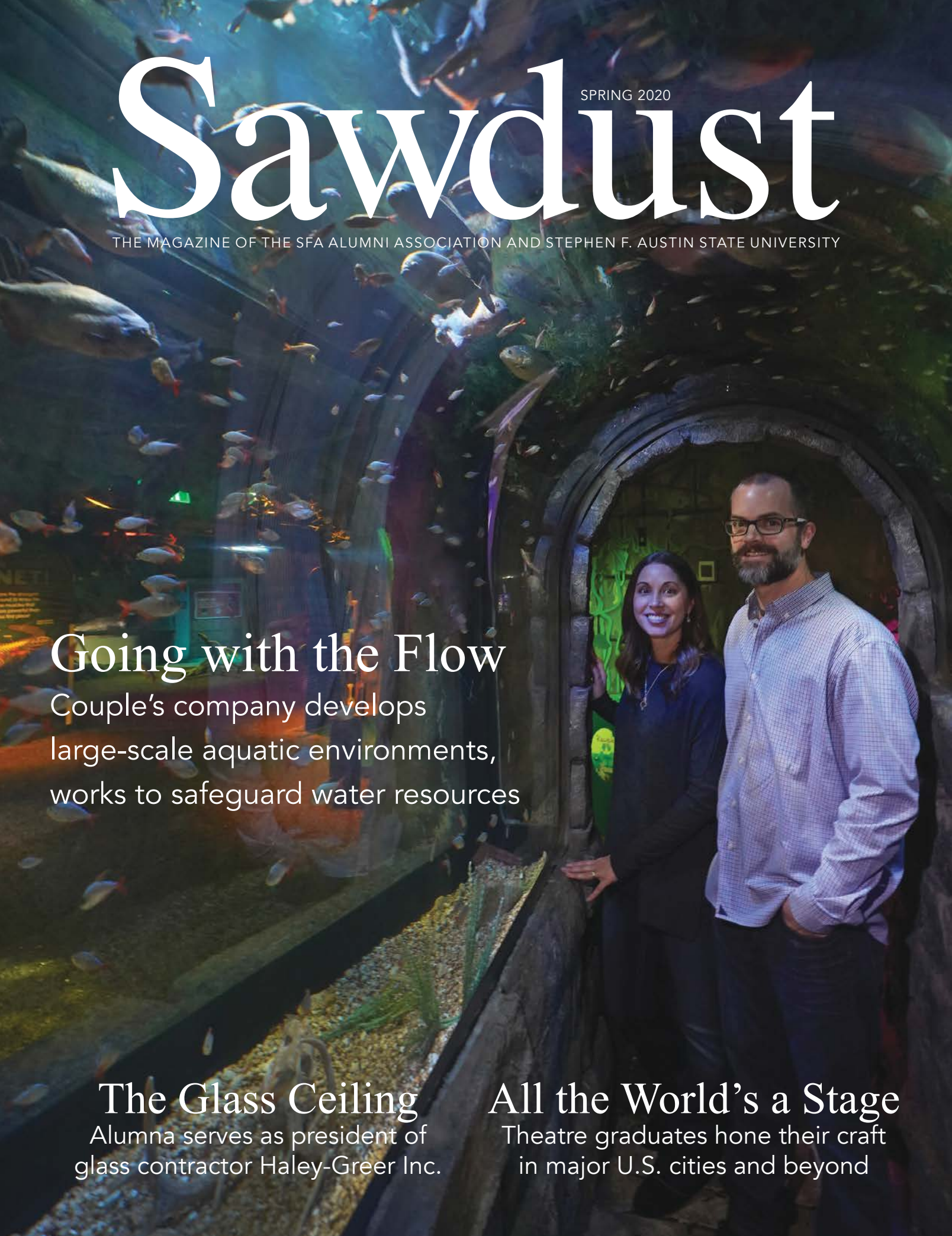




Sawdust

SPRING 2020

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

Going with the Flow

Couple's company develops large-scale aquatic environments, works to safeguard water resources

The Glass Ceiling

Alumna serves as president of glass contractor Haley-Greer Inc.

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President's Letter

"I look forward to April when, for the first time in SFA ROTC history, our Ranger Challenge Team will compete in the prestigious Sandhurst Military Skills competition hosted by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point."



AFTER EXPERIENCING

A phenomenal first fall semester as SFA president, I wondered if the spring semester would be able to compare. Highlights included the Lumberjack basketball

team's record-breaking win over Duke University, our football team bringing Chief Caddo home from Natchitoches and our Ladyjack volleyball team's second-consecutive Southland Conference championship. And as icing on the cake, we awarded 950 diplomas during December commencement ceremonies and honored generous donors at the 31st annual Gala. How could spring 2020 possibly measure up?

Amazingly, this spring semester is well on its way to living up to every expectation established last fall!

We welcomed Naomi Shihab Nye, the Young People's Poet Laureate of the United States, to campus in January. Ms. Nye, a Palestinian American who now lives in San Antonio, is the recipient of the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Book Critics Circle. She conducted professional development training for faculty members and led a writing workshop for participants in our Barrio Writers program.

We look forward to hosting Miss America, Camille Schrier, as the speaker for the Women in STEM luncheon April 7. With degrees in biochemistry and systems biology, Ms. Schrier is pursuing a doctoral degree in pharmacy at Virginia Commonwealth University. We also will welcome Kendra Scott — fashion designer, CEO and philanthropist — as our Archie McDonald Speaker Series guest April 20. We hope you will join us for one or both of these events, if your schedule allows.

The Board of Regents recognized SFA supporters in January by naming campus facilities in their honor. At Johnson Coliseum, the new Loddie Naymola Basketball Performance Center honors a former Lumberjack basketball player and 1978 finance alumnus. The 42,000-square-foot addition will house offices, locker rooms, weight and training rooms, and practice courts for our

basketball teams.

Inside the center, the Bob Sitton Office for the Men's Head Basketball Coach honors the 1960 alumnus who served as director of the SFA Alumni Association from 1972 through 1998. This well-deserved honor for Mr. Sitton was made possible by Ron Kesterson '76. The center's weight room will be known as the Hank and Suzy Crouse Weight Room. The Crouses are Nacogdoches residents, basketball fans and avid SFA supporters.

The physics resource room in the Cole STEM Building has been named in honor of Dr. Harry Downing, a popular physics professor who joined the faculty in 1975 and has been honored with a variety of teaching excellence awards during his tenure. SFA is blessed to have Dr. Downing on the faculty.

I look forward to April when, for the first time in SFA ROTC history, our Ranger Challenge Team will compete in the prestigious Sandhurst Military Skills competition hosted by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. SFA ROTC is one of 16 teams — and the only team from Texas — competing against institutions such as Pennsylvania State University, Brigham Young University, and teams from Canada, Australia and Colombia. I am excited to see the results of their efforts.

With their successes, this tough Ranger team is helping spread the word far and wide about the SFA experience, and SFA is routinely noticed by organizations that rank higher education entities. For example, Intelligent.com recently ranked our online master's degree in music education as "Best in the South" and the human development and family studies program in the top 10 best online master's programs in the U.S. Additionally, SFA was awarded membership in Colleges of Distinction as a result of high-impact practices and student-centered programs. We hope you will join us in spreading the good news of SFA. ★

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Dr. Scott Gordon
President
Stephen F. Austin State University



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In This Issue

Features

- 4 THE GLASS CEILING**
Alumna serves as president of glass contractor Haley-Greer Inc., one of the largest female-owned companies in North Texas
- 10 GOING WITH THE FLOW**
Couple's company develops large-scale aquatic environments, works to safeguard water resources
- 14 RAISING THE BAR**
Business alumna achieves success in the restaurant industry
- 18 SWOOPS AND STROKES**
Calligraphy artist owns flourishing business, works with companies like Cartier, Estée Lauder, Kendra Scott
- 24 FOR THE BIRDS**
Biology major named Inventor of the Year
- 34 ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE**
Theatre graduates hone their craft in major U.S. cities and beyond

Campus Life

- 15 TO FINISH** 9
SFA sharpens focus on student success
- LUMBERJACK²** 28
Get your graduate degree without leaving home
- TREASURE SEEKERS** 40
East Texas Research Center preserves history

Alumni News

- Alumni Association 33
President's Letter
- Mr. and Miss SFA 38

In Every Issue

- VISTA VIEWPOINT 8
- JACKS OF ALL TRADES 22
- WORK SPACE 23
- ADVISING 101 27
- ATHLETICS NEWS 30
- SCHOLARSHIPS 31
- ALUMNI CALENDAR 39
- IN MEMORIAM 43
- CLASS NOTES 46

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ON THE COVER:

Beau and Holly Dempsey founded an aquatic exhibit and life support systems company, Longhorn Organics, which launched 11 years ago and now includes 25 employees. They have constructed exhibits for locations that include Sea World San Antonio, the St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station, the Fort Worth Zoo and the Sea Life Grapevine aquarium, pictured here. *Photo by Louis DeLuca '78*

Sawdust is published three times a year by Stephen F. Austin State University and the SFA Alumni Association. Full subscriptions are included in SFA Alumni Association memberships. SFA alumni and friends receive complimentary issues twice a year.



THE GLASS CEILING

Alumna serves as president of curtain wall and specialty glass contractor Haley-Greer Inc., one of the largest female-owned companies in North Texas

STORY BY DR. SHIRLEY LUNA '85, '06 & '14 / PHOTOS BY HARDY MEREDITH '81

LETITIA HALEY BARKER '77 had always been interested in chemistry and wanted to work in crime scene investigations, so she earned a degree in criminal justice at SFA. After graduation, life took her in a different direction.

“Your life finds you; you just have to be open to it,” she said of her rise as the leader of one of the largest female-owned companies in North Texas. ➔



The iconic red glass covering the Winspear Opera House in the heart of Dallas' Arts District was a challenging project completed by Haley-Greer. An elaborate jigsaw puzzle was created with 9-foot by 4-foot pieces of laminated glass — each weighing more than 300 pounds. Quality control was crucial to the success of the project to help ensure color-matching and prevent impurities in the pieces of bent glass. The Dallas chapter of the American Institute of Architects named Haley-Greer the 2009 Artisan/Craftsman of the Year for its work on the building.



Tish Barker joined Haley-Greer, the company her father, Don Haley, co-founded in 1979. Barker purchased the majority of the company in 2015, but her dad, at age 89, still comes to work several mornings each week.

LEADERSHIP

During her childhood, leadership might not have seemed to be in the cards for young Barker, also known as “Tish.”

“My parents sent me to a private school because in large group settings, I just wouldn’t talk to anyone,” Barker said. “I have always credited SFA with getting me out of that. College is a time when you can become your own person but in a safer environment; at least that is what it was for me.”

After she left the “safe” confines of SFA, one of Barker’s first jobs was with an architectural firm in Florida, where she learned how to use word processors (which were new at the time) and began creating and editing the firm’s job specifications. She later accepted a human resources compensation position that she held for 13 years. She did not realize it at the time, but these experiences were helping her develop skills that would lead to her successful entrance into her father’s company in 1995.

“I was in charge of compensation for 2,000 people — I determined the budgets, starting salaries for new hires and all raises,” she explained. “The numbers made sense to me. It was very analytical work, and it was a formula-based process that was right up my alley.”

In both these positions, she routinely found herself in environments that were predominately male.

“At least 90% of the people I worked with at that time were male,” Barker recalled. “My dad told me not to worry about being the only woman in the room. He said once people realize you know your stuff, they will keep calling on you. You just have to be prepared.”

That advice was vital when Barker returned to Dallas to work as the chief financial officer at Haley-Greer, a company her father, Don Haley, co-founded in 1979. The company installs high-performance window-wall and curtain-wall systems on major commercial projects.

With projects ranging from luxury residential construction to commercial high rises for entities that include Children’s Medical Center, the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas, the 20-story Pier 1 headquarters in Fort Worth and the Frost Bank Tower in Austin, it did not take long for Barker to delve deeply into the business. A short time later, the company won the bid for a project in a neighboring state and, in order to perform the work, it was necessary to obtain a license from that state. This meant someone had to take and pass the state’s business administration exam and a glazing exam.

“When my dad said he thought I should go take the exams, I thought, ‘yeah, right,’” she said. “But you really don’t know how much you know until you test yourself in some way. I got the books, and my dad and I went over a few things about different types of windows and caulking. I still doubted myself, but I did very well on the exam. It gave me a lot of confidence and also helped me turn the corner with some of the employees who might have doubted that I deserved to be in the position I was in.”

Eight years later, Barker’s father made the decision to become the company’s CEO and promoted her to company president in 2003. In 2015, Barker purchased the majority of the company, but her dad, at age 89, still comes to work several mornings each week.

“This wasn’t his plan when I started here — he just needed some administrative help, and I was someone he knew he could trust,” Barker explained. “I didn’t know if he would really be able to turn it over to me entirely, because the company is so much a part of him. But he has really done a great job of directing requests to me and telling people, ‘You are going to have to ask Tish about that.’”

Haley-Greer sales personnel and project managers choose jobs that play to the company’s strengths. They have worked on iconic buildings throughout the state, including the Nasher Sculpture Center, the

Winspear Opera House and the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. AT&T Stadium, home of the Dallas Cowboys, may be the company's highest-profile project.

"It's one of the most exciting projects we've done," Barker said. "It has one of the largest inverted-slope glazed-curtain walls in the world, and the end-zone doors were the largest operable glass doors ever produced."

Currently on deck is Globe Life Field, the new home of the Texas Rangers, expected to open this spring. It will feature a 5.5-acre retractable roof.

"You've got to be there during the design phase," Barker said. "The angles have to be very precise so the glass stays in. Sometimes it takes several attempts to bring designs to life."

Haley-Greer is known for its ability to complete complex building projects. Barker attributes the company's success to her employees and their collaboration with creative customers and innovative suppliers.

"We combine the expertise of multiple engineering groups and specialized firms and, as partners, we complete amazing projects," she said. "Simple buildings really aren't our forte, but contractors look to us for the difficult things, because they know we'll do everything that's required to get it done."

In addition to constructing the facilities, the company applies components, such as sealants, to ensure all the building materials, whether stone, metal or glass, are properly preserved, residue resistant and able to withstand the wide temperature swings throughout Texas' blistering summers and frigid winters.

"We don't underbid jobs," Barker said. "We have highly-skilled craftsmen and long-time employees, and we are not going to jeopardize them by taking work that isn't in the best interest of the company. It's very much a family here, and we take care of one another."

SERVING OTHERS

Haley-Greer has been ranked the 13th largest female-owned company in North Texas by the Dallas Business Journal, but Barker's leadership does not stop within the confines of the company's walls. She was elected president of the American Subcontractors Association in 2015 and held that position during the group's 50th anniversary.

Barker had previously held a variety of chapter, regional and national positions with ASA and still serves on the finance committee for the national association.

ETHICS AWARDS

Haley-Greer was one of 14 subcontractors in the nation honored by the ASA in March 2019 for excellence in ethics. The association requires confidential recommendations from businesses as part of the award process, which is based on commitment to quality construction and safe, healthy work environments.

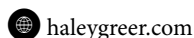
"No matter what happens, we believe in doing what is right, even when it's not the easiest way out," Barker said. "If a mistake is made, we fix it. We don't argue about who is at fault, and that's the reason people come back to us. The trust is there, and that's important."

The ethics award is just one of more than a dozen accolades the company has received in the past decade, including the 2018 National Excellence in Construction Pyramid Award from Associated Builders and Contractors for its work on the Wildwood Corporate Centre II in The Woodlands.

While Barker readily admits that the glass, glazing and curtain-wall business requires a great deal of knowledge and experience, she also believes that communication is key to the company's success. Being a family-based company has contributed, as well.

"We don't operate like a big corporation," Barker said. "Every employee is involved in our company's success. My father and I both strongly believe in treating our employees, clients, suppliers and subcontractors with respect, honesty and integrity. It is a part of our company values and culture, and it definitely affects everything we do." ★

HALEY-GREER



AT&T Stadium, home of the Dallas Cowboys, includes 320,000 square feet of glass, including a 30-foot-tall clerestory glass wall that is 900 feet wide between the upper seating and the roof's edge. A frame designed by Haley-Greer supports more than 1 million pounds of glass.



Vista Viewpoint / By student-athlete Nathan Bain

The Perfect Storm

DURING THE PAST seven months, I have experienced four life-changing events: 1) Hurricane Dorian striking my home in Freeport, Bahamas, 2) the game-winning basket against No. 1 Duke University, 3) an incredible GoFundMe account that raised more than \$150,000 and 4) the rebuilding of the church and school in my home country.

1) Hurricane Dorian, the most intense storm on record to strike the Bahamas, made landfall Sept. 1. It is regarded as the worst natural disaster in my country's history — a Category 5 storm with wind gusts clocked at more than 200 mph. Storm surge of up to 23 feet swept away many buildings and destroyed a large part of the area, including the school in Freeport where approximately 600 children attend and the church where my father serves as preacher. Although I've been living in the United States since 2012, the Bahamas will always be my home. It's where my roots run deep, where my family resides and where my history began. After the storm, I wanted to go home to help my family. We lost our home and almost everything else, but my parents insisted I stay and finish my senior year. That's when I decided I was going to dedicate this basketball season to the Bahamas and raising awareness about what was happening there. However, I had no idea what God had in store to make that awareness effort a reality.

2) The Duke University Blue Devils were a 28-point favorite as we took the court Tuesday, Nov. 26, in Raleigh, North Carolina. With Thanksgiving just a day away and many people watching the game on national television and through live video feeds, we were determined to make SFA proud. None of us realized just how unbelievable that game was going to be. With about 10 seconds left in overtime and the score tied at 83, my teammate, forward Gavin Kensmil, scrambled for the ball. He came up with it and made an outlet pass to me. I caught it and ran toward the basket, just trying to keep the ball secure. I glanced up and saw the clock — 3 seconds remaining. As I approached the basket and started to make the layup, I prayed it would hit the rim. It did and fell into the basket before the buzzer. The rest is history. I have never felt such exhilaration. Our team and coaches were ecstatic. The victory celebration began, and during the next several days, I was interviewed by many national television outlets, which helped bring attention to the devastation in the Bahamas and the needs of the people who live there.

3) Although the GoFundMe account to help rebuild the school and church had been established in early fall, it had only raised about \$2,000. Following the Duke victory, it started to dramatically increase. During the next few days, it climbed from \$30,000 to \$50,000 to \$100,000 — eventually topping out at more than \$150,000!

4) I never expected the donation amount to end up where it did, and thanks to everyone who donated, we have been able to make significant progress toward rebuilding the church and school. The church is almost completely finished, and the majority of repairs have been made to the school. The kids are now back in class, and worship services are able to continue. God has been so good.

There is no way I can express my gratitude to everyone who donated. The story that started so tragically has progressed to one of hope,



"The story that started so tragically has progressed to one of hope, kindness, generosity and love."

NATHAN BAIN

Stephen F. Austin State University Lumberjacks Forward

kindness, generosity and love. When I think back upon the past several months, I can't help but consider how all of this came together — the horrible hurricane that left so much devastation, the toss of a basketball to me to make the game-winning basket with a fraction of a second left in a game against the No. 1 team in the nation, and people from all over the world hearing my story and so graciously giving to help those they didn't know rebuild their lives. None of this happened by accident. The fact that all this occurred just a day before Thanksgiving also was not by chance. Sometimes, we don't understand why things happen. It's easy to despair. But, if we have hope and look for the silver lining — even in the worst weather — we may find it was a perfect storm after all. ★



15 TO FINISH

SFA sharpens focus on student success

STUDENT SUCCESS IS the top priority at SFA, and a number of new initiatives are aimed specifically at reducing student debt and increasing the opportunity for timely degree completion.

A new “15 to Finish” initiative is designed to boost on-time completion rates and provides students with important information about academic credit accumulation, empowering them to make better-informed decisions about their educational journey.

“While not all students are able to take 15 credits per semester, providing information about what it takes to graduate on time helps ensure students are making informed decisions about course loads, their time to degree completion and the costs associated with their academic pathway,” said Dr. Scott Gordon, SFA president.

Undergraduate students can now participate in a flat-rate tuition and fee plan, allowing them to take up to 21 credit hours per semester at the cost of 12 hours with no additional charge. Tuition and fee rates are variable for students who enroll in one to 11 semester credit hours but are flat beginning at 12 semester credit hours.

“By incentivizing students to take additional semester credit hours, the flat-rate plan will help lower student debt levels, decrease the time to graduation and provide greater academic flexibility,” said Dr. Danny Gallant, vice president for finance and administration. “It will create more cost transparency for students and families and simplify the billing process.”

Additionally, when students enter SFA, they have access to a guaranteed price plan that freezes tuition and mandatory fee costs for a period of four years.

“Timely degree completion reduces the cost of a four-year degree and

allows students to begin their careers and capitalize on their lifetime earning potential,” Gordon said. “We are looking at every possible option to make college more accessible and affordable for our students, including a variety of course delivery modes that will allow us to most effectively meet students where they are.”

A flat tuition charge of \$100 per semester for undergraduate students and \$75 per semester for graduate students will replace all course and lab fees, simplifying the billing process and providing greater academic course delivery flexibility.

“This allows students and their families to better calculate what their expenses will be,” Gallant said.

Scarleth Lopez, a senior psychology major from Dayton and president of SFA’s Student Government Association, believes SFA students will appreciate these initiatives.

“I believe this will be really beneficial, especially for first-generation students,” Lopez said. “It will reduce the uncertainty that they may feel about college and incentivize them to take course loads that allow them to reach their goals in a timely manner.”

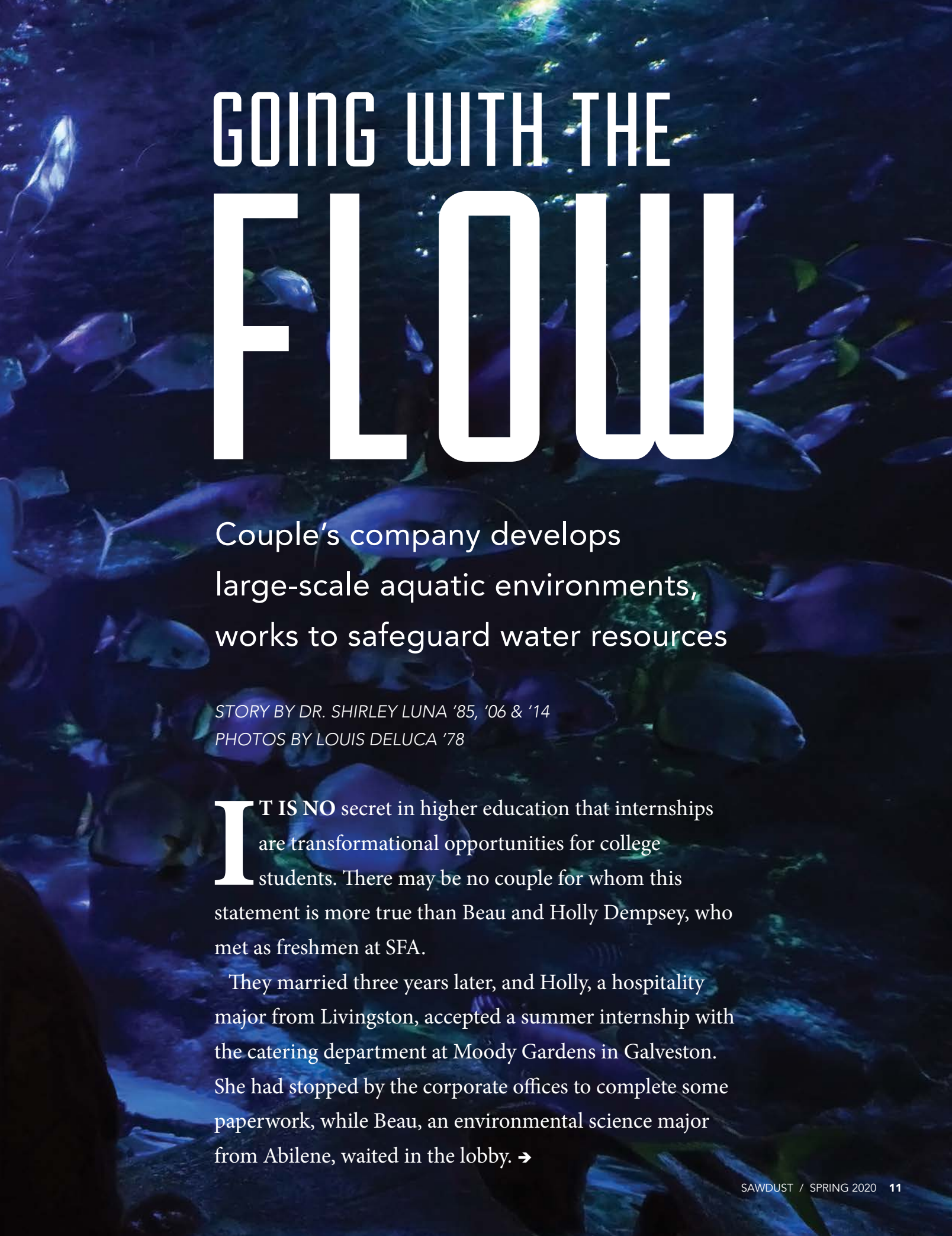
Two new housing incentives — a Spring Transfer Housing Allowance and a Summer Student Housing Rebate — are designed to help students graduate sooner and take on less debt.

More than 20 current SFA students already are taking advantage of the Spring Transfer Housing Allowance, which can be applied during the initial spring semester either to completely offset the cost of a lower-priced residence hall or significantly reduce the cost of a more expensive facility. To qualify for the one-time allowance, students must be transferring at least 45 credit hours to SFA with at least a 2.5 GPA and enroll for 15 or more spring hours. This year’s Spring Transfer Housing Allowance totaled \$2,034, which is equal to the current cost of living in one of the three lowest-priced residence halls.

The Summer Student Housing Rebate will allow students who reside on campus during the spring semester and complete at least nine hours across all summer terms, including Maymester, to have the cost of their summer housing rebated if they continue their residency through the fall. The rebate, equal to the amount paid for summer housing, will be applied to the fall semester bill.

These new programs can help significantly lower the amount of debt students take with them after graduation, not only by reducing overall housing costs but also by shortening the time it takes to complete a degree, according to Dr. Steve Westbrook, vice president for university affairs. ★





GOING WITH THE FLOW

Couple's company develops
large-scale aquatic environments,
works to safeguard water resources

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

PHOTOS BY LOUIS DELUCA '78

IT IS NO secret in higher education that internships are transformational opportunities for college students. There may be no couple for whom this statement is more true than Beau and Holly Dempsey, who met as freshmen at SFA.

They married three years later, and Holly, a hospitality major from Livingston, accepted a summer internship with the catering department at Moody Gardens in Galveston. She had stopped by the corporate offices to complete some paperwork, while Beau, an environmental science major from Abilene, waited in the lobby. ➔



"We can pull up the plans on our cellphones or a tablet at any time, and we use virtual reality goggles so everyone can visualize what we are building. There's no more pulling strings or tape measures. We laid 10,000 feet of linear pipe at the St. Louis Aquarium and were accurate within 4 millimeters when we were finished."

Beau Dempsey



"The aquarium was about to be constructed, and the director just happened to be in the lobby," Beau recalled. "We struck up a conversation, and I mentioned that I worked in SFA's soil laboratory and knew how to do the water sampling tests he would be needing. I had intended to wait tables or mow yards all summer, but he hired me pretty much on the spot as a lab tech."

While this chance meeting seems serendipitous, things had not always flowed so smoothly for the couple, whose first encounter involved a tiff regarding the rightful occupancy of a chair.

"He skipped the first week of class," Holly immediately asserted.

"Well, I was told there really wasn't any point in going the first day or two," Beau defended. "So, when I showed up the next week, I just picked a seat. A few minutes later, Holly walked in and said I was in her chair."

With the seating issue resolved (Beau moved one seat over), the two became friends with similar interests in the sciences and a matching propensity for hard work.

"We worked so many part-time jobs," Holly said. "I tutored physics and waited tables. He worked on campus and at a plant nursery in Nacogdoches — whatever we could do to piece together a living."

As a result of the summer internship in Galveston, Beau learned the basics of closed aquatic systems. He also realized aquariums might provide the only setting where his and Holly's professional worlds — environmental science and hospitality — would overlap.

When summer ended, the couple returned to SFA, completed their senior year and graduated in 2000. They soon received a call from their former Moody Gardens co-workers with a job offer on their next project, the Oklahoma Aquarium in Jenks.

"It was an 83,000-square-foot aquarium that housed the largest bull sharks in captivity," Beau said. "We had

to construct tanks to transport the sharks safely across the country. It hadn't been attempted before, and we were able to do it with a 100% survival rate."

The couple spent the next nine years following similar startup projects across the nation, developing specialized talents that combined construction knowledge with familiarity of the life support equipment required in aquatic environments.

"We moved 15 times during those years, managing building projects," Holly said. "We quickly realized that we loved the frantic 'get-it-open' pace."

Beau frequently served as lab director and curator of fish for the projects, managing the equipment that supported aquatic life, while Holly directed the startup of visitor services — creating programs that generated revenue, such as memberships, special events and catering.

"It was funny that Holly's department frequently made more money than the reason the aquarium was there to begin with," Beau said. "The ticket sales were the least revenue-generating activity. She had a department of three or four people, and I had 30, but her group made much more money."

Eventually, the nomadic lifestyle lost its allure, and with their daughter about to start school, the Dempseys decided to settle down and establish a company of their own. They wanted the new company name to reflect their Texas roots, hence the name Longhorn Organics. In the past 11 years, the Forney-based operation has expanded to a 25-employee business.

The Dempseys constructed a sea turtle rescue exhibit at Sea World San Antonio — Sea World's first major exhibit in more than 30 years and the first use of man-made wetlands.

"It is a 100%-enclosed exhibit," Beau said. "They don't discharge water, so there's no environmental footprint. They rehabilitate injured sea turtles and provide a home for turtles that can't be released because they've been injured in some way."



Longhorn's largest project is the 120,000-square-foot St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station, which recently opened.

"It was the largest building in the world when it was built in 1891, and before this project, it had been empty for a long time," Beau said. "One wall of the filtration room is the original granite footing of the building — installed more than 100 years ago."

The company also is working on Elephant Springs, the second phase of a project for the Fort Worth Zoo, which will triple the size of the habitat and involve multiple pools for the elephant herd.

While the core of their business is water filtration and water infrastructure projects for zoos, aquariums and theme parks, Beau has participated in patent research for various products, including an ammonia-removal product sold by major retailers for home-aquarium use. There are only a few dedicated life support system companies in the U.S., and the Dempseys have differentiated Longhorn Organics through their investment in technology.

"We build 100% of our projects in virtual reality before we begin construction," Holly said. "A company sends us details of what they would like to build, and we create a fabrication model based on what is actually constructible. Once that's approved, we build as much of the project as possible here in chunks that we call spools. Each spool is individually tagged with GPS coordinates on a three-way axis."

The portion of the work completed at the plant in Forney reduces the company's on-site construction time by approximately 50%. At the construction site, there are no large pages of blueprints — the assembly process is completely paperless.

"We can pull up the plans on our cellphones or a tablet at any time, and we use virtual reality goggles so everyone can visualize what we are building," Beau said. "There's no more pulling strings or tape measures. We laid 10,000 feet of linear pipe at the St. Louis Aquarium and were accurate within 4 millimeters when we were finished."

While Beau and Holly enjoy working in the theme-park environment, they hear a higher calling — one they feel is more imperative than the aquatic entertainment opportunities they enjoy making available to their daughter and the public at large.

"The same filtration we use to sustain aquatic life can be used to protect our water resources and safeguard the environment," Beau said. "We have partnerships with the aquafeed industry, the oil and gas industry, and the food-manufacturing industry. These industry partners have all acknowledged wastewater is a limiting factor in future growth and production. However, current regulation makes paying fines and penalties a cheaper option than upgrading and investing in water treatment technologies. I'm a free-market guy, but in this case, free market is polluting a natural resource. When regulation catches up, we'll be ready to return that 'wasted water' back to them for reuse."

While freshwater is contaminated by oil and gas production and then reinserted into the ground in disposal wells, the U.S. food industry similarly contaminates water in the natural course of its business but on a much larger scale. It is the Dempseys' hope that, rather than discarding the contaminated water, business and industry will one day clean and reuse the water in a closed system, similar to the process used in the turtle habitat at Sea World.

"Food production consumes 17 times more water than the oil and gas industry," Beau explained. "It takes four gallons of water to process one chicken and 500 gallons to process a cow. We have the research to prove that these proteins and lipids can be removed."

In addition to the basic biological need for water, humans have a visceral response to water, Holly said, pointing to research that shows a reduction in blood pressure and stress when individuals visit bodies of water, such as lakes, pools and aquariums. The Dempseys said they are happy to work toward ensuring the availability of water for either purpose. ★

Beau and Holly Dempsey, owners of aquatic life support systems company Longhorn Organics, visit an exhibit they created at the Sea Life Grapevine aquarium. The Dempseys have constructed exhibits for clients that include Sea World San Antonio and the St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station.



LONGHORN ORGANICS

 @longhornorganics

 longhornorganics.com



RAISING THE —BAR—

Business alumna
achieves success in
the restaurant industry

STORY BY JO GILMORE
PHOTOS BY HARDY MEREDITH '81

WHEN MICHELLE BYTHEWOOD '89 arrived on campus for her freshman year, she was a bit shy. But before she graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration, she had gained the confidence and determination to take smart risks and conquer some “firsts” in restaurant marketing that would benefit her future employers.

Thirty years later, she's president of Salata, a custom salad bar company founded in Bythewood's hometown of Houston in 2005. It now has more than 90 nationwide locations. She also was recognized as one of Houston's Top 30 Most Influential Women of 2019.

Bythewood is celebrating another important “30” this year — her 30 years of marriage to Richard Bythewood '89, whom she met at SFA.

PREPARATION IN THE PINEYWOODS

As a high school senior touring Texas colleges, Bythewood discovered that, “SFA was the perfect choice for me.”

The campus wasn't too big, Nacogdoches was the right distance from Houston for weekend trips back home, and “the pineywoods were beautiful.”

Several “excellent endorsements” of the Rusche College of Business at SFA sealed her decision, and Bythewood began working toward her successful marketing career. But first, she had a few skills to develop.

During her sophomore year, she joined the Delta Zeta sorority. “Going through rush gave me the confidence to interact with people from different walks of life,” she said.

Serving as treasurer of her pledge class and a Sigma Chi Little Sigma also chipped away at her shyness, but being elected Delta Zeta's social director challenged her at an even greater level. “When I was nominated, I thought there was no way I could lead an entire chapter in events, but that anxiety was short-lived, and I had a blast stepping up to the role.”

Bythewood's new-found confidence was tested in her first public speaking class at SFA when she had to deliver a humorous speech. “I could hardly give the speech, much less one that was funny,” she said. But, to her surprise, she made her classmates laugh.

“I was so proud that I actually survived,” Bythewood said. “Gaining confidence in front of a group and knowing how to command a room is extremely valuable. Almost every job requires it at some point, and it just makes you a better communicator.”

Bythewood also said the real-world applications in her business policy class helped prepare her for her career. “We had to create numerous case studies on business problem-solving in a team setting and present our strategies to the class.”

But her business law course gave her the biggest positive lesson in risk taking. After meeting a guy named Rich on the first day of class in 1987, Bythewood asked him to dance at a local club called Studio 224. Nearly two years of dating later, he proposed to Bythewood on her graduation day in front of the McGee Business Building with an engagement ring he purchased from a local retailer. They celebrated their 30th anniversary in February.

“Rich is absolutely my biggest fan,” Bythewood said. “He's the first one to pump me up when I need the encouragement. He's also the first one to keep me grounded if I'm getting in my own way. I am blessed with a loving and supportive husband, and I'm thankful that SFA brought us together.” ➔



DRESSINGS

MADE EVERYDAY AT THE
SALATA DRESSINGS KITCHEN
IN HOUSTON TEXAS

FRESH HERBS | CREATIVELY CURATED SPICES | SAL LO

MIX 2 FOR A SALAD PERFECTLY

THE



OF THE

SALAD

“I’M IN MY
ROLE TODAY
BECAUSE
WHEN MY
BOSS ASKED
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MY FIRST
ANNIVERSARY
IN THE
POSITION.”

MICHELLE
BYTHEWOOD



Michelle Bythewood, president of the custom salad bar company Salata, shows off its newly renovated location on Westheimer Road in Houston. Bythewood previously served as the company’s chief marketing officer, helping to take its local success to the national level. She was promoted to president after only 18 months.

FUNNY NAME. SERIOUS CAREER STEP.

When she graduated, Bythewood was determined to get a “true marketing job” instead of a sales job.

“I was passionate about brand marketing and finding a company in a high-growth mode where I could be involved in the life cycle of a product or brand strategy,” she said.

An employment ad in the Houston Chronicle for a local field marketing manager position led her to Schlotzsky’s and her first “first.”

“I was the first and only field marketing person in the company, so if I didn’t drive sales and one of my 12 company-owned restaurants failed, it would be my fault,” Bythewood said.

Despite this pressure (or because of it), she got hooked on the restaurant industry. “It’s dynamic and challenging, and there’s never a dull moment,” Bythewood said.

Remember that clever Schlotzsky’s slogan, “We start baking our bunz before you even put your pants on”? Bythewood helped with that and several other slogans during her 22 years of marketing for the restaurant. Promoting a Texas brand with a cult following taught her self-discipline and drive even when working from a home office. It also taught her how to further appreciate and respect others.

“When you work with franchisees, you get a chance to work with passionate individuals and families that have poured their life savings into owning their own business,” Bythewood said. “Their success is your success, and sharing it is quite rewarding. I’m still great friends with many of my Schlotzsky’s family members.”

Her dedication was beneficial in 2004 when Schlotzsky’s filed for voluntary Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, which led to new management. The marketing department of 13 people was cut to just Bythewood and an administrative assistant. She was told her job was safe because of the relationships she had developed in the field with Schlotzsky’s franchisees.

“All the hours I spent on the road helping people grow their businesses paid off,” she said. “I was then tasked to take on basically every role in the department overnight.” Bythewood served as vice president, brand manager and field manager.

“While it was a tough time, I wouldn’t trade the experience for anything,” she said. “Being thrown into a situation like that makes you take charge and get things done.”

It also led to some nonmarketing opportunities outside Bythewood’s comfort zone that helped her grow. She was asked to manage Schlotzsky’s re-image program for 450 restaurants, which required her to serve as a general contractor for two years. She hired a brand design and development team to completely overhaul the company’s logo and all Schlotzsky’s interior and exterior design elements and materials, while being careful to avoid compromising the roots of a 40-year-old brand.

This effort worked. System sales increased by double digits because of the remodeled locations.

THE MAKING OF A CORPORATE PRESIDENT

After two decades at Schlitzsky's and three years in marketing leadership at Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, Bythewood served as vice president of brand at CiCis Pizza. Then she decided to start her own business, Field Marketing Focus.

"I felt a great need to help multiple brands grow," she said.

Once she conquered the logistics of starting a business, she began building connections and proactively seeking opportunities.

"I was very fortunate that I never really had to cold call," Bythewood said. "I started doing small projects for a few brands, and the next door opened through another connection."

The next door belonged to Salata. At Field Marketing Focus, Bythewood consulted with Salata's marketing department, worked on the brand, and conducted research and field work. After a year of consulting, she encountered another "first" — she was asked to join the company as its first full-time chief marketing officer.

"This was a big deal for the brand," she said. "Salata had never hired a chief-level employee before I came on board."

As Salata's first CMO, Bythewood helped take its local success story to the national level. She also set a goal for herself to become president of the company. She accomplished that goal in only 18 months.

"I'm in my role today because when my boss asked me at my annual review what I wanted to do next, I said, 'Run the company.' Six months later, I took on the role of president, and I just celebrated my first anniversary in the position."

With help from her Salata family, Bythewood has made big changes at the company, including overhauling its entire technology package.

"I've surrounded myself with a dynamic team that shares my passion to help me accomplish this," Bythewood said. "I couldn't do it without their commitment and support, and the support of the founders who trust me to evolve their original vision."

A MENTOR TO MARKETERS

Bythewood is excited about SFA's restaurant business ventures: the Culinary Café and Lumberjack Express mobile food lab. Lumberjack Express marked its first year of service on the SFA campus in February.

"The food lab and Culinary Café are both excellent ideas to provide creative outlets for students," she said.

When she's not running Salata, Bythewood enjoys mentoring marketers in the restaurant business. She offered some advice for the hospitality administration and food, nutrition and dietetics students who are learning the restaurant business through their work on Lumberjack Express.

"The food truck is a mobile billboard, so obviously the vehicle alone is valuable," she said. "People want to identify with a brand, so finding a way to do something unique that makes a difference in your community and gets the word out is key."

Taking the Lumberjack Express to an office building and offering to cater lunch for a donation or putting a dollar of every meal sold toward a scholarship for students in need can generate word-of-mouth marketing, Bythewood said.

She's also considering offering the Lumberjack Express some healthy competition. "A Salata location in the student center would be a great choice for college students to eat healthy. I'll work on that!" ★

SALATA

f @SalataSalads

salata.com



Swoop and Strokes

Calligraphy artist owns flourishing business, works with companies like Cartier, Estée Lauder, Kendra Scott

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD '10 / PHOTOS BY HARDY MEREDITH '81

K

RISTARA LYNCH SCHNIPPERT '08 enjoys a good challenge.

Coated in well-worn chalkboard paint, the very walls of her high-ceiling Houston calligraphy studio invite creative risk.

Mementos of all the artistic challenges she's willingly taken on dangle from metal wiring running the length of her entry hallway wall. Vibrant floral patterns surrounding delicate pink lettering invite the reader to so-and-so's wedding. Bold, golden flourishes announce the birth of a new family member. A Christmas card stamped with the prestigious Cartier logo wishes recipients a happy holiday season.

Schnippert has rarely uttered the word "no" since starting her calligraphy business nearly six years ago, and that willingness has allowed her to make quite a name for herself. A quick review of past clients might leave anyone reeling — Jimmy Choo, Kendra Scott, David Yurman, Saks Fifth Avenue, Estée Lauder, Ray-Ban, West Elm, lululemon. The list goes on.



That fearlessness in the face of the unfamiliar has led Schnippert to work in all manner of mediums — chalkboards, gigantic room-size mirrors, perfume bottles and Stella Artois chalices.

“I really enjoy unconventional projects, like the challenge of writing on glassware. I like doing leather journals because they’re really smooth and buttery,” Schnippert said. “I think my willingness to say ‘yes,’ or at least ‘I’ll try,’ is part of what’s helped me grow as a business. I’ve known people who are too scared to say ‘yes’ because they’ve never done that type of project before. But I’m like ‘Oh, I’ve never done it before. I’ll figure it out.’”

THE TURNING POINT

Kristara Calligraphy began in fits and starts.

The very first time Schnippert put nib to paper was in middle school when she took up the artistic trade as a hobby.

“I found a book at my grandma’s house and just fell in love with how beautiful it was,” she said. “But back then, there weren’t Instagram pages or YouTube videos to watch. There were no online resources or classes, so I figured things out through trial and error. Because I’m self-taught, I’ve made almost every kind of mistake I could possibly make and learned from each.”

Owning a business was not originally one of Schnippert’s life

goals. After graduating from McKinney North High School, she moved from the big city to East Texas to attend SFA, where she studied mass communication and art.

“A lot of people don’t know exactly what they want to do in high school, but I always knew I wanted to be a copywriter and write ads,” she said.

The Monday after graduating from SFA, Schnippert began her first post-grad job at the Houston-based ad agency Rehak Creative Services. Her clients included huge corporations, like Halliburton and HP.

Aware of Schnippert’s calligraphy talents, however, friends and family began asking for various smaller projects — a wedding chalkboard here or addressed envelopes there. In true form, she continued to say “yes” and even began charging for certain projects. Finding the talent increasingly lucrative, she created her own website and branded her fledgling business simply “Kristara.”

Word-of-mouth dramatically picked up speed. On weekends and at night — really “any spare moment I had” — Schnippert created calligraphy-based projects for more and more clients.

“It just reached a point where I couldn’t do both jobs because I was getting so busy,” she said. “I was sending emails and answering calls at my ad job when I shouldn’t have been. It wasn’t fair to my clients at either job. That was the turning point.” ➔

LEFT TOP:
Kristara Calligraphy received a permanent home in June 2015 when Kristara Schnippert began renting an open-concept warehouse in the arts district of downtown Houston.

MIDDLE BOTTOM:
A wall in Schnippert's studio displays many of her previous projects, from wedding invitations to Cartier Christmas cards and from birth announcements to the box design for an Estée Lauder perfume line.

RIGHT:
Seated at the desk of her studio office, Schnippert shares stories of her many experiences running her own business. Her calligraphy workshops often sell out because, as a self-taught calligrapher, Schnippert says she is able to connect with her students by sharing all she has learned through trial and error.



“Vogue was having a party and asked if I could be on-site to do the place cards, and I had to tell them I already had another commitment. So I had to turn down Vogue.”

Kristara Schnippert

Schnippert's talent is evident, but the impetus to take that giant leap all small business owners must take was more personal.

“The reason I even started my business in the first place, my biggest inspiration, was my mom,” Schnippert said. “She’s had her own embroidery and silkscreen business for as long as I can remember. When we were little, she would sew all our clothes, and she’s always been really crafty and creative.”

“It was great when we were growing up. She worked a lot but also had flexibility to be there for us,” Schnippert said, clearing her throat before pausing for a moment. “I wanted to do that, too, for our kids.”

TURNING DOWN VOGUE

Kristara Calligraphy was established in August 2014 and received a permanent home in a downtown Houston arts district warehouse the following June.

Almost immediately after creating her business, Schnippert began teaching classes in her studio. The workshops are popular and often quickly sell out. To date, she has taught more than 1,750 people, not counting those in her online classes.

The space is wide and welcoming. Bright light tapers down from high-positioned windows. Most of the walls

are painted white save for a brick outer wall and one gigantic back wall slathered in chalkboard paint. It’s rife with potential for creative adventure and has been used for complex murals, class instruction and a stylized “Axe ‘em, Jacks” catchphrase.

When she’s not teaching, Schnippert has been increasingly preoccupied with taking on new corporate and other clients. Her work with companies can range from on-site personalization of gifts, to in-store chalkboard displays (some the size of an entire wall), brand activation or hand painting the box for a luxury perfume line.

Schnippert’s brush with fame happened when creating place cards for an Omega watches event. Actor George Clooney serves as the company’s spokesperson. Regretfully, she didn’t meet him but did rewrite his name about 20 times until it was perfect.

“No” may not have been in Schnippert’s vocabulary when she began Kristara Calligraphy, but her business has been so successful she has had to be more selective, like when the Super Bowl came to town, and she was asked to simultaneously work multiple events.

“Vogue was having a party and asked if I could be on-site to do the place cards, and I had to tell them I already had another commitment. So I had to turn down Vogue,” she said with a slight grin.



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Though Schnippert minored in art, she says those lessons are as integral to her job as her mass communication degree.

"I use stuff I learned at SFA every day — how to advertise and market myself, the use of correct grammar," Schnippert said. "And since I did study art in college, too, I use it to help teach people. Layout, spacing and design are all big parts of calligraphy. In my watercolor classes, I even share a little basic color theory."

The combination is part of what Schnippert says sets her apart.

"Grammar plays a larger role in calligraphy than many people realize," Schnippert said. "My attention to detail makes me a little different than other calligraphers. You can be artistic and do calligraphy, but if you're misspelling things, people aren't going to hire you again. I work with a lot of luxury clients, and they expect a high level of professionalism. You can't make little mistakes."

THE FUTURE

Six months after Schnippert established Kristara Calligraphy, she was approached by Annie's Paper Crafts to create an instructional calligraphy book. Her answer comes as no surprise, and later that year, "Creative Calligraphy" was published. Again using all aspects of her education, Schnippert

wrote all of the book's text and instruction.

Each year, Schnippert writes down personal and professional goals and most recently scratched out a plan to primarily focus on corporate events and studio classes.

"I love meeting creative-minded people, and I love how lettering can help people, from cancer patients to women overcoming depression, from businesses seeking a unique team-building activity to empty nesters trying to find a new hobby," Schnippert said. "I love that my classes are a relaxing escape."

She's also been toying with the idea of writing a second book for children.

"For young kids, cursive has been scientifically proven to improve fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, thinking memory and visual recognition skills. So the earlier the exposure to a wide range of letters, the better."

Despite an increasingly technological world, Schnippert said she's been surprised to find just how desirable the art of lettering has become.

"Many people think of calligraphy and cursive as a dying art, but I disagree. It may sound counterintuitive, but technology is one of the key drivers of my business," she said. "Texts and emails are so pervasive and impersonal that they actually make people crave and appreciate things created by hand. I don't think handwriting will ever be lost." ★

**To see more of
Kristara
Calligraphy's
work, find it on:**

📷 @kristara

📘 @kristaracalligraphy

🌐 Kristara.co

Jacks of All Trades / With Lori Wendt '89



Lori Wendt '89 earned a bachelor's degree in education at SFA and spent eight years in the classroom before working as a curriculum creator for the television series "Barney & Friends." She met her husband, Dean Wendt, the voice of Barney, while working on the show.

Education major 'falls in love' with work on 'Barney & Friends' TV series

STORY BY DR. SHIRLEY LUNA '85, '06 & '14 / PHOTOS BY LOUIS DELUCA '78

MANY TEENAGERS TAKE on babysitting jobs, but for Lori Wendt '89, her babysitting connections led to a job with Barney, the most-beloved, Emmy Award-winning dinosaur in history.

Wendt was born in Ohio, and her family moved to the Dallas area when she was in sixth grade. When it was time to start college, she appreciated the size of the SFA campus, as well as its proximity to her home.

"I loved the trees; they reminded me of Ohio," she recalled. "Since I was majoring in education, I knew it was the best university for me. And SFA still maintains that reputation. When my school district hires teachers, or when we work with student teachers from SFA, it is always obvious they have been well-prepared for this career."

Wendt was fresh from college herself when she had an opportunity to work with Sheryl Leach, the creator of "Barney & Friends," a series of home videos that became a hit television series nominated for 15 Emmy Awards. Wendt had been a babysitter for Leach's children.

"I had just graduated from SFA when Sheryl asked me to come work for her on the show," she explained. "I was excited to get in the classroom, so I declined the offer and accepted a job teaching first grade in Lewisville."

Wendt subsequently earned a master's degree and, eight years later, accepted the second offer from Leach to work on the show. It was a major transition for Wendt, who had never been on a television set. Fortunately, her training at SFA was a valuable asset in the career shift.

"The opportunities the students have to work in the Early Childhood Laboratory and in the SFA Charter School classrooms, in addition to student teaching, are major factors in their success," Wendt said. "Reading about and studying different classroom methodologies is important, but there's nothing that can take the place of being face-to-face with a child."

In her role with the producers of "Barney & Friends," Wendt assisted in creating curriculum to help ensure the purple Tyrannosaurus' daily

activities and excursions were as educational as possible. Field testing was another of Wendt's job responsibilities that put her early childhood education background to good use.

"To be a successful teacher, it is crucial that material is developmentally appropriate and presented in the right way," she said. "When we brought in new characters, new music or if we changed sets, I visited day care centers with DVDs to show the children, and I took notes of their reactions to each segment — at what points did they sing or laugh? When did they walk away?"

For Wendt, working for public broadcaster and television program distributor PBS, sometimes referred to as America's largest classroom, was the perfect job.

"They were all so invested in doing things for the right reasons," she said. "I loved going to conferences and meeting people like Mr. Rogers and people from 'Sesame Street,' whom I grew up with, but meeting them as almost a peer. It seemed surreal — like worlds colliding."

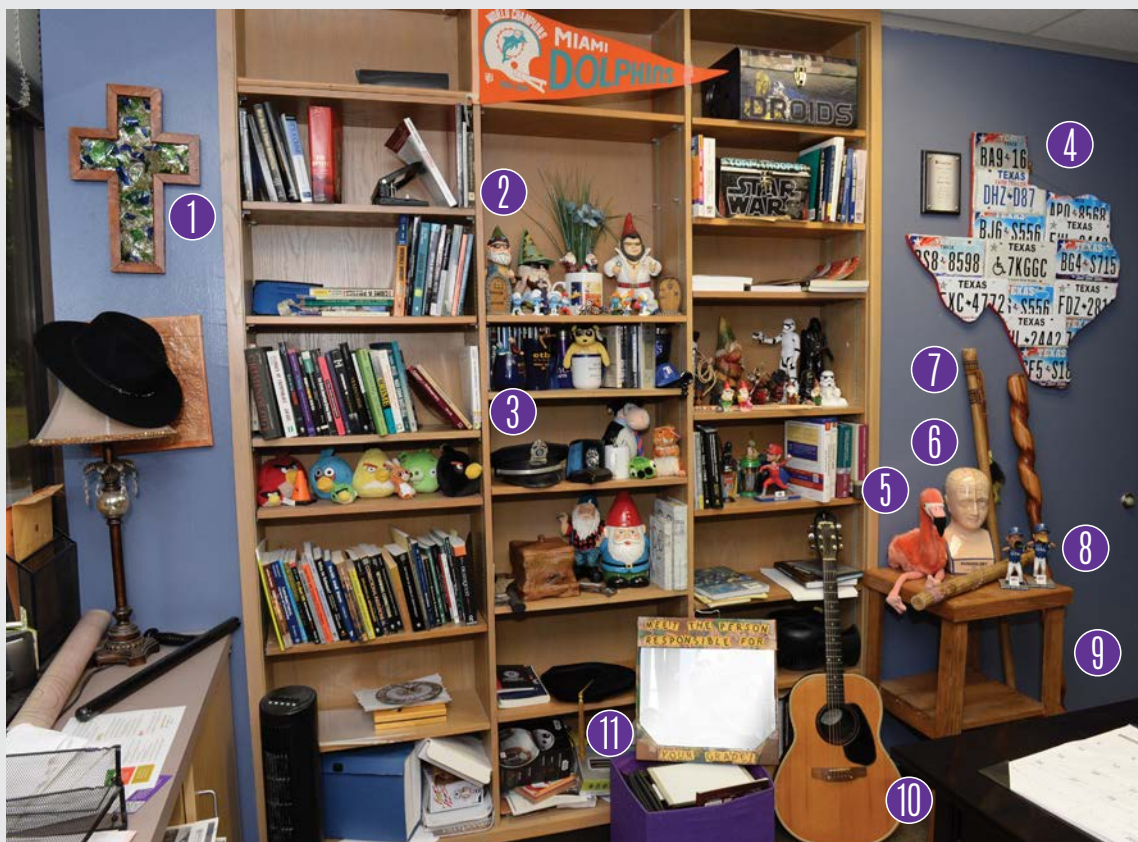
Wendt also enjoyed working with child actors, such as Selena Gomez and Demi Lovato. But the most influential person she met was Dean Wendt, a voice actor who was the voice of Barney for 10 years.

"We enjoyed working together on the show, and got married during the last year shows were being produced," she said. "I was living in Allen at the time, and Dean had been living in Addison."

Since the production of "Barney & Friends" episodes ended, Dean does voiceover work from his in-home recording studio for companies ranging from American Express to Toyota, Nikon and Bulova. Lori returned to full-time teaching, and her time with "Barney & Friends" still plays a valuable role in her work.

"We weren't tied to state or district educational standards, and limited finances didn't play a role in the decisions we made," she said. "So, the sky was pretty much the limit when it came to creativity. But I do find that I try to use that kind of creativity in my teaching — to do whatever I can to make something work." ★

Work Space / Inside Dr. George Day's Office



DR. GEORGE DAY
Assistant Professor
of Criminal Justice

1. Day's wife bought him this cross several years ago at a fundraiser for a faith-based halfway house, where offenders with substance abuse problems reside. The body of the cross comprises broken glass from liquor bottles, which represents what the offenders had broken free from and the broken condition of their lives.
2. The collection of figurines on the shelves, including gnomes and Smurfs, began with one gnome that was gifted to Day by a friend. Others saw it and during the past five years have significantly added to it.
3. Among Day's most prized possessions are the hat, badge and nightstick that belonged to his late grandfather and namesake. Day's grandfather served as a volunteer police officer for the City of Miami during the 1980s. Both of their career paths led them from typesetters for local newspapers to working in criminal justice.
4. Each year, employees from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice hold a fundraising auction to help correctional officers who have experienced traumatic life events. This Texas-shaped wall plaque was created from license plates by a correctional officer and donated to the auction where Day purchased it.
5. While passing the flamingo exhibit at the Austin City Zoo in 2006 with family, Day's mother pointed at the flamingos and said, "Look penguins!" The identification error has since been a bit of a joke between Day and his mother. The pair often exchange stuffed penguins and flamingos, which help them recall the funny moment.
6. The bust sitting on the table is a phrenology model designed by L.N. Fowler in the early 1800s. Day received the replica as a gift from a colleague at East Texas Baptist University upon her retirement.
7. The larger rainstick was created by Day's wife, Ellen, in the mid-1990s during the Cherokee National Holiday celebration. The smaller one resting on the table is an authentic rainstick gifted to Day by one of his sisters-in-law. It is crafted from a cactus and the rain sound the stick makes is created by the shifting of the cactus seeds inside.
8. Day and his father enjoy a Texas Rangers game together each year near Father's Day. Day acquired these Elvis Andrus and Adrian Beltré bobbleheads during one game with his father and another with his wife and both his parents.
9. Before entering academia, Day spent almost 10 years employed by the Texas Youth Commission. While serving at the McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Complex, two incarcerated young men built this wooden table for him.
10. When Day completed his doctoral degree in 2010, he decided he wanted to study a subject unrelated to criminal justice, so he began learning to play the piano, keeping a keyboard in his office at East Texas Baptist University. After his arrival at SFA, his new office wasn't quite big enough to accommodate the keyboard, so he began learning to play the guitar.
11. The mirror reads, "Meet the person responsible for your grade." It was crafted by Day's wife, and it graces the door to his office as a reminder to students. ★

FOR THE BIRDS



Biology major named Inventor of the Year

STORY BY JOANNA ARMSTRONG '17

WORKING TO DEVELOP lifesaving vaccines isn't easy, but for Dr. Holly Sellers '90, professor and researcher at the University of Georgia's Poultry Diagnostic and Research Center, it's just a normal part of her day.

Splitting her time between teaching, research and service, Sellers works long hours and juggles various important responsibilities. Despite the difficult nature of the work, she's known since her first job working in a hatchery at the age of 15 that she would go on to make a difference in the complicated field of avian medicine.

"There's a lot of science that goes into genetic selection of breeds for food production, veterinary care for poultry health and development of new vaccines for control of important diseases — the whole package," she said.

Recently recognized for her work by the University of Georgia with the Inventor of the Year award, Sellers is the first woman to receive the honor since 2001. The award celebrates "innovation at the highest level of excellence" and speaks to the type of career she has cultivated. ➔



Dr. Holly Sellers' research has led to five U.S. patents and 20 license agreements and has included the creation and evaluation of vaccines to help prevent or control viral diseases of poultry.



“I LOVE WORKING WITH STUDENTS. THEIR INTERESTS, IDEAS AND ENTHUSIASM INSPIRE ME AND SERVE AS A REFRESH FOR ALL I DO.”

DR. HOLLY SELLERS

Sellers got her start when her father, a production manager for a Nacogdoches breeder company, helped her land a job at a local hatchery. While there, she worked hard to learn all she could.

“I remember the first day of work started at 3 a.m.,” she said. “There were many of those days during my summer breaks.”

Sellers eventually moved from the hatchery to the quality control lab.

“I knew from the first time I started working in the hatchery that I wanted to do something in the poultry industry, but at that time, I wasn’t sure what that looked like,” she said. “Things quickly changed when I started working in the lab.”

During her time at the hatchery, SFA also was a vital part of Sellers’ life. She began taking classes at the university while still in high school before later enrolling as an undergraduate and working toward a bachelor’s degree. Though she went through a few different majors, she eventually decided on biology, becoming involved on campus in the Biology Club, as well as the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. Sellers was particularly influenced by former SFA biology professor Dr. Homer Russell and his approach to teaching.

“His class was, to this day, one of the best classes I’ve ever taken,” she said. “He taught microbiology in a way that delivered the basic information but made it so interesting and relevant to day-to-day life.”

Sellers remembers a field trip the class took to a wastewater treatment plant in Nacogdoches that helped further ignite her passion for the field.

“I was a little skeptical but, upon arrival, Dr. Russell hopped off the bus, and his enthusiasm was pretty contagious,” she said. “We hiked around this place for an hour while he told us, with such animation, about the process of turning wastewater into drinking water. I couldn’t wait for my next microbiology class.”

Sellers sought advice from her supervisor in the lab, a UGA graduate, who encouraged her to take a look at the graduate program in the Department of Medical Microbiology at UGA’s College of Veterinary Medicine. There, Sellers received her master’s and doctoral degrees, completing research for both at the Poultry Diagnostic and Research Center. After graduating,

she received a post-doctoral research fellowship at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory, now the National Poultry Research Center.

Sellers then became a professor in the Department of Population Health in UGA’s College of Veterinary Medicine, where she also directs virology services. Her research covers everything from evaluating the pathogenicity of viruses from clinical cases to developing new vaccines. She also focuses on avian reoviruses, which can cause viral arthritis in chickens and turkeys. This virus has exponentially increased since 2012, Sellers said, and the research characterizes new viruses isolated from clinical cases. This helps researchers understand how the viruses are causing diseases so they can develop new vaccines to help control disease.

In her work with the poultry industry, she provides diagnostic services to assist poultry veterinarians in making decisions to provide optimal care. In a typical day, Sellers meets with her lab staff to review clinical case submissions, as well as new cases and the status of in-progress cases. She also communicates with clients regarding laboratory results and assists clients in sample collection and submissions to the lab.

“It’s important to understand as much about diseases that affect poultry as possible to determine the best way to control them,” Sellers said. “The health of poultry is important so that it can continue to be a safe, affordable and readily available source of food.”

Sellers’ research efforts have led to 12 invention disclosures, five U.S. patents, 20 license agreements, and many foreign patents and applications, said Dr. Mark Jackwood, head of the Department of Population Health at UGA.

“Her contributions to the poultry industry are enormous, and we are very proud of her exceptional achievements,” Jackwood said.

It was this commitment to innovation that led Sellers to being named UGA’s Inventor of the Year. As the first woman in more than a decade to receive the award, Sellers hopes more women will begin to be recognized for the critical role they play in the advancement of science.



Dr. Holly Sellers received the University of Georgia's Inventor of the Year Award, which celebrates "innovation at the highest level of excellence."

"I only recently learned that women are only listed on 12% of U.S. patents," she said. "However, times are changing, and so many opportunities are now available to help women and underrepresented minorities get involved in innovation. I'm excited to see how this number changes in the near future."

And though Sellers recognizes the worth of the work she's done, she is adamant that she's not reached this achievement alone.

"I have had so much support and help from so many people at UGA and the poultry industry that I really share this award with them all," Sellers said.

In addition to her research and work in industry, she teaches graduate and professional students avian virology and mentors graduate students.

"I love working with students," she said. "Their interests, ideas and enthusiasm inspire me and serve as a refresh for all I do."

Sellers hopes to impart the same love and enthusiasm for the science she first experienced at SFA.

"The time I spent as a student at SFA was life changing," Sellers said. "I found my true calling as a microbiologist and took classes that prepared me for the opportunities ahead. My time at the university provided a great foundation for my post-graduate studies, and I felt very prepared for graduate school."

While Sellers' work pulls her in a lot of different directions, she wouldn't have it any other way.

"No day is the same, and I'm never bored," she said. "I feel so blessed to have this career." ★

Advising 101

On Writing

BY DR. MARK SANDERS
ASSOCIATE DEAN
AND PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH



I MIGHT HAVE been an architect or an elementary school teacher, an artist or an engineer. The wonder of attending college was all the choice. I considered my options, changed my major and minor twice. Among the choices, I also wanted to be passionate about my career path.

I chose writing and never doubted its rightness. Writing would be my way of life, my identity, my service. I would teach writing and literature. I would publish, be a publisher, an editor. Writing could help me to help others. There was no pretense.

I took time and studied, immersing myself in books and words. The lessons have made all the difference, this handful among them:

Writing is an act within proximity. What we need to write about is here. Robert Frost invited his readers to "come, too," out to the fields around his New England home; Wendell Berry instructed us to stay home. My favorite writers show us how to claim territory and to write about what we know. Wherever "here" is, is a fine place to begin.

To borrow from Flannery O'Connor, writing is a "habit of being." Daily hygiene — the brushing of teeth, the combing of hair — is habit, as is driving daily routes to work, or how someone sips a cup of coffee. The habit of being is the writer's perpetual awareness and requires a degree of selflessness. O'Connor wrote, "You have to cherish the world at the same time that you struggle to endure it." She also wrote that knowing "oneself is, above all, to know what one lacks ... The first product of self-knowledge is humility." Ego gets in the way of being.

After all, writers are obligated to their readers. Frost called the writer a "kindly gentleman" who writes to succeed for the reader's sake. Writing is a careful proposition like the art of walking a high wire. Be willing to revise so as not to misstep. William Faulkner wrote, "In writing, you must kill all your darlings." Stephen King added, years later, "Even when it breaks your egocentric little scribbler's heart." While we may love the sound of our own voices or our private imagery, readers need us to connect with them.

Writing should be purposeful. "It is difficult to get the news from poems," William Carlos Williams wrote, but people perish "every day for lack of what is found there." Metaphorically, writing brings us the news and weather of our human community.

Good writers read — a lot. As Descartes noted, reading good books is "like a conversation with the finest minds of past centuries." These conversations teach us much about how to think and communicate. As Ray Bradbury wrote in "Fahrenheit 451," "You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them." Writers help to keep the culture alive. ★

Lumberjack²

Get your graduate degree without leaving home

BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD '10



HIGHER EDUCATION IS evolving at a rapid pace. Leaving the workforce to pursue a graduate degree often is not feasible for those supporting families or hoping to continue cultivating a successful career. Meanwhile, industries are asking more from their employees, including skill diversification and higher levels of academic achievement.

Luckily, SFA is meeting those disparate demands head on.

“Of our 39 graduate degrees, 15 are offered fully online,” said Dr. Pauline Sampson, dean of the SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies. “Faculty members also are currently creating more graduate-level degrees and certifications that incorporate distance learning. In fact, a university-wide committee was formed to address all aspects of the graduate experience and help ensure SFA’s programs are staying current with professional trends in every sector.”

Despite cross-industry changes, online education and other advances in nontraditional learning allow the benefits of master’s and doctoral degrees to remain the same: increased professional competitiveness and a greater chance of making substantially more money over a lifetime.

SFA’s degree offerings are as diverse as the needs of its students. All six of the university’s colleges offer traditional master’s degrees, and two offer doctoral degree options, but faculty members consistently seek new ways to make learning flexible.

One way is to get crafty with stackable certificates.

“Modern students may want to come in for professional skill building, step out, and then come back for more down the road,” Sampson said. “So stackable certificates are becoming more and more important.”

Stackable certificates allow students to pursue separate certificates that, if received within a certain period of time, add up to a full master’s degree. For example, SFA students who successfully complete the Certificate in Homeland Security and return to complete the Certificate in Intelligence Studies will graduate with a Master of Arts in national security.

“The curriculum of SFA’s Post Baccalaureate Initial Certification program, which is an alternative certification program to receive teacher certification and credentials, provided me an opportunity to take an extra 18 hours to complete my master’s degree,” said Dr. Betsy Mijares, principal of Willie Mae and Ecomet Burley Primary in Lufkin.

Have you thought about returning to your alma mater and pursuing post-baccalaureate education? If so, you have a multitude of degree and certificate options.

SFA's fully online graduate degrees and certificates:

Master of Public Administration

Master of Science in Nursing – Family Nurse Practitioner

Master of Arts in Mass Communication

Master of Arts in National Security

Master of Science in Human Sciences

Master of Science in Resource Communications

Master of Education in:

- *Early Childhood Education*
- *Educational Leadership with Principal Certification*
- *Elementary Education*
- *Elementary Education Reading Specialist*
- *Special Education Teaching*
- *Teaching and Learning*

Master of Music in Music Education

Master of Music in Theory and Composition

Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary Education

Educational Diagnostician Certification

Principal Preparation Certification

Resource Communications Certificate

Superintendent Certification

Certificate in Homeland Security

Certificate in Intelligence Studies

Teaching College Psychology Certificate

She received a Master of Education in educational leadership with a principal certification from SFA in 2009 before returning to receive her Doctor of Education in educational leadership in 2017.

Mijares said her specific programs were a mix of face-to-face and online with both options providing their own unique benefits.

"The online classes were beneficial for time and travel, but I also gained knowledge and experience in the face-to-face courses. The doctoral program was a cohort model that allowed me to develop a network and to create in-depth conversations and leadership development through educational practices. The cohort model left a lasting impact professionally and personally by providing a wider lens and application of theory to our profession."

According to the EAB, the top reason individuals opt out of returning to school is concern about the cost. Second is simply a matter of time. SFA is working to address both by reviewing fees, seeking new avenues for financial aid, and increasingly incorporating online and other distance technology.

Distance education, both fully online programs as well as the use of video conferencing, is increasingly important to higher education.

"Many potential graduate students have families and are working professionals, so distance education is not just about convenience," Sampson said. "For those who can't or don't want to give up a job, online programs are truly the only way they'll be able to pursue a master's degree or graduate certificate."

Despite a constantly evolving world, SFA's dedication to serve diverse populations with complex needs often compels Lumberjacks to return to their alma mater for professional growth opportunities.

"For my master's degree, I selected SFA because of its strong reputation in education courses and because the program at that time was a hybrid between face-to-face sessions and online sessions, which worked beautifully for me and my young family," said Dr. Melissa Leigh, director of curriculum and professional learning with the Humble Independent School District. "For my doctoral degree, I researched several other universities, but I came back to SFA because of the quality of the program and the cohort model it follows."

To learn more about SFA's graduate-level degree and certificate programs, visit sfasu.edu/academics. To review the university's fully online programs, visit sfasu.edu/online. ★

Athletics News



MEN'S BASKETBALL EARNS HISTORIC WIN VS. NO. 1 DUKE

The Lumberjacks chopped down the biggest opponent in program history to end November, walking into Cameron Indoor Arena and upsetting top-ranked Duke University at the buzzer, with an 85-83 final score. The win was the first home loss for the Blue Devils to a non-conference foe in two decades and snapped a 150-game winning streak in such games for Duke. Senior forward Nathan Bain was the hero of the night, grabbing a loose ball and running nearly 80 feet for the game-winning layup as time expired. ★



SFA ATHLETICS INTRODUCES BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Riding the wave of the NCAA's fastest-growing varsity sport, SFA Athletics has embraced the addition of beach volleyball to its lineup of top-tier Southland Conference programs. A fast-paced game played on sand courts between two pairs of players, beach volleyball will be a championship sport in the Southland Conference for the first time in spring 2020. Alex Luna was hired to be the first beach volleyball coach in program history in December 2018. ★



LADYJACK VOLLEYBALL

SFA volleyball secured the three-peat this past season, winning its third-consecutive regular-season championship and tacking on a second-straight tournament championship, as well. The Ladyjacks put together a flawless 16-0 conference season as part of a 29-match winning streak that stretched into their second-consecutive NCAA tournament appearance. Head coach Debbie Humphreys was named the Southland Conference Coach of the Year, while Ann Hollas, Corin Evans, Maddie Miller, Danae Daron and Taya Mitchell all received All-Conference honors. ★



JOHNSON COLISEUM ADDITION

As part of a university-wide capital improvement plan, SFA is building a \$26-million addition to the northeast corner of Johnson Coliseum that will be named the Loddie Naymola Basketball Performance Center. The 42,000-square-foot facility will house office spaces, locker rooms, a full-size practice court and weight room, and athletic training/sports medicine spaces to be used by both the Ladyjack and Lumberjack basketball programs. Construction on the performance center is well underway and should be completed by March 2021. ★

LADYJACK SOCCER

Among the additions to the SFA Athletics Department this winter was new head soccer coach Tony Minatta, who took the reins of the Ladyjack soccer program from Wally Crittenden, who moved into an administrative role with the department. Minatta is the ninth coach in program history, and he joins the Jacks with years of experience coaching in the PAC-10 at Iowa State. ★

Scholarships

The Bobbie Hargis Todd Scholarship

THE BOBBIE HARGIS Todd Scholarship supports SFA students who are children or spouses of officers killed in the line of duty with preference given to students pursuing a degree in elementary education.

Bobbie's father, Nacogdoches Deputy Sheriff John Arlington Hargis, was killed while serving an arrest warrant in 1928, when Bobbie was only 18 months old. The scholarship was established by her children, Bobbie Ann Todd Anderson and Richard Todd, in memory of their mother, whose life dramatically changed after her father's death.

"My grandmother and her five children had to do whatever they could to survive and move forward," Anderson said. "My mom and her siblings certainly would have benefited from financial assistance like this for college."

Fortunately, Bobbie was able to live at home with her mother a few blocks from SFA. Her older siblings managed to chip in and help pay her tuition. While attending SFA, she was a cheerleader and member of the Fideles Social Club. During her freshman year, she began dating World War II veteran Joe "Orville" Todd, and they married Feb. 22, 1948.

Employed first at the Rusk County Courthouse, it was after the birth of her first two children that Bobbie made the decision, encouraged by her husband, to return to college. She commuted daily to SFA and earned her degree in elementary education in 1957. She then taught third and fourth grade in the Henderson Independent School District for 23 years.

Texas Ranger Jim Hicks said the child or spouse of an officer killed in the line of duty can make one of two choices. "They can give up, or they can press forward. This scholarship is a tool that can help them move forward," Hicks said.

Sabine County Sheriff Thomas Maddox, president of the Sheriffs' Association of Texas, knew Bobbie and understood how hard she worked to be successful. "She also had a special way of making you feel like the most important person in the world," he said. "She would have been very proud of this scholarship." ★



Pictured are, from left, Texas Ranger Jim Hicks, Bobbie Ann Todd Anderson, Richard Todd and Sabine County Sheriff Thomas Maddox, president of the Sheriffs' Association of Texas.

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 email 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.

Women in STEM Luncheon and Style Show

featured speaker:

Miss America Camille Schrier

STEM Advocate and Biochemist

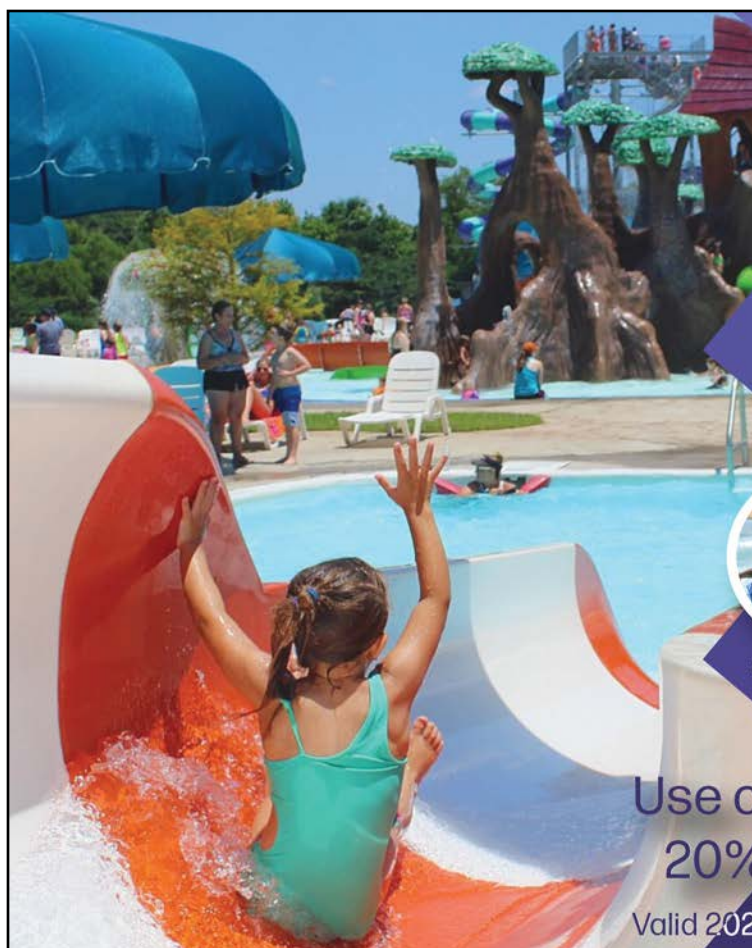
Miss America

**Tuesday
April 7, 2020**

Noon | Baker Pattillo Student Center | Grand Ballroom

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

We look forward to your attendance. Contact Kim Carmona at kdcarmona@sfasu.edu or visit sfasu.edu/womeninSTEM to reserve your table.



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HAPPEN WHEN WE
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From the Association

"At the Alumni Association, one of the frequent questions we are asked is, 'How can I get involved?' We are always eager to share the multiple ways people can make a positive impact on our university."



AS SPRING UNFOLDS in Nacogdoches, there's a lot blooming. It's a great time to visit and take a stroll through the campus — especially the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden.

At the Alumni Association, one of the frequent questions we are asked is, "How can I get involved?" We are always eager to share the multiple ways people can make a positive impact on our university. So, I thought we would use this forum to discuss how you can help.

The Alumni Association's day-to-day operations are managed by a staff of eight full-time professionals and a group of part-time students who are all under the leadership of Craig Turnage, the Alumni Association's executive director and a two-time SFA alumnus. These folks work together to plan and host events throughout the state, maintain a database of our 100,000-plus alums, and support various alumni groups, including those who were members of fraternities, sororities and campus organizations. Annually, they host two signature events — Homecoming and the Alumni Awards. In addition, they handle the sales of the SFA Ring and organize the Big Dip, which has grown to three ceremonies each semester to accommodate the large number of participants and their families.

The Alumni Association is governed by an 18-member board of directors elected by the general membership during Homecoming each year. The board comprises representatives from different geographic regions, SFA's six colleges and graduation years. We strive to be as diverse as possible to easily engage with a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

We depend on a large network of volunteers who have their "boots on the ground" to

help with events and marketing. We have designated three geographic regions: East Texas, the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and the Houston metroplex. We are hoping to add a Hill Country region soon. All of our board members and volunteers are considered ambassadors in the region where they live. These ambassadors serve as a team and are led by a regional chairperson, who also is a board member.

As the alumni calendar of events evolves, the regional representatives are asked for input about venues and programs. As events near, the ambassadors reach out to people in their circle of influence and invite their former classmates, co-workers, neighbors and friends who have an interest in SFA to attend. As each event launches, the ambassadors help greet attendees and assist the Alumni Association's staff members during the event. Our ambassadors are a key component in reaching more people and making it possible to cover so much territory.

So back to the original question, "How can I get involved?" To become an ambassador or board member, call the Alumni Association at (936) 468-3407 to obtain an application. After your application is received, it will be presented to the executive committee for review with notification taking place soon after.

Speaking of upcoming events, add the Alumni Awards to your calendar. It will be held Sept. 18. Also, be sure to save Oct. 23 through 25 for Homecoming. We would love to see you! ★

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

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president

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
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David Madrid '02, Haughton, Louisiana
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executive director of alumni relations

Amber Lindsay
assistant to the executive director

Derek Snyder '01
director of alumni relations

Samantha Mora '08
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Alicia Roland Chatman '16
gifts and records coordinator

Amie Ford '09 & '11
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Travis Turner '05 & '11
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and sponsorships

Bob Sitton '60
director emeritus

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THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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

All the World's a Stage

Theatre graduates hone their craft in major U.S. cities and beyond

STORY BY ROBBIE GOODRICH '82

TWO YOUNG SFA School of Theatre alumni have already experienced nationwide, multifaceted success in their industry, yet they remain focused on the unpredictable challenges that still lie ahead.

Lamar Jefferson '13 and Thomas Brazzle '08 have found many successes onstage and behind the scenes in renowned theatre venues across the country, staying busy with multiple projects. They credit their time as SFA students with giving them a well-rounded background in theatre and teaching them how to be receptive to the unexpected. They also credit their theatre professors for challenging them to do their best work.

"The number of productions I was able to participate in at SFA really set me up for success," Jefferson said. "In many theatre programs, lowerclassmen can't be in shows; they have to wait a year or two before performing. When I arrived at SFA, I was crewing one show, acting in two other shows, and then I had scenes and monologues to memorize for acting classes, plus my academic work on top of all that. It was exhausting and crazy, but it really taught me how to juggle more than one or two things emotionally and psychologically — and sometimes literally and physically."



Thomas Brazzle in "Two Gentlemen of Verona"



Lamar Jefferson in "Five Points" at the Theater Latté Da

Brazzle began his studies at SFA with a desire to act, "but I came out wanting to do so much more." As a student, he gained valuable knowledge in directing, movement, play analysis, performance theory, play writing, lighting, scenic design and costume construction. Those experiences have allowed him to be a successful professional actor while also creating his own work.

"Now, I not only act regionally across the country, but I have written plays and had plays of mine produced, written and directed for film, taught acting classes for multiple theatres and developed after-school programs," he said.

A high school production of the musical "Godspell," in which Brazzle played the character of Jesus, gave him his first insight into "the power of theatre."

"That experience was life changing," he said. "It was my first musical, and I learned so much from my fellow cast mates and the directors. It made me work harder than I had ever worked before on a show. After our final performance, the mother of a student who had recently lost her son in a drunk-driving incident approached me. She said the show and my performance as Jesus were beautiful; they restored her faith in God, and she felt she could move forward after such a loss. It was then I understood why we have theatre and the power it holds. From then on, I put my focus on making this a career."

It wasn't until his sophomore year at SFA performing in a production of "A Raisin in the Sun" that Jefferson found his calling.

"That was my first time truly losing myself in a character and the moment onstage," he said. "It was so exhilarating I could barely remember what happened onstage. It was like a drug, and I began to chase that feeling. I decided to seriously focus on my acting."

Well-established relationships between SFA's School of Theatre and world-renowned performance venues in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Portland, Maine; and Dallas have provided theatre students with valuable internship experiences and the necessary connections to find rewarding work for many years to come. ➔

"That was my first time truly losing myself in a character and the moment onstage. It was so exhilarating I could barely remember what happened onstage. It was like a drug, and I began to chase that feeling. I decided to seriously focus on my acting."

Lamar Jefferson



Photo by Dan Norman

Lamar Jefferson in "We Are Proud to Present" at the Guthrie Theater

While studying at SFA, Jefferson interned as an actor at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater for a year. Following his graduation, he was on the road performing in Arkansas, then back to Texas, and then back to Milwaukee working professionally as an actor. He moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, after learning fellow Lumberjack and best friend Kory Pullam '13 was relocating there. Pullam is making his mark in Twin Cities' theatre and as a recording artist.

"It was great starting there together and helping each other out, which is the artist way," Jefferson said. For the next six years, Jefferson worked at local Minneapolis theatres, including the legendary Guthrie Theater, and he did commercial work.

"At the top of my list is the Guthrie Theater, which is world-renowned and offers classic theatre as well as new work," Jefferson said. "It was there I really found my voice and way as an actor. I was able to do everything from Shakespeare to musicals to new plays. I finally reached my dream, and it all happened at age 25. It's such a blessing."

Jefferson continues to maintain connections by performing in Milwaukee theatres and building new professional relationships in Dallas. After recently moving to New York City, he is gearing up to return to First Stage in Milwaukee to perform in "The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors: The Musical," his third production with First Stage.

While completing his degree requirements at SFA, Brazzle spent time training overseas through SFA's exchange program with Rose Bruford College. Upon returning to the states and graduating, he toured with a new children's musical, followed by acting for Dallas Shakespeare for a season. He then moved to Houston to work as an actor for the Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre and The Ensemble Theatre. After earning a Master of Fine Arts



Photo by Jenny Graham

Lamar Jefferson in "Romeo and Juliet" at the Guthrie Theater

from the University of Connecticut, he moved to New York and worked for various theatres in the city as well as regionally. He became a company member with Shakespeare and Company and has been with them for seven summer seasons. He's worked for TheatreSquared in Arkansas, Portland Stage in Maine and many others. He considers his best role/project to be his portrayal of Edmund in "King Lear" at the Guthrie Theater.

"The process was amazing, and ever since learning the history of the Guthrie while a student at SFA, I always wanted to perform for the company," Brazzle said. "It was a dream come true."

Currently based in Atlanta, Georgia, Brazzle is focused on directing and writing, as well as acting in film. He's done



Photo courtesy of Beth Hall

Thomas Brazzle in "Superior Donuts" at TheatreSquared



Photo courtesy of Beth Hall

Thomas Brazzle in "Look Away" at TheatreSquared

commercials and some co-starring roles on Black Entertainment Television. He is a board member for the Morton Theatre in Athens, Georgia, where he directed "It's A Wonderful Life" for its holiday show. He's producing and directing a web series he wrote titled "Infinite Jest."

"It is a comedy that takes the complete works of Shakespeare and all of his characters and puts them in the same world, remixing the stories and creating new outrageous misadventures," he said. Filming began in January.

Another play written by Brazzle, "Smoked," will have its world premiere in Raleigh, North Carolina, with the MOJOAA Performing Arts Theatre Company, a community theatre that

seeks to preserve, educate and tell the stories of African Americans through artistic platforms.

Although they have each had successful careers thus far, it's the unknown — the next challenge that awaits them — that keeps them excited about their work.

"I am finding that teaching, producing, writing and directing are really at the forefront of my career right now," Brazzle said. "I enjoy acting, but I am discovering that a lot of stories I would like to be a part of or see are not happening. So I have made an effort to create, find and produce those stories with people I want to work with."

Brazzle plans to form his production company in the coming year. He is developing a Shakespeare Film Festival to showcase documentaries, narratives, shorts and full-length films inspired by the works of Shakespeare. He's also in the process of developing an artistry program that helps young people in inner-city schools avoid becoming products of the criminal justice system.

"I've decided I want to branch out and see what life has in store for me," Jefferson said of his recent relocation to New York City. "I've just been auditioning nonstop since I arrived. I know something is coming, and I'm just patiently waiting."

Brazzle advises young theatre students to challenge themselves, continually work on their craft and understand what it is they truly want from a life in theatre.

"Theatre is a large community, and there are so many areas/jobs that keep it thriving," Brazzle said. "Don't get caught doing only one thing. If you came in as an actor, challenge yourself and design a show, stage manage, write, direct. Do something you may be scared to do, or you never thought of doing before. It will open so many doors, tell you so much about yourself, and it may even put you on a path you never saw coming." ★

"I am finding that teaching, producing, writing and directing are really at the forefront of my career right now. I enjoy acting, but I am discovering that a lot of stories I would like to be a part of or see are not happening. So I have made an effort to create, find and produce those stories with people I want to work with."

Thomas Brazzle

MR & MISS SFA



Logan Ray
Stan McKewen Mr. SFA
Award Recipient



Rachel Ballback
Arnodean Covin Miss SFA
Award Recipient

Mr. and Miss SFA named

THE SFA OFFICE of Student Affairs Programs announced Logan Ray of Lubbock and Rachel Ballback of The Woodlands have been selected as the 2020 Mr. and Miss SFA.

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

Ray, who received the Stan McKewen Mr. SFA Award, is a senior music education major. A 2016 graduate of Coronado High School, he is the son of Mark and Becky Ray.

He currently serves as a second-year Orientation student coordinator, choral activities ambassador and a member of the SFA A Cappella Choir, Chamber Choir and University Opera. Ray is a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity, having served as recruitment chair, chaplain and member of the chapter's judicial board. He also has worked as a student assistant for choral activities and served as an Orientation leader.

"The work Logan puts into perfecting his craft as a member of SFA's choirs is evident with his sixth-place finish in the men's division at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Texoma Regional Competition," said Jamal Smith, Mr. SFA '11 and former director of Orientation Programs at SFA. "Logan exemplifies the SFA Way — he cares for his peers and never hesitates to extend a helping hand to those in need."

Ray received the SFA School of Music Scholarship and the Lubbock Classroom Teachers Association Scholarship. He plans to attend graduate school to study student affairs and higher education, and he hopes to one day work as a student affairs professional.

Ballback, who received the Arnodean Covin Miss SFA Award, is a

senior health science major and psychology minor. A 2016 graduate of The Woodlands High School, she is the daughter of Frank and Carolyn Ballback.

Ballback has devoted countless hours to serving the Nacogdoches and East Texas communities. She is the executive director of internal relations for the SFA Dance Marathon, which benefits the local Children's Miracle Network, and she is a member of Dancers Against Cancer. Ballback is a former Jack Camp counselor and a member of the Freshman Leadership Academy and National Student Speech Language Hearing Association.

She has worked as a biology supplemental instructor for the Academic Assistance and Resource Center and has been named to the President's Honor Roll three times and the Dean's List twice. Ballback plans to attend graduate school and study occupational therapy.

"Under her leadership, the Dance Marathon has grown from collecting a few thousand dollars its first year to significantly surpassing its audacious goal of raising \$23,000," said Dr. Adam Peck, assistant vice president for university affairs and dean of student affairs at SFA. "While she has been deeply involved in a number of student leadership experiences, Rachel also excels as a scholar, maintaining a 3.9 GPA."

The Mr. and Miss SFA titles are annually presented by the SFA Office of Student Affairs Programs to exemplary students who well represent and promote the university. Recipients are selected based on their scholarship, participation and leadership in academic and co-curricular activities, and service and loyalty to the university. Selections are made by a committee of faculty, staff, community leaders and alumni. ★

Alumni Calendar /

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

APRIL

3-5

Tau Kappa Epsilon Alumni Reunion
Nacogdoches

7

Women in STEM Luncheon and Style Show
Noon
Nacogdoches

8

Tuition Raffle Drawing

17-18

Robert D. Dickerson Memorial Golf Tournament
Nacogdoches

20

Archie McDonald Speaker Series featuring Kendra Scott
7:30 p.m.
Baker Pattillo Student Center, Grand Ballroom
Nacogdoches

24

Jazzaritas! With the SFA Swingin' Axes and Aces Jazz Band
7 to 10 p.m.
Luna's Tortillas
2225 Connector Drive
Dallas

26

LMB/TOJ Alumni Spring Meeting
Nacogdoches

28

Senior Send-Off
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Nacogdoches

MAY

1

Big Dip Ring Ceremony
9 a.m. James I. Perkins College of Education
1 p.m. College of Fine Arts, College of Liberal and Applied Arts, and Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture
4 p.m. Nelson Rusche College of Business and College of Sciences and Mathematics
Baker Pattillo Student Center, Grand Ballroom
Nacogdoches

8

***SFA Commencement**
4 p.m. Departments of Elementary Education, Secondary Education and Educational Leadership, and the College of Fine Arts
7:30 p.m. Departments of Human Services, Kinesiology and Health Science, and School of Human Sciences
Johnson Coliseum
Nacogdoches

9

***SFA Commencement**
9:30 a.m. Nelson Rusche College of Business and College of Sciences and Mathematics
2 p.m. Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture, and College of Liberal and Applied Arts
Johnson Coliseum
Nacogdoches

15

SFA East Texas Alumni Network Scholarship Golf Tournament
Longview

20-23

Southland Conference Baseball Tournament
Whataburger Field
Corpus Christi

JUNE

17-19

Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association Summer Conference
Austin Renaissance Hotel
Austin

JULY

11

SFA University Day @ the Houston Astros
3:10 p.m. Minute Maid Park
Houston

27

SFA University Night @ the Texas Rangers
6:05 p.m. Globe Life Park
Arlington

31

Scottish Highlands and Islands Tour

AUGUST

1-14

Scottish Highlands and Islands Tour continues

1

Lumberjack Glow Party and "Dive-In" Movie
7:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Splash Kingdom/Timber Falls
Nacogdoches

7-8

***SFA Commencement**
Times TBA
Baker Pattillo Student Center, Grand Ballroom
Nacogdoches

SEPTEMBER

18

Alumni Awards
Nacogdoches

19

LMB/TOJ Reunion
Nacogdoches

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



Alexandra Schutz, university archives librarian for the East Texas Research Center, carries a volume of scrapbooks between the center's stacks. Each box on the center's shelves holds artifacts and documents detailing East Texas' history.

TREASURE SEEKERS

East Texas Research Center preserves history



The East Texas Research Center is home to unique items from the university's past. Among them are the original axe handles owned by Sawyers who attended SFA from the 1930s through the 1950s, a signed football from SFA's 1957 football team and the tiara worn by the 1963 Homecoming queen.

STORY BY EMILY BROWN '17 / PHOTOS BY HARDY MEREDITH '81

If you have ever wondered what the first SFA axe handles looked like or what style of tiara past recipients of Miss SFA proudly wore, you're in luck. These items are preserved for posterity thanks to the East Texas Research Center.

For more than 50 years, the center has focused on collecting, preserving and maintaining archival materials from the SFA and East Texas communities. Nearly two rooms full of shelves in Steen Library hold hundreds of boxes, each stuffed with memorabilia from East Texas' rich history.

"Our mission is to preserve the history of the university and East Texas and to make it accessible to everyone," said Alexandra Schutz, university archives librarian for the ETRC. "We accept a variety of items, such as photographs, alumni scrapbooks, diaries and correspondence from people who lived or worked in East Texas."

The ETRC houses materials that date as far back as the mid-19th century. The center's geographic reach encompasses the Gulf of Mexico north to the Red River, east of the Trinity River and Western Louisiana. All of the items the ETRC accepts emphasize East Texas life, culture, economy and/or history. This collection includes photographs of early settlers, newspaper articles, publications from SFA organizations and much more.

Alongside the traditional archival items you might expect to find, the center houses photos and memorabilia donated by prominent people, such as former U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison's Navy Distinguished Public Service Medal, recordings of sermons by former heavyweight boxing champion and Olympic boxing gold medalist George Foreman, and former Texas Rep. Charlie Wilson's congressional papers. In addition, photographs and documents of key events in East Texas history, such as the space shuttle Columbia disaster, are stored on the ETRC's shelves.

Schutz said she has a favorite section in the archives — scrapbooks from the Ellen H. Richards Club, SFA's former home economics club.

"The scrapbooks date from the 1930s through the '70s," Schutz said. "I love showing them to students because they're so different from scrapbooks you see today. The objects they chose to display in the books are unique, like locks of hair, and the students often are fascinated by the subject matter and wonder why a woman would attend college to study home economics." ➔



Scrapbooks from the Ellen H. Richards Club, SFA's former home economics organization, are spread across a table in the East Texas Research Center's front office. SFA students, alumni and community members can stop by the center anytime and utilize its free resources.

Schutz emphasized that preserving history is important for both academic and historical reasons. The center aims not only to maintain materials, but also to make them available to the public. Archival materials are accessible by visiting the center on SFA's campus, and a small fraction of materials is available virtually at digital.sfasu.edu.

"We have SFA faculty and staff stop by who are interested in researching old budget information or exploring how certain programs got started," Schutz said. "We also have members from the surrounding communities utilize our center. For instance, people researching mineral rights or buying land might want to look through our documents, or often people come in to trace their genealogy."

Genealogical research has proven to be a favorite topic among ETRC visitors. In the public reading room located in the front office area of the ETRC, visitors can relax and conduct research on their family's heritage.

"People are just generally interested in family history," Schutz said. "They are able to come here and trace their lineage, which often includes more than just surnames. For instance, they might locate diaries, photographs and additional items that really help them connect with their past."

Each semester, the center relies on SFA student workers to help organize the materials. Various classes and student groups also visit the center to utilize its resources for class projects and to become more familiar with the region's rich history.

While the shelves at the ETRC may appear to be overflowing, the center's staff members are always looking for more items to expand the collection. As the university prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2023, Schutz said she's hoping to gather even more items to help showcase past decades. She is hopeful SFA's alumni and friends can help.

"I would ask that anyone who has documents, photographs, film, etc. — anything that would be of historical significance to the university and region — please consider donating it to the ETRC," Schutz said. "It's an easy process, and your treasured items have a substantial impact in telling our story."

To donate, contact Schutz or any ETRC staff member at asketrc@sfasu.edu or (936) 468-4100. ★

THE EAST TEXAS RESEARCH CENTER

 [@etrc.archives](https://www.facebook.com/etrc.archives)
 library.sfasu.edu/etrc



Schutz analyzes film from SFA football games that was transferred from SFA's Athletics Department. Schutz can assist SFA alumni in digitizing specific game footage for viewing. Anyone interested can email asketrc@sfasu.edu.

In Memoriam



DAVID A. BRAZIER

A decorated veteran, retired Lt. Col. David A. Brazier from Castle Rock, Colorado, passed away June 7. He graduated from SFA in 1980 with a degree in management.

Brazier served in the U.S. Army from September 1982 to February 2003. During service to his country, Brazier received the Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Medal (second award), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal (second award), Southwest Asia Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, Armed Forces Reserved Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (second award), Kuwait Liberation Medal (K), Kuwait Liberation Medal (SA) and Parachutist Badge.



FRANCIS J. CHRISMER

Francis J. Chrismer was born April 28, 1945, in Falmouth, England. His family later moved to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1962, serving for 22 years.

Chrismer received a Purple Heart for injuries he suffered in Vietnam. After leaving military service, he attended SFA and graduated in 1988 with a degree in forestry. Chrismer re-entered government service with the U.S. Forest Service, where he was employed for 20 years.

Chrismer passed away Nov. 3 in Mount Ida, Arkansas.



THOMAS EDWARD "ED" COLE

SFA's largest individual benefactor, Thomas "Ed" Cole, passed away Dec. 5 in Nacogdoches.

Cole was born in Homer, Louisiana, in 1922. His family moved to Arkansas and later settled near Longview, where his father worked in the oil fields. He graduated from White Oak High School in 1941 and, after serving in the U.S. Air Force in England during World War II, started his own oil field equipment rental and blow-out preventer business in Louisiana in 1958.

His late wife, Gwen, was a native of Hamburg, Arkansas, who worked at Home Federal Savings and Loan in Shreveport, Louisiana, for 26 years. The Coles married in their 40s and had no children of their own, but they helped finance the education of their nieces and nephews, and their children and grandchildren.

Although Cole never attended SFA, he helped a multitude of people obtain their education. The couple retired in Nacogdoches in 1978 and were dedicated SFA supporters. Their generosity impacted students

in fine arts, nursing, audiology and athletic programs. The Coles were avid fans of SFA athletic teams and were members of the SFA Friends of Music and the College of Fine Arts Dean's Circle.

In addition to the Ed and Gwen Cole Art Center and the Ed and Gwen Cole Concert Hall, a student success center located in the Lumberjack Landing residence hall was named in their honor in 2011, and the Ed and Gwen Cole STEM Building opened in 2018.

The Coles' support of SFA includes the following: Ed and Gwen Cole Endowed Scholarship for Music, Ed and Gwen Cole Endowed Scholarship for Theatre, Ed and Gwen Cole Ladyjacks Basketball Scholarship, Ed and Gwen Cole Lumberjacks Basketball Scholarship, Ed and Gwen Cole Audiology Lab, Ed and Gwen Cole Endowed Scholarship in Audiology, Ed and Gwen Cole Simulation Lab – DeWitt School of Nursing, Ed and Gwen Cole Endowed Scholarship for STEM, and the Ron Anderson Endowed Scholarship for Music.

During the May 2019 commencement ceremony, Ed was awarded an honorary doctoral degree. SFA has conferred only seven such degrees in its 96-year history.

In Memoriam



BOB C. DUNN

Former SFA disc jockey and scholarship donor Bob C. Dunn passed away Sept. 3.

Dunn served in the U.S. Air Force from 1950 to 1954. He moved to Nacogdoches in 1959 and operated radio stations KSFA AM and FM 92 from 1959 to 1989. Dunn also was the announcer for SFA football and basketball and for Nacogdoches High School football for many years. He served as the Nacogdoches city commissioner for 10 years, county judge for four years and mayor for three years.



DORIS W. GIBSON

Doris W. Gibson of Longview passed away Oct. 31.

Gibson grew up in the East Texas oil fields and graduated from Talco High School in 1949. She attended SFA and graduated in 1953 with a degree in education. While an SFA student, Gibson was drum major for the Lumberjack Marching Band, Homecoming queen, class favorite and named an SFA beauty. She retired from her teaching career at Pine Tree High School.



PEGGY WEDGEWORTH WRIGHT

Major SFA donor Peggy Wedgeworth Wright passed away Nov. 26.

Peggy lived her entire life in Nacogdoches County. Starting in the fifth grade, she attended classes at the Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College's advanced educational program named the Demonstration School. In 1940, she moved into the regular collegiate program at SFA, majoring in music and English.

During her first year of college, she accepted a blind date with Tom Wright. Two years later, the couple married. During the 29 months they were separated by Tom's military service in Europe, Peggy completed her college degree. After the war, Tom rejoined his family's business, Texas Farm Products Company of Nacogdoches. The couple was married for 70 years until Tom's death in 2012.

In the late 1960s, as her alma mater moved from college to university status, Peggy played an important role in the transition and expansion of the Ex-Student Association into the modern Alumni Association. On the eve of becoming the association's president, Texas Gov. Dolph Briscoe, in recognition of her work, appointed Peggy to the newly created SFA Board of Regents. She served two official terms as a regent, from 1973 to 1983 and from 1987 to 1993. She became the first woman to hold the position of chairman of the

board, an elected office she held twice, from 1980 to 1982 and from 1988 to 1990.

To advance and coordinate SFA endowments, Peggy helped establish and led as treasurer of the SFASU Foundation. Throughout her association with the university, she worked closely with six presidents, countless administrative and planning commissions, and periodic celebratory groups to mark the university's anniversaries.

In addition to service, the Wrights generously gave to SFA. They endowed a lecture series and later consolidated their gifts into the Wedgeworth-Wright Endowment for the Arts. To acknowledge her varied contributions, the SFA Friends of the Arts celebrated Peggy's life by bestowing the title of East Texas Cultural Leader of the Year in 1997. During that same year, she was honored with a Doctorate of Humane Letters — the highest honor the institution bestows and the only woman to have received this distinction. The regents followed in 1999 by naming the music building in honor of Tom and Peggy Wright.

Peggy's other accolades include director, Citizens 1st Bank of Nacogdoches; regent for the Nacogdoches chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; All American Donor, SFA Athletic Fund; Distinguished Member Award, President's Club, and Honorary Life Member, SFA Alumni Association; Honorary Member, SFA Women's Club; Board of Directors, SFA Center for Economic Education of the State of Texas; and Governor's Board, Texas Arts Alliance.

In Memoriam

Ted B. Adams '65 of Lufkin, Dec. 12

Madge G. Askonas '42 of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Dec. 24

Jerry M. Bacon '80 of Lindale, Nov. 17

Susan K. Bell '79 of Allen, Dec. 10

Mary G. Blake '41 of Marietta, Georgia, Oct. 8

Virginia L. Blankenship '73 of Center, Sept. 26

Gregory C. Bond '77 & '80 of Irving, Nov. 6

Jean Rayford Bradshaw '64 & '72 of New London, Nov. 9

Frankie J. Bridges '72 of Texarkana, Oct. 13

Sarah M. Camfield '99 of Brazoria, Dec. 26

George M. Cammack '68 of Nacogdoches, Sept. 3

Ruby Ann Casillas '69 of Ennis, Feb. 18, 2019

Samuel E. Colburn '48 of Tyler, Nov. 26

Mary E. Corbett '78 & '97 of Nacogdoches, Oct. 21

Chad Lee Coulter '95 of Orangefield, Jan. 6

Leah E. Dorsey '86 of Dallas, Oct. 2

Winola W. Ellis '52 of Center, Dec. 4

Mozelle A. Garrison '69 of Henderson, Dec. 2

Carl Clifton Gotti '07 of Fort Collins, Colorado, Sept. 28

Janet E. Grainger '76 of Houston, Dec. 27

Johnnie L. Henderson '75 of Greenville, May 30

James C. Hines Jr. '62 of Jacksonville, Oct. 24

Loretta L. Holbrook '52 & '58 of Tyler, Sept. 29

Gary W. Jay '74 of McKinney, Nov. 28

Joan E. Johnson '61 of Huntington, Sept. 25

Gilbert A. Kalinec '60 & '73 of Gilmer, Sept. 29

Joe D. Kuykendall '84 of Longview, Nov. 3

Stephanie E. London '95 of Houston, Dec. 23

Robert W. McCurry '49 of Granbury, Nov. 16

Nathan D. Newton '72 of Huntsville, Oct. 23

Sandra L. Nolan '70 of Waco, Oct. 14

William F. Osborn II '88 of Bryan, Oct. 12

Dr. John R. Pack '59 of Nacogdoches, Sept. 17

Rocco B. Pelosi '02 of Cedar Park, Nov. 8

Melba Pettiette of Nacogdoches, former SFA employee, Sept. 1

Dorothy L. Rabin '71 of Nacogdoches, May 31

Stephen E. Reese Jr. '55 & '77 of Lewisville, Dec. 31

Amanda S. Reilly '01 of Rowlett, Oct. 21

Robert D. Rheiner Jr. '63 of Bakersfield, California, Nov. 3

Joan S. Rhodes '60 of Nacogdoches, June 8

Ina M. Rowell '70 & '74 of Henderson, Dec. 13

Dietrich Schoennagel '76 of Lufkin, Sept. 28

Edwin Anthony Simon '72 of Cushing, Nov. 19

Clara F. Skinner '59, '76 & '80 of Nacogdoches, Nov. 11

Jannell R. Smith '62 & '75 of Longview, Oct. 24

Katharine M. Smith '71 of Dallas, Oct. 7

Sandra Stanley-Stone '89 of Nacogdoches, Nov. 5

Carolyn Starling '85 of Kilgore, May 31

Dollie D. Stone '49 of Dayton, Sept. 13

Richard D. Tallent '55 & '59 of Nacogdoches, Oct. 4

Edwin N. Tatum '70 of Platte City, Missouri, Dec. 21

James P. Theriot '60 of Arlington, Oct. 23

John B. Toner '75 & '91 of San Augustine, Nov. 15

Angela Rene Rose Turman '84 of Fresno, Texas, June 20

Dr. Nelda S. Wellman '06 of Natchitoches, Louisiana, Sept. 21

David S. West '81 of Fort Worth, June 2

Odis R. Wheeler '58 of Nacogdoches, Oct. 4

Dr. Thomas Joseph Wood '61 & '67 of Council Hill, Oklahoma, Feb. 16, 2019



SFA students

Dorothea J. "Janie" Arriola of Nacogdoches, Dec. 2

Ginger I. Lustig of Jacksonville, Nov. 9

Matthew Brett Nelson of Skidmore, Feb. 17

Class Notes

1950s

Dr. L. Turner Collins '59 of Springfield, Missouri, professor emeritus of biology at Evangel University, recently published his research on the genus *Orobanche* in the Flora of North America Project. Since 1999, Collins has been working on the FNA Project, which is a collaborative effort between dozens of institutions and organizations to describe all 20,100-plus plants found in the United States and Canada.

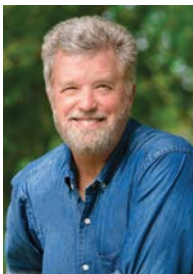
1960s

Gary Ashlock '63 & '68 of Ocala, Florida, was recently honored by the Malakoff Independent School District as a Hall of Fame career educator and coach. Ashlock played basketball at SFA for two years before going on to coach and teach for 50 years in districts and at community colleges across Texas and Florida.

Raymond Thomas '64 of Carthage was inducted into the National Association of Military Marching Bands.

1970s

→ **E. Russell Brazier '72 & '73** of Houston has published the novel "Kado: Lost Treasure of the Kadohadacho." The book translates the historical realities of the early 1800s frontier for middle grade to young adult readers.



← **Dr. David Allard '74**, professor of biology at Texas A&M University at Texarkana, was recently named a 2018-19 Regents Professor Award winner by the Texas A&M University System board of regents. The award program recognizes professors in the A&M system who have made exemplary contributions to their university and to the people of Texas.

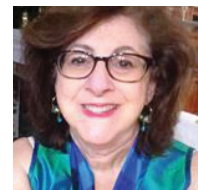
Gov. Greg Abbott appointed **Cliff Todd '74** of Long Branch to serve a term on the Sabine River Authority board of directors.

John R. "Bob" Garrett '75 of Tyler, former SFA regent and president of Fair Oil Company of Texas, received the T.B. Butler Award for outstanding citizenship.



Billy Mangham '75 of San Marcos, an internationally known artist, exhibited his pieces as part of the grand opening of the San Marcos Art League in October.

→ **Dede Fox '77** of The Woodlands is the Montgomery County poet laureate. She also recently published her novel "On Wings of Silence."



Dottie Sheffield '78 of Dallas was added to Harper Bates & Champion's litigation group.

Brad Streit '79 of Tyler retired as Gray Television's senior vice president of local media after a decades-long distinguished career in the broadcast industry.

1980s

Dr. Paula Griffin '81, '83 & '14 of Nacogdoches received the 2019 Leadership in Education Award presented by Project Learning Tree, an environmental education program. The award recognized Griffin's work in training SFA preservice teachers using the PLT curriculum. She will represent Texas at the national PLT award level in late 2020.



← **John Drake '83**, Baylor Scott & White Irving Foundation president, earned the designation of fellow from the Virginia-based Association for Healthcare Philanthropy. This is the highest honor the group bestows and is attained by fewer than 2% of members.

Dr. Tedd L. Mitchell '83 of Lubbock left his position as president of the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center to become chancellor of the Texas Tech University System.

Class Notes

Mike Franks '84 of Elkhart is the founder, president and CEO of DataTrans Solutions Inc.

Phillip Kevin Bryant '85 of Austin and his wife, Susan, were featured in an October 2019 MarketWatch story. The article discusses the couple's retirement to Spain, where they are able to comfortably live on \$2,000 a month.

➔ **Gary Pugh '87 & '88** of Lubbock retired from public education after 30 years. He's excited to be able to spend more time with his grandson, River.



← **Larry Redmon '87** of College Station, associate department head and Agrilife Extension program leader for the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University, recently was named an American Society of Agronomy Fellow.

Rhonda Kay Walker '87 & '91 of Wichita, Kansas, received the 2019 Center High School Alumni Association Hall of Honor Award.

Steven Daughety '88 of Jacksonville was appointed county auditor of Cherokee County in October.

Carol Ritter '88 of Houston was named executive director of Romance Writers of America Inc.

Todd Whitten '88 signed a six-year contract extension to remain the Tarleton State University head football coach.

Julie Watts '89 of Tyler was named chief financial officer for Starpoint.

1990s

➔ **Kevin Cooper '90** of Austin was promoted to chief of media and government relations for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security. Cooper is a former regional director to current NATO Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison and was a lobbyist before rejoining DPS after a 20-year departure from the agency.



The University of Texas at San Antonio named **Jeff Traylor '90 & '02** as the university's new head football coach.

Dr. James Hockenberry '91, '99, '00 & '03 was named assistant superintendent of human resources and community relations for Longview Independent School District.

➔ **Tricia Beck Strickfaden '91** of Manhattan Beach, California, started TS Modern Art in 1995. Her black-and-white series recently was bought exclusively by Ann Taylor and will be showcased in 190 of its retail stores.



Catharine Knight '92 of Allen started a kindness project in 2017 where she distributes handwritten notes. Since then, she's created more than 23,000 and traveled to 18 different states and four different countries to distribute them.

Ben Norton '93 and his wife, Kelli, of Austin announced the birth of their son, Henry Cain Norton, in December.

Dr. Michael Sawyer '93 of Kansas City, Missouri, was appointed dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Central Missouri.



← **David M. Baskin '94** of Sachse was elected Most Excellent Grand High Priest for the Masonic Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas.

Wendy Feigenbaum '95 of Ormond Beach, Florida, was hired by the Futures Foundation as a college success coach.

Dr. Shelby Melton '97 & '99 of Dallas co-authored the article "Randomized Trial of Medical versus Surgical Treatment for Refractory Heartburn," which was published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

2000s



← **Derek Bowman '00** was named director of personnel and administrative services for Navasota Independent School District.

Roger W. Mangham '00 of Little Rock, Arkansas, joined the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission as deputy director in November.

D. Robert Holcomb '01 was promoted to senior counsel of digital at 7-Eleven Inc. in Irving.

Class Notes

Christie Glenn-Moore '02 of DeBerry was promoted to program director of The Martin House Children's Advocacy Center.

→ **Lisa McInnis '02** of New Albany, Mississippi, was named the new chief of resource management and science for Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



← **Rebecca Kitchens '03 & '06** of Henderson is a faculty member in Auburn University's School of Communication and Journalism.



Hermann Pereira '05 was hired by Prosper Waco, a nonprofit geared toward collaborative efforts to improve community education, income and health outcomes.



← **Stephanie (Sipes) Ellis '06** of Longview and her husband, Matt, welcomed their first child, son Sutton, in August.

Dr. Daniel Spikes '07 was hired as Lufkin Independent School District's assistant superintendent of administrative services.

→ **Dr. Patricia Nation '08** of Tyler, a trustee for the Tyler Independent School District, was selected to participate in an education leadership study program that allows her to become a master trustee.



Alissa Tschappat '09 was named Spring Leadership Academy's September Teacher of the Month.

Share your Lumberjack story!

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

sfasu.edu/sawdust

2010s



← **Rebecca Newman '12** of San Antonio married Michael Mockerman Jr. in September.

Harold Bateman Jr. '14 of Davenport, Iowa, was sworn in as a Davenport Police Department officer in January.

Mallory Thomas '14 joined the News on 6 team in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Bailey Coll '18 of Roswell, New Mexico, joined the Roswell Museum and Art Center as an instructor.

Life Members

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

- 8283. Elizabeth J. Simoneaux '19, Alvin
- 8349. John M. Mars '99, Talco
- 8350. Jamee L. Mars '07, Talco
- 8351. Judith A. Olson '83, Spring
- 8352. Lee L. Mason '04, Fort Worth
- 8353. Stacy E. Mason '00 & '05, Fort Worth
- 8354. Kyle W. Sanders '07, Nacogdoches
- 8355. Autumn B. Sanders '05, Nacogdoches
- 8356. Kerry D. Whitsett '02 & '12, Nacogdoches
- 8357. Hiliary Cheyenne Swor '18, Diboll
- 8358. Rebecca Powell Hill '98 & '07, Woodville
- 8359. Cassandra N. Givas '18, Lewisville
- 8360. Christopher D. McGuire '12, Little Elm
- 8361. Pamela L. McGuire '14, Little Elm
- 8362. Dr. Robert M. Crocker, Nacogdoches
- 8363. Cheryil D. Crocker '12, Nacogdoches
- 8364. Joseph F. Hudson '19, Marshall
- 8365. Vincent E. Beard '97, Nacogdoches
- 8366. Angela L. Beard '98, Nacogdoches
- 8367. Jessica C. Miller '19, Nacogdoches



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State University

Archie McDonald Speaker Series



KENDRA SCOTT

FASHION DESIGNER, CEO
AND PHILANTHROPIST

April 20 · 7:30 p.m.

Baker Pattillo Student Center, Grand Ballroom

sfasu.edu/archie

Free event passes are available at SFA's student center information desk and Involvement Center as well as at the Charles Bright Visitor Center, 200 East Main St.