. I learned a lot and was fortunate to have a good group of people to learn alongside."

McClain formed close bonds with her professors and was particularly influenced by Veronica Sjolander, a clinical instructor in the School of Nursing, whom McClain calls a mentor. Sjolander said she appreciated McClain for her professional behavior, patience and patient advocacy.

"Working with Georganne was such a pleasure, as she was curious and only wanted to be a good nurse," Sjolander said. "She worked hard and offered help to other students at every opportunity. Even though she's graduated, we still keep in touch."

STARTING A CAREER HELPING OTHERS

After graduation, McClain accepted a job as a medical-surgical nurse at CHI St. Luke's Health-Memorial in Lufkin.

After working in Lufkin for a year, she took a leap of faith and accepted a NICU nursing position at Covenant Children's Hospital in Lubbock. It was there she saw another "26-weeker" for the first time.

"I remember thinking, 'This baby is like me, and this situation matches the one my mom and dad went through — being worried and stressed about what was going to happen and how things were going to turn out,'" McClain said.

This realization ignited a new passion for the nursing profession in McClain, as her training, along with her unique background,



McClain and Dr. Amir Khan, medical director for the NICU, Neonatal Transport and Children's Respiratory Care at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, discuss patient care. Khan is the doctor who admitted McClain into the NICU when she was born.

Photos courtesy of Jose Hernandez, Memorial Hermann Hospital

put her in the perfect position to treat the infants and their families with empathy.

"I never realized what it was like for my parents until I started working in a NICU and witnessed what other parents go through," McClain said. "Learning from my own parents' experiences has helped ensure that I'm compassionate toward other parents when advocating for them and their baby."

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

After a year working at Covenant Children's Hospital, McClain accepted the job of a lifetime as a NICU nurse at Memorial Hermann working with Dr. Amir Khan, the same doctor who admitted her into the NICU when she was born.

While it is an inherently high-stress environment, the level of care McClain provides allows her to develop strong relationships with the infants and their families that sometimes last long after the patient's release from the hospital.

McClain said Memorial Hermann hosts yearly reunions, which allow family members and their children who have "graduated" from the NICU an opportunity to visit the hospital and interact with the nurses.

"The best part of the NICU is the families you meet and the babies you care for," she said. "Parents will send us pictures to keep us up to date and let us know how the family is doing."

Still, employment in the NICU involves working long hours and on holidays. It is a stressful profession that includes guiding people through some of the most difficult situations they will face.

"I think it helps families to see someone who has gone through something similar and overcame it," McClain said. "I feel extremely blessed to be in a position to care for these babies and also offer support to the parents. I basically began my life at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, and now I've come full circle. I think everything I had to go through in life has made me a better and more compassionate nurse." ★

JACK TALK

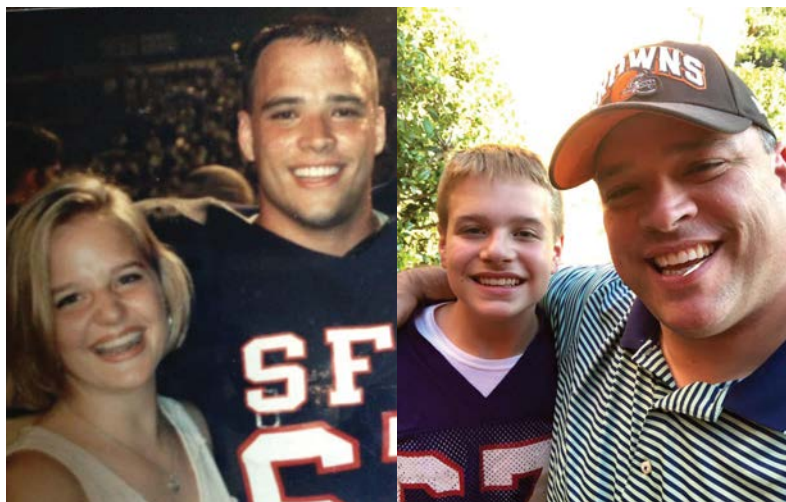
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Use #AxeEm or #SFAJackTalk on social media.



J is wearing Adam's old SFA practice football jersey. He's getting so big!

HEATHER HARRIS ROSSOW / FACEBOOK



A beautiful morning at the Ag Pond! #AxeEm

@BRANDIKL / TWITTER

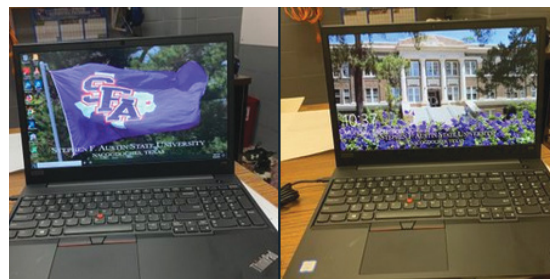


Landry Sturgeon, son of David '99 and Melissa Sturgeon, is a Lumberjack fan. While at SFA, David was a member of Phi Delta Theta. #AxeEm

FACEBOOK

This is my first year attending a university. SFA offers the full package, from the variety of clubs and organizations to the dining halls, classes and professors.

SIGOURNEY CRAWFORD / FACEBOOK



For day one of #SHSUhateweek, I played a prank on a colleague who has been talking trash all year. I hope he likes @SFASU wallpapers on his computer. #AxeEm

@CHADAHUCKABY / TWITTER



Today is Lumberjack Day. @SFASU #AxeEm

@REYRODRIGUEZ / TWITTER



Thursdays are college days at the CLC. Two very proud Lumberjacks. @SFASU #AxeEm

@HUMBLEISD_CLC / TWITTER

Jacks of All Trades / With George Bedar '86



Bedar returned to SFA in September and spoke to business and computer science students about his career.

Keeping information technology in shape

STORY BY JOANNA ARMSTRONG '17 / PHOTOS BY HARDY MEREDITH '81

SERVING AS CHIEF information officer for America's largest health and fitness company, LA Fitness International, George Bedar '86 strives to put into practice a lesson he has learned throughout the course of his career — the importance of doing what he can for others.

"As we get older, almost all of us are going to ask ourselves the question, 'What difference have I made?'" Bedar said. "I will submit to you one of the best answers you can give is, 'I know as a result of my leadership there are other people whose lives are better.'"

Beginning his career in the Marine Corps, Bedar served in a variety of roles during his 20 years of active duty, from supply clerk to A-6E intruder naval flight officer to master instructor of computer science at the U.S. Naval Academy. Through the Marine Corps, he applied for a program that assigned him to pursue a master's degree in computer science at SFA and started at the university in 1984.

"I realize I wouldn't have had the opportunities I've had if it weren't for SFA, and the only reason I'm where I am today is because the chair of the department at the time decided to take a chance on me," Bedar said.

With a bachelor's degree in mathematics but no background in computer science, Bedar immersed himself in studying — spending nights poring over complex problems.

"As soon as I got an assignment, I was on it," Bedar said, "and I would stay up all night because I was so intrigued by it and so challenged by solving this problem that I was eating, sleeping and breathing it."

Bedar was appointed to two technology-related assignments for the Marine Corps, including project officer responsible for software

maintenance at the Marine Tactical Systems Support Activity. Deciding to join the private sector, he served as the chief information officer of CKE Restaurants and later worked at Microsoft as a program manager before starting with LA Fitness. In his current role, Bedar uses technology to understand and solve business problems in creative ways.

"We've had some difficult challenges we have taken on and solved," he said. "I think a lot of organizations wouldn't have taken the challenge."

Under Bedar's guidance during his 14-year tenure, LA Fitness has expanded from approximately 120 clubs to more than 700 clubs and has worked to improve the efficiency and accuracy of business processes, enhance member experiences and reduce operating costs through the use of technology.

By emphasizing Microsoft products as a solution, he has helped the company achieve a steady stream of accomplishments. Throughout all the changes LA Fitness has experienced during Bedar's employment, his focus on others and tenacity for problem-solving has remained constant.

"In business, you can make customers' lives better as a result of what you're providing them," Bedar said. "You can differentiate your business as a result of how you apply technology. You certainly can impact and influence the employees and their experiences, and the productivity and profitability of the company."

Throughout his career, Bedar has learned many lessons, but he hasn't forgotten where he started.

"My SFA education provided me with all these opportunities to have amazing experiences for which I'm really grateful," he said. ★

FIND SOMETHING FOR EVERY
LUMBERJACK FAN THIS

Holiday Season



BARNES & NOBLE
COLLEGE

SHOP ONLINE: SHOPSFA.COM

From the Association

"In September, Dr. Scott Gordon joined the Lumberjack family as president. His arrival has created lots of enthusiasm, as he has immersed himself into everything SFA and Nacogdoches."



GREETINGS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS!

These are exciting times for SFA. We all have so much to be proud of and enthusiastic about. During the past year, we have engaged in great

alumni-sponsored events, appointed a university president, added a new head football coach and launched several on-campus construction projects. All of this has occurred while we are drawing closer to our centennial celebration.

We had a wonderful time at Homecoming in October. If you weren't able to make it, I hope you will plan to attend next year. Homecoming is chock-full of activities, including the annual golf tournament, Jack Madness basketball, bonfire, 5K, flap "Jack" breakfast, parade, football, after parties, Sunday brunch at The Fredonia Hotel and more. There truly is something for everyone, and you can pick and choose the events in which you want to participate. Be sure to reserve some time to simply walk the campus and relive memories while also seeing everything that is new. Perhaps invite some of your college friends and make it a reunion!

The Alumni Association staff members have been working hard to provide a variety of activities and social events across Texas, including at locations in Austin, Conroe, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Richardson and The Woodlands. Thanks to all the Lumberjacks and SFA supporters who attended SFA Nights with the Astros and Rangers, Day at the Aquarium, the private party at Splash Kingdom, breakfasts, luncheons, happy hours and axe-throwing social events. If you're not receiving notifications about these events, please let us know by using the link mentioned toward the end of this letter.

In September, Dr. Scott Gordon joined the Lumberjack family as president. His arrival has created lots of enthusiasm, as he has immersed himself into everything SFA and Nacogdoches.

I was pleased to see the first time we met he was wearing his purple Lumberjack socks, a gift from the Alumni Association. I've enjoyed getting to know him and seeing how committed he is to the future growth and success of SFA.

There also have been some additions to athletics. Since his arrival on campus in May 2018 as athletic director, Ryan Ivey has participated in almost every Alumni Association event and has spent lots of hours meeting and talking to SFA stakeholders. We also have welcomed head football coach Colby Carthel to SFA and, of course, we're gearing up for a great season of Ladyjack and Lumberjack basketball. Throughout the fall semester, SFA's student-athletes and coaches have given us many moments in which to be proud. It's always exciting to see the purple lights shining atop Steen Hall, but win or lose, it is uplifting to witness the respect our student-athletes and coaches have for each other and their opponents. It truly makes me proud of my alma mater.

Construction projects also are ongoing and include renovations to some buildings, while others will be razed to make room for new facilities. These improvements will help bring more students to our campus.

As we draw closer to our centennial celebration, let's make sure we have the right contact information to keep you informed. The easiest way to ensure you're in the loop is to visit sfaalumni.com, and click the "Contact Us" link at the top. Then, complete the information. Please add any comments you'd like, but especially include suggestions on ways we can keep in touch.

We look forward to seeing you in 2020! ★

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Bob Francis '78 – Bullard
President, SFA Alumni Association

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Derek Snyder '01
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THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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

Scholarships



Gianni Grosso

The STEM Chase Scholarship

K.C. RUDY '73 & '75 established the STEM Chase Scholarship to annually support academically achieving students pursuing a degree in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics discipline within the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

Rudy is co-founder of Wildlife on the Move, an organization dedicated to conducting STEM, environmental and nature appreciation outreach programming to a wide variety of groups. The program features an assortment of animals used to help educate the audience in a fun and interactive way.

Incoming freshmen are evaluated based on grades, ACT and/or SAT score(s), class rank and curriculum rigor, while returning SFA students must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA. Transfer students must meet the same requirements as entering freshmen and have maintained at least a 3.0 in all college work taken at other higher education institutions.

This year's STEM Chase Scholarship recipient is Gianni Grosso, a freshman from Highland Village. Grosso is a graduate of Marcus High School in Lewisville and is pursuing a computer science degree at SFA. ★

Ways to Support SFA

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

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

Visit our website at sfasu.edu/give.

Life Members

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

- 8337. Rebecca A. Daniel '16, Timpson
- 8338. Clarissa M. de Santiago '19, Houston
- 8339. Braxton S. Berthot '19, Douglass
- 8340. Cody W. Johnson '94, Santa Fe
- 8341. Tracy L. Johnson '95, Santa Fe
- 8342. Brandon W. Beavers '16 & '18, Nacogdoches
- 8343. Judy L. Harmon '75, Montalba
- 8344. Adarsh B. Varghese '19, Nacogdoches
- 8346. Tammy J. Bell '19, Freeport
- 8347. Summer E. Scown '12, Rowlett
- 8348. Michael K. Millett '98, Dallas

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AWARDS

Alumni Award recipients were honored Sept. 6 during the annual awards banquet. Each recipient is pictured with Dr. Scott Gordon (left), SFA president, and Bob Francis (right), president of the SFA Alumni Association.



Distinguished Alumnus Award

MICHAEL CALBERT '84 was born in San Angelo and raised in Tyler and Longview before coming to SFA by way of his older brother, Craig '82. Calbert entered SFA as a music major. However, after taking an accounting class, he discovered his interest in public accounting and quickly changed his major to business with an emphasis in accounting. After graduating, he accepted an auditor position with Arthur Andersen Worldwide in Houston, and he later moved into the consulting practice. He graduated from the University of Houston with a Master of Business Administration and holds a certified public accountant certificate (inactive).

During his career, he served as the executive vice president/chief financial officer of Randall's Food Markets, a \$2.5 billion revenue retailer based in Texas. Calbert recently retired after a 15-year career as a partner at private equity firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. He ran the global retail private equity practice, generating more than \$30 billion in transactions during his career.

Calbert has been a member of the board of directors for Shoppers Drug Mart (Canada) and Toys 'R Us, and chairman of Academy Sports & Outdoors, Dollar General, Pets at Home and U.S. Foods. He continues to serve as chairman of the board for Dollar General. He also serves as lead director for Brookshire Grocery Company and is on the board of directors of Vestcom International and AutoZone.



Distinguished Alumnus Award

Educator and researcher **DR. JOHN D. WEETE '65 & '68** majored in biology at SFA. In 1970, Weete received his doctoral degree from the University of Houston and worked as a scientist at the Lunar Science Institute.

He began his academic career at Auburn University in 1973 in the Department of Botany and Microbiology. In recognition of his work, Weete received the Director's Research Award and the William Howard Smith Faculty Fellowship Award and was named Alumni Professor. In 1983, he was one of only 36 scientists invited to participate in a conference at the prestigious Rockefeller Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy.

Weete has been issued four U.S. patents and has authored more than 100 research articles and two books. He also served as associate dean for research and director of the Leach Science Center in the College of Sciences and Mathematics at Auburn University, where he is currently emeritus professor and associate dean.

At West Virginia University, Weete served as vice president for research and economic development and president of the WVU Research Corporation. He is recognized as the architect of the WVU Research Enterprise.

In 2007, Weete returned to Auburn to serve as executive director of the Auburn Research and Technology Foundation. In 2016, he was inducted as a fellow by the prestigious National Academy of Inventors.



Outstanding Young Alumnus Award

COLE TOMBERLAIN '10 enrolled at SFA in 2007 with a desire to get involved and volunteer. While a student, Tomberlain was involved with the Student Activities Association. In addition, he was a student instructor for the freshman seminar SFA 101 and executive director of the Student Foundation Association, and he served on the SFA Alumni Association board of directors as a student representative. He also co-founded and was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Texas Phi Chapter. Outside of SFA, he was a volunteer firefighter with the Appleby Volunteer Fire Department.

After graduating with a business degree, Tomberlain returned to Longview, his hometown, to join the family's insurance and real estate business. He also is the co-owner of Texas Toasted Cigar Distributors and The Smoking Aces Mobile Cigar Lounge. Tomberlain is the founding chairman of the annual Bourbon & Bowties fundraiser event, which benefits the Longview World of Wonders Children's Hands-on Discovery Center. He continues to give back to SFA through his service on the Alumni Business Advisory Council with the Rusche College of Business, and he is highly involved with the SFA East Texas Alumni Network Chapter in Longview.



Lumberjack Pride Award

STEVE WHITBECK '75 has supported the purple and white since his time as a student. He served as the Lumberjack mascot in 1972 and also as a cheerleader for two years, backing the Lumberjacks and Ladyjacks during athletic competitions, while also serving in this capacity as an ambassador for SFA at various other university-related events. While pursuing his Bachelor of Business Administration, he became a charter member of the Nu-Xi Chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity.

As an insurance provider in Nacogdoches, Whitbeck has continued his support of SFA and the Nacogdoches community. This support includes his service as a former co-chair of the Texas Blueberry Festival from 1994 to 2001, 13-year membership with the Nacogdoches Jaycees, honorary life member of the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce and three terms on the SFA Alumni Association's board of directors. Whitbeck also endowed a scholarship for future generations of Lumberjacks.

Whitbeck and his wife, Dr. Katherine Whitbeck, a two-time SFA graduate, have many family members who also have graduated from the university.

CELEBRATE MUSIC MEMORIES LUMBERJACKS HOMECOMING 2019





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Commercial Bank of Texas
Loblolly Properties
USI Insurance



HOMECOMING WINNERS

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GOLF TOURNAMENT Gross Winners

Lance Villareal, Justin Farrar
and Jeff Burkholder

TRADITIONS COUNCIL SFA PARADE FLOAT

Grand Champion: Sigma Kappa Omega/
Phi Psi

Lumberjack Spirit: Sigma Chi/Tri Delta and
Purple Haze Association

TRADITIONS COUNCIL NON-SFA PARADE FLOAT

Grand Champion: Yellow House Christian
Student Center

Lumberjack Spirit: GETCAP Head Start





FOR THE L♥VE OF ANIMALS

VETERINARIAN IS CHIEF OF STAFF FOR TWO ANIMAL HOSPITALS

STORY BY
SARAH FULLER '08 & '13

PHOTOS BY
HARDY MEREDITH '81

FIREFIGHTER, NURSE, DOCTOR, pilot, police officer, teacher, astronaut — all of these are among the most popular career choices children name when asked what they want to be when they grow up. As children grow and mature, rarely do these options remain constant — unless the child is Dr. Meredith Howe '09 & '11.

"I've wanted to be a veterinarian since I could talk," Howe said.

A native of Plano, Howe participated in the 4-H Club and National FFA Organization, and she eventually worked at equine centers where she taught horseback riding and cared for the horses. She said she was obsessed with the veterinarians who came to the equine center and thought of them as celebrities.

"I would follow them around and offer to help while asking questions about treatments," Howe said. "One vet taught me how to clean and flush the wounds caused by a certain bacterial infection, and then I would show up early to work because I wanted to be sure I was the one who gave the treatments."

During high school, Howe worked at veterinary clinics, ultimately becoming a licensed veterinary technician when she was 18. Now a doctor of veterinary medicine and chief of staff for two Banfield Pet Hospitals located in the Dallas metroplex, it seems Howe can finally count herself among the veterinary luminaries she once revered.

Howe received her bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture from SFA, during which time she established meaningful relationships with professors with whom she still stays in contact. She counts Dr. Tim Cherry, former SFA professor of agriculture and doctor of veterinary medicine, as one of her key advocates.

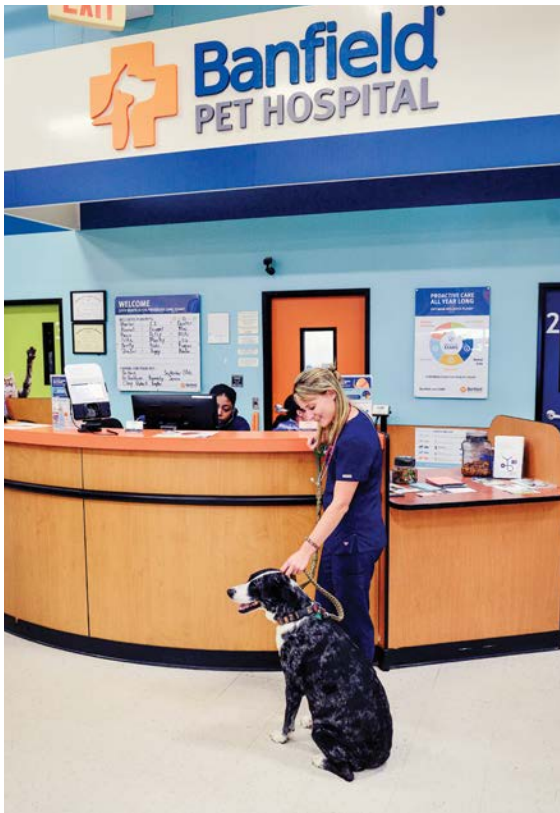
Despite excelling academically during her first year at SFA, Howe said she still harbored doubt that she would be able to surmount the strenuous admission requirements for veterinary school. There are approximately 30 accredited Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges in the United States, each accepting only about 100 students annually. Cherry wasted no time in assuring Howe she had the intellect and ambition to gain admittance.

"Sometimes people come through your life, and you just know they're going somewhere," Cherry said. "I spotted that in Meredith and knew she was going to be a success — she just needed someone to guide her."

During one advising session, Howe said Cherry directed her to follow him to the office of Dr. Dale Perritt, who is now professor emeritus of agriculture.

"He walked me to Dr. Perritt's office and said, 'You've got to meet Meredith. She's going to be our next veterinary student,'" Howe recalled. "Any time I doubted myself, he would assure me I had what it took to be a vet." ➔





"SHE (DR. TEMPLE GRANDIN) CAME UP AND ASKED SO MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY. MEETING HER WAS SLIGHTLY OVERWHELMING, BUT SHE WAS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN THE RESEARCH, SO IT WAS VERY EXCITING."

DR. MEREDITH HOWE '09 & '11

After leaving SFA, Howe enrolled at Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, where she graduated in 2015.

In her relatively short career as an agriculture researcher and doctor of veterinary medicine, she has received a number of professional accolades. While presenting at the American Society of Animal Sciences and American Dairy Science Association Joint Annual Meeting as an SFA graduate student, Howe's research caught the eye of internationally renowned animal scientist, inventor and advocate Dr. Temple Grandin.

Howe's research, facilitated by Dr. Erin Brown, SFA associate professor of agriculture, investigated the ways in which different weaning strategies affected the overall well-being and health of beef cattle calves. Through her work, Howe determined that the use of suckling devices that accelerate the weaning process while allowing the calf to remain alongside its mother in pasture not only reduced levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, but also resulted in increased weight gain and fewer instances of illness.

"She [Grandin] came up and asked so many questions about the study," Howe said. "Meeting her was slightly overwhelming, but she was genuinely interested in the research, so it was very exciting."

In 2017 and 2018, Howe was recognized at the Banfield National Field Leadership Conference for her outreach and dedication to the veterinary profession. Since joining the clinic, she has trained four newly graduated veterinarians and currently manages six other veterinarians and associated staff members. In addition to her administrative roles and consistent appointments for routine and emergency pet care, Howe volunteers with Dallas Animal Service's feral cat vaccination and spay/neuter program, as well as Operation Kindness, the largest no-kill animal shelter in North Texas.

"Banfield has a student job program where vet students interested in the company work in

our office over the summer," Howe said. "During that time, we organize a volunteer day with Operation Kindness, allowing us to give back to the community. We provide whatever veterinary services the shelter needs that day."

As one might expect, Howe's profession extends far beyond the technical aspects of veterinary medicine. She develops genuine relationships with both the human clients and four-legged patients that enter her office.

Howe fought back tears as she recalled one of her most memorable patients — a Yorkshire terrier that overcame heart, liver and gallbladder disease to live to the ripe old age of 15.

"She had the greatest owner who wanted to talk to me about everything," Howe said. "I loved that dog."

However, accompanying the moments of sadness or frustration that are inevitable in the field of medicine are moments of sheer joy. Just last year, Howe's office partnered with the Make-a-Wish Foundation to grant the wish of a child with leukemia to have a dog of his own.

"We treated the child like a celebrity," Howe said, "We literally rolled out a red carpet and will provide free medical treatment for the life of his pet."

Now in remission, the boy and his puppy regularly visit Howe for the dog's preventive care.

"It was a special moment in our hospital to see the power of the human-animal bond and the incredible difference it can make in a person's well-being," Howe said.

Although Howe has advanced far beyond her time as a student employee at SFA's Walter C. Todd Agricultural Research Center, her eyes still light up as she recalls the mornings she would saddle her horse and round up the SFA beef cattle herd.

"We learned everything out there at that farm," Howe said. "If anyone is interested in being a veterinarian or working in the agriculture field, they should consider SFA. My time there was the best of my life." ★

Alumni Calendar /

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

DECEMBER

13

***SFA Commencement Ceremony**
James I. Perkins College of Education

6 p.m.
Johnson Coliseum
Nacogdoches

14

***SFA Commencement Ceremonies**
Rusche College of Business and College of Liberal and Applied Arts

9:30 a.m.
Johnson Coliseum
Nacogdoches

***SFA Commencement Ceremonies**
College of Fine Arts, Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture, and College of Sciences and Mathematics

2 p.m.
Johnson Coliseum
Nacogdoches

**Due to construction at Johnson Coliseum, three graduation ceremonies will be held.*

SFA Gala

6 p.m.
Baker Pattillo Student Center
Grand Ballroom
Nacogdoches

FEBRUARY

12-15

Texas Music Educators Association Convention
Alumni Reception: 9:30 to 11:30 p.m. / Feb. 14
Marriott Riverwalk, San Antonio

28-29

Zeta Tau Alpha 43rd Anniversary Reunion
Nacogdoches

MARCH

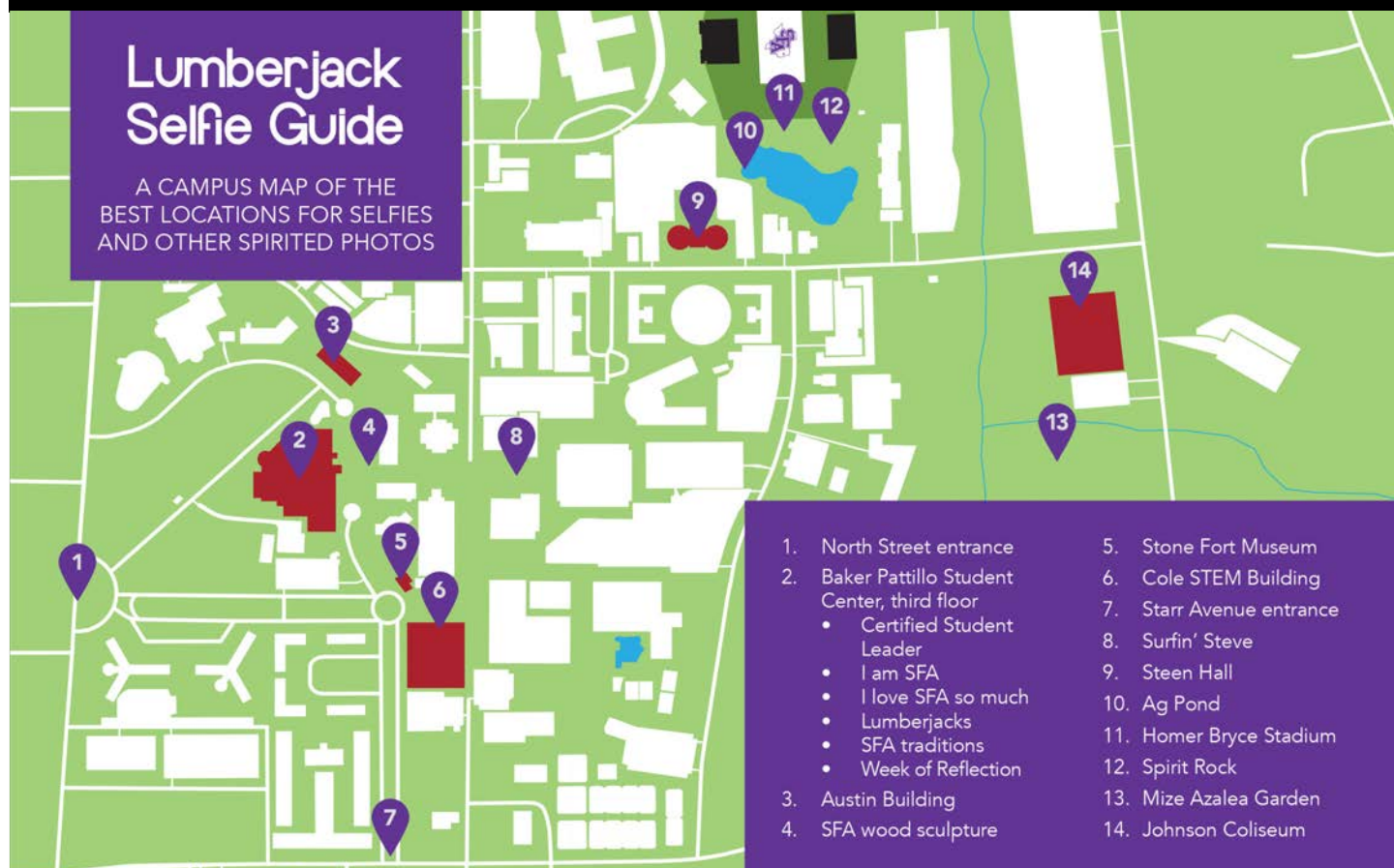
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Zeta Tau Alpha 43rd Anniversary Reunion
Nacogdoches

IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO BE ON CAMPUS FOR COMMENCEMENT OR DURING THE HOLIDAYS, STOP BY AND TAKE PHOTOS USING THIS SELFIE MAP.

Lumberjack Selfie Guide

A CAMPUS MAP OF THE
BEST LOCATIONS FOR SELFIES
AND OTHER SPIRITED PHOTOS



1. North Street entrance
2. Baker Pattillo Student Center, third floor
 - Certified Student Leader
 - I am SFA
 - I love SFA so much
 - Lumberjacks
 - SFA traditions
 - Week of Reflection
3. Austin Building
4. SFA wood sculpture
5. Stone Fort Museum
6. Cole STEM Building
7. Starr Avenue entrance
8. Surfin' Steve
9. Steen Hall
10. Ag Pond
11. Homer Bryce Stadium
12. Spirit Rock
13. Mize Azalea Garden
14. Johnson Coliseum

Class Notes

1960s

Randall Ireland '67 of Cypress wrote the book "Inviting Muslims to Christ."

1980s

→ **Timothy Bell '85 & '87** of Waco retired from the U.S. Probation Office after almost 28 years of service.

Kevin Brice '86 of Covington, Georgia, was hired as CEO of Xvoucher, a division of Genuine Genius Technologies.



← **Ventana by Buckner**, a high-rise luxury senior living community in Dallas, hired **Chuck Childress '96** as executive director.

Dr. Callie Beauchamp '97 of Albuquerque, New Mexico, purchased the audiology practice, Worth Hearing Center.



← **Trae Gerard '97** and **Casey Ives Gerard '99** came back to campus Aug. 23 to help their daughter, Amzee, who plays softball for the Ladyjacks, move in to her residence hall. Amzee plans to graduate in 2023.



← **Justin Jeffus '97 & '98** of Rockwall was named a partner with Mycon General Contractors.

→ **Michael Moody '97** was named Spring Hill High School's band director.



1990s



← **Dr. Deana Sheppard '92** of Houston was named Tyler Junior College's provost and vice president for academic and student affairs.

Robin Ballard '93 of Tyler won the Peach Tree Men's Club Golf Championship title for the seventh time.



← **Dr. Tyrone Sylvester '94** of Houston is the human resources director for Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District. He also serves on the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators executive board as District II representative.



← **Kenneth Williams '94**, city manager of Buda, was elected president of the Texas City Managers Association.

2000s

Derek Bowman '00 was promoted to director of personnel and administrative services within the Navasota Independent School District.



← **Milan Simic '01** of Houston was hired as strategic solutions advisor for Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball, a certified public accounting firm.

Heritage Land Bank named **Gene Roddy '02** of Bullard as vice president and branch manager of its Tyler location.

Dr. Lisa McLane '05 of Lufkin returned home to open McLane Family Practice.



Jeff Brewer '08 was hired as Chickasha High School's baseball coach.

← **Andy '08 & '11** and **Jennifer McCrady '08** welcomed Joanna Jane McCrady Jan. 25.

Class Notes

2010s



← **Laurel Kuepker '10** of La Porte, Indiana, and **Harmon McClanahan '12** of Portland, married July 21 in Lewisville.

→ **Brandon Ogden '10** of Tyler was named the Texas girls coaches sports writer of the year by the Texas Girls Coaches Association.



Gabe Cassell '11 of Center was hired as a private wealth advisor for Americana Partners.

Kelly Jackson '11 is a nurse practitioner for the U.S. Dermatology Partners' Nacogdoches branch.



← **Kelly Vullo Raulston '11** was named the 2018 Greater Tyler Association of Realtors rookie of the year. She also was the only Realtor nominated for the Better Business Bureau award of excellence for small business owners.

→ **Lauren Williams '13 & '15** and **Stephen Adix '14** of Pflugerville married in October.



← **Patty Collins '14** of Bridge City was named executive director of college affairs at Lamar State College in Orange.

→ **Hollis Gregory '14** of Athens is the new game warden for Floyd and Hale counties.

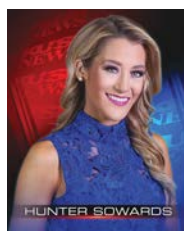


Stephanie Applewhite '15 was hired as an education professor at Wayne State College.



← **Rhonda Daniel '16** is the new Longview High School band director.

Joe Price '16 was hired by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to serve as the director of high school relations on the football recruiting staff.



← **Hunter Sowards '16**, formerly the evening anchor for KTRE-9 in Lufkin, has moved to San Diego to anchor for KUSI-TV.

Carly McClain '17 of New York City recently released her second single, "Enough," to iTunes, Apple Music, Spotify and other music streaming platforms. She released her first single, "You Don't See Me," earlier this year with a corresponding music video.

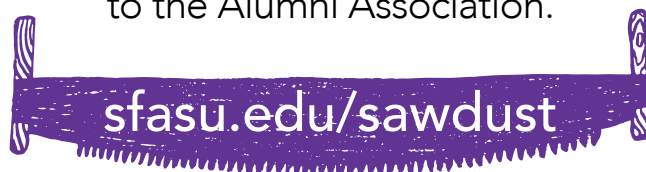
Juwan Lee '18 was hired as a sports editor for the Palestine Herald-Press.

→ **Meghan Reily '19** is an account executive with the KAGS television station and Tegna Marketing Solutions in Bryan.



Share your Lumberjack story!

Visit sfasu.edu/sawdust to send your class notes and wedding or birth announcements to the Alumni Association.



Tell us what you think.

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

sfasu.edu/sawdust/survey

In Memoriam



AUDIE P. BELCHER JR.

Scholarship donor Audie Presley Belcher Jr. passed away June 18. He is the father of the late Presley Calloway "Cally" Belcher, who played defensive back on the Lumberjack football team and died of head trauma following a spring

practice in March 1994.

In 1963, Audie enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving three years in Germany. He attended college, met his wife, Helen, and in 1971, the couple welcomed Cally, their only child.

Audie worked for 30 years with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division. A devoted Lumberjack football fan, he continued to attend all Lumberjack home games until his health failed.

Audie and Helen established the Cally Belcher Memorial Football Scholarship at SFA in Cally's memory.



WILLIAM "BILL" BARNES-COX

SFA staff member William "Bill" Barnes-Cox passed away Sept. 20. A native of Danville, Illinois, he attended Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Bill married Dr. Randi Barnes-Cox, a faculty member in the Department of History, in 1995, and the couple moved to Nacogdoches in 1999.

Since 2006, Bill served as a graphic designer and media coordinator for the SFA Office of Admissions.



DR. DONALD DEAN GREGORY

Former SFA faculty member Dr. Donald Dean Gregory passed away Oct. 27.

Gregory served in the U.S. Navy from 1955 to 1959 as an aviation electronics petty officer

second class on VP-47 seaplanes, which gave him the opportunity to see the world. While serving in the U.S. Navy Reserve, he rose to E-6 petty officer first class.

In 1971, Gregory arrived at SFA to serve as a political science instructor. He later was named chair of the political science and geography department, serving 14 years in that capacity.

His teaching specializations included judicial process, American legal systems and constitutional law. Gregory published numerous articles

and presented papers on Texas politics, constitutional law and the U.S. Supreme Court. He served as the pre-law advisor for 30 years and was twice selected as SFA Advisor of the Year. He co-founded the Texas Moot Court Association and coached SFA's Moot Court Team. He also served as chair of the SFA Student Conduct Review Board for more than a decade and represented the university on three Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation visitation teams.

Gregory was named professor emeritus of political science, geography and public administration by the SFA Board of Regents upon his retirement in 2004.



DR. ALAN B. LARSON

Dr. Alan B. Larson, former associate professor in the professional counseling graduate and rehabilitation services undergraduate programs, passed away Aug. 7.

Larson devoted his life to the education of those with disabilities. He strived to ensure disabilities did not hold anyone back from accomplishing the smallest tasks or the largest dreams. A highlight of his life was organizing a disability pride parade in Nacogdoches. He served on the Mayor's Council for Disabilities and the Goodwill Industries Board.



GLENN E. WELLS

Glenn E. Wells '80, '86, '01 & '02, a member of the SFA Band Directors Hall of Fame, passed away June 24. Wells received his bachelor's and master's degrees in music from SFA and later returned to the university to earn his Master of Education and principal certification.

He taught for 39 years at various schools, including at junior highs, high schools and colleges. He retired as the director of bands for Kilgore College in 2018.

During his career, Wells served as a band division chair for the Texas Music Educators Association and the Association of Texas Small School Bands, as well as concerto competition chair for the Texas Community College Band Directors Association. He was inducted into the Texas Band Masters Hall of Fame this past spring.

In Memoriam

Frances Ann (Hopkins) Stringer Allen '56 of Tyler, July 8

David K. Askins '75 of Yantis, July 20

Alnet S. Bailess '49 of Huntington, June 21

Carl A. Barton '68 of Longview, Sept. 23

George A. Bates '76 of Longview, Aug. 21

David G. Boese '87 of Frisco, June 25

Berkey W. Branch '69 of San Clemente, California, May 31

David L. Bridges '66 of Grapeland, July 15

Glenn Cloudy '69 of Jasper, July 12

Gerald M. Conway '77 of Humble, July 4

Charlotte A. Cooper '57 of Hayden, Idaho, Aug. 19

Mary H. Corley '82 of Trinity, June 13

Judge Albert LeRue Dixon III '67 of Jacksonville, March 3

David K. Exum '71 of Tyler, July 6

George K. Fite Jr. '79 of Hughes Springs, June 1

Melva J. Harmon '70 of Little Rock, Arkansas, July 3

Lisa D. Harper '08 of San Antonio, Aug. 2

Patricia T. Hines '84 of Sunbury, Pennsylvania, July 20

Leigh Ileson '82 of Penn Valley, California, July 27

Gordon R. Kirkpatrick '73 of Dallas, Aug. 4

Thelma M. Lankford '99 of Apple Springs, Aug. 10

Mikel M. Massey '68 of Lufkin, Sept. 1

Colbert B. McAlister '01 of Mount Enterprise, June 29

Robert W. McBee '65 of Longview, July 26

Frances Williams McKinzie '38 & '53 of Lufkin, Sept. 7

Paula Page Monson '74 of Lufkin, Sept. 5

Gene H. Nerren '57 of Corpus Christi, June 29

Jeffrey D. Opperman '79 of Nacogdoches, July 4

Thomas R. Parkman '50 of Lufkin, Aug. 29

Karen K. Peschka '77 of Houston, July 8

Kirsten J. Pierard '93 of Conroe, June 16

George F. Posey '62 & '70 of Waco, July 11

Sue Lynn Reed '03 of Longview, July 7

Jean P. Reese '68 of Lewisville, July 23

Derwanna Sue Reynolds '62 & '65 of Lufkin, Aug. 21

William Michael Rogers '69 of Rockport, Sept. 23

Johnny B. Singleton '86 of Rising Star, Aug. 25

Nina Spencer '64 of Douglass, Aug. 24

Dudley Allen Suggs '70 of Eagle Lake, Nov. 20, 2018

Miles S. Sutton '67 of Athens, Aug. 1

Dennis Totin '89 of Sachse, July 17

Wayne L. Tschoertner '83 of Houston, Aug. 26

Troy Usleton '64 of Lufkin, Aug. 30

Violet F. Waters '49 of College Station, June 29

Ekaterina M. Welch '19 of Fort Worth, Aug. 3

Hertha A. Whatley '57 of Henderson, Aug. 24

Silent Nights, Purple Lights

Looking for the perfect gift for a fellow Lumberjack or yourself? Check out these SFA-related holiday items that are available at Barnes & Noble College Bookstore on the SFA campus.

To purchase, visit the store, log on to shopsfa.com or call (936) 468-2108.



← COMING SOON!

You've been waiting for it, and it's arriving soon.

Limited number available. Contact the SFA Alumni Association at (936) 468-3407 to reserve your Lumberjack bobblehead.



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