

Sawdust

WINTER 2021

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

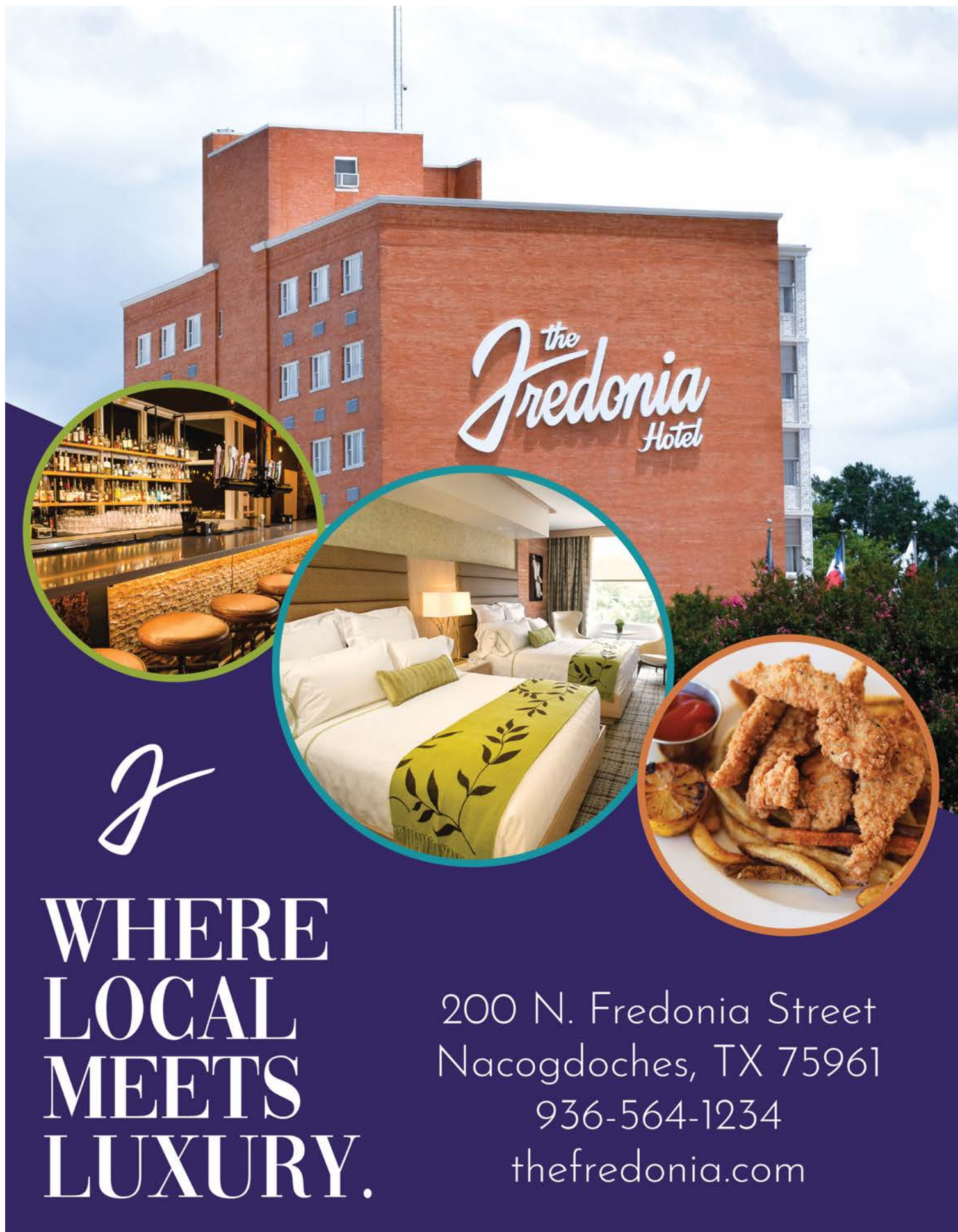


BILL ELLIOTT
President
Elliott Electric
Supply

ELEVATE SFA

EDUCATE ★ CELEBRATE ★ PARTICIPATE

Comprehensive capital campaign launches to provide support for students, faculty, facilities and programs

The advertisement features a large background image of the Fredonia Hotel, a multi-story brick building with a prominent sign that reads "the Fredonia Hotel". Three circular inset images are overlaid on the left side: the top one shows a well-stocked bar with various bottles and glasses; the middle one shows a hotel room with two beds, white linens, and a green patterned throw; the bottom one shows a plate of food, including fried chicken, fries, and a tomato-based sauce. The text "WHERE LOCAL MEETS LUXURY." is written in a large, white, serif font on the left. The address, phone number, and website are listed in a white, sans-serif font on the right.

the
Fredonia
Hotel

I

**WHERE
LOCAL
MEETS
LUXURY.**

200 N. Fredonia Street
Nacogdoches, TX 75961
936-564-1234
thefredonia.com

President's Letter

"We have so many stories to tell about the people of SFA. Our students and alumni are amazing people who are changing the world for better, thanks to the guidance and mentoring of faculty, staff and friends throughout our Lumberjack community."



IT IS TIME to Elevate SFA.

For nearly 100 years, Stephen F. Austin State University has been an incredible force in East Texas. Like the piney woods surrounding the campus, there was a day when even the idea of an institution like what we have today was just a seed, a hope. In our first century, we have reached incredible heights, always climbing into the bright, expansive Texas sky.

In this spirit, announcing our largest fundraising campaign ever – with a goal of \$100 million – gives us all a charge to reach higher and see farther.

We are building our campaign on four pillars – student scholarships, faculty support, program support and facility enhancements. You can read more in the pages of this issue of Sawdust and on our campaign website at sfasu.edu/elevate.

The progress of the campaign is already staggering. While the quiet phase began several years ago, upon the public announcement during this fall's Homecoming weekend, we announced having raised nearly \$80 million already. In the Board of Regents meeting that followed a few days later, we officially recognized Bill and the late Micky

Elliott for their generosity. The College of Fine Arts will now be known as the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts in their honor.

We have so many stories to tell about the people of SFA. Our students and alumni are amazing people who are changing the world for better, thanks to the guidance and mentoring of faculty, staff and friends throughout our Lumberjack community. We see more people to serve, more subjects to learn, more knowledge to share and more industry to transform.

We are at new heights, and our forest of influence is expanding. We have benefited from generations before us. We carry on their legacy and see what we can do to keep SFA on a trajectory of healthy growth. We share what has been passed to us and what we have learned for ourselves. Greater discovery is ahead.

Together we cooperate, and together we will elevate this fine institution so that it can be seen as a source of strength and opportunity throughout East Texas and beyond.

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Dr. Scott Gordon
President
Stephen F. Austin State University



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Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.





Welcoming Jacks Back Since 1923

Coming back to SFA and to Nacogdoches can be quite the experience for those who came of age here. In a way, it's a little like coming home. For almost 100 years, Nac has welcomed back Jacks with wide open arms and a warm, familiar embrace. If you're ready to relive a few memories or make some new ones, we have a *Nac* for that!

Plan your visit back on the Visit Nac app or at VisitNac.com.



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ON THE COVER:

Bill Elliott honored the memory of his late wife, Micky, with a pledge of

\$8 million to support scholarships for SFA fine arts students. After graduation from Louisiana Tech University, where Bill was a music major and Micky was a student worker in the music department, the couple relocated to Nacogdoches, where they established Elliott Electric in 1972. The company has grown to more than 165 locations across nine states. The gift was made in conjunction with SFA's \$100 million fundraising campaign, Elevate SFA. Photo by Robin Johnson '99 & '19

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Sawdust

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RANCHLANDS AND RESEARCH

STORY BY SARAH FULLER '08 & '13



WILKINS LEADS THE MISSION OF SOUTH TEXAS' EAST FOUNDATION

Bouncing along the sandy roads that weave through the East Foundation's 27,000-acre El Sauz Ranch, Dr. Neal Wilkins '84 punctuates his discussion of the ranch's history by pointing out wildlife that stirs at the sound of the all-terrain vehicle approaching. While there is no shortage of wildlife sightings during the drive — nilgai (a non-native antelope species introduced to Texas in the 1930s), Rio Grande wild turkeys and crested caracara — one key species remains unseen, awaiting nightfall in the dense South Texas shrubland.

Standing atop a towering sand dune, Wilkins gestures to the expanse of oak shrubland below.

"This is the last domain of the ocelot," Wilkins said. "The largest single population remaining in Texas — in the United States — is right here on this property."

Wilkins' career of more than 30 years in natural resources and wildlife management is highlighted by a track record of confronting ecological challenges. Past research subjects include several endangered species, as well as

the challenges posed by land fragmentation on conserving wildlife habitats and agricultural sustainability in Texas.

"I'm probably more associated with doing research on species that are at the nexus of the land management and policy problem," Wilkins said. "Whereas some people consider themselves ornithologists, mammalogists or herpetologists, or they focus on one particular ecosystem, I focus on one particular kind of problem."

As president and CEO of the East Foundation, Wilkins leads the mission of one of the largest native rangeland holdings in Texas. The foundation, comprising six separate working ranches totaling more than 217,000 acres, promotes the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science and education. The foundation's properties operate as a working beef cattle ranch while also serving as a living laboratory where scientists tackle vital questions related to wildlife management, rangeland health and ranch productivity.

Because more than half of the remaining U.S. ocelots are found on East Foundation properties, the recovery of this endangered species is a key research and conservation initiative.

Larger than the common house cat, but slightly smaller than a bobcat, ocelots once roamed most of Texas, as well as portions of Arizona, Arkansas and Louisiana. In the U.S., the species known for its cream-colored fur and striking brown and black markings now number fewer than 80.

While the fur and pet trades are contributing factors to historic ocelot population decline, overwhelming habitat loss and fragmentation due to agricultural and urban development is the leading factor in this species' struggle to survive. ➔

Comprising six separate ranches, the East Foundation is located within the ecological region known as the Coastal Sand Plains or the South Texas Sand Sheet. Visitors to this region discover the unique confluence of coastal prairies and marshes, as well as dense South Texas shrubland. Pictured is one of the migrating sand dunes located on the foundation's El Sauz Ranch. The dunes, the highest elevation being about 800 feet, are created by sand blown inland from the Gulf of Mexico.

Photo by Wyman Meinzer

At 217,000 acres, the East Foundation is one of Texas' largest ranch holdings and serves as a living laboratory supporting research and education to promote wildlife management, rangeland health and ranch productivity.

Photo by Wyman Meinzer



"We have somewhere in the neighborhood of 35 to 40 ocelots on the El Sauz Ranch, and we recently helped produce a feature film titled 'American Ocelot,'" Wilkins said. "It lays out what we think is the plight of the ocelot and the path to recovery in Texas on private lands."

The East Foundation also is working with scientists at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and partners at the Cincinnati Zoo to ultimately develop a breeding program utilizing semen obtained from male ocelots on the foundation's properties. Their plan is to establish a captive breeding program with resulting ocelots to be reintroduced to suitable habitats elsewhere in the wild.

While the largest threats to the remaining ocelot population are human driven, including habitat loss and vehicle collisions, Wilkins stresses the fact that one significant natural disaster could wipe out the entire remaining population.

In July 2020, Hurricane Hanna made landfall in South Texas, moving directly over the center of ocelot habitat. Thankfully, the Category 1 storm only produced a roughly 3-foot storm surge. Just one month later, Category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall along the Texas and Louisiana coasts, bringing with it a storm surge of more than 17 feet.

"Most wild ocelots in Texas live in habitats below 20 feet in elevation," Wilkins noted. "If Hurricane Hanna had been as powerful as Hurricane Laura, we probably would not be talking about ocelots today. You can knock out an isolated population with one single hurricane, so we're living on borrowed time."

As with many in the field of natural resources, Wilkins' passion for nature began during childhood.

"Every single opportunity my parents had when I was growing up, we were on the road with our tent or camper headed somewhere in Colorado, New Mexico or Texas," Wilkins said. "I was just completely fascinated by the natural world."

That fascination led Wilkins to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Forestry at SFA and ultimately took him across the globe.

After earning a master's degree from Texas A&M University and a doctoral degree from the University of Florida, Wilkins worked for Port Blakely Tree Farms, a family-owned timber company in the Pacific Northwest. The company soon expanded its forested footprint to New Zealand.

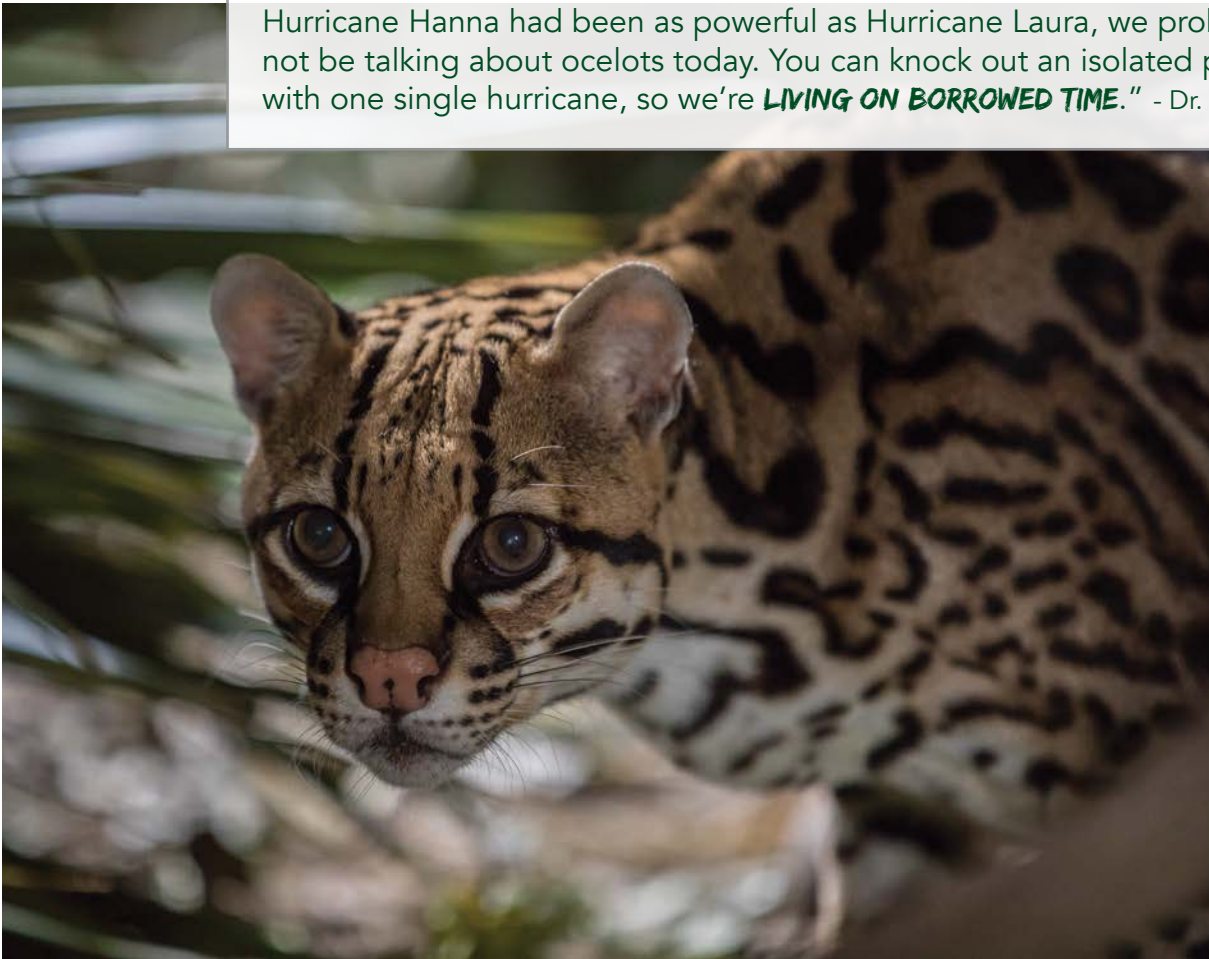
"I would spend six to seven weeks at a time in New Zealand helping manage our assets, and since I was in charge of our wildlife and environmental compliance, we had to negotiate with the indigenous Māori people," Wilkins said. "A lot of their concerns were conservation related."

Back in Washington and Oregon, Wilkins led the company's efforts to conserve important fish and wildlife resources while maintaining sustainable timber harvests across more than 100,000 acres of private forestlands. This included the development of one of the region's first habitat conservation plans for northern spotted owls and other species of concern.



Dr. Neal Wilkins' career has taken him around the globe to address wildlife and environmental conservation issues. Prior to his appointment as president and CEO of the East Foundation, Wilkins served as a professor at Texas A&M University and directed the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources and the Texas Water Resources Institute.

"Most **WILD OCELOTS IN TEXAS** live in habitats below 20 feet in elevation. If Hurricane Hanna had been as powerful as Hurricane Laura, we probably would not be talking about ocelots today. You can knock out an isolated population with one single hurricane, so we're **LIVING ON BORROWED TIME.**" - Dr. Neal Wilkins '84



The ocelot, an endangered species, is one of the many wildlife species that call the East Foundation properties home. Because more than half of all remaining U.S. ocelots are found on the foundation's properties, the recovery of this small, native feline is a key research and conservation initiative.

Photo by Fin & Fur Films



In 1998, Wilkins and his wife, Sandra, eventually returned to Texas where he served as a professor at Texas A&M and directed the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources and the Texas Water Resources Institute until 2012.

Although no longer a professor, Wilkins continues to serve as a mentor in his current leadership role, placing great emphasis on cultivating the next generation of natural resource professionals.

While much of this is done via the numerous graduate research projects occurring on East Foundation properties, it also includes investing in underserved South Texas communities to help ensure school-age children are exposed to science and the outdoors.

The foundation's Behind the Gates program brings thousands of students from across South Texas to East Foundation properties to participate in interactive science lessons and outdoor learning experiences.

Wilkins attributes the success of the East Foundation's programs to a staff of talented managers and scientists who are wholly dedicated to the foundation's mission.

"Somebody somewhere in the United States is training the next U.S. Department of the Interior secretary," Wilkins said. "Somebody is training the next administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the next chief of the U.S. Forest Service, the next director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nobody is doing it on purpose. We're trying to be an outfit that is doing it on purpose." ★

The East family, for whom the East Foundation is named, managed their properties for cattle production and wildlife conservation for roughly a century. Today, the foundation continues that mission with the goal of improving wildlife, native forage and rangeland health through scientific research and sound land management.

Photo by Wyman Meinzer

*Mister Sweeper
President Jodie
Thompson '92 leads
60 employees. The
company operates 57
sweeper trucks with
contracts to clean
more than 50,000 curb
miles of city streets.
He said the company's
employees are its
greatest asset.*

oH, THaNK HeaVeN!

SFA alum provides service
to keep the environment clean

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

PHOTOS BY HARDY MEREDITH '81



AS A COLLEGE student, Jodie Thompson '92 took a 600-question career interest survey and was told he should choose a career as a park ranger or business owner. Today, his office walls are adorned with impressive trophies of his many hunting and fishing successes and don't provide many clues regarding which career path he chose. However, the desk sitting in the middle of the space is a monument to the entrepreneurial legacy his ancestors established.

Becoming a business owner may have been a foregone conclusion.

Thompson's grandfather, Joe C. Thompson, opened the first 7-Eleven store and founded the chain that would grow to include more than 70,000 stores. Jodie's family invented the Slurpee that helped make the franchise an icon in the 1980s and popularized the company slogan, "Oh, thank heaven for 7-Eleven."

"My grandfather had worked for an ice company, and one of the employees said customers were asking for other items — like milk and bread," Thompson explained. "So, they added those items to the horse-drawn wagon, and a few months later, the employee came back with a box full of cash. Sitting at this desk, my grandfather



quickly realized those additional items needed to be at every location, and that idea spurred the idea for the convenience stores.”

When Thompson arrived on the SFA campus, it was his first trip to Nacogdoches, and he did not know a soul.

“I was driving around town trying to get my bearings and looking for a place to live. I kept passing the Catholic Student Center, and I finally decided to take a break and drop in,” he recalled. “I met the priest and learned that the apartment behind the church would be available the following year. My roommates were forestry majors, so it was just a great situation. My experience with the Catholic Student Center really helped me refocus my attention on my faith, and that has had a long-term impact on my life.”

That focus, and his bachelor’s degree in finance, plays a major role in Thompson’s leadership of Mister Sweeper, a company his family purchased in 2006.

“When we bought this business, we were blessed that the employees were individuals with a lot of experience. We employ approximately 60 people with a record 610 years of combined service. You don’t find that longevity everywhere. We value employees — they are a company’s greatest asset. We try to go above and beyond to make it like a family.”

Making the decision to purchase the company reflects his family’s entrepreneurial spirit.

“My dad instilled a strong work ethic in my sisters and me,” Thompson said. “I worked every summer, and from the entrepreneurial perspective, you have to ask yourself if you want to take risks, and are the risks worthwhile? And secondly, do you always want to work for someone else, or do you want to work for yourself?”

Now the largest privately owned sweeping contractor in Texas, Mister Sweeper handles sweeping for about 700 properties and 50,000 curb miles of city streets, including contracts with the cities of Dallas, Frisco, Lewisville, Rockwall and Houston. The company also offers pressure washing, striping, porter services and roll-off rentals. There’s a satellite office in Houston with 15 employees.

“Some of these are daily or weekly jobs, and some are monthly or quarterly, but it results in us cleaning parking lots almost 50,000 times per year.”

Mister Sweeper was named 2020 contractor of the year by the North Texas chapter of the American Public Works Association. Nominated by the City of Frisco, the award was the result of technology the company utilizes that improves the customer experience. ➔

“God has entrusted this business to me, and I need to take care of the employees. Work is work, but I want to create an environment that makes people always want to come back.”

- JODIE THOMPSON '92

“We previously used paper route sheets, and drivers had a set amount of time to complete work at each property,” Thompson said. “I did away with that and just told drivers to get it clean, regardless of how long it took. Sometimes a job will take longer because of a storm or a change in wind direction, but the next day, that will even itself out. Now, all the drivers come in and grab a tablet. They have site plans and other data at their fingertips so that they can do the best possible job.”

Thompson offers other benefits not commonly available to employees of small businesses. The company provides a marketplace chaplain who provides on-site confidential counseling one day a week and visits with employees' hospitalized family members, upon request.

“It's just something extra that few companies provide,” he said. “In this day and age, you have to do everything you can to attract and retain great employees.”

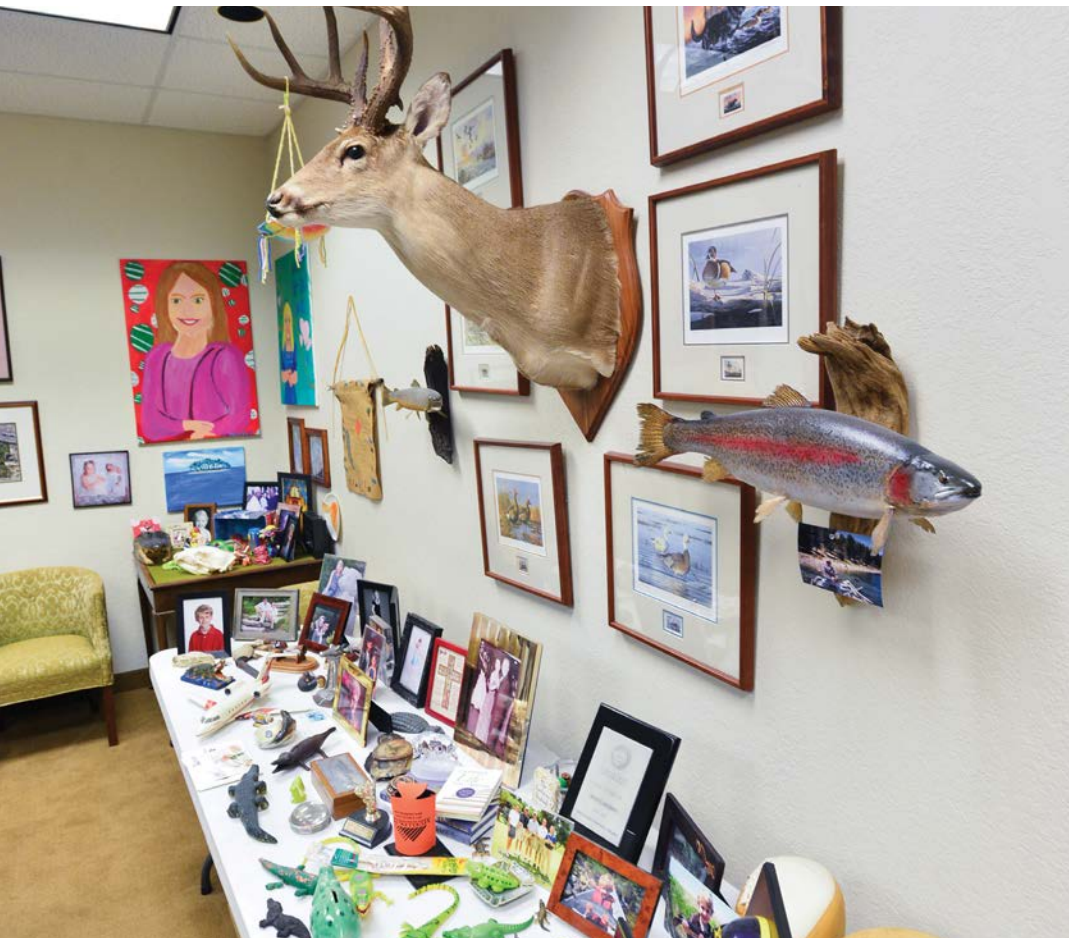
Thompson gives some credit for his success to Convene, a Christian-based CEO group that offers executive coaching and leadership development.

“My faith is so important to me, and it is really helpful to prayerfully lead a business,” he said. “God has entrusted this business to me, and I need to take care of the employees. Work is work, but I want to create an environment that makes people always want to come back.”

Mister Sweeper operated continuously during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Thompson taking precautions to help keep his employees and clients safe.

“When the mandate requiring face masks was announced, it was impossible to find them,” he said. “We went and bought bed sheets and spread them out on the conference table and cut them into bandanas. We provided those to employees so we could comply with the mandate, and our employees could continue working.”

Jodie Thompson's affinity for the outdoors, his entrepreneurial spirit and his degree in finance from SFA solidified in his ownership of Mister Sweeper, the largest privately owned sweeping contractor in Texas.



In spite of the pandemic, Mister Sweeper finished the year with 98% of its projected revenue.

"The construction boom that began during the pandemic helped make up for the businesses that reduced their cleaning schedules," Thompson explained. "Track out is a big business for us. Construction companies need help cleaning up the dirt that's tracked onto streets by vehicles leaving construction sites."

But COVID-19 isn't the first hurdle Thompson has faced — the Great Recession began the year after he purchased the company, and the price of fuel subsequently increased from \$1.50 to \$4.78 a gallon.

"Our trucks get seven or eight miles per gallon of gas, so you are looking at a cost increase from 20 cents per mile to 70 cents per mile," he said. "It has been a roller coaster."

Thompson looks to complete a construction project of his own, consolidating Mister Sweeper, currently housed on three separate properties, onto one nearby property.

"It will be nice to have all our employees in one location," he explained. "Our staff is meticulous about maintenance, and this allows us to extend the life of our vehicles. We have some trucks with more than 400,000 miles. At the new property, we have a covered area so that these employees don't have to be out in the weather when they are working."

While property sweeping always has been considered an important service — patrons are more likely to return to an establishment that is clean and well maintained — a recent study showed that street sweeping is the best management practice to prevent storm water pollution. "Most cities now have a storm water pollution prevention plan, since sweeping plays a major role in reducing pollutants in streams. Debris that goes down storm drains ends up in rivers and lakes," Thompson said.

Increased concerns about environmental impacts have shored up the necessity for Mister Sweeper's service, but it's also attracted competition from national entities breaking into the business.

"Reputation is so hard to establish and so easy to lose," Thompson said. "We haven't tried to be the lowest-cost provider, and we don't cut corners. We have a lot of work, and it behooves us to do the job right the first time. Take care of customers, and they will want you back." ★



In addition to making businesses more appealing to prospective customers, research has shown street sweeping helps prevent stormwater pollution by reducing the amount of debris that enters into storm drains and is subsequently deposited into rivers and lakes. According to epa.gov, most of the trash that pollutes rivers, lakes and oceans comes from land sources. Preventing this contamination protects the physical habitat and aquatic life, while improving opportunities for human use of rivers, marine and coastal environments.

Vista Viewpoint / By Lacie Shepherd, nursing student



College during COVID: A student's perspective

I DID NOT expect my college experience would change so drastically when I began as an SFA student in fall 2019.

My passion for helping others led me from Fort Worth to Nacogdoches to pursue a nursing degree. My career choice was solidified when I experienced my own hospitalizations — having twice torn my ACL while playing soccer in high school. Under the watchful eyes of doctors, nurses, physical therapists and other health care professionals, I healed and came to know nursing was my calling. What I didn't know was COVID-19 would soon change everything.

The first time I recall hearing about the virus was in March 2020 during spring break. My mom and I attended a wedding, and we were talking with the bride during the reception. I remember her saying she was concerned about the lockdown. A few days later, I received notification from SFA that the university would extend spring break by two days to provide time for professors to move classes to an online format. We could arrange to return to campus and collect things from our residence halls for class, but otherwise, attending classes on campus was over for the immediate future.

The adjustment was difficult, as it was nearing the end of the semester, and adapting to new modes of learning was hard. Many students also were not prepared to deal with technology issues, such as not having reliable internet access and some not owning computers.

When I returned to campus in fall 2020, it was still so different and eerie. The campus felt empty, as many students chose to continue online learning from home. Face coverings were required, which, although very necessary, made interacting difficult. My mental health was affected

because on-campus events were canceled, and it wasn't safe to gather with friends. College life was quite different than I had imagined, and as a student in the pre-nursing program, I knew the health risks and followed the mandates.

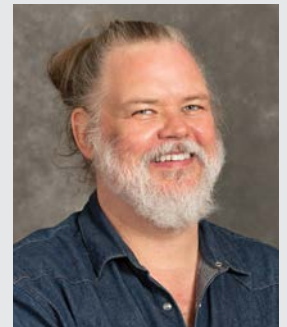
It was a trying time for everyone and intensified when family and friends became ill. Worrying about their welfare, taking classes, being away from home and feeling helpless were stressful. As the semester slowly ticked by, things seemed to improve. And by Christmas, there was serious talk a vaccine would soon be available.

As spring 2021 got underway, we still kept our distance from each other, stayed masked and sat widely apart in classrooms. As spring progressed, the vaccine became available, and as soon as I received an email saying I could be vaccinated through clinics on campus, I immediately signed up. I took my first round in March and second dose in April.

Now back on campus for fall 2021, things seem to have returned to some kind of normalcy. All my classes are in person. Events on campus are taking place. There's activity across campus, the dining halls are open, student organizations are meeting, athletic events are in full swing, and there's a glimmer of what I had envisioned college would be like.

I have become involved with the Wesley Foundation campus ministry, joined the Sigma Phi Lambda sorority, have a new job working at Boot Barn and have been able to reconnect with my friends. I am hopeful things will continue to improve, campus will remain open, and we can absorb the full Lumberjack experience. I am looking forward to spending the holidays with my family this year. ★

Work Space / Inside Dr. Court Carney's Office



DR. COURT CARNEY
Professor of History

1. Carney likes to keep mementos from his classes, especially when his students stumble into accidental poetry during discussions. He has them write down and sign their comments. One of the postcards on the wall alludes to the proverb, "Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter," which points to the saying that winners write history. Carney said the lion proverb complicates and intensifies the relationship between the past and the present and the ways in which these stories get passed down and appropriated — a prompt to interrogate his own writing and the viewpoints therein.
2. A poster of American novelist, playwright, essayist, poet and activist James Baldwin hangs on the wall. Carney said Baldwin's writing, especially his essays, speak to the "convoluted map of reckoning and denial in the United States." He added that decades after Baldwin's death, everything he wrote about — the impoverished national mind, the punch-gut brutality of the everyday, the blues motif of the American paradox — is still with us today.
3. Music plays an enormous role in Carney's life. The music of the band Wilco has circulated through much of his life during the past quarter century. This concert poster from a show in Fort Worth in 2006 has long appealed to Carney with its surrealist ear.
4. A friend and co-worker of Carney's purchased and gifted him this doll because she thought it resembled him with its denim shirt, long hair and beard.
5. "The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara" rests on the back of the love seat. Carney has read the final section of O'Hara's poem "Mayakovsky" to many different classes in many different contexts. Carney said the words, "Now I am quietly waiting for the catastrophe of my personality to seem beautiful again, and interesting, and modern," continue to evoke some feeling at once undeniably modern and forever just out of grasp.
6. Carney's first book, "Cuttin' Up: How Early Jazz Got America's Ear," stemmed from his doctoral dissertation and examined how jazz music, with its origins as a particular form of Black folk music in New Orleans, became the defining popular music of the United States by the 1930s.
7. The poster of Bob Dylan was acquired during a conference at which Carney presented a few years ago. He asked one of the speakers, a writer who had a significant impact on Carney early in his career, to sign the poster, which depicts Dylan sitting in front of a bar menu featuring fried clams. Carney thought it was a fun, goofy request, but the speaker didn't see the humor. He begrudgingly signed it anyway. Carney said the whole 90-second interaction was comically weird, another reminder that the world of academics should be filled with laughter instead of the anxious joylessness that so often defines it.
8. A former student and current friend, Christine Broussard, was the recipient of the 2020-21 William R. Johnson Outstanding Thesis Award for her Master of Arts in history thesis (which Carney directed) on the dissemination and marketing of Cajun music. Carney keeps a copy of the plaque as a reminder of the proud moment.
9. A collection of photos and album covers sits on the shelf. One is a framed photograph of members of Duke Ellington's band, snapped by acclaimed photographer Gordon Parks. Carney said they are nice reminders of the continued resonance of music and musical performance and to never undervalue the power of the creative impulse and musical expression.
10. Several years ago, Carney taught a course on the TV show "Mad Men." At the end of the semester, he was presented with this photo collage of the class posing in the elevator in the Ferguson Building on campus. He said the elevator serves as a repeating metaphor in the show and played a recurring role in his class. ★



‘KATALYZING’ CREATIVITY

Graphic designer,
photographer explores
vulnerability and life
through surrealist sets

STORY BY CHRISTINE BROUSSARD '10 & '20

PHOTOS BY KAT ALYST '11

IF KAT ALYST'S '11 photography was a music genre, what would it be? It may seem like an odd question, but when I view Alyst's art, I hear music. Her crystalline pinks sound like the Cocteau Twins' shoegaze beats, while her bright blues play chillwave notes you'd expect from Washed Out or Toro y Moi. What do you hear?

To experience synesthesia — or the perception of one sensory modality in another, like seeing music — while viewing Alyst's work is fitting. A lot of her art is borne from her own predisposition to synesthesia.

"Color combinations from sentences or words inspire me often," she explained. "A flash of color or texture pops in my mind when I see certain things, so I run with how it feels to see these colors or this abstract imagery. I try to transition it from abstract mind puddles to a narrative with physical elements."

The answer to the genre question would be "a little bit of a lot of them, and a lot of a few of them." Pop, punk, a little yacht rock, with dashes of country and classical music peppered in — all of these sounds spill out of the more than 800 photo shoots Alyst has done since 2015.

The Lufkin native has made a name for herself in the bicoastal art worlds. In just the past few years, her work has appeared in

*Graphic designer
and photographer
Kat Alyst '11 →*

Vogue, New York Weekly, LA Weekly and The Los Angeles Tribune, among others.

Recognition of Alyst's name seems to be growing still (she's nearing 40,000 followers on Instagram) and, while surreal, each new recognition is her own catalyst to continue creating.

"I spent years emailing my work nonstop before getting a 'yes,' and in the meantime, I continued shooting, creating and brainstorming," she said. "I caught a couple small features at first, and each has been a lifeline to keep me motivated. I learned that rejections aren't personal — it's all timing and business. If you don't fit in at one point, eventually you might. And as long as you're doing what's true and right for you, the rest doesn't even matter."

GROWING UP ON THE MOVE

Alyst moved a lot in high school — by her estimate about 11 times, though always to locations tucked behind East Texas' beautiful pine curtain.



"I was always in the woods on a lot of land, exploring, climbing trees, running from cows and burying things with a homemade map," Alyst said. "A lot of time capsules are still buried out in Beulah with notes from my 1998 self to my future self."

She self-describes as someone who, in her youth, "sunburned easily, didn't wear jeans, or relate to ranching or horseback riding." Creativity was her outlet, and she often crafted any random thing she could cobble together.

Choosing to stay in East Texas for college to be near her mother, who was sick, Alyst originally enrolled at SFA to study psychology. A 2D design class quickly changed her mind and her major.

Alyst graduated from SFA in 2011 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design and photography. She fondly recalls more art faculty members than there is space here to recount, including the late Gary Fields, Ron King, Jill Carrington, Chris Talbot, Robert Kinsell and Gary Parker. →



“I hope to forever create a space that holds a safety net for viewers who may need additional support with their internal struggles or whatever it is they aren’t talking about yet. I believe the only way to remind people how they aren’t alone is simply by sharing and opening up more about our vulnerabilities.”

- Kat Alyst ’11

“Linda Post became one of my favorite professors,” Alyst said. “I loved that she was from New York because I really loved art from New York at that time, so she was extra cool to me. She also always supported my weird digital media videos and encouraged me to go for my wild ideas.”

Faculty members also fondly remember Alyst’s time at the university.

“Kat was in a number of my digital media art classes,” Post said. “She was always a dynamic, confident artist ready to soak up all she could and experiment in her work. Her drive, energy, fearlessness and kind, kind heart stood out.”

ART AND INSPIRATION

The day after graduating from SFA, Alyst moved to Austin. Aside from a small stint working in the New Orleans film industry beginning in 2016, she still lives in Texas’ weirdest city and works predominantly between Austin, Los Angeles and New York.

For several years, she lived a nomadic lifestyle, living job to job and seeing if she could make photography a full-time profession. Now, Alyst works as a graphic designer by day and a photographer by what spare time

she can find. Her photography expertise is all over the artistic map — she’s done everything from fashion editorial shoots to wedding photography and enjoys it all.

“A lot of photographers only focus on one type of photography, like they’ll only shoot products and not people because it’s all very different thinking, lighting setups and planning,” Alyst explained. “But I wanted to remain open to every experience because, in my opinion, that is not only how you grow, but it also just makes you more knowledgeable, so why not learn everything you can?”

Vulnerability and honesty about the complexity of life are crucial aspects of everything Alyst creates.

“I still find a lot of myself through this new work. I’ve discovered many of the boundaries I created for myself that I’ve kept hidden,” she said. “I don’t think we should censor ourselves in art, but I have definitely done just that. It’s all fear-based, right? We hide because we are worried about x, y and z, so it’s been good breaking those down and trying to find the raw parts.

“I’m hoping my future work will have fewer hidden messages. I want to live my truth and let my art live in that expression,” she added. “I believe so many





of us share the highlights of our lives nowadays — especially with social media — and I oftentimes see some artwork mimicking that. But real life is raw, uncensored and not pretty.”

A part of being vulnerable is acknowledging mental health, which also is a central thematic component of her art.

“I hope to forever create a space that holds a safety net for viewers who may need additional support with their internal struggles or whatever it is they aren’t talking about yet,” Alyst said. “I believe the only way to remind people how they aren’t alone is simply by sharing and opening up more about our vulnerabilities.”

Just this year, Alyst debuted her first solo show — one that, in our current socially distanced pandemic world, is housed entirely online. “Someone is Trying to Tell You Something,” or SITTTYS, is Alyst’s attempt to share her own vulnerabilities through “surreal and hyperstylized” self-portraits. It’s her attempt at being honest, not only to herself but in the hopes that others will become comfortable doing the same.

“I genuinely love people and connecting to people,” Alyst said. “I love hearing everyone’s stories and really believe the only way we

can make the world go round is by being vulnerable at times and gentle with each other.”

Alyst’s social and online presence is as much about her art as the social justice she craves for the world. That desire for equality informs her art and has helped her grow personally and professionally.

“I have always tried to stand up for what is right, but I used to be so soft-spoken and easily talked over, easily shut down. Photography in the fashion world specifically gave me the director’s voice I never had,” she said.

Some may view Alyst’s art and hear the blues play in their head (which is apt as she has an entire shoot that explores “the blues” — both the color and the feeling). Others may hear any number of genres, or none at all. But whatever music or feelings her art inspires, Alyst is likely just glad to have inspired. ★

To view more of
Kat Alyst’s work,
including her first
solo show, visit
mynameiskat.com.

Advising 101

TIPS TO HELP MANAGE THE HOLIDAYS

BY CLARE FITE, LPC, LCDC

DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING SERVICES



THE HOLIDAYS ARE a great time to assemble with people we love, honor traditions, give thanks and exchange gifts. While these blessings give us a sense of happiness and joy, they also can be stressful.

The holiday season is busy — involving shopping, cooking and traveling. It can result in financial stress and impact your mental health. Here are a few suggestions on how to better cope with the holiday blues and maintain good mental health.

Keep a routine.

Don’t abandon your normal routine. If you enjoy going to the gym in the mornings, eating lunch at noon and being in bed before 11 p.m. then strive to do that. Small adjustments in our schedules are more easily achieved and don’t cause much distress. Large schedule changes can lead to feelings of uncertainty and alter our ability to feel positive and present.

Focus on what you can control, and let go of what you can’t.

When we focus our attention on what we control, we feel more effective and positive. Take time to recognize what is in your control. Focus on the influence you can make and accept that the outcome is rarely yours to decide.

Stock up on compassion for yourself.

We are often our own worst critic. We speak to ourselves in ways we would never to speak to others. A kind tone and words when talking to yourself promotes overall wellness and helps to combat feelings of stress and sadness.

Give yourself permission to take breaks.

It is important for you to rest and give your body and mind time to restore. Many people perceive downtime as a symptom of laziness. In a culture that tells us to go faster and do more, we often feel great shame when we take time to take care of ourselves. Introduce intentional and guilt-free rest into your routine.

Know it is okay to feel it.

It is completely normal to feel upset during the holidays. Acknowledge how you feel, and tell yourself what you are feeling is valid. ★

JACK TALK

Facebook - @SFASU
Instagram - @SFASU

Twitter - @SFASU
Pinterest - SFALUMBERJACKS

Use #AxeEm or tag SFA on social media.



Went to visit my big sister @kiiarra_0 at her big school @sfasu #golumberjacks #sfafamilyweekend

MASTERACE28 / INSTAGRAM

Beer light, beer bright. First beer I'll drink tonight is ... PURPLE LIGHTS!
#ReleaseParty #AxeEm

FREDONIABREWERY / INSTAGRAM



Throwing up the "ole axe" with 2021 Lumberjack Deion Robbins!

VINCENT B. ADAMS / FACEBOOK

Had the pleasure of meeting one of SFA football's greatest, Larry Centers, this weekend at the @sfa_alumni Awards Banquet. Truly a humble, gracious and inspiring human being. Thank you! #AxeEm #LumberjackPride #RaiseTheAxe

@BRIAN_K_DAWSON / TWITTER



If you're in the area, please go to Naca Valley Vineyard! Great owners and fun staff!

ANNE CASELLA / FACEBOOK



Day project done! Stitched together this shirt just for fun! #axeem #axeemjacks #sfasu #sfalumberjacks #sfa25 #sfa24 #collegelife #floraldesign

CHRISTYHILLEMBROIDERY / INSTAGRAM



@PARTINMEALEX / TWITTER

Jacks of All Trades / With Katy Portillo '11

IT'S A 'RUFF' LIFE:

Hospitality administration grad is proprietor of dog treat and accessories business

STORY BY NATHAN WICKER '19

KATY PORTILLO'S LIFE has gone to the dogs. After graduating from SFA with a degree in hospitality administration, her career was mapped out — or so she thought — until a cute corgi named Susie helped inspire her to take her career in a different direction.

Portillo '11 has been around the hospitality industry her entire life. Her father is a chef, and her mother is a former caterer. Starting her career as a catering and sales administrator at the historic Hilton Fort Worth, Portillo moved up the ranks working at several hotels. Named by her SFA professors as “Most Likely to Succeed in the Lodging Industry,” Portillo continued working in hospitality until 2013 when she and her mother decided to set up a booth at a local community market in Denton.

Looking for a product to sell, they bounced around a few ideas and, in what Portillo calls a “perfect storm” moment, they came up with the idea to make dog treats.

“We felt we could create a recipe that far exceeded store-bought dog treats,” Portillo said. “In a perfect storm kind of way, we started brainstorming, and it all just came together.”

Portillo's corgi, Susie, served as the inspiration and taste tester, and Portillo's love of alliteration helped them settle on the business' name, Susie's Scrumptious Snacks. With Portillo and her mother busy creating the treats, Susie also had an official role as CFO — chief food officer. If the products pleased Susie's palate, they were placed on the shelves.

Fur kids couldn't get enough of the tasty treats, and their owners lined up at the Denton Community Market to purchase several varieties of dog cookies, including peanut butter blueberry, gluten-free bacon cheddar, ginger-carrot and smoked meat products. Portillo continued to balance working full time in the hospitality industry while growing her business. As she branched out to sell her products at multiple markets and during events in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, it was becoming clear she needed to decide whether her business was just a hobby or whether she wanted to take it to the next level.

In April 2018, she opened a brick-and-mortar shop in Denton, named Susie's Snack Shop. Although Susie passed away in October 2015, Portillo's new furry family members, Simon and Lucy, help fill the void and serve as official mascots.

The shop still offers a mix of dog cookies and smoked meat products, and Portillo has expanded the product line to include an assortment of other items, like grooming supplies, dog cakes and “Bug Away Bites,” which help keep pests at bay.

In 2019, Susie's Snack Shop debuted what Portillo calls her “proudest product,” a locally milled, private label dog food. “It isn't filled with harmful ingredients. In fact, the food is grain-, soy- and dairy-free and made with non-GMO ingredients,” Portillo said.



“I know Katy has gone to great lengths to source the ingredients she uses in her pet food and treat business,” said Dr. Chay Runnels, SFA professor and interim director of the School of Human Sciences. “She has taken her passion for customer service to the next level.”

The food is a special recipe that comes in chicken, salmon and duck flavors. Portillo said the product played an important role during the shortages many people experienced during the pandemic.

“Since we are considered an essential business, the dog food allowed the doors to remain open,” Portillo said. “When grocery stores were out of pet food, and online retailers, such as Amazon and Chewy, weren't able to deliver, lines of desperate dog owners quickly formed outside our shop. We were able to meet the demand and feed their pets.”

Just recently The Dallas Observer named Susie's Snack Shop as Best Pet Store, and the Denton Record-Chronicle honored the business in 2020 and 2021 in its Best Pet Supplies Shop category. Though Susie's has experienced impressive growth during the past several years, Portillo said she's just getting started.

“We are in the midst of relocating the store in Denton to a bigger facility to add a do-it-yourself dog wash,” Portillo said. “Customers bring in their furry friends and can treat them to a bath while also letting them enjoy their favorite treats.”

She's also set her sights on bigger cities, including expanding her business into the Austin and Houston-area markets. ★

ELEVATE SFA

Comprehensive capital campaign launches to provide support for students, faculty, facilities and programs

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

PHOTO BY GABRIELLE CZAPLA '20



HUNDREDS OF ALUMNI, parents, faculty, staff and friends gathered during Homecoming weekend to celebrate the public launch of the university's comprehensive capital campaign, Elevate SFA.

A key moment during the event was the announcement that the university has already raised \$79.59 million, securing almost 80% of its overall \$100 million goal.

The campaign is the most ambitious in SFA's almost 100-year history and has steadily gained momentum during its silent phase, which began in September 2015.

"We are incredibly inspired by the growing support from our Lumberjack community members and the way they have risen to every occasion to invest in SFA and help to secure our future," said Dr. Scott Gordon, SFA president. "We are taking the necessary steps to transform our institution into the model of a new American university — one characterized by dedication to the pursuit of excellence, broad access to quality education and the creation of meaningful societal impacts."

More than 14,500 donors have already supported the Elevate SFA campaign, including 8,603 donors who made a first-time gift to the university. Notable gifts during the silent phase of the campaign included 12 gifts of \$1 million or more.

Gordon emphasized the campaign's importance in driving SFA's strategic plan, SFA Envisioned. The campaign empowers SFA to pursue its stated vision to engage students in experiences that prepare them for the challenges of living in a global community.

Anchored by four objectives, the campaign priorities are



UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Ensuring SFA degrees are accessible and affordable ties in with one of the foundational goals of the SFA strategic plan — reducing the average debt of students. It also can play a role in another foundational goal — increasing retention.

Bill Elliott, president of Elliott Electric Supply, honored his late wife, Micky, with a pledge of \$8 million to support scholarships for fine arts students, and the college was renamed the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts in her honor.

"The college not only develops professional performers but also offers East Texas residents an opportunity to enjoy cultural events that rival those in metropolitan areas," Elliott said. "Fine arts students spread the SFA story worldwide, and my family is honored to offer an endowment to assure the perpetual availability of scholarships that will attract the outstanding talent that has made SFA and its students so admired."



FACULTY SUPPORT

A priority of the campaign is building an endowment to ensure SFA is competitive when recruiting qualified and knowledgeable faculty members who are able to drive program enhancements and innovation.

"Donor-endowed funds, especially those that support named faculty positions, are extremely important to

\$100 million
CAMPAIGN GOAL



\$79.59 million*
Total gifts and commitments



14,519
Total donors



8,603
Total first-time donors



12
Gifts of \$1 million or more



universities,” said Dr. Lorenzo Smith, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. “Professorships and designated funds to support research activities play a crucial role in faculty recruiting. They reflect the trust philanthropists have in the mission of an institution and their desire to leave a legacy associated with that mission.”

The university offers approximately a dozen professorships that incentivize faculty members, including the T.L.L. Temple Distinguished Professor in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture, the Tom F. and Deborah Nichols Pruitt Patent Education Professorship, and the Montgomery Professorship for Humane Education.

Donations that support faculty members also may be used to establish centers or institutes on campus to advance an area of study and to create interdisciplinary programs that appeal to students’ academic interests and the workforce needs of employers.

3

FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS

Another goal of the campaign is assuring students, faculty and staff have access to modern facilities that meet their needs, such as the recent expansion and renovation of the Griffith Fine Arts Building and the addition of the Loddie Naymola Basketball Performance Center at Johnson Coliseum. The center features the Coach Harry and Tillie Miller Fan Observation Area, the Bob Sitton Men’s Basketball Coach’s Office, the Joe Max and Jane Green Lobby, the Dr. Robert and Ruth Carroll Sports Medicine Offices, the Dr. Bill and Barbara Gandy Men’s Basketball Lounge, and the Hank and Suzy Crouse Weight Room.

“I took the competitiveness I learned on the basketball court into my business, which is one of the elements that led to my success,” said Naymola ’78 of Austin. “For this reason, I choose to give back to the university that gave me this opportunity to learn so much.”

In addition to his financial support, Naymola is playing an important role in the fundraising effort by serving as a member of the President’s Campaign Cabinet, along with David Chadwick of Center, Kurt and Cindy Kalkomey of Dallas, and Michael Taff of Houston.

4

PROGRAM SUPPORT

This support provides operating funds to strengthen and elevate both academic and athletic programs. Curricular and co-curricular programs should evolve as the needs of students evolve, Smith said.

“Funding for program support will allow us to be innovative in the ways we reach our students and prepare them for lifelong learning and successful careers in the 21st century,” Smith explained. “We can help students have more service-learning experiences, and more community engagement and international education opportunities, with the aim of building their leadership skills to the benefit of the communities where they will eventually live and work.”

The capital campaign will culminate in conjunction with the university’s centennial celebration, which will begin in September 2023.

“Those of us who love SFA, especially those whose lives have been impacted by its people and its programs during the past century, have an opportunity to make certain that the qualities that make this university uniquely transformational will become even stronger and available to new generations of students,” Gordon said. ★

**CAMPAIGN
CONTRIBUTIONS
AS OF
OCT. 13, 2021***



\$34 million
Student
scholarships



\$4 million
Faculty support



\$5 million
Facility enhancements



\$36 million
Program and other
support

VOICES OF THE ELEVATE SFA COMPREHENSIVE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

These individuals
are featured in the
campaign videos,
which can be viewed at
sfasu.edu/elevate.

DANIEL CAMPOS '21

MAJOR: Physics Engineering
EMPLOYER: Lockheed Martin

DANIEL CAMPOS, A Lockheed Martin quality engineer, never planned to graduate from high school. “A common trend in my family is that once you become of age, you drop out and go to work to help with bills,” he said. “Especially because of my situation, I was eager to help my mom out.”

Campos is the youngest child in a single-parent home, and his mother is disabled.

“I grew up thinking college was impossible, because I knew my family couldn’t pay for it,” Campos said. “No one in my family had gone to college, so I didn’t even want to think about it. A college degree was really a reach for the stars.”

Campos began working at age 16 at a local restaurant and was soon promoted to a management position. But his teachers at Lufkin High School, as well as his mom, encouraged him to stay in school. He was named a

National Dell Scholar and, as a Smith-Hutson Scholarship recipient, received a full-ride scholarship to SFA in 2017.

“I realized I had an opportunity,” he said. “It was up to me to give it everything I had.”

The first step in giving education his all was selecting a major.

“I asked someone what the most challenging major is, and they said physics,” he explained. “I chose physics because I wanted to prove that anything is possible. I especially want anyone who comes after me, my kids or my grandkids to know they shouldn’t be discouraged just because something is difficult.”

Campos said the support he received at SFA played an important part in his success in earning an engineering degree. In addition to serving as an Orientation leader for three years, he was an active participant in the Generation Jacks program for first-generation college students.

“I got to meet other students who were in the same boat as me,” he recalled. “As I progressed and saw the accomplishments and growth of other Gen Jacks, I realized this was doable. Even if I didn’t talk to them every day, I knew they were there for me. They helped me realize I really wasn’t such an anomaly.” ★



ADDISON POPE
Current Student
MAJOR: Dance

WHEN DOCTORS FIRST told Addison Pope she may not have a career in dance, she was devastated. Then she set out to prove them wrong.

Dancing since age 2, Pope began wearing a back brace when she was diagnosed with scoliosis at age 12.

"It wasn't successful, and my spine had begun to rotate," she said. "When I was 17, I was told I had to have spinal fusion surgery."

Two months after her high school graduation, surgeons placed rods along the entire length of Pope's spine to correct the curvature. The surgery was mostly successful, and staying active was one of the doctor's orders.

"Dancing professionally seemed to be out of the question," Pope said. "In their very nice way, the doctors told me that probably was not going to happen. As long as I could move, I was exceeding their expectations."

With a tough mentality that matches her physical fortitude, the Carthage native enrolled in fall classes at Panola College and was dancing within four months of the surgery (although jumps were forbidden). She choreographed several productions for Panola's theatre department and worked part-time at the dance studio where she'd studied all her life. She even participated in a short scene in the studio's spring recital.

"When I came out, everyone knew what I'd been through and that it was my first time back on stage," she recalled. "Everyone just cheered; it was pretty amazing."

Still determined to earn a degree in dance, Pope was feeling almost back to "normal" by the beginning of her sophomore year, which was spent at a Louisiana university.

"I enjoyed it, but I wanted to be back in Texas, and when I walked into the SFA audition for the Repertory Dance Company, it instantly felt like home," she said.

Now a senior, Pope is pleased when other dancers aren't aware of the trials she has overcome, and she typically likes to keep it that way.

"I want to be judged just as a dancer, not as a dancer who has rods in her back," she said. "SFA has provided that opportunity for me. There are talented dancers here who have a passion that you don't find everywhere. We dig into what dance really is — the artistry behind it. It's about creating a story and, without speaking a word, communicating a point that is meaningful and moving for your audience."

With the new facility being created for the dance program in the Griffith Fine Arts Building, these opportunities will be strengthened and enhanced for Pope and future dancers.

"We work on technique every day — and how to be better dancers physically, but what you are really learning is how to love dance even more." ★



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

PHOTOS BY
ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19

ELEVATE SFA

EDUCATE ★ CELEBRATE ★ PARTICIPATE



AVERY BRITTINGHAM
Ladyjack Basketball Forward
MAJOR: Kinesiology

WHEN AVERY BRITTINGHAM visited the SFA campus as a prospective member of the SFA Ladyjack basketball team, she was struck by how sincere and empathetic the coaching staff seemed. The feeling was so strong that she immediately committed to SFA, foregoing the opportunity to visit other schools that were recruiting her.

This prescience proved to be beneficial when, two days after she arrived on campus for summer workouts, her coaches had to deliver the news to Brittingham that her mother, Angela N. Smith, had passed away.

"That was July 1, 2020," the Fort Worth native said. "They supported me but also gave me the space to process this and to be with my family. Then, they became my family."

While coaches and trainers within the SFA basketball program have helped Brittingham adjust to life as a collegiate student-athlete, her roommate, who is from Germany, widened Brittingham's perspective of the world. Her teammates also have provided valuable learning experiences.

"Being at SFA has helped me see the bigger picture, not just as a person, but as a member of a team," she explained. "It's a different mindset to think of the group, rather than just a single individual. There's no doubt in my mind I chose the right school."

Some videos circulating on social media show the 6-foot forward nailing big tournament shots during the Ladyjacks' undefeated season, including a shot in the final seconds of the NCAA Tournament game against Georgia Tech that could have been a bracket buster. "My Twitter blew up for a few days, but that was about it," she said. "Then it was time to get back to work!"

Brittingham plans to take her passion for athletics and use it to drive her next step — coaching young people in Fort Worth.

"I want to teach them they can have options in this world," Brittingham said. "You have to keep your eyes on the prize, and take little steps to achieve your goals; don't just take one big swing and then give up if it doesn't work out. Never give up. Time keeps on ticking, so you have to manage the time you have here on Earth." ★



EDUCATE ★ CELEBRATE ★ PARTICIPATE

DR. KEITH HUBBARD, an SFA professor of mathematics, will freely tell you he loves puzzles. When he sees capable students struggle to be successful, he views it as another puzzle to help solve.

"Universities collect vast amounts of data, and in these terabytes of data, it is possible to see in real time which students are at risk of not completing their degree, of becoming disengaged, of not being successful," he said. "If you could help solve these very intricate problems using this data, you could make thousands of people's lives better. It's almost a moral imperative."

SFA's learning management systems allow a professor to record absences and see how many times a student has logged in to the system for that specific class, but Hubbard sees a benefit in looking across the data to determine when students disengage.

"We are a state institution collecting all of this student data, but are we really using it?" he questioned. "Google and Amazon have teams of people scouring your data — how well are the rest of us doing it?"

"If a freshman student stops eating meals on campus, that matters," he said. "Something has happened in that student's life, but that information is on a different server. It's siloed. It's our responsibility to use this information to help students, and it's the right thing to do."

SFA students are working with Hubbard to design the systems that scour the data, and it was a student who suggested that information from the Student Recreation Center be included in the study.

"There's a correlation between the number of times a student swipes in at the recreation center and his or her GPA. It's a small piece, but it is correlated," he said. "It's important to be able to invite students into this problem-solving, but a challenge is that helping students on this scale costs money."

With the necessary data, an advisor or faculty member can contact a student to check in and ask how they are doing.

"What's the worst-case scenario? The student might realize people care? He or she knows there is some accountability for turning in homework? I don't see a downside," Hubbard said.

One of the suggested action items based on the initial data analysis is strategic room assignments.

"If you room with someone who is studying in the same college and likely has the same amount of homework as you, you'll likely have a higher GPA. And both students will do better than someone who rooms alone," he said.

The computational needs for this type of research are not inexpensive, Hubbard explains, but it benefits students across campus, both those involved as researchers and those assisted by it.

"I always say to my students, 'Do you think we are going to have more data in 10 years or less data?'" he said. "Being prepared to gather and analyze data to support students at the right time is our job. And it is important training for the future." ★

DR. KEITH HUBBARD
Professor of Mathematics
College of Sciences and Mathematics





FROM LEFT: Jack Sullivan '06 & '08, Fredonia Brewery operations manager; Ryan Ivey, SFA athletics director; Paul Murray, Fredonia Brewery partner and Wally Crittenden, SFA associate athletics director for business development and revenue generation, enjoy a glass of Purple Lights lager at the brewery. Photo by Gabrielle Czaplá '20

SFA, Fredonia Brewery collaborate to create Purple Lights lager

STORY BY DONNA PARISH '99 & '07

AS FOOTBALL SEASON and fall approached, SFA and Nacogdoches-based Fredonia Brewery launched Purple Lights, an American lager with a touch of sweetness and crisp finish, to help Lumberjacks throughout Texas celebrate the university's athletic victories and other special moments.

"What an exciting time for Jack Nation and SFA," Ryan Ivey, SFA's athletics director, said. "This has been a fun project to be involved with — from concept to execution — and provides a great opportunity for alumni, fans and all of those associated with SFA to stay connected and celebrate those 'purple lights' moments wherever they may be."

The lager's name pays tribute to the university's longstanding tradition of displaying purple lights on campus when its athletic teams are victorious. Alumni may recall the lights illuminating the night sky above Steen Hall and in the clock outside the Baker Pattillo Student Center.

"It's the perfect reflection of what the purple lights represent: winning!" said Richard Hurtado '06 of Houston.



The beverage is available on tap at the Fredonia Brewery. Regional and statewide distribution is taking place throughout the fall.

"It's been incredibly exciting for Fredonia Brewery to have the opportunity to brew SFA's official beer," said Paul Murray, a partner with Fredonia Brewery. "I think our collaboration will be a huge success, and I cannot wait to get it into the hands of Ladyjack and Lumberjack fans."

A portion of the sales benefits the SFA general

licensing fund, which helps support student-athletes and SFA Athletics.

"From the minute we began our conversations with Fredonia Brewery representatives, their passion, independent mentality and attention to designing a great-tasting custom flavor attracted us to this project," Wally Crittenden, SFA associate athletics director, said.

Fans interested in Purple Lights are encouraged to ask their favorite grocery stores and restaurants to request the beverage from their distributors.

Requests also can be emailed to sales@fredoniabrewery.com. ★

THE LEGENDARY BOB FLEET

Former SFA rugby coach inducted into Hall of Fame

STORY BY JOANNA ARMSTRONG '17



Dr. Robert "Bob" Fleet, former research associate and SFA Rugby Club coach, recently was inducted into the Texas Rugby Union Hall of Fame, forever enshrining his contributions to the sport.

ASK ANYONE WHO knew Dr. Robert "Bob" Fleet to describe him, and they're likely to toss out countless descriptors.

To some he was a coach, to others he was a teacher, but to all he was a fierce opponent on the rugby pitch. A research associate and coach of the SFA Rugby Club for more than 40 years, Fleet touched those who knew him in ways that were as distinctive as he was.

"He was my rugby dad," said Dan Persha '79, former SFA rugby player. "I loved him to death. He taught me strong rugby fundamentals, which were critical against larger and faster opponents. There were a few times we hated his training techniques, but that was only momentary. They always made us better rugby players."

Fleet became involved in the sport in the early 1970s while working on his doctoral degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences at Texas A&M University. After graduating, he made his way to SFA, where he was employed in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture and played for the SFA Rugby Club before serving as its coach. During Fleet's tenure as coach, gradually the club improved, and in 1979, it won the Texas collegiate championship tournament.

"Bob taught old school rugby fundamentals as a player and coach," Persha said. "His training sessions were not fun and very physically demanding. However, over time, players could see the positive results on the pitch and quickly embraced the training techniques Bob taught."

In addition to his work with the SFA club, Fleet helped develop the Eastern Counties Division SFA played within.

"Bob was really instrumental in the formation of early Texas rugby and organizing it as it came together," Persha said.

Known as the "godfather of East Texas rugby," clubs from Shreveport to the Gulf Coast benefited from Fleet's leadership, allowing players to earn All Star honors at the divisional, state and Western USA levels. Fleet also served as coach and head selector of the All Star Team.

Though a man of varied interests, the sport of rugby was his passion, said Diana Montgomery, Fleet's wife of 41 years.

"To him, it was a game that could be played by anyone," Montgomery said. "You did not have to be a great athlete; you could learn what it takes to be a great rugby player, and you could learn to play it well. That is why he loved to coach."

And though it's been almost four years since Fleet died, his former athletes still talk about him with a palpable sense of respect.

"I know there was no one who had more influence on the early development and survival of collegiate rugby in Texas than Bob, and I believe every Texas collegiate player since owes a debt of gratitude to Bob," Michael Morris '81, former SFA rugby player, wrote in a letter recommending Fleet for induction into the Texas Rugby Union Hall of Fame.

Fleet was enshrined into the Hall of Fame in early November, the first from SFA to claim the honor. A plaque now hangs in the SFA Student Recreation Center to commemorate the contributions he made to the university and the sport.

"The story of Bob Fleet is a guy who just absolutely, unconditionally had a love of the game," Persha said. "People play it because inside it transforms them, and it also forces you to play as a team. That's what Bob was good at, and to do that is a gift and an art in and of itself." ★



Vince Beard '97 | LIFE MEMBER

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From the Association



Greetings, Lumberjacks!

I AM HAPPY to report the fall semester brought back in-person classes, tailgating, football, soccer and volleyball games, Homecoming, Alumni

Awards and cooler weather. How nice it is to have the campus revive with excitement in the air!

If you want to know what is happening in your area, our regional chairs can keep you informed. They are

- East Texas
Sam Khoury '97 of Longview
- North Texas
Mark Friedman '91 of Allen
- Houston Area
Pamm Coleman '80 of Houston
- Central Texas Area
Alex Ranc '11 & '13 of Nacogdoches.

You also can always find information about on-campus and area events on the calendar included in each edition of Sawdust and on the Alumni Association's social media platforms.

Our social media is trending. A recent report from content discovery and social monitoring platform Crowd Tangle shows we were No. 3 in social media interactions — behind Texas A&M's The Association of Former Students and The Texas Exes — for a three-month period ending in September, and we were No. 2 in growth. Our interactions were up on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Let's keep engaging, Lumberjacks!

During the association's September board meeting, we approved the following resolution reaffirming our bylaws in an effort to be clear that the Alumni Association supports what is best for the institution.

The purpose of this resolution is to provide stakeholders (i.e., SFA students, alumni and friends) with the SFA Alumni Association's stance and overall support for the betterment and growth of SFA.

1. Whereas, the SFA Alumni Association's mission is to engage students, alumni and friends to create an attitude of loyalty and support;
2. Whereas, the SFA Alumni Association's role is to live out our action statement: "We grow Lumberjack pride!" among our 100,000-plus living alumni and friends;
3. Whereas, the SFA Alumni Association encourages everyone at SFA to do the hard work and make the difficult, sometimes

challenging decisions through open dialogue to ensure the best asset of the university — its people — are able to perform to their fullest potential in an effort to protect the future growth of SFA;

4. Whereas, the SFA Alumni Association will support innovative university growth initiatives in the rapidly changing higher education climate to help elevate the institution and engagement in the communities in which we live and work;

Be it resolved that the SFA Alumni Association Board of Directors approves the aforementioned statements and fully supports the best interest of Stephen F. Austin State University as outlined in the bylaws.

As we think about the future, I know many of us have September 2023 on our minds, when SFA will celebrate its centennial anniversary. We continue to look forward to this celebration, and plans are already underway. A Centennial Committee has been formed, and Brian Dawson '03 is leading the charge, so look for exciting things to come.

In conjunction with the Centennial Celebration, we have launched a comprehensive alumni data verification project. Postcards have been mailed to verify your information. If you have corrections, please follow the directions on the postcard so you don't miss out on event notifications. We also are collecting stories to help memorialize the history and campus experiences through the years. So, please participate, and share your Lumberjack story.

If you are not a member of the Alumni Association, I invite you to join. Your involvement is vital to maintaining SFA's excellence and helps keep our valued traditions alive for future generations of Lumberjacks. You can join online at sfaalumni.com/join or call (936) 468-3407 to speak with an Alumni Association representative. There are levels for annual or lifetime memberships.

As 2021 draws to a close, please consider making a tax-deductible donation as part of your end-of-year giving. We appreciate every donation and put them all to good use building Lumberjack pride.

Here's to a bright 2022, Lumberjacks. Axe 'em!

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
President, SFA Alumni Association

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
president

Erika Tolar '02, Nacogdoches
president-elect

Bob Francis '78, Bullard
past president

Mike Harbordt '63, Nacogdoches
director emeritus

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

Matt Adkins '06, McKinney

Tony Both '98, Katy

Larry Brooks '01, Houston

Reuben Brown '07, Grand Prairie

Pamm Coleman '80, Houston

Brian Dawson '03, Conroe

James Drennan '73, Pittsburg

Mark Friedman '91, Allen

Sam Khoury '97, Longview

Steve McCarty '65 & '70, Alto

Jaclyn Partin '08 & '14, Tyler

Larissa Philpot '03, Nacogdoches

Alex Ranc '11 & '13, Nacogdoches

Ted Smith '07, Nacogdoches

Bob Williams '70, Dallas

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STAFF

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

Amber Lindsay
assistant to the executive director

Derek Snyder '01
director of alumni relations

Samantha Mora '08
director of events and engagement

Alicia Roland Chatman '16
gifts and records coordinator

Amie Ford '09 & '11
coordinator of events and engagement

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

Bob Sitton '60
director emeritus

CONTACT

Sawdust
SFA Box 6096
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
(936) 468-3407
alumni@sfasu.edu ★ sfaalumni.com

THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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

Alumni Calendar

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

DECEMBER

3

BIG DIP CEREMONIES

Baker Pattillo Student Center
Grand Ballroom
Nacogdoches

9 a.m.

James I. Perkins College of Education

1 p.m.

Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts
College of Liberal and Applied Arts
Arthur Temple College of Forestry and
Agriculture

4 p.m.

Nelson Rusche College of Business
College of Sciences and Mathematics

BIG DIP AFTER PARTY / BEER & BITES

4 to 9 p.m.
Fredonia Brewery
Nacogdoches

JANUARY

9

SFA DAY AT THE HOUSTON TEXANS HOUSTON TEXANS VS. TENNESSEE TITANS

Noon
\$195 includes pregame reception (tailgate
food and open bar), a custom purple SFA/
Houston Texans cap and a seat in the SFA
section

15

LUMBERJACK BASKETBALL VS. SAM HOUSTON (PURPLE OUT SAM)

Time: 2 p.m.
Huntsville

FEBRUARY

3

AGRICULTURE CAREER FAIR

10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Agriculture Building, Room 110
Nacogdoches

9-12

TEXAS MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

Marriott Riverwalk
San Antonio

11

TMEA ALUMNI RECEPTION

9:30 to 11:30 p.m.

16

SPRING CAREER AND INTERNSHIP FAIR

1 to 4 p.m.
Baker Pattillo Student Center
Grand Ballroom
Nacogdoches

24

LADYJACK BASKETBALL VS. SAM HOUSTON (PURPLE OUT SAM)

6:30 p.m.
Huntsville

25-27

ZTA ALUMNI REUNION

Nacogdoches
Find more information at
sfaalumni.com/ZTA

28

SFA RING WEEK

Pearman Alumni Center
Nacogdoches

MARCH

1-2

SFA RING WEEK CONTINUES

Pearman Alumni Center
Nacogdoches

APRIL

1

ALUMNI AWARDS NOMINATIONS DUE



Order an updated SFA diploma

SFA diplomas have changed to now include the major of study. Replacement diplomas cost \$25 and can be ordered through the Office of the Registrar's online store at sfasu.edu/newdiploma.

Order yours today!

Scholarship

The Dixie and Paul Kellerhals Scholarship

DIXIE KELLERHALS GRADUATED from SFA with a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1984 and a master's degree in special education in 1985. Prior to attending SFA, she received a teaching certificate from Iowa State Teachers College in 1957 and taught kindergarten for four years in Iowa Public Schools before becoming a full-time Army wife to Paul in 1964.

When Dixie and Paul's five children were enrolled in school, she began her studies at SFA. After her graduation, she served as an educational diagnostician in the Killeen Independent School District for 11 years before retiring in 2000 to be a full-time grandmother and volunteer with various organizations. Dixie passed away in February 2021.

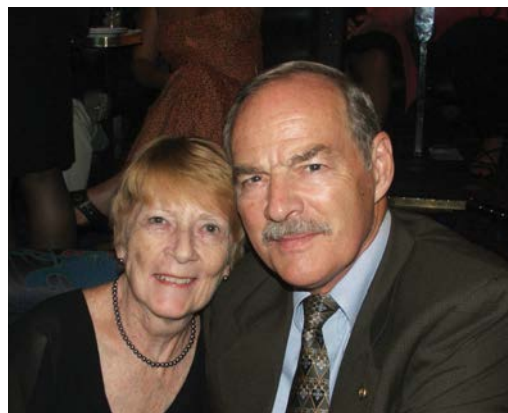
Paul earned four college degrees: bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Northern Iowa, a master's degree from the University of Central Texas and a doctoral degree from Auburn University. He served as SFA's professor of military science from 1982 to 1986. He spent his early years in the U.S. Army, which he entered in 1954. He served in the demilitarized zone in South Korea before leaving the service in 1956.

In civilian life, Paul was a high school head football and basketball coach and served as an elementary school principal before returning to active Army service in 1964, completing a tour in Germany, two tours in South Vietnam and three tours in South Korea.

He later served as the director of teacher education at the University of Central Texas and retired as a lead education specialist with ECS Region 12 in 2004.

The Dixie and Paul Kellerhals Scholarship will annually support four students enrolled in the

James I. Perkins College of Education. All recipients must have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 and have participated in extracurricular activities and worked or volunteered during high school. Previous recipients may reapply and compete for the scholarship up to four years for undergraduates and two years for graduate students under specified criteria. ★



Ways to Support SFA

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

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

Visit our website at sfasu.edu/give.



Life Members

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

- 8448. Samantha McPhail '92, Houston
- 8449. James A. Wiggins '76, Bossier City, Louisiana
- 8450. Carol Wiggins, Friend of SFA, Bossier City, Louisiana
- 8451. Joe D. Nichols '85, Texarkana
- 8452. Yessenia Guardado '21, Nacogdoches
- 8453. James Nathan Hodge '97, Nacogdoches
- 8454. Amy B. Hodge '99, Nacogdoches
- 8455. Kaitlyn M. Hall '21, Melissa
- 8456. Amber M. Koons '05, League City
- 8457. Eric X. Schoch '94, McKinney
- 8458. Harry L. German '74 & '81, Houston
- 8459. Loy E. Dorsey III '76 & '04, Henderson
- 8460. Jay W. Miller '01, Gilmer

Alumni Awards recipients were honored Sept. 17 during the annual awards banquet.



Distinguished Alumnus Award

Greg Arnold '87



GREG ARNOLD '87 graduated from SFA with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing. He is chairman and CEO of The Arnold Companies, a privately owned national petroleum marketing and aviation services company in Dallas, which employs approximately 1,000 associates across its divisions.

Throughout his 34-year tenure, Arnold has been responsible for expanding the company in four divisions. *TAC Air* has a network of 16 fixed-based operator locations and 3 million square feet of tenant and hangar space that annually services 320,000 business and general aviation aircraft movements. *Keystone Aviation* is a private jet charter and management business with a fleet that includes 25 aircraft from small-engine turbo props to large-cabin, long-range jets capable of international travel. *TAC Private Hangars* launched in May 2021 as an entity providing ground handling, and hangar and office space outside the confines of a traditional fixed-based operator. *TACenergy* operates as an independent wholesale distributor of refined petroleum products and has grown to cover 48 states supported by 14 regional sales offices selling 2.7 billion gallons annually with more than \$4 billion in annual revenue.

Arnold is a member of the National Petroleum Council, vice chair of All Stars Project Inc. in Dallas and a member of the Board of Trustees of Texas Christian University. ★

Distinguished Alumnus Award

Larry Centers



Widely recognized as one of the greatest pass receiving fullbacks ever, **LARRY CENTERS** attended SFA from 1986-89 after being recruited from Tatum High School to play running back, wide receiver and defensive back.

As a freshman at SFA, Centers broke a finger

and was assigned to play scout team running back and on special teams. During his sophomore year, an injury to the team's starting running back allowed Centers an opportunity to play. Centers finished the season with 100-plus rushing yards in each of the remaining six games. He led the Lumberjacks in receptions, rushing yards and yards from scrimmage during his junior and senior years. Centers was a two-time All Southland Conference pick and set a school record for rushing yards during his senior season. In 1989, with Centers as the starting running back, the Lumberjacks advanced to the 1989 NCAA Division I-AA football championship game, where the team lost by a field goal to the Georgia Southern University Eagles.

Centers was drafted by the Phoenix Cardinals in the fifth round of the 1990 NFL Draft. He spent nine seasons playing fullback for the Cardinals and was considered "the heart and soul of the Cardinals' offense." When Centers left the team in 1999, he had achieved the status of its all-time leading pass catcher.

His next stop was with the Washington Redskins, where he played from 1999 to 2000, followed by the Buffalo Bills in 2001, where he reached the top 10 all-time receptions by a player. Centers was selected to the Pro Bowl in 1995, 1996 and 2001, and the Associated Press NFL All-Pro Team in 1996.

Centers' last stop was with the New England Patriots, which he joined in 2003 and played with quarterback Tom Brady. His contributions as part of the Patriots offense helped the team win the 2004 Super Bowl by besting the Carolina Panthers 32 to 29. The game was hailed by Sports Illustrated writer Peter King as the "Greatest Super Bowl of all time." Centers retired from professional football before the next season.

During his 14 seasons in the NFL, Centers rushed for 2,188 yards, caught 827 passes for 6,797 yards, returned 33 kickoffs for 617 yards and scored 42 touchdowns. His 827 receptions are the most by any running back and until 2008 were the most by any non-wide receiver in NFL history. Centers caught passes in 128 consecutive games — at one point the third-longest streak in the NFL. When Centers retired, he was seventh in league history for passes caught. ★

Distinguished Alumnus Award

John R. "Bob" Garrett '75



Growing up in the West Texas oil fields, **JOHN R. "BOB" GARRETT '75** made a 500-mile trek to SFA after graduating from junior college. After receiving a degree in biology from SFA, Garrett started his first job working on the completion of Lake Nacogdoches and opening the surface water treatment plant. During the following five years, working with the City of Nacogdoches while also operating a small business, Garrett moved his family to Tyler, where he joined Fair Oil Company and began studying toward a master's degree in business. Garrett's mentor, James W. Fair, taught Garrett the business side of the oil industry along with skills in residential and commercial land development. In 2002, Garrett was named president and CEO of Fair Oil Company and the organization's real estate businesses, a role he has held for 37 years.

Appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the SFA Board of Regents in 2007, Garrett served two terms, retiring from the board in 2019. During his tenure, the university experienced enrollment growth, approved more than \$400 million in campus improvements, and helped SFA's academic and athletic programs rise in prominence.

Garrett remains active in the energy industry, as well as residential and commercial real estate development. He serves as president of the R.W. Fair Foundation and chair of the board of Southside Bank/Southside Bancshares. He is a life member of the development board of the University of Texas at Tyler Health Science Center and is on the steering committee for its new medical school. He is past president of the Texas Association of Builders and serves on numerous corporate and nonprofit boards. In 2019, Garrett was honored with the T.B. Butler Award as Tyler's most outstanding citizen. ★

Outstanding Young Alumnus Award

Sean Hightower '09



organizations, serving as a member of the Pre-Law Club and a competitor on the Moot Court Team. Hightower was the recipient of the Waldo Miller Memorial Debate Scholarship.

After graduating from SFA with a degree in political science, Hightower attended Texas A&M University School of Law, where he received his Juris Doctor. He then returned to Nacogdoches, where he joined Tim James to launch James & Hightower Attorneys at Law.

Hightower is a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, serves on the board for the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association and has been elected twice to serve as vice president of the Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital Board of Directors. During his tenure, the hospital has eliminated tens of thousands of dollars in debt and paired with an operations partner to help ensure the hospital's future. ★

Twice-named a Super Lawyer by Texas Monthly magazine, **SEAN HIGHTOWER '09** was a debate team standout at SFA, being named the International Public Debate Association national champion.

He also was active in other SFA student

Lumberjack Pride Award

Saville Harris '10 & '13



Leader of the Year and Junior Homecoming Duke.

Until recently, Harris worked at SFA, serving as the assistant director of student engagement, where he worked alongside Student Activities, Orientation, Greek Life and served as Purple Santa, helping collect holiday gifts for children who reside in the local community. In 2020, Harris received the highest honor a staff member at SFA can receive — the President's Achievement Award. Other honors he's received include being named the National Association for Campus Activities New Professional of the Year, NACA Advisor of the Year and recipient of the NACA Markley Award, which recognizes an individual who is regarded as a positive role model for students, professional staff members and associates.

Harris is now the production manager at Smith Sawmill Service, where he oversees the circular saw division at the Timpson branch. When he's not at his "regular" job, Harris owns and operates his own food truck, Big Fella's BBQ, in and around Nacogdoches. He has established a following with his family's recipe for "The Come Back Ribs" and his own spin on a stuffed turkey leg with jalapeño macaroni and cheese.

A proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha and Alpha Phi Omega fraternities and BlacSFA, an official network of the SFA Alumni Association, Harris also serves as a board member for the Nacogdoches Jaycees. ★

SAVILLE HARRIS '10 & '13 is well known on the SFA campus. While a student, he was named Mr. SFA in 2012, was a three-time recipient of the Presidential Volunteer Service Award and was named the Student Activities Association Member of the Year, Orientation

2021 Homecoming MOMENTS

PHOTOS BY GABRIELLE CZAPLA '20





THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING THE SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

Barnes & Noble Bookstore/ShopSFA.com
Commercial Bank of Texas
The Fredonia Hotel
Liberty Mutual Insurance
Loblolly Properties
Nacogdoches Pediatric Dentistry
Pilgrim's Pride - Nacogdoches
Rex Perry Autoplex
SouthSide Bank
Suddenlink
University Rental
USI Insurance
You Know You Went to SFA
Facebook Group



HOMECOMING WINNERS

BOB SITTON CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

First-Place Winners
Ted Burget
David Magee
Scott Randolph
Joe Rinehart

HOMECOMING PARADE FLOAT WINNERS

Grand Champion
Yellow House

Lumberjack Spirit
Sigma Chi and Tri Delta
Delta Zeta and Pi Kappa Alpha



Class Notes

1960s

Lynn Vincent '60 of Carthage was honored for his long tenure serving the City of Carthage and Panola County in various positions during the past 50 years. As part of the ceremony, Vincent received a plaque and key to the city. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business.



Delta Sig alums enjoy reunion

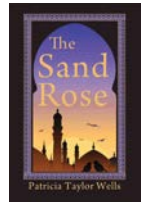
Several members of Delta Sigma Phi gathered this summer in Seabrook for their annual reunion. The group, the Delta Sig-Sawyers, comprises SFA graduates from the 1960s and 1970s.

The "Delta Sigs" developed from the Sawyers social club, which was formed around 1929 and eventually became the first Greek organization on campus. Their trademark was custom-painted axe handles, now a part of SFA's campus culture and traditions. At that time, Sawyers had the elite status of being the only unit allowed to display their axe handles as they walked around campus. They also were used to help build school spirit during sporting events.

1970s



Robert G. McCullough '70 of Houston was elected to the 13-member class of 2021 Public Relations Society of America College of Fellows. McCullough serves as communications director for Morgan's Wonderland Inclusion Foundation. He received a Bachelor of Arts in journalism.



Patricia Taylor Wells '77 of Tyler had her novel, "The Sand Rose," published. The novel is based on Wells' experience as a young, single American woman living and working in Saudi Arabia. Wells received a Bachelor of Arts in French.

Dr. Janice Reardon '78 of Leander was honored with the Lifetime Membership Award by the Texas Dental Association, which recognizes her 30 years of continuous membership in the TDA. Reardon is chief dental officer of the Office of Inspector General. She received a Bachelor of Science in biology.

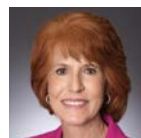
1980s



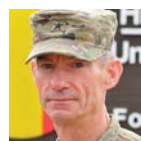
Ty Woodfolk '81 of New York City was appointed as the first chief culture and inclusion officer of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.



Ray Thompson '83 of Gilmer was recognized for his many years serving as pastor at various East Texas churches, most recently Enon Missionary Baptist Church. He received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.



Bridget Britt Flaherty '86 is director of physician development at Mansfield Methodist Medical Center. She received a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.



Maj. Gen. Neil S. Hersey '86 of Augusta, Georgia, was appointed deputy commanding general (operation) U.S. Army Cyber Command at Fort Gordon. He received a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice.



Tim Worley '86 of Tyler is a mortgage broker and owner/principal of Home Life Lending Group. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance.

Class Notes

1990s

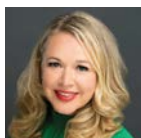
Michael Lantz '91 began a new teaching and coaching position with Huntington Independent School District. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.

Dalane E. Bouillion '92, '94 & '04 of Houston was named chief development officer of VLK Architects. She received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies, Master of Education in secondary education and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership.

Curtis VanderSchaaf '96 of Raymond, Mississippi, joined the Mississippi State University Extension Service as a forestry specialist. He received a Bachelor of Science in Forestry with a concentration in forest management.

Miguel Serrano '97 of Las Cruces, New Mexico, was named the state's HR Administrator of the Year by the New Mexico School Personnel Association. Serrano is chief human relations officer for Las Cruces Public Schools. He received a Master of Education in secondary education.

Carol Carson '98 of Greenville, North Carolina, was named Teacher of the Year for Elmhurst Elementary School. She received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.



Sereniah Breland '99 is the City of Pflugerville manager and president of the Texas City Management Association. Breland received a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.

2000s

Justin Cure '00 was named information technology director for the City of Santa Barbara, California. He received a Bachelor of Science in geology.

Wes Schminkey '00 was named football defensive coordinator, head boys and girls powerlifting coach, and strength and conditioning coordinator for Arp Independent School District. He received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

Jonathan Smith '01 of Mansfield was named executive director of the Cahn Fellows Program, a national organization designed to support the growth of school leaders in large metropolitan school districts. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.

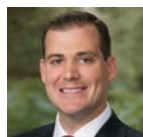
Jamie Speck '02 of Rockport was recognized by the Blinn College District as a 2021 Teaching Excellence Award winner. Speck is a part-time remote instructor for the Blinn arts program. She received a Master of Arts in art.

Kim Kassaw '03 was named executive director of special programs for Lufkin Independent School District. She received a Master of Education in special education.



Gabriel Lindsay '04 & '15 of Garrison was elected president of the Nacogdoches Jaycees for 2021. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business and Master of Business Administration.

Dr. Andre Emmons '07 & '19 was named principal of Lufkin High School. He received a Master of Education in kinesiology and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership.



Chris Rector '07 of Houston was named managing director and chief operating officer for Hines, a real estate investment company, and he is responsible for operations throughout the Southwest region. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.

2010s

Aaron Williams '13 was named executive director of leadership for Midlothian Independent School District. He received a Master of Education in educational leadership and administration.

Amanda Black '14 was named head volleyball coach for Amarillo College. She was hired as part of the coaching team that will revive the college's intercollegiate sports program as AC has not participated in intercollegiate athletics since the mid-1980s. She received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

Class Notes



Jager Loyde '14 was named by Round Rock Independent School District as director of fine arts for music. He received a Master of Education in educational leadership.



Amanda Sellman '14 married **Kaleb Castor '17**, both of Waxahachie. Amanda received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies, and Kaleb received a Master of Business Administration in finance.



Chad '15 & '17 and **Candra '14 & '18 Huckaby** of Nacogdoches announced the June birth of their first child, Tucker Alan. Chad, who served during 2016-17 as SFA's student regent, was named Mr. SFA in 2015. He received a Bachelor of Science in

mathematics and a Master of Science in mathematical sciences. Candra received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master of Education in educational leadership.

Aaron Baker '16, '18 & '21 was hired as an eLearning technician and part-time adjunct instructor for mathematics, physics and engineering at Kilgore College. He received a Bachelor of Science in computer science, a Bachelor of Science in mathematics and a Master of Science in mathematical sciences.

Tyler Johnson '17 of Rock Springs, Wyoming, was hired as managing editor for the Rocket Miner Newspaper in Sweetwater County. He received a Bachelor of Arts in mass communication.

Blake Langley '17 of Karnack was named by the Marshall Independent School District as principal of Price T. Young Elementary School. He received a Master of Education in educational leadership.



Great attendance for Sigma Tau Gamma alumni golf tournament

Members of SFA's Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity met June 26 for their annual golf tournament at the Woodland Hills Golf Club in Nacogdoches. The group had a great day engaging in friendly competition while reliving stories from their days on the SFA campus. ★

Share your Lumberjack story!

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

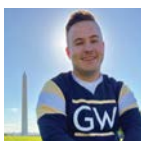


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2020s



Trace Horger '21 of Washington, D.C., was hired as a technical support specialist with The George Washington University. He received a Bachelor of Arts in information technology.

In Memoriam

DARWIN L. CRAWFORD



Former SFA baseball coach Darwin L. Crawford of Lake Orion, Michigan, passed away June 23.

Crawford was a four-sport letter winner at Bishop Thomas K. Gorman Catholic High School in Tyler. He played multiple positions on the football team, including tight end, running back and defensive end. He earned all-state recognition in football, baseball and track, while also playing basketball. He was selected for numerous all-district and all-East Texas squads.

Crawford was a state medalist in track, and he played on the first baseball team at Gorman in 1972, where he earned all-district and all-state honors on the diamond. He was inducted into the Bishop Thomas K. Gorman Hall of Fame in fall 2020.

Crawford enrolled at SFA and played football and baseball for the Lumberjacks. He received a bachelor's degree in 1978 and a master's degree in 1980. He then spent a decade as the SFA head baseball coach, winning more than 250 games and having his player's jersey number retired in the SFA Hall of Fame in 2014. Crawford later served as a health care executive for 20-plus years with his primary focus and passion in health care facilities management.

JAMES "JIM" HESS



Former SFA football coach and athletic director James "Jim" Hess passed away Oct. 2.

Hess graduated from Farmersville High School in 1955. He attended college, graduating from Southeastern Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in education from North Texas State University.

He began his coaching career in Farmersville and then coached at McKinney, Rockwall, Kilgore and Sterling high schools. His collegiate coaching career included stints with Rice University, Angelo State University and New Mexico State University.

Hess led the Lumberjack football team from 1982 through 1988, amassing an overall record of 48 wins, 29 losses and two ties. He was head coach when the Lumberjacks captured the Gulf Star Conference co-championship in 1985 and an NCAA Division I-AA quarterfinals appearance.

In 1988, the team boasted a 10-3 record and advanced to the NCAA Division I-AA playoffs, where the Jacks faced Georgia Southern University in the quarterfinal round. Following his tenure as the Lumberjacks' head coach, Hess served as athletic director and was instrumental in moving the program forward. From 1997 to 2006, he served as an area scout for the Dallas Cowboys and is credited with co-discovering former Cowboys' quarterback Tony Romo.

Keith Aiavolasiti '77 & '81 of Nacogdoches, May 26

Ronald E. Barlow '92 of Pineland, Aug. 25

Jason B. Bizzell '96 of Jacksonville, Sept. 1

Janet K. Bonner '65 & '67 of Grapevine, June 23

Joe D. Bonner '83 of Jonesboro, Arkansas, Aug. 31

Philip Lane Brown '55 & '57 of Orange, March 15

Rick Lane Campbell of Center, donor and friend of SFA, July 19

John V. Carvajal '20 of Houston, July 29

John W. Chambless '69 of Grand Saline, July 11

Linda K. Chance '80 of Adamstown, Maryland, July 24

David Chiang '86 of Austin, June 28

Dorothy R. Claggett '70 of Nacogdoches, June 25

Velton Cummings '96 of Lufkin, Aug. 16

Hunter D. Cunningham '59 of Nacogdoches, July 28

John Q. Derr '61 of Muskogee, Oklahoma, Feb. 7

Jill L. Dillard '88 of Lewisville, July 31

In Memoriam

Beckie K. Duer '74 of Tyler, July 2

David B. Funderburk '71 of Henderson, July 18

James B. Gammon '95 & '19 of Waco, July 9

Genirde Glenn '09 of Grapevine, Aug. 13

John W. Gregson '65 of Jacksonville, June 26

Robert E. Hardesty '70 & '80 of Bacliff, July 17

Dr. Kenneth Hensarling '74 of Jasper, June 16

Linda W. Hight '06 & '07 of Carthage, Aug. 28

Frank R. Hoppe '73 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 19

Virgil E. Horn '65 of Garland, Aug. 26

Dr. Ronald E. Jackson '72 of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Aug. 27

James W. Jenkins '77 of Lufkin, Aug. 5

Rona F. Johnson '62 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 18

Priscilla King '80 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 22

John C. Lawdon '70 & '75 of Longview, Aug. 26

Anthony W. Lightfoot '84 of Tyler, Sept. 2

Sharon E. Logue '84 of Waco, June 30

Vivian L. Lovell '10 of Mount Pleasant, Sept. 9

Sueann T. Lumpkins '84 of Abilene, Aug. 9

Susan H. Manchester '61 of Brenham, June 17

Edward E. Markus '71 & '72 of Katy, Aug. 18

Kathy A. Mathews '71 of Texas City, June 14

James D. May '76 of Pearland, Aug. 25

Robert McClanahan Saxon '71 of Garland, Jan. 10, 2019

Maj. William R. McCrea '76 of San Antonio, July 12

Kaye F. Milligan '10 of Whitehouse, Aug. 20

William B. Moseley '65 & '71 of Henderson, Aug. 18

Dr. Patrick A. Mueller of Weatherford, former faculty member, July 12

Jerry Bob Nix '64 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 20

Jonah R. Patton '06 of Kenedy, Aug. 4

Dennis M. Peco '66 of Mauriceville, Aug. 24

Richard L. Perry '54 of Gilmer, Aug. 6

David B. Raines '88 of Houston, Aug. 7

Charles L. Randall '57 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 28

Dan Rankin '88 of Rusk, Aug. 8

Susan Reed '04 & '07 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 15

Susan C. Senter '87 of San Antonio, July 14

Marlene Sexton '75 of Lufkin, June 19

Hubern L. Smith '64 of Center, June 6

James E. Spivey '55 & '63 of Jacksonville, July 11

Joe P. Stovall '72 & '74 of Diboll, Sept. 1

Charles A. Sullivan '64 of Carthage, June 23

Jimmy R. Thomas '64 of Hemphill, Aug. 2

Dr. Lonnie Traylor '59 & '64 of Henderson, July 30

Daniel Vanderwoude '67 of Dallas, June 11

Anne Waller '73 of Kilgore, Aug. 15

Doris F. Wedgeworth '74 of Longview, July 4

Mary J. Welch '66 & '71 of Hallsville, June 14

Andrew P. Wenner '70 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 18

Donald W. West '69 of Lafayette, Louisiana, Aug. 12

Jack R. Wilder '61 of Navasota, Aug. 6

Billy R. Williams '66 of Center, Aug. 23

Frances A. Williamson '79 of Diboll, Aug. 25

Todd Banks Wilson '97 of Spring, July 5

Gary E. Winfree '89 & '95 of San Marcos, Aug. 6

Staff Sgt. Larry K. Wolfe '72 of Lebanon, Illinois, July 21

Gordon N. Woolam '77 of Eastland, June 27

Harry K. Wynns '72 of Buffalo, Missouri, July 2



SFA students

Jose Alberto Alvarado of Palestine, Sept. 13

Leah Marie Couch of Lindale, Oct. 18

Cole Edward Overstreet of Livingston, Sept. 24

Kayla Reid of Teague, Aug. 13

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