

Sawdust

SPECIAL COVID-19 ISSUE

FALL 2020

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

A 'Family' Physician

First female president of the American Medical Association shares life's accomplishments



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President's Letter

"Although much of the Lumberjack family has been physically separated, the connections created and instilled at SFA are stronger than ever. As you will read in this special issue of Sawdust, Lumberjacks on campus and across the nation rose to the challenges of working remotely and demonstrated extraordinary leadership and vision to move forward in challenging times."



ONE YEAR AGO, in the fall issue of Sawdust, I was introduced as the new president of SFA, and what a year it has been. While there definitely have been heartbreaking times, many moments

have been invigorating and encouraging. I saw firsthand the indomitable spirit that has sustained SFA throughout its almost 100-year history.

Although much of the Lumberjack family has been physically separated, the connections created and instilled at SFA are stronger than ever. As you will read in this special issue of Sawdust, Lumberjacks on campus and across the nation rose to the challenges of working remotely and demonstrated extraordinary leadership and vision to move forward in challenging times. In fact, I am calling this issue of Sawdust "The Resilience Issue."

During the spring semester, faculty members moved all coursework to a distance learning format due to the trial-by-fire COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, SFA faculty members are attuned to the needs of students and prepared to provide instruction in a variety of ways in order to meet those needs, especially in the uncertain time in which we find ourselves living. We will emerge as a stronger institution as the country recovers from this pandemic.

There were many "firsts" during the spring semester, but perhaps one of the most monumental was the first-ever virtual commencement ceremony. While in-person ceremonies are certainly preferred by most students, we were pleased with the responses we received from our new alums, and we look forward to the achievements they will make in years to come.

Although the campus this summer was quiet without the usual presence of students, construction projects that were already underway at Johnson Coliseum and the Griffith

Fine Arts Building continued, and these facilities will be spectacular upon completion. The Board of Regents honored generous donors to the university by naming rooms in their honor — the Bill and Barbara Gandy Men's Basketball Lounge at Johnson Coliseum, and the Harry and Carolyn Downing Engineering Resource Commons in the Cole STEM Building. I am grateful to the Gandys and the Downings for their giving spirit and their contributions that help us provide students with exceptional experiences that enlighten, challenge and prepare them to lead successful and impactful lives.

So many things have changed in 2020, but one thing that remains steadfast is that Lumberjacks — like the Gandys, the Downings and the individuals featured in the stories in this magazine — make the world a better place to live. We do this by helping others and by giving back. SFA needs your support, and you can help ensure we continue producing graduates who are viable, essential and productive members of our society by donating today at sfasu.edu/give. If you would like information regarding endowed scholarships, naming opportunities, or gifts of real estate, or if you would like to include SFA in your will, please contact the Office of Development at (936) 468-5406.

Even in times of uncertainty, SFA's values and its mission have remained the same. As always, we welcome the excitement and challenges of this new academic year. We have a bright future ahead, and I know the trials we have experienced will make us better and stronger than ever.

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Dr. Scott Gordon
President
Stephen F. Austin State University



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ON THE COVER:

Dr. Nancy Dickey's career began as a family medicine physician and

has advanced to include several impressive titles. While raising three children, she worked in private practice for 20 years, eventually being elected the first female president of the American Medical Association. In 2002, she was named president of Texas A&M's Health Science Center, where she now holds the title of president emeritus. Today, Dickey serves as executive director of the A&M Rural and Community Health Institute. She recently discussed aspects of her remarkable career with Sawdust. Photo by Sam Craft '04

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Sawdust

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A 'FAMILY' PHYSICIAN

First female president of the American Medical Association shares life's accomplishments

STORY BY DR. SHIRLEY LUNA '85, '06 & '14 / PHOTOS BY SAM CRAFT '04

PHYSICIAN NANCY W. Dickey '72 was the first female president of the American Medical Association and helped write the Patient Bill of Rights. While she was president of the Texas A&M Health Science Center, three campuses were added and enrollment increased from 880 students to more than 2,000.

Dickey now serves as executive director of the A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, which serves in a consultative role with personnel from hundreds of hospitals and communities across the United States to help improve access to quality health care.

Despite these incredible accomplishments, she still says some of her best memories are based on the relationships she developed as a family medicine physician. ➔

NANCY DICKEY'S ACCOLADES:

- Six honorary doctoral degrees in science and law
- Citation of Merit Award – Texas Society of Pathologists, 1995
- Elected to Institute of Medicine, 2007
- Texas Women's Hall of Fame, 2010
- Senior Scholar – Association of Academic Health Centers, 2013
- Trustee – Foundation for the History of Women in Medicine
- John G. Walsh Award for Lifetime Contributions to Family Medicine – American Academy of Family Physicians, 2019

Higher education has played an important role in Dickey's professional career, and one of her first experiences in higher education came when she attended a high school debate tournament on SFA's campus.

"It happened to snow that weekend, and that very lovely campus became even more spectacular," Dickey said. "My partner and I won the tournament at SFA, and a partial scholarship to SFA was part of the prize."

Dickey later graduated from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston and is board certified in family medicine. In 1979, she was appointed director of patient education for the residency program. During this time, she also maintained a private practice and has delivered more than 4,000 babies during her career.

Her first child, Danielle, was born while Dickey was completing medical school. Her son, Wilson, was born during her residency, and her third child, Elizabeth, was born in the early years of Dickey's private practice.

"I often had to advise my pregnant patients that I might be unable to attend them in childbirth if their due date was too close to mine," she said. "I worked hard and put in long days. I coached soccer teams, led Brownie troops, and watched a lot of volleyball, basketball, and football games. I didn't make it to all of the games, but we had a lot of fun. However, I've had students say to me they were told I 'did it all' — and they did not want to do it the way I did it."

In 1996, Dickey joined the Texas A&M Health Science Center faculty and founded the family medicine residency of the Brazos Valley. Two years later, she was the first woman to be elected president of the American Medical Association. At that time, she was the youngest president ever to be elected by the organization.

In 2002, she was named president of Texas A&M's Health Science Center. During her

decade-long tenure, the center grew from four to six colleges — adding a College of Pharmacy and a College of Nursing. Dickey is now the president emeritus of the center and still lectures in the College of Medicine, but her primary work is dedicated to improving access to health care in rural areas through the A&M Rural and Community Health Institute, which was initiated during her leadership of the Health Science Center. It creates programs, policies and projects that help rural hospitals remain open and offers services at reasonable prices.

Looking back on a career that has included work as a health care provider, an educator and an administrative leader, at both facility and national levels, Dickey said caring for patients still defines her work.

"My 20 years of private practice provided the support for the other platforms, so from a 'most meaningful' perspective, I'd have to say that caring for patients meant the most. There are many patient stories I think of from time to time — the first patient whose baby I delivered and being in the ER when a colleague of my husband's came in and was having a heart attack. Saving the life of a friend is part of small-town medicine."

While personally fulfilling, the practice of medicine also provided a platform that led to other remarkable moments in Dickey's career.

"The years leading up to being president of the AMA were a spectacular education in health policy and perspective of physicians from every specialty and every geography," she recalled. "It was a joy to teach medical students and residents, and leading the Health Science Center was a tremendous honor. I think one of the signs of having had a fulfilling life is that there is no one moment that stands out — there are literally hundreds of them."

But even physicians as accomplished as Dickey were impacted by the COVID-19 global

pandemic. For a staff accustomed to a daily schedule of back-to-back meetings, the two-month shutdown provided a travel reprieve and an introduction to the pros and cons of working from home.

"We do a tremendous amount of travel at the institute, reaching out to small towns across the U.S., and we spent January on the road," she said. "We were saying we had to figure out how to get control of the travel and, all of a sudden, COVID hit. We weren't in a plane for months."

Although it was eye-opening, Dickey said she is not sure the pandemic will have a long-lasting effect on the way ARCHI does business.

"There is something very enlightening about going to a town and not just having a teleconference with the hospital CEO or chief nursing officer, but visiting with members of the community being served — to ask, 'What do they do well?' or 'What do you wish they could add or fix?'" she said. "You come home with a much more intense flavor of the institution and a deeper understanding of what might be done."

This difference is reflective of the overall mission of the institute — the importance of access to rural health care.

"There is nothing like driving for hours down a two-lane road, with sketchy cell service, and thinking, 'If one of us develops chest pains, what are we going to do?'" she said. "It's challenging for someone to develop a passion if they haven't experienced one of those trips — whether the concern is the sheer distance or a winding mountain road or, in some cases, a driver from Texas realizing a blizzard is in the forecast. That creates a deep understanding of why local access to health care is important. Living in a rural area should not be a health risk."

According to Dickey, the pandemic fast-forwarded the prominence and prevalence of telemedicine by 10 to 15 years.

"We've changed regulations and policies; it is a true, meaningful part of delivering health care, particularly for rural areas and our aging population," she said. "What a physician can do via phone or an 18-inch screen in terms of caring for a patient is different than what can occur in the exam room, but, especially if the physician sees the patient on a regular basis, telemedicine can be a powerful tool for chronic disease management, routine follow-up care and helping decide if a problem can wait until the next available clinic appointment or needs a visit to the emergency room."

For the 2018-19 flu season, flu vaccination coverage among U.S. adults was 45%, but Dickey is hopeful that a coronavirus vaccine will be developed and administered to a greater percentage of the population.

"The flu vaccine admittedly only covers three strains of flu in any given year, and

it's a gamble whether the right three strains are covered," she explained. "However, any vaccine developed for the coronavirus should be directed specifically at SARS-CoV-2. So we really have to work hard to differentiate between flu and coronavirus, and we have to do a better job of getting a widespread base of the population back on the bandwagon for vaccines, in general."

Dickey said, ironically, the reluctance of many individuals to get vaccinated is a result of the success of vaccines.

"Many people don't remember when children died of measles — when meningitis, while it's still a terrifying word, was not an uncommon word," she said. "Through the efforts of Rotary and the Gates Foundation, we have almost wiped polio off the face of the Earth. That is remarkable if you think back to my parents' generation when thousands of people contracted polio, and many ended up in iron lungs and with permanently crippled extremities. Because of vaccines, younger generations haven't seen this. So it's vital we educate the public that vaccines are major contributors to improved childhoods and to the opportunity to survive to adulthood." ★

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NANCY DICKEY '72





Making Connections

STORY BY AMY ROQUEMORE '93 & '12

University continues to serve students during pandemic

IN EARLY MARCH, SFA students' slight concerns about COVID-19 were drowned out by excited buzz surrounding the impending spring break. With midterms finished and bags packed for visits home or road trips with friends, they departed campus and Nacogdoches in the usual droves, anticipating a respite from day-to-day college life and a return to their routines in a matter of days.

But it was not to be.

In response to the rapidly developing health emergency, SFA classes were moved online practically overnight, spring meetings and events were canceled, and students became full-time distance learners as the nation focused on flattening the curve. Meanwhile, all across campus, extraordinary efforts were being launched to ensure students remained connected to the critical support services, co-curricular programming and engagement opportunities that greatly contribute to the transformative educational experiences for which SFA is well known.

In the ensuing weeks, traditionally face-to-face activities — from peer tutoring to mental health counseling and from career coaching to exercise classes — were transitioned to online formats for the first time in school history. Even the SFA Spirit Teams tryouts were held online. As the semester rolled on, SFA hosted its first-ever 100% virtual commencement ceremony, transfer orientation, summer advising and registration, student government elections, service activities, and numerous special events and awards ceremonies.

"The overarching goal of SFA's strategic plan is providing transformative student experiences, and one of the essential ways we accomplish that is through student engagement," said Dr. Adam Peck, assistant vice president for university affairs and dean of student affairs. "When COVID-19 hit, this engagement became more essential and more challenging than ever. I am really proud of how our team adjusted to unprecedented changes and challenges while keeping the needs of our students at the forefront."

Serving Students From Home

On the surface, switching to online classes midsemester doesn't sound like a big adjustment for a generation of college students that has never known a time without smartphones, social media and Google. But in reality, many students struggled with this transition, in part because it didn't happen in a vacuum. They suddenly found themselves back home, oftentimes without ideal technology or internet connectivity, perhaps also sharing computers with siblings or parents who were now working from home. Many continued working or started new jobs during the crisis to help their families make ends meet.

Meanwhile, university staff members were manning call centers, sending mass emails, and constantly updating social media and webpages to help guide students and families through this unprecedented time. Counseling Services began providing consultations, individual sessions and referrals to local mental health providers virtually, along with tips for stress-management, relaxation and overall well-being. The newly created Student Emergency Aid Fund was used to help pay living expenses for students who suddenly lost jobs and to cover shortages at the on-campus food pantry, which continued serving students with food insecurities.

"Answering our students' questions and connecting them to individuals and resources across campus that could help get their needs met became a 24-hour-a-day job," said Peck, who was a constant presence on social media throughout the crisis and hosted virtual "Check with Peck" meetings to provide updates and respond to concerns. ➔

BOTTOM: Accounting graduate student and president of the Traditions Council Cole Muske from Friendswood serves as a student assistant for student affairs and student engagement. He helped package and distribute boxes of food for students during spring and summer. Aimee Pecina '20, a psychology graduate from Longview, volunteered at The Pantry and Nacogdoches HOPE food pantry.

Photos by Hardy Meredith '81



Tutoring options quickly move online

Previously, SFA's Academic Assistance and Resource Center had offered students myriad face-to-face peer tutoring options with a few virtual services, such as the Online Writing Lab. But when COVID-19 forced the AARC to close its doors, all Supplemental Instruction groups, learning teams, one-to-one appointments and walk-in tables were expeditiously moved online. Key to that transition was a redesign of the AARC's website to help students navigate the new virtual offerings.

"As a lifelong educator and a parent, I was very sensitive to the anxiety our students were feeling as classes were moved online, and they suddenly weren't able to access our services in the usual way," said AARC Director M.E. McWilliams. "But, thankfully, very quickly we were able to reassure our students and their parents that we were still doing absolutely everything we were doing before, we were just doing it online."

In addition to providing tutors with the technology to work virtually, the AARC trained them to help students feel comfortable and gain confidence using Zoom. McWilliams and other AARC staff members also took to social media to provide study and time-management strategies and tips for maintaining a positive mindset during the online-only period.



ABOVE: Senior Maci McCurley of Lumberton, an elementary education/special education major, has worked at the AARC since 2017. During the COVID-19 crisis, she assisted AARC staff members with the transition to online tutoring so students could continue to receive academic assistance from a distance.

Photo by Hardy Meredith '81

RIGHT: Safety precautions are in place at the Student Recreation Center. To comply with physical distancing guidelines, access to equipment is staggered, and sanitizer is readily available throughout the center to help keep everyone safe.

Photo by Robin Johnson '99 & '19

"One day they were on campus just going through their routines and utilizing all of these services, and the next day they were thrust into this really uncertain situation."

Jamie Bouldin, Director
Center for Career and
Professional Development



Virtual career services and job fair

The Center for Career and Professional Development also went into virtual mode when the campus closed. Almost 500 résumés and other professional documents were reviewed online during the spring campus closure, and a large teacher job fair was reimagined as a virtual event, allowing students to network with potential employers online. During April, 132 students attended CCPD's Zoom-based workshops covering job-search and interviewing advice, specialized software training, and entrepreneurship guidance to help them jumpstart their careers.

Other career services previously offered in person, including dozens of career-coaching appointments, mock interviews, and assisted job and internship searches, also were provided digitally during the second half of the spring semester and throughout the summer.

"I think our staff did a fantastic job of just maintaining that consistency for our students at a time when so much of their college experience had suddenly been pulled away," Jamie Bouldin, CCPD director, said.

"One day they were on campus just going through their routines and utilizing all of these services, and the next day they were thrust into this really uncertain situation. So, as much as anything, our job initially was simply communicating to our students that, although things may look a little different right now, our office is open, and we are still here for you."

Did you know?

SFA alumni enjoy free access to all virtual and in-person services offered by the Center for Career and Professional Development, including document critiques, career-coaching appointments, mock interviews, career fairs and help finding a job or changing careers.

"It's a cool perk for alumni who can join virtual drop-in hours and ask questions, get a résumé critiqued or learn about available resources," Jamie Bouldin, CCPD director, said. "We have always offered these services to our graduates, but they may be even more valuable during these uncertain times when many of our alumni — especially recent grads — may be struggling."

For more information, visit sfasu.edu/ccpd, email ccpd@sfasu.edu or call (936) 468-3305.



Pressing on

In mid-May, the Student Recreation Center became the first facility on campus to reopen with new physical distancing and other health protocols in place to help keep patrons and staff members safe. But two months prior, the center already had begun offering virtual exercise classes through a national coalition of university recreation departments to help SFA students maintain their physical and mental wellness during the stay-at-home period. Likewise, the offices of Multicultural Affairs, Greek Life and Student Engagement moved all of their programming online, transitioning beloved traditions like The Big Event, Dance Marathon, Week of Reflection and the annual Lumberjack Achievement Awards to virtual platforms.

"We were extremely committed to maintaining our programming throughout the spring because, number one, we wanted to keep all of our students engaged with us and having fun," said Molly Moody, assistant director of student engagement for leadership and service. "Number two, we wanted to honor the hard work that so many of our students had put into planning these events for the entire year."

She said the first challenge was to reassure and encourage SFA student leaders who also were reeling from the sudden disruption to their lives. "We got on Zoom and had our moment, venting our frustrations and saying 'OK, we all agree this stinks.' Then we took a deep breath, got back on Zoom the next day and got to work on our new action plan.

"That might end up being the biggest takeaway for our students from all of this," Moody said. "When things don't go as planned, you get busy and you reassess. You help each other, and you press on. That's just what Lumberjacks do." ★

Vista Viewpoint / By Megan Sharp Weatherly '04



MEGAN SHARP WEATHERLY '04 / Interim Director, Center for Teaching and Learning

WE DIDN'T PANIC. There's no doubt the rhythms of our classes, departments, community and lives were disrupted when COVID-19 necessitated a transition to remote instruction, but SFA faculty and staff did not divert from our mission of engaging students in a learner-centered environment.

I have the privilege of leading SFA's Center for Teaching and Learning, an energetic team of seven whose mission is to support, strengthen and promote teaching effectiveness and student learning. As plans for closing campus began to form during spring break, the CTL team jumped into action and created the Keep Teaching website, which provided SFA faculty members with resources to help them navigate their transition to remote teaching.

As soon as the transition was formally announced, SFA's faculty members got to work, accessing available resources, recording lectures, crafting remote learning experiences for students, and sharing ideas and experiences among themselves.

Within a week, 700-plus faculty members transitioned more than 2,200 SFA courses from face-to-face to remote learning.

Fortunately, the technological infrastructure needed for remote instruction was largely already in place. SFA has offered online courses for more than 20 years, and adoption of our learning management system, Brightspace by D2L, is widespread. Perhaps most importantly, we already had Zoom, a stable videoconferencing solution. Though we'd had an institutional license with Zoom for more than two years and used it to broadcast campus meetings, almost every employee got a crash course in the details of its use in mid-March.

The most difficult part of the transition wasn't our campus community having to learn new technologies but instead the speed and scale of the necessary changes. In only a few days, faculty members

had to determine the best plan of action for transitioning each of their courses, communicate that plan to their students and then execute it. To put this in perspective, faculty members often spend a semester or more developing one online course. Now, they were faced with transitioning three or four courses to some blend of online and Zoom instruction.

Our faculty members responded with verve and creativity. Teaching is both an art and a science; it requires not only information dissemination but also constant experimentation and the creative evolution of assessments and experiences. Within days of the start of remote instruction, CTL staff members began hearing about the exceptional ways faculty members were embracing the unique teaching situation COVID-19 created. For example, education students held live, online lessons and activities for local elementary students; culinary students planned and prepared meals in their own homes; business students crafted interactive data dashboards tracking COVID-19 cases; and agriculture students remotely monitored expectant mares at the Equine Center. From necessity came remarkable innovation.

Our provost, Dr. Steve Bullard, is fond of the Alvin Toffler quote, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." I think the ways in which our faculty members and students adapted during spring 2020 revealed the truth in that statement. We had to learn new technologies, teaching methods and ways of interacting with students and colleagues when we couldn't be in the same room. We had to unlearn a few things, as well, including stepping out of the routine ways we approached teaching in the past. We had to relearn technologies we may have used only a handful of times but now rely on daily. Our biggest lesson was the need to be flexible and nimble — a lesson that surely will serve us well in the months and years to come. ★

Work Space / Inside Dr. Janice Ledet's Office



JANICE LEDET, M.D.
Director
Health Services

1. Ledet's son, Patrick '17, was a pitcher for the SFA Lumberjack baseball team beginning in 2013. He is featured in this 2017 poster publicizing the team's schedule. Patrick was an all-star pitcher in the Frontier League last spring. He pitched for the championship-winning Melbourne Aces in the Australian Baseball League this past winter.
- 1a. A photo of Patrick decorates Ledet's bookshelf.
2. The checkerboard wall was painted by former SFA Physical Plant employee Roy Mills. He created a different pattern for every exam room and private office in the Tucker Health Services Building.
3. Among the framed documents hanging on Ledet's office wall are diplomas from Centre College and the University of Louisville Medical School in Kentucky. She also proudly displays her Texas medical license.
4. One of the photographs on Ledet's bookshelf is of Christine Ledet, daughter of Drs. Janice and Ted Ledet. Christine was named queen of the 2008 Heritage Festival. The 2020 festival was canceled due to COVID-19.
5. Ledet received the SFA President's Achievement Award in spring 2018 for her service as interim director of the student health clinic. She was appointed director in 2018 and has worked at SFA for 34 years. Ledet oversees a staff of 14.
6. The deck of playing cards leaning against the checkerboard wall was an unexpected gift to Ledet during a speaking engagement to a student group. The student group's leader asked one of the members to bring cards — meaning thank you cards — for the speakers. The member erroneously brought playing cards, which Ledet has kept as a humorous remembrance of the miscommunication.
7. The small "Kenya" beaded bracelet displayed on the bookshelf is a gift from a former student health clinic worker who served on a mission trip to the East African country.
8. The antique medical instruments and equipment are part of a small collection original to the health clinic. Ledet hopes to one day procure an antique medical cabinet or display case to house the objects and display them in the lobby.
9. A child's drawing depicts Ledet in the "dokders ofes" (artist's spelling of doctor's office).
10. The decorated porcelain plate illustrating popular places to visit in France is a souvenir from a former patient who traveled to Paris.
11. The white cast-iron dental chair has inexplicably been in the health clinic for decades.

WHAT DOES TEXAS' largest manufacturer of landmark signage have in common with health care workers fighting a pandemic? The answer is saving lives.

Until early March, employees at National Signs in Houston were busy building between 50 to 100 major sign projects a month. The 27-year-old company has been responsible for creating some of Houston's most iconic signage, including installations for NRG Stadium, Minute Maid Park, Toyota Center, Gallery Furniture and the Smart Financial Centre in Sugar Land.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began to surface in the United States, and the first confirmed case in Texas was announced March 9, the leadership team at National Signs had already begun discussions regarding what the company might do to help.

Located in a 50,000-square-foot facility in the heart of the Texas Medical Center, National Signs is housed within the perfect proximity to help its neighbors.

"We have awesome engineers, designers and craftsmen," said Cody Johnson '94, CEO of National Signs. "We knew we had the expertise and resources to help. After Gov. Greg Abbott made his plea for more personal protective equipment, we were immediately ready to assist."

Johnson grew up in the small town of Fannett, located about 15 miles southwest of Beaumont. He attended SFA and played defensive end for the Lumberjacks. Johnson was named an Academic All-American and graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He later attended the University of Houston, where he graduated cum laude in 2009 with a law degree.

Before his appointment as National Signs' CEO in December 2019, Johnson founded One World Polymer Products in 1999. He started the engineered rubber products design and outsourcing company with only \$2,000 and grew the business to a net worth of \$5 million before selling it in 2004. ➔



SHIELDING

CEO of landmark sign manufacturer discusses company's temporary reconfiguration to make personal protective equipment during pandemic



HEROES

STORY BY
DONNA PARISH '99 & '07

PHOTOS BY
HARDY MEREDITH '81

The employees at National Signs in Houston have reconfigured the manufacturing facility in the wake of COVID-19 to produce face shields, emergency messaging center trailers and other lifesaving equipment.



He then served 14 years as CEO of Core Polymer Moulders, a company that provides engineered rubber products for the oil and gas, aerospace, railroad, truck and trailer, mining, and offshore marine industries.

"After spending 20 years as the CEO for businesses that mainly cater to the oil and gas industry, I was extremely excited for the opportunity to join National Signs," Johnson said. "As the leading provider of signage and architectural accents and one of the top distributors of LED signs and electronic message centers in the United States, I knew of the employees' attention to detail and the high-quality products they make. Everyone working here genuinely cares about our customers and our products."

Julius Lyons, National Signs vice president of operations, said he's proud of what the employees have been able to accomplish.

"As the pandemic started to unfold in Texas, we were all concerned what the future might hold and if our business would be able to continue operations," Lyons said. "But after a serious think-tank session, we landed on a couple of ideas we thought could help our country's immediate needs and started to zero in on which ones we had the capability to produce."

Working together, employees at National Signs were able to reconfigure the equipment — computerized router tables, vinyl plotters and precision metal-forming machines — to produce face shields and electronic messaging center trailers. They also developed a prototype for a hospital bed that could be used if medical facilities reach bed capacity.

"From the first face-shield design discussion to a finished prototype took about three hours," Johnson said. "From finished prototype to full production took about 24 hours."

Part of Johnson's motivation to make face shields was due to a shortage of PPE at New York City's Mount Sinai Hospital, where his brother, physician James Johnson '94, ran a COVID-19 intensive care unit.

"As we know, New York was hit especially hard during this pandemic," Johnson said. "I knew of the struggles health care workers there were dealing with in getting the equipment they needed. I wanted to do what I could to help alleviate that situation in Texas."

The face shields are lightweight, one-size-fits-most and easily disinfected. The employees at National Signs can manufacture thousands of face shields per day. They are then delivered to various health care facilities, including the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, where Johnson and his team were able to quickly send 8,500 face shields.

"Early on, we ran very short on face shields," said Dr. Joan Richardson, chair of the Department of Pediatrics and director of neonatology at UTMB. "After a brief conversation with Cody, National Signs quickly began production of plastic face shields for use in our labor and delivery and newborn ICU areas. The employees of National Signs have been amazing in their rapid response and ability to help us protect our health care workers and patients."

Other health-care-related entities National Signs has been able to help include Texas Children's Hospital, Bayside Community Hospital, Laurel Court Continuing Care, South Lake Houston Emergency Medical Services, Windsong Care Center and The Resort at Texas City.

National Signs also has made and delivered face shields to police, fire and sheriff's departments throughout Texas.

"During the progression of the pandemic, the Galveston County Sheriff's Office began attempting to purchase PPE for staff members," said Lt. James Roy of the criminal investigation division of the Galveston County Sheriff's Office. "It was difficult to get in a timely manner due to nationwide demand. I reached out to Cody, and National Signs was able to deliver 50 face shields to us the same day I called."

As the United States transitions back to work, National Signs plans to provide PPE to national and state stockpiles, as well as many large American corporations.

"Since the initial crisis began, we have improved our products, pricing and marketing, and we've been rewarded with requests for quotes and strong interest for more than 10 million units from the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the state of Texas; Marriott Hotels; United, Delta and American Airlines; the Toronto Transit Authority; and the NFL," Johnson said.



In addition to face shields, the company is manufacturing electronic messaging center trailers. The EMC trailers allow municipalities, hospitals, restaurants and other businesses to communicate complex messages at maximum social distance using a single- or double-sided digital display mounted on a trailer, which can be towed and set up almost anywhere.

"These devices have multiple communication uses," Johnson said. "One of the most common is wayfinding. They can be used to help the public navigate entrances and exits for COVID-19 testing. The messages also can be changed remotely, so updates can be posted without having to go outside and further the risk of exposure."

Acrylic barriers are another product National Signs is making for places where social distancing is not possible. The company designs, fabricates and installs the barriers at checkout counters, reception areas and other locations to help keep people safe. As Texas began to reopen in late April, National Signs installed 60 acrylic barriers at Goodwill stores across Houston and donated 1,000 face shields to help protect its employees and customers.

"I am pleased Cody and his team wanted to help Goodwill's employees safely return to work," said Steven P. Lufburrow, president and CEO of Goodwill Houston. "Cody and National Signs' Vice President of Sales Matthew Nicolay were so kind to offer Goodwill-branded face shields to assist in the safety of our employees and customers. We are blessed with our partnership and the generous gift from them."

Although it's difficult to predict where the world will be a year or even a few months from now regarding the pandemic, it's almost certain COVID-19 will continue to be a threat, and the lifesaving products National Signs produces will stay in demand.

"We're still making signs," Johnson said. "That's the core of our business, but we're also proud to continue assisting those on the front line fighting this pandemic. It's rewarding to know the products we make are helping save lives." ★

Advising 101

Nurses make great Lumberjacks!

BY DR. TAMMY HARRIS '93
DIRECTOR, DEWITT SCHOOL OF NURSING



THE PAST SEVERAL months certainly have been life-changing for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic has forever reshaped society. It has affected every aspect of our lives.

During this unprecedented time, our Lumberjack family has risen to the occasion. We have united to become a part of the solution.

Our students, alumni and faculty members have helped redesign how elementary and high school students learn, pitched in to sew surgical masks, worked the COVID-19 call center, used their STEM knowledge to design and manufacture face shields for health care workers, and led the front line as doctors and nurses caring for the sick.

I am proud and find it gratifying that the World Health Organization designated 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse."

There has never been a better time to become a nurse, and here are just a few reasons why.

- Industry demand for nurses is rising, and the future is bright.
- There are numerous opportunities to specialize in your field of interest.
- Nurses experience cutting-edge technology.
- The nursing profession offers flexible work schedules and locations.
- There is abundant room for career advancement.
- Nurses enjoy competitive salaries with good benefits.
- Nurses are part of a team that share in rewarding work with a purpose.

The SFA DeWitt School of Nursing is growing and evolving to meet the needs of nurses across the state. Our RN to BSN transition program is designed for registered nurses who have not yet achieved a bachelor's degree in nursing. If you know a registered nurse who fits this description, I would appreciate your helping us grow our program by pointing him or her our way. We offer an online program with eight-week sessions, competitive tuition packages and supportive faculty members.

In addition, we are here for our nursing alumni who are interested in returning to further their education with graduate degree programs. Both the MSN family nurse practitioner and MSN nurse educator tracks are fully online.

We all know SFA has a long-standing history of educating great nurses. Help us spread the word that Lumberjacks make great nurses, and nurses make great Lumberjacks! ★

CONTACT US AT
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(936) 468-7700

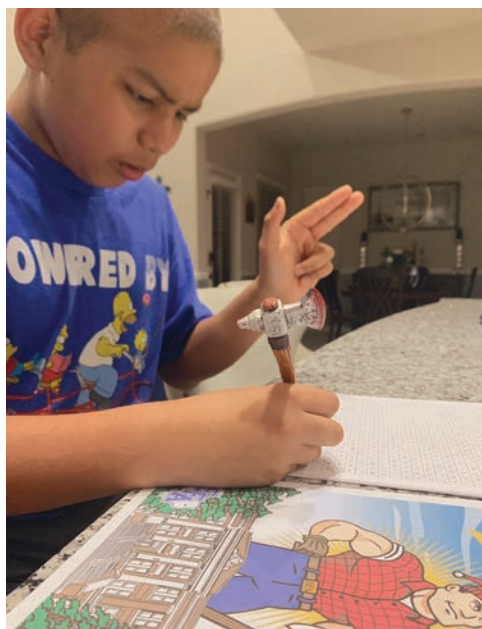
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JACK TALK

Facebook - SFASU
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Pinterest - SFALUMBERJACKS

Use #AxeEm or #SFAJackTalk on social media.



He's excited to use his axe pen while completing the word search!
#LumberjackFun #AxeEm @SFASU

@LAPROFEMONI / TWITTER

Y'all, my professor was up till almost 2 a.m. reworking her classes to be online. You have to remember, this is tough for them, too. Thank a faculty member today. They are working hard behind the scenes.
@SFASU #AxeEm

@ALT_KEILI / TWITTER

My academic advisor called to check on me today and went out of his way to order me groceries. No one can convince me that I chose the wrong university. @SFASU

@LARRIAN23 / TWITTER



Mrs. Midgett is showing her @SFASU Lumberjack pride today for @AVID4College Thursday! #KnightSelfieSpirit

@HOWARDMSKNIGHTS / TWITTER



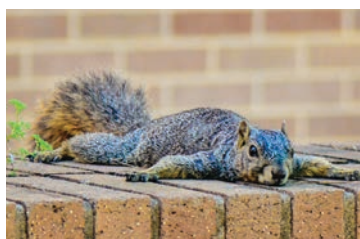
Really fun day as @SFA_Football donating nearly 200 face shields across @SFASU and the Nacogdoches community to help with #COVID19 recovery! We're doing our part to help #ReopenTexas safely. #WeWantToPlay #AxeEm #RaiseTheAxe

@COACHCARTHEL / TWITTER



A little @Crayola chalk goes a long way with my kids and me during this time. @SFASU @sfa_alumni #AxeEm

@WISEGERBER / TWITTER



2020, am I right?

@SFA_TWIGGY / INSTAGRAM



SFA grad packages! #classof2020

@SFA_RES LIFE / INSTAGRAM



Working on my dream dorm room. Have to represent the best university in the piney woods and the great state of Texas!!! @SFASU #AxeEm #AnimalCrossing

@AUSTINHAWKINS22 / TWITTER

Jacks of All Trades / With Lisa Miller '14

Nursing alumna provides vivid view from COVID-19 patient rooms

STORY BY JO GILMORE

Lisa Miller '14 (middle row, far left) and other COVID-19 unit nurses at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas initially served as the primary nursing providers for patients with the virus. They examined patients using Bluetooth devices while physicians outside the room assessed vitals.

Photos courtesy of Lisa Miller



AS ONE OF the nurses working in the “float pool” at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Lisa Miller '14 goes where she's needed the most based on patient census and acuity.

At the beginning of March, Miller learned she'd be working in the COVID-19 unit, a group of 20 to 30 rooms blocked off for patients infected with the virus.

“I felt anxious but also grateful for the hospital entrusting me to care for patients with this novel virus,” she said.

When the first “person under investigation” for possible COVID-19 infection arrived at the hospital, Miller received a step-by-step tutorial on how to don and doff personal protective equipment.

First, she had to wash her hands and put on gloves, followed by her booties, gown, N95 mask and face shield. Lastly, she put on her hair bonnet and a second set of gloves. Removing PPE requires an even more methodical process to help avoid infection, Miller said.

“We had a second nurse supervise the donning and doffing of this equipment each time, especially since the highest rate of infecting ourselves occurs when removing our PPE.”

On her very next shift, Miller began taking care of a person under investigation.

At that point, UT Southwestern medical personnel had to wait two to four days for their patients' COVID-19 test results, so they treated all people under investigation as if they had the virus.

Two nurses were assigned to one patient to ensure the proper use of PPE and limit patient exposure as the nurses switched roles with each patient's entry. The nurse in the room providing direct patient care directed the “runner nurse” outside the room to retrieve supplies not readily accessible in the room.

“This helped our PPE last longer,” Miller said.

Because of the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, UT Southwestern initially designated Miller and the other nurses in the float pool as the primary nursing providers for patients with the virus and limited access to these patients' rooms to the nurses.

“That meant we had to learn how to administer respiratory treatments, perfect our phlebotomy skills and embrace the role as a

patient care tech,” Miller said.

This included detailed physical exams using Bluetooth stethoscopes with recording capabilities so that physicians, who stood outside the room to avoid coming into direct contact with the patient, could listen to the patient's heart and lungs.

“This helps preserve PPE and limits the staff's overall exposure to the virus,” Miller said.

Nurses also helped provide emotional support by connecting patients with their families via a conferencing app on the hospital's TVs.

As the number of positive and ruled-out cases increased, the COVID-19 unit grew to encompass the entire hospital floor, and other UT Southwestern nurses were trained to take care of COVID-19 patients.

“It has been encouraging to see nurses from all different departments come together as we embrace the different daily challenges that have come with this virus,” Miller said.

Because she was one of the first float pool nurses on the UT Southwestern front line, Miller helped train nurses new to the unit and cautioned them to eliminate all outside distractions.

“It's important to be fully present because the patient is extremely isolated,” Miller said. “Therefore, time with the patient should be efficient and clustered, but also empathetic and caring.”

She warned nurses that forgetting to complete the simplest task could lead to using additional PPE to re-enter a room.

“Preserving PPE is something we all worked diligently to do,” Miller said. “The nationwide shortage of PPE and subsequent rationing of certain PPE items generated a lot of stress and anxiety for nurses.”

She credits SFA's DeWitt School of Nursing for preparing her to serve during this pandemic.

“It was such an amazing experience and certainly gave me the foundation of knowledge needed to effectively take care of COVID-19 patients,” Miller said.

She believes the pandemic has and will continue to change the nursing profession.

“I've noticed nurses from different specialties coming together to support one another and cross-train,” Miller said. “I am hopeful the next nursing generation will be inspired by this pandemic and know that they can help with change and really make a difference.” ★

TAKING A PAGE OUT OF POAGE'S BOOK

*Dr. Frederick Poage '06
serves as medical director
of Amarillo's Northwest
Emergency at Town Square.
His team is among the
millions of health care
workers globally combating
the spread of COVID-19.*



Various sections of the Northwest medical facility are engaging in COVID-19 clinical trials. Poage's own emergency room team is part of a national double-blinded, randomized, controlled clinical trial investigating effective virus treatments.

Poage has been medical director at Northwest Emergency at Town Square since graduating from residency in March 2017. He also serves as an ER physician at Northwest Emergency and still finds time to work as a professor at Texas Tech University.

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is more important than ever in protecting medical personnel from contracting the virus and keeping health care workers safe so they may continue helping others.



THE PANDEMIC THROUGH AN EMERGENCY ROOM DOCTOR'S EYES

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD '10 / PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE NEIMAN

THOUGH NORMALLY A blur of chaotic movement, the emergency room of Amarillo's Northwest Emergency at Town Square has, in recent days, become noticeably quieter.

For Dr. Frederick Poage '06, the facility's medical director, the significant drop in patient visits has been the strangest side effect of the ongoing global pandemic. Out of fear and uncertainty, more patients are pushing the limits on when to seek care for dire medical conditions, and it's making his job as an ER physician increasingly tricky.

"Patients are delaying coming in for emergencies because they are

scared," Poage said. "I saw a kid who was experiencing abdominal pain for a week end up having severe appendicitis, requiring surgery and hospitalization to receive IV antibiotics. If his family had brought him in the first or second day, he could have most likely gotten an appendectomy and gone home the same day."

Poage has been one of the many health care workers on the front line in the battle against COVID-19. As an ER physician, medical director and professor at Texas Tech University, he's in a unique position to witness firsthand the vast array of emotional, local and medical responses to the virus.

While he understands the fears associated with high levels of change and uncertainty, Poage still finds it concerning that people are placing fear over their own health.

"A gentleman called one night reporting chest pain but said, 'I think it's just indigestion.' He checked all the boxes for a heart attack, so I advised him to come in immediately," Poage said. "He said his wife has stage 4 cancer, and he was scared of bringing COVID-19 back home to her. He finally showed up at 4 a.m. having a full-blown heart attack. Thankfully, we were able to get him to the cath lab immediately for three cardiac stents, but this sort of delay has been the strangest part to me." ➔

In June 2016, Poage completed private pilot training at the Angelina County Airport. He is a volunteer pilot for Angel Flight South Central and has been able to use his pilot training multiple times during the pandemic to transport high-risk individuals.

Patient care has taken on a new life in Poage's emergency room as community members grow hesitant to seek care. Poage's personal doctrine is to treat patients like family, which has helped ease medical fears.



FROM SFA TO RESIDENCY

Poage is certainly no stranger to the emotional toll health issues can have on people and their families. His first wife, Carla, whom he met while attending SFA, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in September 2009. She went through six and a half years of chemotherapy, surgeries and hospitalizations before running out of treatment options. She died in December 2015 during his first year in a residency program.

Meeting Carla in January 2003 remains one of Poage's most important memories from his time at SFA. Some might even say it was the very size of SFA's campus that brought the couple together.

"I was late and running across campus to another class, walked in [to my human physiology class] and there was a seat open in the front row of the second-tier next to her," Poage reminisced. "I asked her to coffee after every class for three weeks before she agreed! We got married in July of that year."

SFA continued to root itself in the couple's lives in significant ways.

"Organic chemistry with Dr. James Garrett was one of my favorite courses," Poage added. "I remember Dr. Garrett's energy and positive approach — he always seemed in a good mood. Dr. Garrett taught both me and Carla, and we named our oldest son after him — Bryton Garrett Poage."

Just before Carla's passing, Poage took a leave of absence from his residency program in Amarillo and moved himself, his wife

and the couple's two boys back to his hometown of Lufkin to be near family.

While her death did not redirect his interests in medicine, it did "change the way I viewed patients in general," he said. "It made me more empathetic. It changed how I interacted with patients. I treat all patients like they are my family, because I've been on the receiving end of the bad news. You can't quite describe how you feel."

In July 2016, he returned to his residency program in Amarillo but with a catch — he wanted to ensure his two boys could still see family on weekends following the loss of their mother. So how does one handle a nine-hour commute?

"I looked into chartering a private pilot to fly me back and forth, but after assessing the cost, I decided to just become a pilot myself and buy an airplane," Poage said.

After completing private pilot training in June 2016 at Angelina County Airport, Poage bought his first airplane — a Cessna 172XP — and flew himself, "my two boys and our little Yorkshire terrier to Amarillo for the first time when we moved back a few weeks later."

Just a few short months later, he met his current wife, Annie, and the couple was married in March 2018.

Poage has been able to put his pilot's license to use during the pandemic, as well. As a volunteer pilot for Angel Flight South Central, he's flown patients from the Texas panhandle to Dallas, Houston and

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FAMILY OF A PATIENT HAVING
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DR. FREDERICK POAGE '06



Colorado, including a baby with significant birth defects, a man with a brain tumor and a woman with ovarian cancer.

HEALTH CARE IN THE COVID-19 ERA

As one component of a teaching hospital system, the emergency room in which Poage works has played a role in all levels of pandemic response, from on-the-ground emergent care to clinical trials for coronavirus-related treatments.

Northwest's ICU has been part of an ongoing treatment trial studying the most effective ventilator use for COVID-19 patients. Within his specific area — the emergency room — Poage's own team, for which he serves as lead investigator, is part of a national clinical trial for a new treatment of the virus. Although they are limited on the information they can share, he did explain his emergency room is the first in the Texas panhandle to become involved.

"We are in the Federal Drug Administration's clinical research phase three out of four, meaning we're in the human testing phase, so we are able to involve patients from the very beginning in the emergency room on this treatment," Poage said. "It's a double-blinded, randomized, controlled clinical trial, which is the gold standard for trials."

The speed of response Poage said he's witnessed within the medical community to the virus is a testament to many things.

"A typical drug, from initial discovery to placement on the market, can take about 10 years," he explained, "so the fact that COVID-19 testing, treatments and trials are being developed

so rapidly is a huge testament to the whole science community's research capabilities and determination."

DEALING WITH THE PRESENT, PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

No one may yet know the extent to which the pandemic will cause lasting economic and cultural change, but its emotional toll has been immediate and far-reaching. Perhaps few know that better than health care workers fighting to keep the virus at bay.

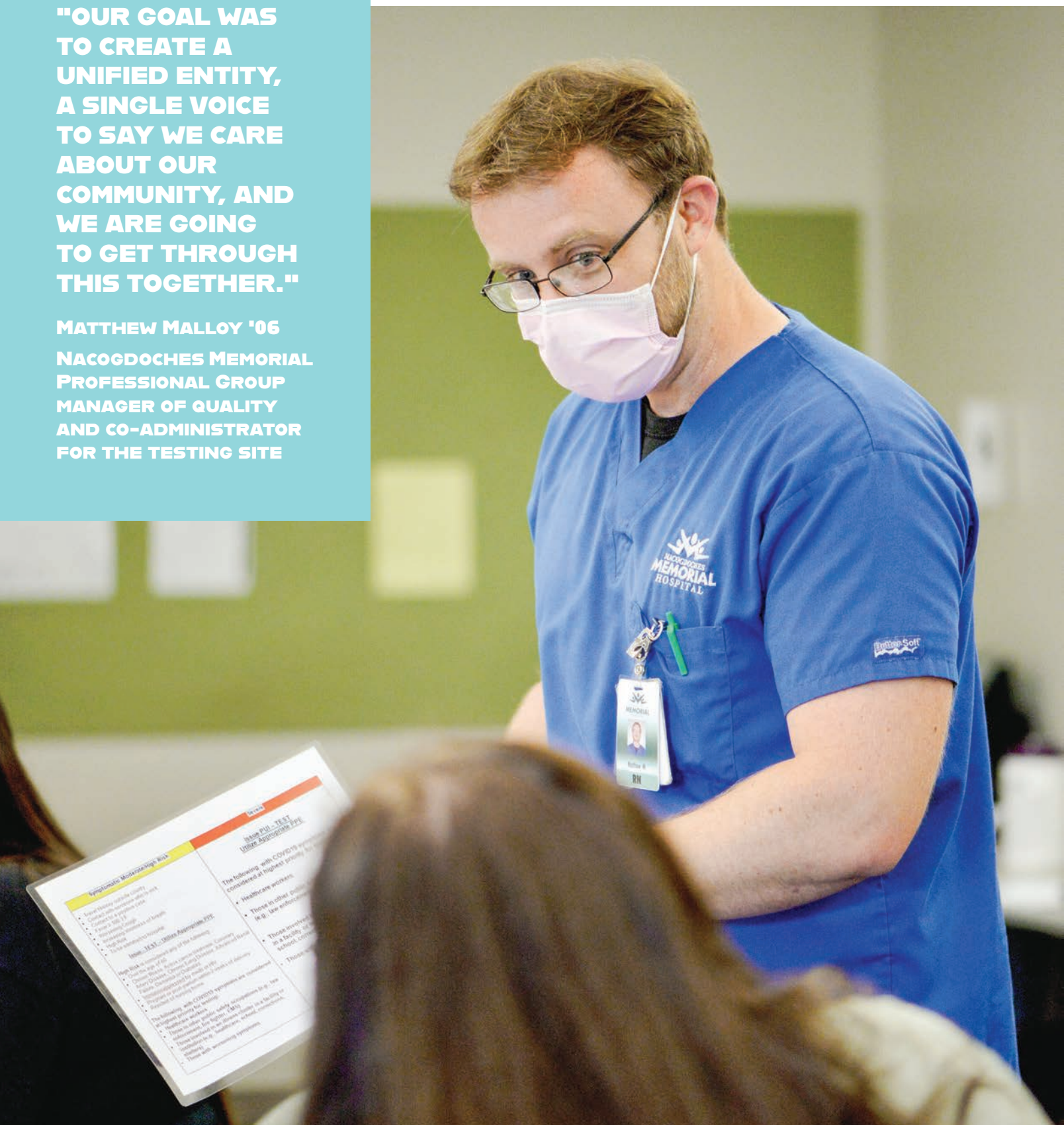
"The hardest part is having to tell patients in the emergency room that their loved ones cannot be present," Poage said. "I have had to discuss over the phone with the family of a patient having a stroke that it may have been the last time they will see their loved one. I have teared up on a few occasions. This also affects our nursing staff just as hard. Thankfully, my family has been emotionally stable and excellent throughout this."

As fear and uncertainty about the future of the virus continue to grip the world, Poage offered advice on keeping a healthy body and mind.

"I would advise to wear a mask when out in public and not to go out if experiencing flu-like symptoms, but I also have advocated for people to remain clear minded and not succumb to panic," he said. "We need to approach this with a focused mindset and remind ourselves this is not just about 'me' but about my neighbors, as well. We need to keep animosity and politics out of medicine." ★

**"OUR GOAL WAS
TO CREATE A
UNIFIED ENTITY,
A SINGLE VOICE
TO SAY WE CARE
ABOUT OUR
COMMUNITY, AND
WE ARE GOING
TO GET THROUGH
THIS TOGETHER."**

**MATTHEW MALLOY '06
NACOGDOCHES MEMORIAL
PROFESSIONAL GROUP
MANAGER OF QUALITY
AND CO-ADMINISTRATOR
FOR THE TESTING SITE**



CALLED TO SERVE

NURSING STUDENTS VOLUNTEER AT CALL CENTER DURING PANDEMIC

STORY BY JOANNA ARMSTRONG '17

PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19

DURING THE SPRING at the Nacogdoches County coronavirus call center and testing site, faculty members and students from SFA's DeWitt School of Nursing spent their time answering calls and providing relief to overworked medical professionals and members of the community by screening patients for the coronavirus and addressing their concerns.

Established as a collaboration among the School of Nursing, Nacogdoches Medical Center Health Network, Nacogdoches Memorial Health, Excel ER, East Texas Community Health Services, and local physicians and government officials, the call center and testing site opened March 25. It operated for about two months with volunteers logging more than 2,700 calls and health care providers completing 586 tests.

"Our goal was to create a unified entity, a single voice to say we care about our community, and we are going to get through this together," said Matthew Malloy '06,

Nacogdoches Memorial Professional Group manager of quality and co-administrator for the testing site.

Working four-hour shifts, Cheyenne Kelley, an SFA nursing student who has since graduated, answered 20 to 30 calls a day, some lasting only 10 minutes with others taking as long as 45 minutes. Kelley and the other senior nursing students who volunteered at the call center used the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to ask patients a series of questions.

Starting with basic information like name and date of birth, they would then progress to more specific questions relating to signs and symptoms, travel history and exposure to illness. If a patient was identified as high risk, the call was transferred to one of the physicians or nurse practitioners on hand to determine if testing was needed.

"As transitioning nursing students, this was a good way to do what we could with the expertise we have," Kelley said. ➔

Though some might have been hesitant to take on the important task of screening patients for a potentially life-threatening illness, Katelyn Takacs, who graduated with her nursing degree in May, felt her time as a student in the nursing program prepared her for working at the call center and starting her career in the midst of a pandemic.

"Although there was so much uncertainty during these times, every single faculty member went above and beyond to show us love and take away any fears we had," Takacs said. "We have been extensively trained in assessments, patient interaction during clinicals and the many other skills it takes to be successful during times like these."

Despite the unprecedented situation the volunteers faced, the students rendered aid using communication and assessment skills cultivated during their time in the nursing program and their knowledge of the transmission of pathogens. While their primary duty was screening, the student volunteers also played a vital role in educating the community and providing reassurance, helping alleviate the fear of the unknown with information about the virus.

"The students got to be a part of addressing a community health need and saw how a community comes together to meet this need," said Dr. Tammy Harris, director of the DeWitt School of Nursing. "SFA certainly is a part of the community, and the SFA nursing program has always participated in community outreach."

With the support of various local agencies, the call center and testing site went from paper to practice in just five days, Malloy said. The DeWitt School of Nursing complex was determined by Malloy and Ian Gibson, director

of strategy at Nacogdoches Medical Center and co-administrator of the site, to be the ideal spot due to its location, physical layout and nearby clinical support.

In a matter of days, the building was outfitted by SFA Information Technology Services with the technical support needed, and city and county personnel made the necessary signage and rented tents, then coordinated security with the Nacogdoches Police Department. Malloy asked Harris for help organizing nursing faculty members and students as volunteers for the call center, and within hours volunteers were already slotted for shifts.

"The fact that these faculty members, along with Dr. Harris, were at that moment scrambling to figure out how to transition their entire program to online learning makes this even more heartfelt that they would give their time," Malloy said. "I cannot be prouder of my alma mater and its nursing school!"

Once the site was in operation, Malloy and the rest of the team weren't content to sit back and take a more passive role. The volunteers constantly did their best to stay up to date on ever-changing guidelines and new information relating to the virus, continually adjusting practices to fit.

"Day to day we would need to change our course due to new CDC updates or because our processes/criteria no longer met our goals," Malloy said. "We were constantly reading, learning and researching to try to better understand this virus and how other cities, states and countries were handling it. We made the continual stretch to see into the future, trying to think of needs before they arose and coordinating with the right people,

such as those with nonprofits, churches and city officials."

The site administrators weren't the only ones having to do double duty. Not only were the student volunteers working at the call center, but they also were finishing their final semester of nursing school and preparing for graduation and future careers.

"There is a certain skill it takes to keep life balanced while in nursing school, and some weeks it felt like I had that skill, while other weeks not so much," Kelley said. "Often, the call center was a good break from my classwork and a positive use of my time."

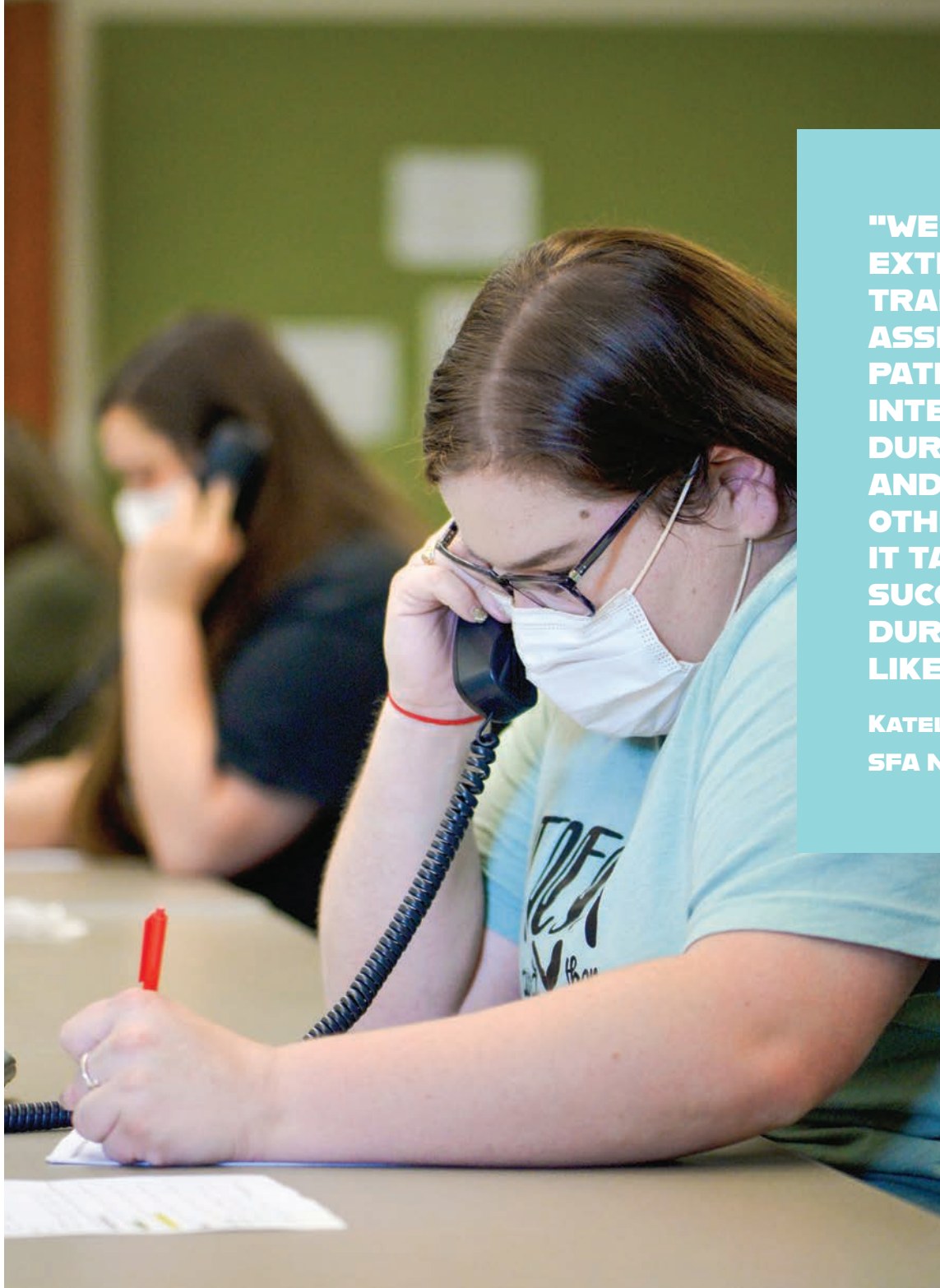
Through all the uncertainty and extra work, students like Takacs just focused on doing what they could to support others.

"We are taught to be the patients' rock and allow them to voice their concerns, all while providing a comforting voice and a smile," Takacs said. "I really like helping in the community. I became a nurse to serve, so I just wanted to do that in any way I could."

Though the call center and testing site came together quickly and out of necessity, the volunteers gelled into an effective team, tirelessly serving during a difficult time. From SFA students and faculty members, to health care providers, to local governmental agencies, to essential employees and businesses, everyone involved had one goal in mind — caring for the community in the best way possible, Malloy said.

"None of us knew how this situation would play out, but it is so encouraging to me that when it comes to protecting each other, Nacogdoches will band together and get the job done," Malloy said. ★





"WE HAVE BEEN EXTENSIVELY TRAINED IN ASSESSMENTS, PATIENT INTERACTION DURING CLINICALS AND THE MANY OTHER SKILLS IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL DURING TIMES LIKE THESE."

**KATELYN TAKACS '20
SFA NURSING ALUMNA**

LEFT: Katelyn Takacs, a May nursing graduate, volunteered out of a desire to serve others in the community. Though she was tasked with screening patients for a potentially life-threatening illness, Takacs felt thoroughly prepared for the job due to her time in the School of Nursing. Students in the nursing program are extensively trained in assessments, patient interaction and other related skills.

OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT: Cheyenne Kelley, who graduated with her nursing degree in May, volunteered at Nacogdoches County's COVID call center, screening 20 to 30 calls a day. In the call center's two months of operation, volunteers logged more than 2,700 calls, and health care providers completed 586 tests.

OPPOSITE PAGE MIDDLE: Laurel Matthews, clinical instructor in the School of Nursing, mentored the student volunteers, assisting them in processing assessment data and interpreting the findings with confidence. Continuing to fulfill her role as an educator, Matthews guided the students in asking questions that would elicit more

data. Pairing students with nursing faculty members or local nurses helped ensure the community was served as thoroughly and efficiently as possible.

OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT: Before graduating in May, Ashleigh Ahlborn volunteered at the call center. Following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, Ahlborn asked callers basic information like name and date of birth before progressing to more specific questions relating to signs and symptoms, travel history and exposure to illness.



2020 HOMECOMING

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The deadline for items is Thursday, Oct. 1.

As we follow COVID-19 restrictions, we continue to plan for ways our alumni can interact with the SFA Alumni Association and fellow alumni.

The annual online Homecoming auction is an engaging way to raise funds for SFA Alumni Association programs while bidding to win unique SFA-related items.

Thank you
for supporting the
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
AXE 'EM!



#LumberjackPride



From the Association

"A large portion of my optimism stems from stories about people helping people during this pandemic — stories like those included in this issue of Sawdust."



SO MANY ADJECTIVES come to mind to describe the past several months — challenging, confusing and uncertain are among them. However, even with all that is going on around us, I find optimistic best

describes my outlook for the future.

A large portion of my optimism stems from stories about people helping people during this pandemic — stories like those included in this issue of Sawdust.

In times of crisis, it is comforting to know we are surrounded by those who genuinely care about their communities and the people who live in them. Many of the heroes during this pandemic have been health care workers — like SFA alumni Dr. Nancy Dickey, Dr. Frederick Poage and nurse Lisa Miller, who put their own lives at risk to save others. There also have been people who work outside of health care — like Cody Johnson, Dan Bruton and Angela Bacarisse, who have played a vital role in fighting COVID-19. They are all featured in this issue of Sawdust.

During these trying times, Lumberjacks from all walks of life have used their knowledge, skills, resources and talents to fight against this virus. I am proud to know many of them. I also want to acknowledge the SFA students, administrators, faculty and staff for their determination and resilience during this unprecedented time. Many adjustments were necessary to completely transition classes to an online format during the spring and summer semesters, and it has been challenging to rework nearly every aspect of university life going forward to ensure we are still serving students, but it has been accomplished.

Although life as a Lumberjack will be different for the foreseeable future, it will be

flexible. Students can take classes on campus or online. They can live in the residence halls or off campus. They can build special friendships and a connection to SFA that will last a lifetime.

For our alumni, things also will be different. With the necessity of physical distancing, events have been canceled or postponed. However, as soon as we are safely able to do so, your Alumni Association will once again be ready to welcome you to the campus. In the meantime, some virtual events are in the works, and you are always invited to connect with us by email, mail or phone.

I also would like to invite you, if you are not already a member, to join the SFA Alumni Association. Your involvement plays a vital role in maintaining SFA excellence and helps us ensure valued traditions are carried into the future. You can join online at sfaalumni.com/join or call (936) 468-3407, and an Alumni Association representative will sign you up. There are options for annual or lifetime membership, and each level comes with its own perks.

If you prefer, you can make a one-time donation to the Alumni Association. Every gift makes a difference and helps us continue the important work we do in serving our alumni and students.

I am looking forward to the time when we can all celebrate Homecoming activities again on campus, attend network meetings and recall our wonderful SFA experiences. ★

Stay well, and axe 'em, Jacks!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Francis".

Bob Francis '78 – Bullard
President, SFA Alumni Association

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Bob Francis '78, Bullard
president

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
president-elect

David Madrid '02, Haughton, Louisiana
past president

Mike Harbordt '63, Nacogdoches
director emeritus

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Reuben Brown '07, Grand Prairie

Jeremy Cleverly '98, Mansfield

Pamm Coleman '80, Houston

Brian Dawson '03, Conroe

James Drennan '73, Pittsburg

Mark Friedman '91, Allen

Sam Khoury '97, Longview

Steve McCarty '65 & '70, Alto

Jaclyn Partin '08 & '14, Tyler

Alex Ranc '11 & '13, Nacogdoches

Ted Smith '07, Nacogdoches

Erika Tolar '02, Spring

Bob Williams '70, Dallas

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STAFF

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

Amber Lindsay
assistant to the executive director

Derek Snyder '01
director of alumni relations

Samantha Mora '08
director of events and engagement

Alicia Roland Chatman '16
gifts and records coordinator
Amie Ford '09 & '11
coordinator of events and engagement

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

Bob Sitton '60
director emeritus

CONTACT

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

THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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

Scholarships



Edgar and Joe Ann Burton Scholarship

THE EDGAR AND Joe Ann Burton Scholarship is awarded annually to an SFA junior or senior who has declared a major within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts.

Edgar received his bachelor's degree in history from SFA in 1965. He served as a partner with Burton Eggs for 28 years before joining Brookshire Brothers in 1989 as the director of distribution. In 1991, he was named vice president of distribution operations. In June 2007, he was promoted to senior vice president of property management, a position he retired from in 2010.

During his tenure with Brookshire Brothers, Burton was responsible for the company's assets, including maintenance, construction, environmental compliance and real estate.

Joe Ann worked in banking for 28 years and retired in 2003.

The couple resides in Lufkin. ★

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:

- 8226. Susan R. Robertson '09, Lufkin
- 8368. Caley D. Kays '19, Prosper
- 8369. Sara LeighAnn Bass '20, Winona
- 8370. Dr. Matthew D. Lindsey '00, Nacogdoches
- 8371. Dr. Kathy L. Shapley '89, Columbus, Mississippi
- 8372. Regent Jennifer Winston '00, Lufkin
- 8373. Russell J. Elsner '20, Houston
- 8374. Jovan Grujić '20, Pančevo, Serbia
- 8375. Keyonna J. Lewis '20, Baytown
- 8376. Amanda Lynn Swofford '20, Brownsboro
- 8377. Logan George Richard Ray '20, Mr. SFA, Lubbock
- 8378. Rachel B. Ballback '20, Miss SFA, Conroe
- 8379. Ty Dustin Ham '20, Mount Enterprise
- 8380. Christie L. Smith '19, McKinney
- 8381. Chelsea Sheehan '20, Friendswood
- 8382. Kenzie M. Kwiatkowsky '20, Bath, Maine

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AWARDS

THE SFA ALUMNI

ASSOCIATION

ANNUALLY BESTOWS ITS

HIGHEST HONORS ON

INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE

MADE OUTSTANDING

CONTRIBUTIONS TO

THEIR PROFESSIONS AND

COMMUNITY, COMMITTED

THEMSELVES TO ADVANCING

THE VALUES AND GOALS

OF SFA, AND ENSURED A

BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR

FUTURE GENERATIONS.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1966.



GREG ARNOLD '87



LARRY CENTERS
FORMER STUDENT
'86-'89



JOHN R. "BOB"
GARRETT '75

OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNUS

THE OUTSTANDING YOUNG
ALUMNUS AWARD WAS
ESTABLISHED IN 1989.



SEAN HIGHTOWER '09

LUMBERJACK PRIDE

THE LUMBERJACK PRIDE
AWARD WAS
ESTABLISHED IN 2015.



SAVILLE HARRIS
'10 & '13

**FACULTY
AND
STAFF
LEND
TALENTS
TO HELP
DURING
COVID-19**



NACOGDOCHES COUNTY HAD its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on March 25. And although it may seem a world away from the big cities and rising infection rates often associated with large populations, East Texas wasn't immune.

Personal protective equipment was in short supply everywhere, making it nearly impossible to procure face masks, face shields and protective gowns. That's when members of the SFA and Nacogdoches communities stepped in to assist.

With the Texas Department of State Health Services reporting 50 positive COVID-19 cases and three deaths as of April 13 in the county, Nacogdoches Memorial Health requested that a grassroots seamstress group's effort, coordinated by SFA theatre professor Angela Bacarisse and costume shop supervisor Barbara Blackwell, expand its volunteer work sewing face masks to assist the hospital.

Memorial Health's Community Relations Director Kim Barton '85 told Bacarisse that additional PPE orders had been placed, but hospital officials were uncertain when those orders would be filled.

As a result, the seamstresses continued to assemble surgical mask coverings from cotton fabric. The masks were being sewn by faculty and staff from several SFA departments, community members and some costume shop alumni, while Bacarisse, Blackwell and other SFA stakeholders focused on constructing the more complex and labor-intensive gowns.

"Barbara and I looked at each other and said, 'OK, we have the facilities here at SFA, and we can make this happen,'" Bacarisse said. "But this wasn't just us. This was a group of SFA people — faculty, staff, spouses and a dean — who care about our community."

Nacogdoches Memorial is accustomed to collaborating with SFA on multiple levels, Barton said. The hospital utilizes student interns from a variety of departments, sponsors an assortment of cultural and sporting events, and supports safety-related organizations like Driving Jacks because they share the hospital's mission of helping to keep Nacogdoches safe.

"We have always appreciated the value of the university as a partner and a resource, but the COVID-19 pandemic really drove home the importance and the depth of that relationship," Barton said.

Barton described the work the SFA costume shop and others did as "incredibly personal to our staff," adding the cloth masks kept the Memorial team safer in broad practical terms as they came and went throughout the hospital, "because the coronavirus could be anywhere."

"We're so grateful for that protection, but the isolation gowns were a completely different, extremely personal story," she said. "They were worn by staff members who knew, without a doubt, that they were dealing with a COVID patient. That barrier was an important layer of the equipment that kept them safe so they could continue to fight the fight, without worrying so much about their own health.

"We saw the news stories about health care workers wearing trash bags over their clothes as protection. That's so incredibly dangerous if you don't remove them correctly, because you can aerosolize the virus when you take off the trash bags. It's a comfort beyond words to know that our community cared enough to work as hard as they did to ensure that didn't happen to our team."

Dr. Dan Bruton, director of engineering

and professor in SFA's Department of Physics, Engineering and Astronomy, also contributed to the local effort to save lives.

Equipped with just 10 3D printers, he provided medical professionals on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic with lifesaving PPE.

Using a design he found online and modified, Bruton utilized the department's printers to manufacture face shields and distribute them to Nacogdoches Memorial Health.

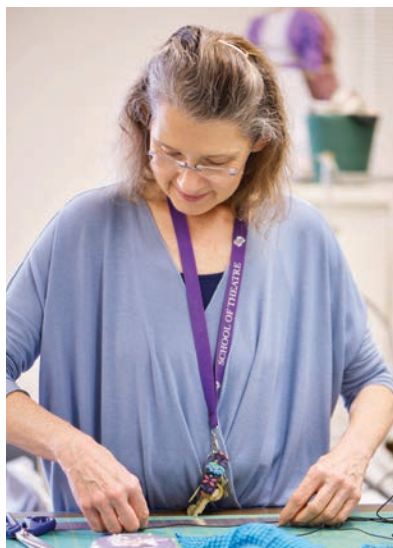
These shields were vital to the safety of health care professionals, keeping them protected from infectious droplets released by coughing and sneezing when examining, testing or treating a sick individual, according to Matthew Malloy '06, Nacogdoches Memorial Professional Group manager of quality.

It took two to three hours per headgear to print the plastic shield and affix it to the front using thermal laminate and gaskets. After assembly, Bruton delivered them to Malloy for distribution at the hospitals.

After learning Bruton was making the PPE, Malloy was eager to assist. Having had Bruton as a professor for an astronomy class while an SFA student, Malloy was familiar with his attention to detail and commitment to helping others.

"In times of crisis, there always are inspiring individuals who step forward in some capacity to meet a crucial need," Malloy said. "For Nacogdoches, Dr. Bruton is one of the heroes who stepped up and helped save lives."

Not only did the shields keep medical professionals in Nacogdoches safe, but the design was shared with SFA alumni in Lufkin who used it to print shields for their community. ★



Barbara Blackwell, SFA costume shop supervisor



Angela Bacarisse, SFA theatre professor



Dr. Dan Bruton, director of engineering and professor in SFA's Department of Physics, Engineering and Astronomy



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

There is no denying that we have all experienced unforeseen challenges during 2020. Changes in our day-to-day routines and minimal face-to-face interactions with family and friends have been difficult to endure.

Needless to say, we miss you Lumberjack Nation!

We are looking forward to seeing you once again, but until that time, we are hoping you'll join us in telling your SFA story! Every Lumberjack's experience is the thread that creates the fabric of our wonderful institution. As your Alumni Association, we see the people behind the stories that are woven together to form lifelong relationships.

Let us know what makes SFA such a special place to you by emailing us at alumni@sfasu.edu or messaging us on any of our social media channels!



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Class Notes

1960s



The Lancasters are celebrating three generations of SFA graduates, including Jesse '66, Todd '99 and Chad '14.



Former SFA Regent and Director of Athletics **Steve McCarty '65 & '70** of Alto was inducted into the Kilgore College Hall of Fame.

McCarty was inducted as the "Spirit of Excellence" award winner. He played on the '61 and '62 football teams and was later recruited to play for the SFA Lumberjacks.

McCarty was a head coach at Beaumont South Park, West Orange-Stark and Nacogdoches high schools.

His reputation and success at Nacogdoches High School led to his hiring as athletic director at SFA, where he worked until his retirement in 2005. He was named athletic director emeritus in 2014. McCarty served on SFA's Board of Regents from 2009 through 2015, serving two terms as chairman.

→ **Thomas E. Spencer '78** of Huntsville retired from the Texas A&M Forest Service after 40 years. His final position was head of the Predictive Services Department.



1980s

Three SFA graduates, **Wayne A. Hughes '80**, **Raymon Hedges '90 & '98** and **Amy Kearns '94**, work in the 673 Civil Engineer Squadron/ Environmental Compliance and Natural Resources at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska.

Dr. S. Gail Eckhardt '81 of Austin was appointed to the NuGenerex Immuno-Oncology board of directors



← **Winston Sauls '81** was promoted to assistant director of public works for the City of Borger.

Jeffrey Hanks '82 & '91 is retiring as superintendent of schools for Weatherford Independent School District.

Tim Bell '85 & '87 retired from the U.S. Probation Office in Waco after 28 years of service.

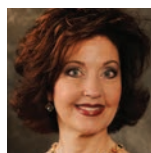
Gerald Cregg Thompson '85 of McAllen was recognized for his three decades of public service at the Hidalgo County district attorney's office.

Kim Wier '85 of Nacogdoches had her book, "The Art of Friendship: Creating and Keeping Relationships that Matter," published.



← **Mark Cooper '86** of Houston was promoted to library director of business operations at the University of Houston's M.D. Anderson Library.

→ **Kent Yarborough '87** of Austin received his MBA from Aspen University in November.



← **Dr. Kim Childs '88** of Nacogdoches, professor of mathematics and statistics and dean of SFA's College of Sciences and Mathematics, has been appointed by Gov. Greg Abbott to serve on the Angelina and Neches River Authority Board of Directors. Her term will expire Sept. 5, 2025.



→ **Sarah Abel Frazer '88** of Jacksonville was hired at Homes and Properties Realty after retiring from more than two decades of teaching.

← **Felicha Stanley '89** of DeSoto had her book, "wPower: The Strength of an Empowered Woman to Change the World," published.



1970s



← **Larry Kotch '70 & '72** of Bremond is a registered trainer in child care and has trained internationally in New Zealand, Costa Rica, Belize, Portugal and China.

Iral Ragenovich '72 was featured in Entomology Today for her work in the field of forest entomology.

→ **Judy Harmon '75** of Montalba received the 2019 International Association of Emergency Managers – USA Career Excellence Award, which recognizes a national leader who has made significant contributions to promote and improve U.S. emergency management.



Bobby Knotts '75 & '78 of Willis recently was inducted into the Dickinson High School Athletics Hall of Honor.



← **Les Neal '76** of Thousand Oaks, California, joined Security Door Controls, a manufacturer of electronic access control security systems, as business development manager.

Dr. James Griffin '77 of Naples was featured in the Texarkana Gazette for his 35 years in family medicine.



Artis Newsome '77 & '80 was sworn in as a member of the Tyler Independent School District board of trustees.

→ **Randy Schaffner '78** of Tyler was named president of Scout Title and Abstract.

1990s

→ **Paul Evans '91** of Arlington Heights, Illinois, was named chief financial officer for Sevan Multi-Site Solutions Inc.

Julie Krc '91 of Longview was named chief financial officer of UT Health North Campus in Tyler.

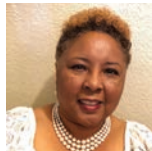


Class Notes



← **Harry J. Hickey '92** of Prosper was named the chief financial officer at SAI Construction in Richardson and adjunct professor at Collin College in Frisco.

→ **Tonya Solis-Mosby '92** of Dallas earned a Doctor of Education with a specialization in English as a second language from Northcentral University in January.



Dr. Tony Tipton '93 was named the lone finalist for superintendent of Lumberton Independent School District.



← **Michael Guinn '94** of Fort Worth was named an Irma P. Hall Black Theater Award Winner.

Chris Morgan '94 of Sugar Land was named assistant superintendent of secondary school leadership and support for Katy Independent School District.

Lisa Box '95 & '97 of Austin was appointed senior vice president of corporate development for WP Engine, the WordPress digital experience platform.

→ **Dr. Isaac C. Carrier '95 & '00** of Waco was named principal of G.W. Carver Middle School.

Former Waco Chief of Police **Ryan Holt '95** was named assistant city manager for the City of Waco.



Bradford Hunt '95 was sworn in as the Keene Police Department's newest police chief.

Mark Keith '95 of Paris was named principal of North Lamar High School.

Thomas Sitton '95 was hired as the head football coach and athletic director for Rusk Independent School District.

Dana Parr '96 was named the 2020 chairwoman for the Longview Chamber of Commerce.

Matt Russell '96 was named principal of Allen High School.



← **Yolanda Prince '98** of Tyler was named one of Tyler's Notable African American Women by the Texas African American Museum.

Pat Roberts '98 is the coach of the Elgin High School women's varsity basketball team.

Heather Welch-Westfall '98 of Fate, director of surveying for Baseline Corporation, was named to the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors' Surveying Advisory Committee.

Andrea Wilson '98 was named executive director of People Attempting to Help, a social services nonprofit based in Tyler.

→ **Dr. Jana Brock '99** is a member of the medical staff at Medical Associates at Corsicana Crossing.



Regina Brown '99 of Tyler was named a 2020 Women's History month honoree by the Cherokee County Women With Purpose organization.



← **Jeff McNutt '99** was hired as the assistant operations manager of Aggressor Adventures.

2000s

Clint Formby '00 of Round Rock was named territory manager for The Andersons, a professional turf business.

Tracy '00 and **Preston Pavlu '00** were featured in North New Braunfels Living magazine.

Valerie Little '02 of Prosper was named the Region 3 Texas High School Athletic Director Administrator of the Year.

Eric Pierre '03 of Austin, CPA and founder of Pierre Accounting, was featured in a national interview on "America's Voice Live" in May with advice on how tax laws can benefit small businesses during the COVID-19 crisis.

Luke Goode '04 & '06 was hired as the athletic director and head football coach for Elkhart Independent School District.

Justin McFaul '04 was promoted to senior vice president and personal trust manager of Texas Bank and Trust in Longview.

Tim King '05 of Crockett was hired as Cooper Lake State Park's newest park police officer.

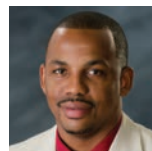
Dana Bickley '06 was named by the Lufkin Independent School District as principal of Kurth Primary.

Dr. Cade Brumley '07 of Stonewall, Louisiana, was named the Louisiana state superintendent of education.

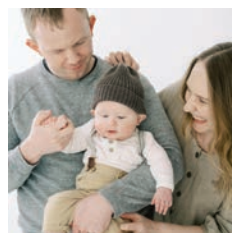
South Plains College recently honored **Marcie Miller '07** of Levelland with the 2020 Faculty Excellence Award.

→ **Gerald Fonzie '08 & '10** of Nacogdoches was named principal of Brooks-Quinn-Jones Elementary School.

Weston Griffis '09 of Pittsburg was appointed head football coach and athletic director for Spring Hill Independent School District.



← **Sean Hightower '09** of Nacogdoches has been named a Texas 2020 Rising Star by Superlawyers.com. Hightower became the fourth criminal attorney in Nacogdoches and the first since 2012 to be named to the list.



→ **Heather Shorter '09** of Highland Village was named principal of Donald Elementary in Flower Mound.



← **Travis Waller '09** of Bremerton, Washington, and wife, Maggie, welcomed their first child, Boone, in September. Travis works as a pediatrician in the Seattle area.

2010s

→ **Kaycee Bennett '10** and her husband, Larry, adopted their son, Carson, in January.

Brett Morton '10 of Tyler is a CPA and senior manager at Henry and Peters, an East Texas accounting firm.



Class Notes



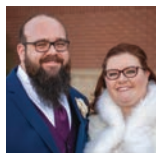
← **Kendall Mott '10** of Spurger was named the 2019 national distance-learning teacher of the year by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

→ **Justin Pelham '10 & '11** and **Kelsey Pelham '11 & '14** of Nacogdoches announced the March birth of Ian Gregory.



← **Jessica Williams '10** of Fort Worth was named director of people and culture for TimelyMD.

→ **David Johnson '11** of Richardson received the Dallas County Sheriff's Meritorious Conduct Award for his role in convincing a juvenile not to harm himself.

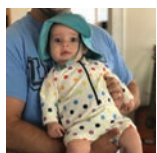


← **Anna Sweet '12** of Cincinnati, Ohio, married Matthew Yochman in February.

→ **Dan Usher '12 & '16** was named social studies instructional coach at Lufkin High School.



Nicholas Wheeler '12 was named VFW Post 8904 Teacher of the Year. Wheeler teaches business courses at Center High School.



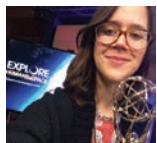
← **John Cleveland '13** and his wife, Hayley, of Norman, Oklahoma, welcomed their first child, Josephine, earlier this year.

Amy Fain '13 of Lufkin was named principal of Brookhollow Elementary.



→ **Luisa White '13** of Corpus Christi and her husband, David, welcomed their first child, James David Buddy, in January.

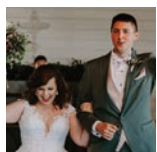
Chase M. Jackson '14 of Marshall has a podcast titled "Black Mind Chronicles," which covers mental health-related topics in the Black community. Recent guests include SFA alumnae and licensed mental health professionals **Dr. Lashondra Manning '04**, **DeLisa Smith '13** and **Taryn Castaneda-Gonzalez '15 & '16**.



← **Sarah Hughes '15** of Kemah was a member of the video production team at NASA's Johnson Space Center that won a 2019 Creative Arts Emmy.



→ **Ashley Riley '15** of Pearland and **James Davoli III '16** of Garland were married in November.



← **Ray '17** and **Cassie Chatary '18** of Irving were married in July 2018.

Brandon Olson '17 of Rosharon was named general manager for the newly reopened Anderson County Livestock Exchange.



→ **Hannah '17 & '19** and Zach Wilke announced the birth of their first son, Samuel Isaiah, in February.

Kayla Lyons '19 of Houston was hired as a digital news anchor by KLTN in March 2019 and started working at the Tyler station in June.

2020s



Mother and daughter **Angela** and **Angelica O'Pry** both graduated in May 2020 with their bachelor's degrees.

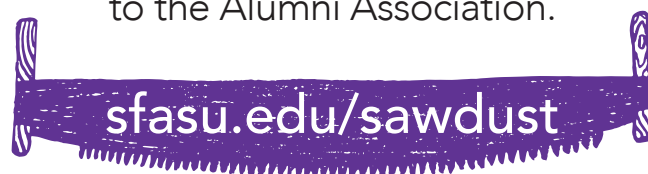
Angela received a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences with a specialization in allied health occupations. She is the mother of three

daughters and the owner of Angela's Heel 'N Hands, a massage business.

Angelica received her degree in music, and she is the music teacher at Raguet Elementary in Nacogdoches.

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

LT. CMDR. ROBERT P. BLOUNT JR.



Lt. Cmdr. Robert P. Blount Jr., a naval veteran of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War, passed away Jan. 12.

Blount was born March 19, 1924, in Nacogdoches. While in military service with the U.S. Navy, he traveled the world. He graduated from SFA in 1948 with a degree in accounting. After his retirement from the Navy in 1968, he moved with his family to Alamogordo, New Mexico, and worked for Telledyne Ryan Aeronautics at White Sands Missile Range in the drone program.

ROBERT ALAN CASHELL SR.



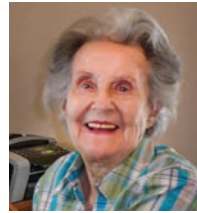
Known to thousands as “Mayor Bob,” Robert Alan Cashell Sr. passed away Feb. 11.

Cashell graduated from SFA with a general business degree in 1963. He landed in Reno, Nevada, where he transformed a humble truck stop in Verdi, Nevada, into the Boomtown Hotel and Casino, which he sold in 1988.

Cashell was a longtime civic booster, which helped him eventually make his mark in politics, serving as the 28th lieutenant governor of Nevada from 1983 to 1987. In 2002, he ran for mayor of Reno and won with a landslide vote. He repeated his electoral success twice as an incumbent, serving through mid-November 2014.

His many public appointments include serving on the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents from 1979 to 1982 and chairing the Nevada Comprehensive Health Planning Board, the Reno-Tahoe Olympic Organizing Committee for the Winter Olympic Games, and the Nevada Museum of Art. He served on the Regional Planning Governing Board, the Regional Transportation Commission and the Truckee River Flood Management Authority.

ROSA G. CHOATE



Texas novelist Rosa G. Choate of Nacogdoches passed away April 18.

A 1943 SFA elementary education graduate, Choate began her career writing fiction in the 1950s. By 1960, she had published several short stories and two Western novels, “Buffalo Gold” and “Phantom Hill.” Her publisher believed Western novels by female writers would not sell, so the books were published under the name R.G. Choate.

Under the pen name Kristin Michaels, she later co-wrote two young adult romance novels, “Shadow of Love” and “Heartsong.” Her fifth novel, “The Sack,” was published under her full professional name, Gwen Peterson Choate, in 2012.

DR. DAVID COOK



Computer science Professor Dr. David Cook passed away May 28. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Cook later moved to the United States, serving in the U.S. Air Force for 21 years and achieving the rank of major. He received his Bachelor of Science in

computer science from the University of Central Florida, Master of Science in teleprocessing science from the University of Southern Mississippi and doctoral degree in computer science from Texas A&M University. Cook joined the SFA faculty in 2009.

In Memoriam

WILLIE G. WHITAKER



A native of Longview, Willie G. Whitaker passed away April 21.

Whitaker was born Nov. 29, 1934, and graduated from Ned E. Williams High School in Longview as valedictorian in 1952. He

continued his education at Butler College in Tyler and later Wiley College in Marshall, where he graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in 1961. In 1966, Whitaker was among the first African Americans to earn a master's degree from SFA. He received his second master's degree in social science from East Texas State University in Commerce in 1974.

Whitaker taught social studies and was a football and basketball coach. He frequently worked two jobs, also serving as a police officer in Longview and Marshall, and in Shreveport, Louisiana. He retired from the police force in 1987 as a lieutenant. In addition to serving on the Wiley College faculty, he served as director of discipline for the Marshall Independent School District until his retirement in 1998.

A lifetime member of the SFA Alumni Association, Whitaker was a member of the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Marshall and the Knights of Columbus.

DR. KENNETH COLLIER



Professor of government Dr. Ken Collier passed away June 14.

A Longview High School graduate, Collier earned a Bachelor of Arts in government from the University of Texas

in 1981 and a doctoral degree in government in 1988. He joined the SFA faculty in fall 1999.

Collier oversaw SFA's legislative internship program and believed the experience students could gain through an internship with the Texas Legislature was an important part of the educational process. He worked tirelessly to secure funding for the program, which allowed students to live in Austin during each legislative session and work in an office that correlated with their own personal interests, gaining valuable experience in areas ranging from the legislative process to the state budget.

He received the College of Liberal and Applied Arts Teaching Excellence Award in spring 2006 and was named the School of Honors Professor of the Year in 2008.

Collier was appointed Faculty Athletics Representative in 2017 and was an ardent supporter of SFA student-athletes. As a result of his leadership, a record-high departmental GPA of 3.22 was attained for the spring 2020 semester.

With teaching interests including campaigns and elections and the American presidency, Collier frequently served as a media spokesperson for the university, providing election-night commentary and expert analysis of campaign results.

Collier was a prolific writer, authoring "Between the Branches: The White House Office of Legislative Affairs" and co-authoring "Lone Star Politics," a textbook on Texas politics in its fifth edition. Collier published articles in the Journal of Politics, White House Studies, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Public Choice and Social Science Quarterly.

**Donations to the
Dr. Ken Collier Legislative
Internship Program
can be made at sfasu.edu/collier.**

In Memoriam

Dr. Donald Wayne Alford '61 & '66 of Marshall, May 17
Patricia P. Allen '65 of Nacogdoches, Jan. 29
Eugene R. Barbin '56 & '70 of Nacogdoches, former SFA registrar, April 7
Regina G. Beasley '78 of Marshall, Jan. 1
Gail K. Beil '99 of Marshall, Jan. 8
Barbara A. Bogue '80 of Timpson, March 16
Kathleen Bone '68 of Dallas, Feb. 16
Ecomet Burley '90 of Pearland, Feb. 13
Gary Lynn Carpenter '74 of Tyler, March 7
Jane Chambers '82 of Nacogdoches, May 9
Rebecca A. Clem '63 of Tyler, Jan. 8
Tona Clevenger '75 & '78 of Nacogdoches, Jan. 27
Ricky Allen Close '77 of Fort Worth, Jan. 17
Sandra L. Coats '59 of Nacogdoches, Jan. 7
Judy L. Cockrell '69 of Carthage, May 5
Kerry J. Comeau '76 of Dallas, March 18
Renee S. Dillon '74 & '77 of Dickinson, Dec. 30
Margaret H. Duke '69 & '75 of Carthage, Jan. 14
Helen W. Durrett '58 of Carthage, Feb. 22
Christopher Duvall '05 of Richmond, Virginia, Feb. 22
Drummond Edge '48 & '53 of Temple, March 12
Dr. Margaret O. Forrest '75 of Nacogdoches, Feb. 10
Marilyn L. Foster '76 of Orange, March 14
Harold D. Garner '66 of Bryan, Jan. 17
Alice M. Hanks '81 of Princeton, May 18
George W. Harrison '87 of Lufkin, Feb. 19
Simon D. Hayes '69 of Henderson, March 11
Janice C. Heidbreder '01 of Jacksonville, March 28
Dr. Gary L. Henry '68 of Scottsdale, Arizona, March 14
Dr. J. David Holcomb '62 & '65 of Houston, Jan. 26
Carol Lee Hudson '74 of Lakeway, March 29
Mike Hudson '71 of Nacogdoches, Feb. 4
Gustave Jasper Huff Jr. '59 & '75 of Tyler, Dec. 27
Ramona M. Ingram '55 of El Campo, April 4
Christopher Jefferson '97 of Waxahachie, April 10
Joan Y. Johnson '53 & '59 of Nacogdoches, March 19
Jo M. Jones '84 of Jasper, Feb. 18
Dana Judson '81 & '85 of Pflugerville, Feb. 12
Jimmy R. Killion '55 of Kilgore, May 11
Raymon Lacy '75 of Tyler, Feb. 1
Dr. Tommie Charles Lee of Lufkin, former faculty member, March 30
Melvin L. Marshall '70 of Henderson, March 6
Jennifer Del McBride '72 of Fredericksburg, Jan. 15

Marty McDonald '63 & '70 of Henderson, Feb. 4
Paul Lee Miller '72 of Nacogdoches, Feb. 10
Dorothy C. Morgan '51 of Nacogdoches, April 4
Teann J. Nagelhout '94 of Fort Worth, Oct. 30
Rebecca J. Newton '75 of Longview, May 27
Harry P. Noble Jr. '61 of San Augustine, March 13
Odie Nutt '52 of Carthage, March 13
Dr. Peggy Owens '69 & '73 of Cypress, Jan. 9
Carl N. Peavy '65 of Garland, May 24
Johnny H. Peveto '71 of Orange, March 29
Kimbal S. Pierce '80 of Hamilton, April 18
John G. Pilette III '98 of Tyler, March 26
Donald Wayne Plum '70 of Queen City, Feb. 8
Burdett F. Pulliam Jr. '49 & '58 of Jasper, June 1
The Rev. Eldon L. Reed '45 of Orange, April 3
Ronald L. Sedtal '61 & '69 of Nederland, March 29
Jo E. Simon '78 of Longview, Jan. 22
Mona L. Skinner '48 of Lufkin, Jan. 8
Richard Slawson '65 & '72 of Jacksonville, March 3
Steven C. Smith '78 of Lufkin, Jan. 29
Joseph William Sory '69 of Henderson, Feb. 16
Nonabeth G. Taylor '59 & '64 of Houston, May 4
Jerry Ronald Thompson '63 of Benbrook, May 25
Joyce O. Tinkle '86 of Memphis, Tennessee, April 27
Elizabeth A. Vinson '68 of Lufkin, March 21
Helen Walker '70 of Nacogdoches, May 1
Virginia E. Wallace '83 of Diboll, Jan. 13
James Christian Walters '82 of Longview, March 25
Joseph D. Weber Jr. '78 of Alvin, Feb. 26
Georgeanne Wimberley '91 & '93 of Wichita Falls, former SFA staff member, March 17
Joe B. Woodland '63 of Longview, April 4
Guy A. Yarborough '85 of Nacogdoches, March 21



SFA students

Hunter Jackson of Wylie, June 6

Matthew B. Nelson of Skidmore, Feb. 17

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