

Sawdust

SPRING 2023

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

GREG ARNOLD '87
CEO of TAC - The
Arnold Companies

Elevate SFA

Capital campaign
closes exceeding
set goal, benefiting
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and facilities

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President's Letter



"OH, FUTURE BRIGHT, 'neath the purple and white ..."

Our alma mater's introductory lyrics are fitting as SFA embarks on its celebration of 100 years of Lumberjack

history, tradition, leadership, scholarship and service. We officially kicked off our centennial on Jan. 28 with the annual SFA Gala, honoring generous benefactors and showcasing the impact their giving has on our university. That night, we also announced that funds raised during the recent Elevate SFA capital campaign totaled more than \$121 million for scholarships, faculty and program support, and facility enhancements. Fifty percent of those funds were contributed by SFA alumni, so I want to personally thank you. With your support, we well surpassed our goal of raising \$100 million by our 100th year.

Throughout 2023, I encourage you to visit sfasu.edu/centennial regularly to learn more about planned celebrations, centennial memorabilia, and the people and events that make up SFA's unique history. In particular, please save the dates of Sept. 14-18 when the university will host a number of special centennial weekend events on campus.

As we celebrate our history, we also look forward to the start of a new, exciting era for SFA. The Board of Regents voted last fall to accept the invitation of The University of Texas System to become a member of one of the largest and most prestigious university systems in the country. The 88th Texas Legislature will decide on the enabling legislation. Benefits of our affiliation are already making an impact, including the system's commitment to provide at least \$1 million annually in need-based student aid through its Regents' Promise Plus endowment. In addition, our decision to affiliate with the UT System created the financial capacity to provide most SFA employees with a 6% salary increase that became effective Feb. 1.

Those of you who live in the area and travel up and down North Street are no doubt aware of the ongoing expansion and renovation of the Griffith Fine Arts Building. It is undergoing a stunning transformation! Our faculty members will be moving into the new facility over the summer, and I hope many of you can join us for some very special grand opening events planned in the new building during our

centennial weekend. Across campus, Hall 16 has been razed, and that site is being prepared for the construction of a new dining hall. In addition, planning has begun in earnest for a significant expansion and improvement of our forestry and agriculture facilities, a project that will also be financially supplemented by funds available through the UT System.

I would also like to update you on a few personnel changes happening within the administration. We recently welcomed Dr. Lee Furbeck to campus as vice president for enrollment management, and she has hit the ground running. Dr. Brandon Frye, former vice president for student affairs, recently accepted a position at another institution, and the national search for his replacement is getting underway. Meanwhile, Carrie Charley, executive vice president of Campus Living, Dining and Auxiliary Enterprises, has graciously agreed to serve in the interim vice president role. The search for SFA's 11th president is being conducted by the UT System. A large number of SFA representatives have been appointed to the Presidential Search Advisory Committee empaneled by the UT System Chancellor James Milliken, and additional updates on that front will be shared with the SFA community in the coming weeks.

As you know, my term as university president will soon come to an end, and I am looking forward to returning to life as a retired Lumberjack. I was deeply humbled when the Board of Regents voted in January to remove "interim" from my title, allowing me to serve as the university's 10th president. This honor was the icing on the cake of my SFA career, and I want to thank the regents for their kindness and trust in me. I have truly enjoyed working with them, as well as countless students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of this extraordinary institution I have called home for more than 45 years. As all of you reading this will surely agree, *"happy mem'ries we'll hold; all hail to SFA."*

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Dr. Steve Westbrook '81 & '89
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.



Unwind & Rewind

Few things are as rewarding as reconnecting and reminiscing. And there's no better place than back where it all began. Whether a girl's weekend or a full-fledged reunion, Nacogdoches welcomes you back with open arms and a warm embrace. Plan your road trip back this spring or anytime with the Visit Nac app or at VisitNac.com.



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On the Cover



Greg Arnold earned a marketing degree from SFA in 1987. Now he and his wife, Ashley, are giving back to his alma mater in a big way. Their gift through the SFA Elevate campaign established the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship, which offers students, and East Texans in general, a greater chance at successfully building businesses.

Sawdust

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Read past issues, watch video extras and submit class notes at sfasu.edu/sawdust.

Sawdust is published twice a year by SFA and the university's Alumni Association. Alumni and friends of the university receive both issues free of charge.

News Briefs

SFA announces intention to affiliate with The University of Texas System

After a comprehensive process evaluating affiliation with a university system, including responses and feedback from student, faculty, staff and alumni stakeholder groups, as well as the general public, the SFA Board of Regents voted during its special meeting in November to accept the invitation of The University of Texas System to become a member institution.

SFA regents thanked all participants in the process, as well as the Nacogdoches community, for their work evaluating system affiliation and the proposals of the four systems SFA was invited to join. Work began Aug. 22 and culminated in reports to the board Oct. 30.

"We are excited about the enormous opportunities this affiliation will provide for our students, faculty and staff," said Karen Gantt, SFA Board of Regents chair. "We know that the future of SFA will be enhanced by becoming a member of the leading university system in the country."

For updates on the affiliation process, visit sfasu.edu/ut-system.



SFA launches centennial celebration

From being administered through a small shack on Washington Square to educating nearly 12,000 students a year on its beautiful 421-acre main campus, SFA has come a long way in 100 years. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Nacogdoches community have big

plans to mark the university's first century throughout 2023.

"SFA's history is filled with incredible people and events," said Dr. Steve Westbrook, SFA's president. "Our campus and community have been looking forward to celebrating them."

Centennial celebrations will take place throughout the year and will feature concerts and commemorations. Events will culminate in a weekend of festivities leading up to Sept. 18, a century after SFA opened its doors on the 53rd birthday of its first president, Alton W. Birdwell.

"This year, Sept. 18 falls on a Monday, so the centennial committee is busy planning a full weekend of events and activities, including concerts, a luncheon, dedications and a big birthday party," said John Branch, chair of SFA's centennial committee. "There will be more details as we get closer to the date."

For more information on SFA's history, as well as centennial events and memorabilia, visit sfasu.edu/centennial.

Jim and Margaret Perkins recognized with the 2023 Texas Higher Education Distinguished Service Award

Presidents, chancellors and the leaders of more than 100 Texas higher education institutions honored Jim and Margaret Perkins by naming them recipients of this year's Texas Higher Education Distinguished Service Award during a ceremony held in Austin in January.

They were co-nominated by faculty and staff from SFA and Tyler Junior College. The nomination referred to their establishment



Jim and Margaret Perkins were the recipients of this year's Texas Higher Education Distinguished Service Award. The two were honored in January in Austin. Pictured, from left, are Dr. Kirk A. Calhoun, president, The University of Texas at Tyler; Dr. Steve Westbrook, president, SFA; Jim and Margaret Perkins; Dr. Juan E. Mejia, president and CEO, Tyler Junior College; and Dr. J. Blair Blackburn, president, East Texas Baptist University.

in 2006 of the James I. Perkins Family Foundation, which was created to support students, institutions of higher education and communities in East Texas. The Perkins family has generously supported SFA's James I. Perkins College of Education, the Tyler Junior College Foundation, The University of Texas at Tyler, The University of Texas School of Law and East Texas Baptist University.

Margaret Perkins is a former junior high and

high school English and history teacher. She also served as a librarian, substitute teacher and board member for the Rusk Independent School District. Jim Perkins served on SFA's Board of Regents from 1969 to 1981 and spearheaded the development of the SFASU Foundation. He is an attorney serving as president and chair of the board with Citizens 1st Bank. He's also known for celebrating the fact that more than half of the bank's employees are SFA students or graduates.

Through the James I. Perkins Family Foundation, the couple continues to support student development, research grants and professorships at SFA. They have served as lead partners in the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce's Nacogdoches Opportunity for Better Learning Experience, or NOBLE, since 2000. This program annually awards 20 students from Nacogdoches County scholarships to attend SFA.

SFA expands lyrics to fight song

With an extra dash of pep and a few sprinkles of tradition, SFA's fight song was expanded in the fall with university-sanctioned lyrics.

The fight song stands as the longtime mantra of the university's athletic triumphs and is known for its vigorous brass melodies and drum line cadences. After a nearly yearlong development and approval period, the lyrics passed legislation by the Student Government Association in April 2022 and were approved by President Dr. Steve Westbrook the following month. The new lyrics were rolled out to students during summer Lumberjack Orientation and Jack Camp sessions.

The idea to implement fight song lyrics came from T.J. Maple, coordinator of SFA's Cheer and Dance Teams. Having guided SFA spirit teams to 16 national championships in the past 17 years, Maple said it was hearing competitors from other schools sing along to their fight songs at sporting events and competitions that spurred the idea to expand the lyrics.

To read the full lyrics, visit gosfa.com/fslyrics.

News Briefs

SFA celebrates white cane safety, 50th anniversary of orientation and mobility program

SFA jointly celebrated White Cane Safety Day and the 50th anniversary of its orientation and mobility certification preparation program in October with a rally and march.

Festivities began on campus at the Baker Pattillo Student Center with a blindfold obstacle course arranged by SFA's Braille and Cane Club. The march culminated at the Janice A. Pattillo Early Childhood Research Center with an address from Dr. Lorenzo Smith, SFA provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, and a reception with cake and ice cream.

Housed in the James I. Perkins College of Education's Department of Education Studies, the orientation and mobility program began in fall 1972 with support and guidance from the Texas State Commission for the Blind, which provided grant funding. Former SFA employees Bob Bryant and Bill Bryan administered the program, affectionately known as the "Bill and Bob program," for the next 33 years until the two retired.

Family-established endowment honors Music Prep's Pat Barnett



An endowment honoring the late Pat Barnett was established by her son, Barry Barnett, to recognize the many contributions she made to the university's Music Preparatory Division in the School of Music.

The Patricia A. Barnett Fund commemorates her service as director of Music Prep from 1999 through 2019, during which time a number of advancements were made to the program's mission, including moving into what is now known as the Music Prep House and creating new educational opportunities for young musicians.

"Mom was very proud of the university for making its wealth of musical talent available to teach young students through the Music Prep program," Barry said. "She loved seeing the kids develop skill and confidence. She thought there was magic at the prep house, and we hope many others will join us in helping sustain and extend Music Prep's important mission."

Five-year English language learners grant awarded to SFA's James I. Perkins College of Education

The James I. Perkins College of Education was awarded a five-year \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to enhance bilingual and multilingual education for school districts in Nacogdoches and Angelina counties.

Administered by the college's Department of Education Studies, the grant will fund a series of professional development sessions to prepare as many as 332 educators to teach and support English language learners. Those educators include SFA faculty members and education students, as well as East Texas pre-K through 12th grade teachers.

The grant, titled "Reaching All Communities to Establish Success in Language Learning," is the third of its kind for the college, which was awarded \$1.4 million in 2007 and \$1.9 million in 2011.

SFA Gardens receives grant to research pineapple guava production



The Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture's SFA Gardens recently received grant support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service to investigate the potential

of pineapple guava as a new, low-input fruit and ornamental crop for production in Texas.

The project, funded through 2024, is a collaboration between SFA Gardens and Dr. Tim Hartmann, a Texas AgriLife extension specialist based in College Station.

"Pineapple guava has been grown in Texas for many years as an ornamental," said Dr. David Creech, director of SFA Gardens. "This project will evaluate the performance of over 20 cultivars, several of which are new to the United States."

SFA receives \$100,000 grant for STEM summer camps



SFA was among 17 Texas universities and community colleges to receive a grant to help

fund summer science, technology, engineering and mathematics camps for students ages 14 to 21.

Gov. Greg Abbott made an announcement in July 2022 that nearly \$1.3 million will be distributed through the Governor's Summer Merit Program to provide scholarships for approximately 2,231 students statewide to attend STEM camps this summer to help prepare them for future high-skill, high-demand jobs.

The program introduces young people to one or more of Texas' six focus industry clusters: advanced technologies and manufacturing, aerospace and defense, biotechnology and life sciences, information and computer technology, petroleum refining and chemical products, and energy.

The funds support SFA's College of Sciences and Mathematics STEM camps, which offer such activities as Vex robots, programming and flying drones, virtual reality simulations, computer science coding and programming, crime scene investigations, biology labs, nursing simulations, geology explorations with a fossil hunt, and more.

For more information about SFA's STEM summer camps, call the STEM Research and Learning Center at (936) 468-5814 or email STEMcenter@sfasu.edu.

ELEVATE SFA

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CLOSES EXCEEDING SET GOAL, BENEFITING STUDENTS, FACULTY AND FACILITIES

STORY BY JOHANNA GILMORE

YOU CAN SEE the results of it all over campus — the funds raised during the Elevate SFA comprehensive capital campaign are already making an impact.

More than 16,000 donors have given \$121 million for undergraduate student scholarships, faculty and program support, and facility enhancements. This far exceeds the original goal of \$100 million for the campaign, which launched publicly in October 2021 and wrapped up in September 2022.

A special gift from Ashley and Greg Arnold '87 of Dallas gave the campaign a big boost and established the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship in the Nelson Rusche College of Business.

"Greg Arnold is not a man to think small — he thought large and asked us to continue to think in that way, too," said Dr. Steve Westbrook, SFA president. "The activities and opportunities this center will create are almost limitless in scope. This is the right type of initiative at exactly the right time, and all of us at SFA are grateful for Greg Arnold's dynamic leadership and vision."

Officially launched in summer 2022, ACE will advance its mission through services provided to East Texas businesses by center staff and faculty, as well as SFA students under the direction of faculty members.



The SFA Nelson Rusche College of Business hosted a dedication for the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship in January. The center is named for Greg Arnold of Dallas, who received a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing from SFA in 1987. Arnold is CEO of TAC - The Arnold Companies. Celebrating at the ribbon cutting are, front row, from left, Dr. Steve Westbrook, SFA president; Ashley and Greg Arnold, ACE benefactors; Karen Gantt, SFA Board of Regents chair; Jennifer Wade Winston, board secretary; Brigette Carnes Henderson, regent; Paige Vadnais, student regent; and Robert Flores, regent. Back row, from left, are Dr. Tim Bisping, Rusche College of Business dean; David Alders, regent; Judy Larson Olson, regent; Nancy C. Windham, regent; and Laura Rectenwald, regent. Photo by Hardy Meredith '81

"Ashley and I wanted to establish the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship to provide students a greater chance to achieve their dreams and find business-building success," said Arnold, CEO of TAC - The Arnold Companies, a multi-business company built on a foundation of wholesale petroleum distribution and aviation services. "Being able to give back to SFA has been personally very rewarding."

The ACE offers mentoring, scholarships and internships for students; travel to competitions and field trips; support for SFA's Society for Entrepreneurial Advancement; and funding

for the campuswide Lumberjack Entrepreneurship Competition inspired by ABC's "Shark Tank."

"Supporting students and faculty to ultimately impact the greater business communities of East Texas and the entire state has long been a goal," Arnold said. "When students' hard work, expanded knowledge and effort come together, great things happen. SFA has designed an innovative, forward-thinking program as a true center of excellence in higher education that trains and develops future business leaders."

Three of the people directly impacted by the funds raised through Elevate SFA shared their stories with Sawdust. ★

**FINAL
CAMPAIGN
NUMBERS**

\$121 million
total gifts and
commitments



16,312
total donors



8,603
total first-time
donors

RYAN WAUGH '22

Current Graduate Student
MAJOR: Entrepreneurship

RYAN WAUGH WAS already interested in entrepreneurship when he arrived at SFA because he had participated in an entrepreneurship program at Crockett High School in Austin. At the time, SFA's Department of Management and Marketing only offered the subject as a minor, so Waugh initially majored in marketing with a minor in entrepreneurship.

When funds from the Elevate SFA campaign helped the Rusche College of Business establish the entrepreneurship program and major as well as the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship, Waugh immediately switched majors and started recruiting other students to the program.

From his entrepreneurship courses, Waugh developed a mindset that seeks opportunities, takes risks, tolerates failure and helps him use resources creatively. From events like the Lumberjack Entrepreneurship Competition, SFA's version of "Shark Tank," he received feedback from local business leaders on making his pitch compelling to the audience.

"Often, business students go with general business for their majors not realizing that entrepreneurship can help them if they're planning to start their own businesses one day," Waugh said. "This was an awesome opportunity to talk about a major I'm passionate about and maybe help open the door to other students who were on the fence about which path to follow."

He also earned the \$1,500 third-place prize for his educational video game Play Gov during the inaugural competition.

"The competition is a great way for students to explore that business idea they've always had but don't know where to start," Waugh said.

The next SFA-wide all-major Lumberjack Entrepreneurship Competition, sponsored by the ACE, is scheduled for April 21 and is open to the public.

Waugh is now working toward his Master of Business Administration at SFA and a venture capital career.

"I would love to help raise funding for great business ideas!" ★



Photo by Gabrielle Czaplá '20



12
gifts of \$1 million
or more



\$40 million
for student
scholarships



\$4 million
for faculty
support



\$5 million
for facility
enhancements



\$72 million
for programs and
other support



*Photo by
Lizeth Rodriguez Santes*

DR. STEPHANIE ROSS

Assistant Professor of
Accounting and Sammie L.
Smith Endowed Professor
Rusche College of Business

ONE OF THE biggest challenges for universities is recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty members. The Sammie L. Smith Professorship in Accounting has helped ensure SFA students benefit from the talent of skilled professors like Dr. Stephanie Ross, assistant professor in the Schlieff School of Accountancy.

Ross earned her doctoral degree in accounting from The University of Texas at San Antonio and her Bachelor of Arts in economics, Master of Business Administration, and Master of Science in accounting from The University of Texas at Dallas.

A certified public accountant, Ross has served as a financial accountant, auditor and tax accountant in industry and public accounting. She also served as the National Association of Black Accountants' advisor, and her research interests include compensation, corporate governance and auditing.

Ross said her goal as a professor is to use concern, competence and clarification in her teaching to help students solve puzzles, a skill accountants need.

"Accounting is not math — we are not just adding and subtracting numbers," Ross said. "Some accountants focus on auditing corporations or preparing tax returns.

Others work for the Federal Bureau of

Investigation to help solve cases. Still some specialize in fields like oil and gas accounting. Regardless of the specialty, critical thinking is key."

To provide this level of teaching expertise to accounting students, SFA must offer competitive salaries to faculty members. Endowed professorships like the one Ross was awarded and the Beverly Hatfield Smith Professorship in Accounting do just that.

These professorships were created by a couple who believes that a university's most important asset is its faculty: Dr. Sammie Smith, a regents scholar and former chair and director of the Schlieff School of Accountancy, and his wife, Beverly, who is an SFA accounting alumna. ★

CARLY CASH '23

Current Undergraduate Student
MAJOR: Special Education

AS THE YOUNGEST of three children in her family who all attended college, Carly Cash is grateful for the financial help the Dixie and Paul Kellerhals Scholarship has provided. It's one of the undergraduate scholarships funded by the Elevate SFA campaign to help reduce the average debt of students and increase retention.

"This scholarship was an honor to receive," said Cash, a senior from Georgetown. "It allowed my parents and me to not stress as much going into my last semester of college. For me, personally, it took a weight off my shoulders so I could focus on my clinical teaching semester."

Like Dixie Kellerhals, who graduated from

SFA with a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1984 and a master's degree in special education in 1985, Cash has chosen to focus on special education. She's also minoring in deaf education.

"My goal with those specialties is to teach life skills classes at the elementary school level," she said.

The Dixie and Paul Kellerhals Scholarship annually supports 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. ★

*Photo by
Lizeth Rodriguez Santes*



Lumberjack Legacy

Alumnus named
10th university
president at sunset
of decades-long
SFA career

STORY BY AMY ROQUEMORE '93 & '12

TO THE BEST of his recollection, Dr. Steve Westbrook '81 & '89 has held more than a dozen positions in the course of a distinguished SFA career spanning more than four decades. His most recent promotion came as a surprise in late January when the Board of Regents voted unanimously to remove “interim” from the title he’s held since April 2022, officially naming him the institution’s 10th president and cementing his place in the annals of SFA history.

Although Westbrook won’t serve as SFA president for long — he still plans to retire (for good) later this spring — he told the board he was both honored and humbled by the gesture. He then added, with his trademark self-deprecating humor, “I’m glad there was no split vote.”



1977

Leading the university during the past year has bookended a rewarding career in higher education Westbrook said he couldn’t have imagined when he arrived at SFA in 1977. A first-generation college student from the small East Texas town of Kennard, he moved into Dorm 14 intent on studying history and political science as a stepping stone to law school. He quickly got involved with the Performing Arts Committee, a forerunner of the Student Activities Association, helping produce multiple large-scale concerts each year.

He also juggled several off-campus jobs, working at a local tire store and serving as a late-night radio DJ. He even rang up sales at Jack in the Box on North Street, where he would sometimes stand outside wearing the famous clown head and encouraging passersby to stop in for burgers and fries.

“I needed the off-campus jobs to pay the bills, but I fell in love with campus activities,” he said. “The experience truly changed the concept I had of myself, and I became a lot more confident. I learned I was just as capable as the kids from big cities, and I

became very engaged. Toward the end of my sophomore year, I began to think I may want to do this as a career.”

He eventually got up the courage to tell his parents he wasn’t going to be a lawyer after all, and with his family’s wholehearted support, he landed his first SFA job after graduation as a University Center programs advisor. He began a steady rise through the Student Affairs ranks, earning a Master of Education in counseling and serving as coordinator of UC programs, director of student activities, director of student affairs and executive director of student affairs.

“I never know what to tell people when they ask me about my leadership style because I didn’t consciously choose one,” Westbrook said. “But it boils down to relationships — getting to know people and letting them get to know me. Once we have that common ground, we can work through things and manage whatever challenges come along.”

He acknowledges he is innately calm in a crisis — be it a hurricane, a flooded building, a pandemic or a budget shortfall. His default response is to slow down, consider all angles, make a plan and execute the steps needed to resolve the problem.

Westbrook said one especially enjoyable aspect of his SFA career has been working directly with talented and motivated student leaders on such efforts as passing the student fee that made possible the expansion and renovation of the Baker Pattillo Student Center and the construction of the Student Recreation Center, both of which were completed in 2007. ➔



1988



Photo by Hardy Meredith '81

RIGHT: Dr. Steve Westbrook signs the Bible all previous SFA presidents signed before him while surrounded by his family: wife, Dayna, and sons, from left to right, Reed and Bryce. Photo by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes

BELOW LEFT: The SFA Board of Regents celebrated Presidents Day by officially electing Dr. Steve Westbrook the 10th president of the university Feb. 20. Photo by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes

BELOW RIGHT: The Board of Regents and Westbrook show their axe 'em signs by the resolution that made Westbrook the 10th president of SFA. Regent David Alders wrote the resolution and read it at the board meeting. Pictured, from left, are Alders; Judy Larson Olson; Jennifer Wade Winston, board secretary; Brigitte Carnes Henderson; Westbrook; Karen G. Gantt, board chair; M. Thomas Mason, board vice chair; Paige Vadnais, student regent; Nancy C. Windham; and Robert A. Flores. Photo by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes



"I have also had the pleasure of working with faculty and staff, community members, and regents on numerous initiatives over the years," Westbrook said. "When I think of the university, our people are who I always come back to — faculty, staff, students and alumni. They are what make SFA a special place."

SFA is also the place where he met his favorite person, his wife Dayna Reed Westbrook '91 & '91. A former high-scoring SFA point guard and member of the Ladyjack Basketball Hall of Fame, the SFA first lady recently retired from Douglass Independent School District after a successful career as a high school teacher and basketball coach.

Married for 32 years, the couple has two sons, former Lumberjack basketball player Reed Westbrook '17 and Bryce Westbrook, a University of Texas alum; two daughters-in-law, Annabeth '19 and Ellen, respectively; granddaughter Slayde; grandson Hayes; and granddog Lottie. They are a close-knit family who the president said — along with extended family, good friends and a deep Christian faith — has provided him invaluable support throughout his career.

The SFA role in which Westbrook served the longest was vice president for university affairs, a position he held for 13 years. As vice president,

he oversaw more than 300 full-time employees and 640 student workers and was responsible for a \$50 million annual budget. His portfolio of campus departments included Campus Recreation, the University Police Department, Information Technology Services, Student Affairs, auxiliary services, student publications, Residence Life and divisional operations.

Westbrook assumed the duties of the SFA president for the first time in late 2018 when his longtime friend and mentor, then-president Dr. Baker Pattillo, became ill and passed away. He served as interim president until Dr. Scott Gordon was named SFA president in 2019 then resumed his post leading the university affairs division through a time of unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He retired from SFA at the end of 2020, expecting to never go back to work full time. However, when Gordon and the university parted ways in April 2022, SFA once again turned to Westbrook for leadership.

"I love the place," he said when asked why he agreed to serve again as interim president. "I knew it was something I could do for a year or so to help the university through another important transition. SFA changed my life, and I felt I owed a little more time for that. The least I could do was help see it through until the next leader was in place."



TOP LEFT: As part of SFA's centennial celebration, SFA pledged to plant 100 pine trees across campus. Dr. Steve Westbrook planted the 10th pine tree as the 10th president of SFA in front of the Austin Building. Photo by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes

TOP RIGHT: In addition to friends, family and past regents, Dr. William R. Johnson (right), SFA's fourth president, and relatives of the late Dr. Baker Pattillo, SFA's eighth president, attended the board meeting and luncheon. Photo by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes

BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT: After the board meeting and luncheon, Dr. Steve Westbrook met with SFA students, faculty and staff for an informal reception in the Baker Pattillo Student Center. Photos by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes



Westbrook's second term as interim president turned out to be a time of greater change than anyone anticipated. In the months after his return to campus, the Board of Regents decided to explore a possible affiliation with one of the state university systems. Westbrook directed a months-long process of vetting interested systems, which led to a board vote last November to become a member institution of The University of Texas System.

"Dr. Westbrook has led SFA during two critical times in the history of this institution," Karen Gantt, chair of the Board of Regents, announced at the January meeting. "When Dr. Pattillo fell ill and later passed, Dr. Westbrook led SFA through that time. As we have recently gone through a system affiliation evaluation process, Dr. Westbrook led SFA through that process, as well.

"You have given so much to this institution," she said directly to him. "It has been your personal sacrifice and to the benefit of SFA. And our history at this institution needs to reflect you being a president."

According to SFA's university historian and retired professor Dr. Jere Jackson, the 10th SFA presidency will be historically significant, despite its brevity.

"Dr. Westbrook's leadership at the end of the institution's first century is going to give him a preeminent position on the roster of SFA presidents," said Jackson, who served as Westbrook's faculty advisor during his first year at SFA.

"He offered the kind of leadership the university needed to cope with the remnants of the COVID-19 pandemic and has guided SFA in a very transparent way throughout the affiliation process with The University of Texas System. In some ways, it's a miracle he agreed to come back to help us through this time, and that speaks to his devotion to SFA."

As his term as president winds to a close amidst the university's centennial celebrations, Westbrook said he is confident the institution is poised to begin a new era of success and prosperity.

"I am very excited about the future of SFA," he added. "The affiliation with The University of Texas System, the new energy I feel on campus, and the support of the community, region and state leaders have positioned us for a period of growth and increased excellence. It's a great time to be a Lumberjack." ★

SFA Athletics adapts to name, image and likeness rules, launches Axe 'Em Experience Exchange

STORY BY
NATHAN WICKER '19

PHOTOS BY
LIZETH RODRIGUEZ SANTES

TOP: SFA student-athlete Jonathan Shuskey wears a polo shirt and hat from Last Stand Hats' SFA apparel line. Shuskey's play on the golf course and his unique story — a 41-year-old, 20-year U.S. Army veteran who is pursuing collegiate golf and a bachelor's degree following his military retirement — helped him gain an NIL deal with Last Stand Hats shortly after enrolling at SFA.

BOTTOM: Shuskey gained an NIL deal with SwingJuice, a golf apparel company, while attending Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. Shuskey said the funds have helped cover expenses in his athletic endeavors, such as replacing old equipment.

IN SUMMER 2021, the landscape of National Collegiate Athletic Association-sanctioned athletics changed.

The NCAA, since its beginning in 1906, has built its empire on amateurism as a core tenet: student-athletes could not be paid to play — or paid for anything — using their name, image or likeness while representing their respective universities. They could only receive scholarships. That was true for more than 100 years, until just a couple of years ago when the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously ruled that the NCAA could not limit education-related payments to student-athletes.

Due to that decision, various state laws regarding name, image and likeness went into effect July 1, 2021.

Simply put, student-athletes competing in NCAA intercollegiate athletics are now permitted to receive compensation for the use of their name, image and likeness — often shortened to NIL — for commercial and entrepreneurial activities, endorsements and appearances, among other opportunities. Like so many other schools, SFA had to decide what that meant for Lumberjack student-athletes.

“When you look at NIL for what it’s designed to be, I think it’s good,” said Ryan Ivey, SFA’s director of athletics. “I think it’s a good opportunity to provide an avenue for our student-athletes to earn compensation for their name, image and likeness.”

AXE 'EM EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE

The new legislation allowed for NIL opportunities but didn’t require them, so each school had to decide if and how they would go about implementing the process.

According to the NCAA, schools can inform student-athletes about potential NIL opportunities and can work with an NIL service provider to administer a “marketplace” that matches student-athletes with those opportunities.

For SFA, it was an easy choice — why turn down an opportunity for student-athletes to tap into that new and unique source of income?

SFA Athletics partnered with Teamworks to use its platform called INFLCR, pronounced “influencer,” which is a software service to help collegiate athletic departments support student-athletes in NIL endeavors. In July 2022, SFA Athletics launched the Axe 'Em Experience Exchange to create a seamless marketplace transaction for student-athletes and vendors to engage in NIL opportunities.

All student-athletes are automatically enrolled in the program but have the choice to opt out. Businesses, vendors and individuals can create a profile within the exchange and connect with student-athletes. They’re able to see what sport the student-athlete plays, monitor the student-athlete’s social media following and observe their posts’ value. Then, they’re able to connect with the student-athlete with a contract request, which the student-athlete can accept or decline.

The exchange can be used by local or national companies to promote the company itself or its products. Individuals or associations can also use the service for such things as sport-specific lessons, birthday announcements and engagement appearances, among other opportunities.

“We really try to protect our student-athletes in this activity, so the platform creates a safe and compliant place for vendors to communicate with student-athletes,” Ivey said.

Contracts between student-athletes and vendors are streamlined through the exchange, including the processing of payments. The program also processes and sends all tax documents to the student-athletes.

‘PUTTING’ IT INTO PRACTICE

Since the NCAA’s ruling, student-athletes have taken advantage of NIL to grow social media followings, earn new income and tap into their entrepreneurship. Jonathan Shuskey, a member of SFA’s men’s golf team, is one of them.

Shuskey’s story can’t be categorized any other way than unique: a 41-year-old, 20-year U.S. Army veteran who is pursuing collegiate golf and a bachelor’s degree following his military retirement, all while being a loving husband to his wife and father to four children, who live in Columbus, Georgia.

His well-documented story has drawn a lot of attention for NIL deals and media appearances alike. The story is his hole in one.

“NIL has been a little different for me than the normal student-athlete,” Shuskey said. “Obviously, I’m not a starting quarterback or starting point guard. In a lot of cases, NIL is tied to the star athlete. For me, it’s about my story.”

The sports business major has landed three NIL deals, the first two with Talco Industrial Chemicals Inc. and golf apparel company, Swingjuice, while he was at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. After transferring to SFA, he received a deal from Last Stand Hats, which has an SFA line of products.

According to Shuskey, his main responsibilities are promoting the products and frequently interacting on social media. The funds have helped cover expenses in his athletic endeavors, such as replacing old equipment.

Shuskey believes SFA’s efforts to assist its student-athletes will open many NIL opportunities, and the Axe ’Em Experience Exchange is a true testament to that.

“Through the Axe ’Em Experience Exchange and INFLCR, I think it’s something that’s really going to take hold here,” Shuskey said. “What we have in place and just the ease of access and use is really well done.”

The Axe ’Em Experience Exchange provides ample opportunities for SFA alumni entrepreneurs. Want to book your favorite Lumberjack student-athletes? Visit sfajacks.com/NIL to request access, or contact the department at (936) 468-3501 to get started. ★







The Art of Storytelling

Alumna co-created and starred in a Houston stage play highlighting the experiences of first-generation Vietnamese Americans

STORY BY ROBBIE GOODRICH '82

MAI LÊ '13 has always loved the art of storytelling. As a child, she constantly watched movies and TV shows and devoured books. But it wasn't until she was 13 years old that a random audition for a school play set her on the career track she's following today — one that finds her making waves in the performance and film industries.

"My English teacher at the time wanted to put on a school play," Lê said. "I don't remember the title, but I remember it was a really sad play about four high school kids who passed away when their school bus crashed, and now they're in limbo, thinking back on their lives and who and what they would miss on Earth."

She said her monologue was written to be heart wrenching and delivered as one of the last in the play. She didn't have training beforehand, but for a week, she went over her monologue every day after school.

"The day of the audition comes, and I get up in front of the class and perform," Lê continued. "I was the opposite of popular in middle school, so I wasn't surprised when I heard people laughing and mumbling under their breath during my monologue. But when I finished, everyone stood up and clapped for me. That's when I realized they weren't laughing — they were crying, and some people were audibly impressed by my delivery."

"I think that's the first time it clicked that I could do this — that I can partake in the delivery of a story for other people to see. Here we are, almost 20 years later; I have worked so many different jobs in my life, and I have searched so thoroughly for something I understand and find as gratifying as acting. But in a way, I'm still that 13-year-old."

Of all her accomplishments, Lê is most proud of her recent work and collaboration on "Song of Me." She created and co-wrote the two-person show with Đạt Peter Tôn, who also directed the play in its successful debut last spring at Stages, Houston's sixth largest nonprofit performing arts producer. ➔

Photo courtesy of Tasha Gorel

Starring Lê and Sergio Mauritz Ang, “Song of Me” is the story of brother and sister duo Philip and Luci as they reunite on the eve of Philip’s wedding to his partner, Nathan. Over some egg rolls, they plan, reminisce and clash in the way only siblings can as they struggle to find their own voices. Stages described it as “a jubilant world premiere about family, tradition, Vietnamese cooking and growing up in Houston from two of the city’s most exciting young artists.”

“It was something really special to be supported and empowered to co-write a script where Peter and I got to scream, ‘Hey, look, we exist! Come see what it’s like to be us. Enjoy! Share in our culture!’

Listen to our language!” Lê said. “The most precious thing to me about ‘Song of Me’ is that we were told by so many Asian American and Pacific Islander people that they felt seen in stories they didn’t realize they were waiting for.”

If you’ve seen a PODS Moving and Storage TV commercial while watching a Sunday afternoon football game, a METRONext commercial on Houston-area TV, or an Upwork Plateau web commercial, and if you regularly attend plays at Houston’s Alley Theatre or Stages, you’ve seen Lê in action.

She lives and works in the Houston area where she’s active in the local entertainment scene in theatre productions and readings,

film festivals, commercials, and web ads. She also was featured in the Houston Press article “Houston’s Up and Coming Actors 2019: Razzle, Dazzle and a Whole Lot More.”

“The first Houston show I ever saw was ‘Amadeus’ at the Alley back in 2011. And my debut with the Alley was in January 2020, right before the pandemic. I was cast in a workshop reading of ‘High School Play: A Nostalgia Fest,’ which is a fantastic script by Vichet Chum,” Lê said. “The play is set in Carrollton, Texas, and it’s about a high school theatre troupe. There was, of course, a delay in production with the pandemic, but I was ultimately brought back to perform as

Allison in its world premiere at the Alley in 2022.”

Lê was the host for Space Center Houston’s “Explorer Camp TV,” a show dedicated to science and space exploration learning, as well as a former writer and actor for Comedy Club Houston’s sketch comedy group, The Astronutz. She is a voice actor for Sentai Filmworks.

Her first feature film, “Acid Test,” was nominated for a Texas Independent Film Award from the Houston Film Critics Society and can be streamed on Tubi, YouTube and Apple TV. She is represented by Pastorini-Bosby Talent.

Being cast regularly in shows each semester while earning her Bachelor of Arts at SFA helped

“It was something really special to be supported and empowered to co-write a script where Peter and I got to scream, ‘Hey, look, we exist! Come see what it’s like to be us. Enjoy! Share in our culture! Listen to our language!’”

MAI LÊ ‘13



SFA graduate Mai Lê plays the character of Lilith in “Pulsate: The Vampire Musical” that was performed in Houston’s historical Prohibition Theatre. Photo courtesy of Claire Logue



prepare Lê not only to recognize opportunity but also to create her own art.

"I got a lot of real-world simulation on what the entire acting process felt like, from the first audition to the closing night. I had a lot of industry experience by the time I graduated."

SFA theatre professor Angela Bacarisse remains in touch with Lê, and she describes her as "an excellent student and a joy to work with, both in performance and backstage."

"This is evidenced in her ability to work in different aspects of performance," Bacarisse said. "I have enjoyed watching her successes since graduation, especially every time one of her commercials comes on TV. I have to stop and watch, even if I have seen it a million times. Her versatility and understanding of 'making your own work' were on display when she co-wrote and starred in 'Song of Me.' As I told her recently, I was just lucky to be there at the beginning of her career."

Coming out of the pandemic, Lê considered herself "one of the lucky ones" in the 2021 and 2022 seasons. She was offered five theatre contracts and two workshops and hopes to add a few more items to her bucket list.

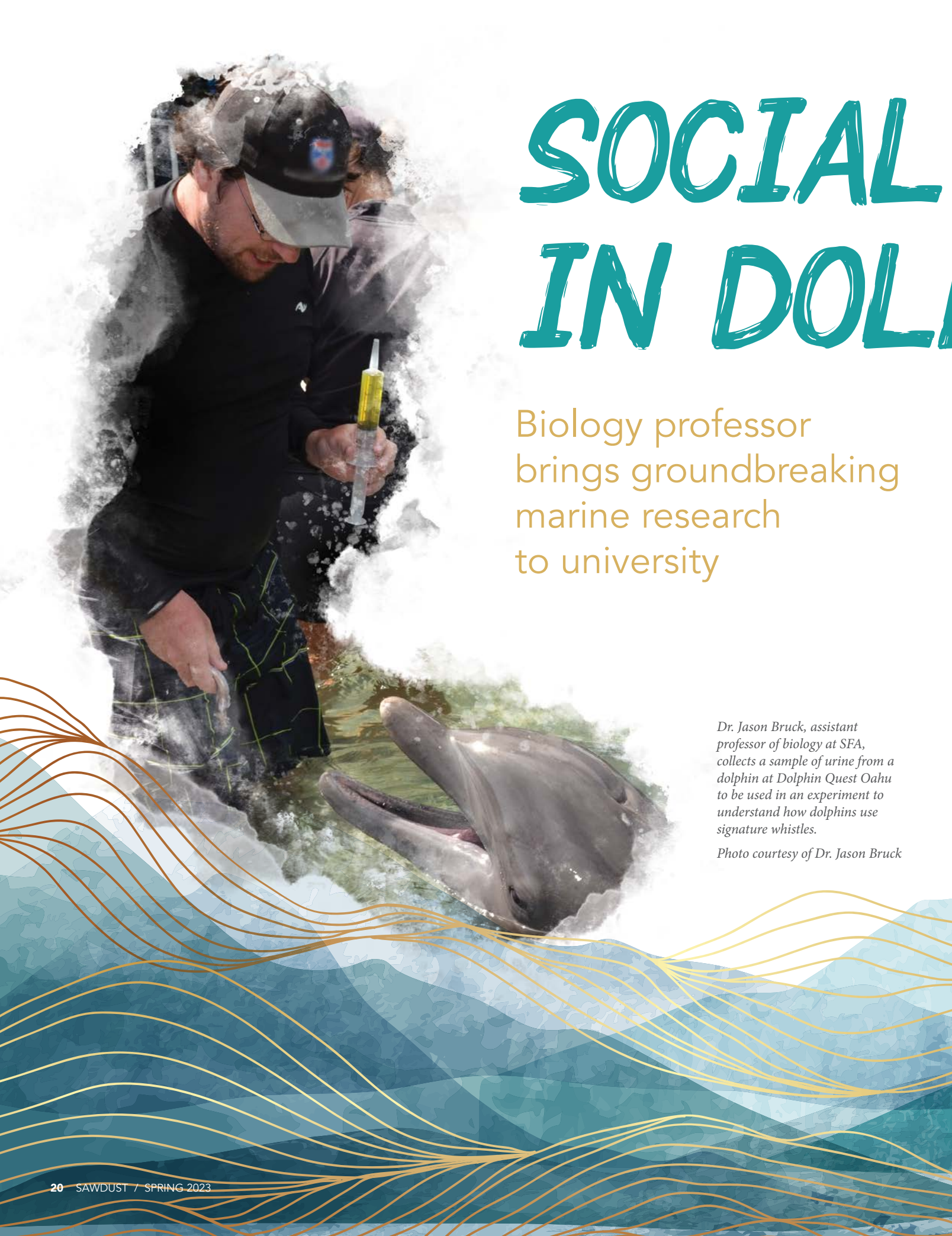
"I would love to book my first TV series," Lê said. "I want to book more commercials, especially ones that spam my mom when she plays Candy Crush and watches YouTube. I would like to audition for 'Saturday Night Live,' and I want to be a resident member for a theatre company. And lastly, I would love to be in a movie with Ming-Na Wen or Michelle Yeoh!"

"Whenever I watch a good movie or a play, I am so inspired by all the artists it took to create that story," she added, "and my awe and wonder compelled me to be a part of something like that. I love creating and collaborating as an actor — plus it helps that I think I'm pretty good at it! There's really nothing I look forward to more." ★

TOP LEFT: One of Mai Lê's many headshots showcasing her vast array of emotions and facial expressions. Photo courtesy of Arthur Bryan Marroquin of ABM Photography

TOP RIGHT: Mai Lê and her fellow stage actors captivated audiences during SFA's "The Madwoman of Chaillot" play. Photo by Hardy Meredith '81

BOTTOM: SFA students Kurt Bilanoski (portraying Captain Braid Beard) and Mai Lê (playing Jeremy Jacobs) rehearse a scene from the SFA School of Theatre's summer 2012 musical production of "How I Became a Pirate." Photo by Hardy Meredith '81



SOCIAL IN DOL

Biology professor
brings groundbreaking
marine research
to university

Dr. Jason Bruck, assistant professor of biology at SFA, collects a sample of urine from a dolphin at Dolphin Quest Oahu to be used in an experiment to understand how dolphins use signature whistles.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Jason Bruck

MEMORY PHINS

STORY BY
ALYSSA FAYKUS '19

BEING THE FIRST person in the world to know a fact is just a perk of the job for Dr. Jason Bruck, assistant professor of biology at SFA, who researches one of the most intelligent mammals in the world.

Last year, Bruck published a study on how dolphins use taste and signature whistles to identify each other. He conducted much of his research at Dolphin Quest locations in Bermuda and Hawaii at both Oahu and Big Island. These facilities support vital marine mammal conservation, education and scientific study.

Though Bruck has already published the results of this research, he's just getting started with understanding the multifaceted communication style of these mammals.

"Dolphins are one of the hardest animals in the world to study," Bruck said. "This animal is smart enough to where

you have to keep them entertained or they will swim off and do something else with their time. They are hard to see, hard to tell apart, they live in remote places — they are very hard to work with, but I enjoy those challenges."

CAREER PLANNING AT AGE 3

Even at a young age, Bruck knew he was destined to have a career that involved dolphins. His father was a veterinarian, and his family all worked together in animal rehabilitation in upstate New York.

"When I was about 3 years old, my parents made it clear to me that I would need to get a job someday," Bruck said. "I asked them to give me some options, and what I settled on was a whale and dolphin doctor. That's where the genesis of this all came from — from a little kid who thought whales and dolphins made sense because they were big and cool." ➔

Later in his life, Bruck became more interested in the behavior and study of dolphins than simply “putting them back together as a doctor,” he said. “I was drawn to their communication, how they think, how they behave.”

Luckily, life went exactly that way — now, Bruck is a researcher who studies dolphin behavior. His early research focused on interspecies interactions with hybrid dolphins and evolved into his current focus of dolphins’ signature whistles, as well as conservation projects related to drone development.

COMMUNICATING WITH WHISTLES

Just as humans have names, each dolphin has a unique whistle. Dolphins name themselves within the first year of life and keep that signature whistle their whole lives.

“When a dolphin gets lost in a group, instead of calling out to the group, they will call their own name, and that’s how the other dolphins will know they are lost and who is lost. They can copy each other’s whistles and address other dolphins,” Bruck said.

Bruck’s curiosity to understand how dolphins communicate and think goes hand in hand with his education, which he said was split between psychology and biology. His undergraduate studies at Southampton College of Long Island University were in psychobiology, and his master’s and doctoral studies were in the behavioral biology cluster of the Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago.

“Because I work in a multidisciplinary sense, I’m a jack of all trades but a master of few,” Bruck said. “I always tell my students to be the person who can see the connections between the disciplines because then you get to be the first author of the paper that puts a lot of smart people on a team together.”

Being able to see those connections is a large part of what drives his dolphin research. Humans and dolphins are separated by about 90 million years of evolution, yet they share many characteristics of intelligence.

“Dolphins can remember other dolphins’ signature whistles for more than 20 years,” Bruck said. “A dolphin lives in a society very similar to ours in that you have different kinds of social groups that are all contingent on the types of social relationships. They have a fission-fusion social system, which is the same as what humans have. When you have that kind of social system, you get smart over evolutionary time — or at least smart in a way that we understand.”

While Bruck’s memory research was considered groundbreaking, one challenge remained: how does someone determine if a dolphin is remembering a signature whistle because they know the dolphin it belongs to or just remembering that whistle as a familiar sound?

“Part of the way we figured out the whistles are representational — meaning when a dolphin hears a signature whistle, it elicits a mental picture of the whistle’s owner in the listener’s head — is by doing a cross-modal experiment,” he said. “We paired the whistle with another aspect of the dolphin’s identity that can’t change. In the case of a human, it might be a face. We don’t know if dolphins can tell each other apart visually, but maybe we could rely on another sense.”

The question remained: What else do dolphins use to identify each other?

CROSS-MODAL EXPERIMENTS LEAD TO NEW DISCOVERY

In the 1994 book titled “The Hawaiian Spinner Dolphin,” considered the first comprehensive scientific natural history of a dolphin species ever written, researcher and co-author Ken Norris shared an observation he’d make when he’d stand at the front of his boat and glance down at the water.

“The dolphin would swim up and urinate or defecate, and the next dolphin would come, open its mouth and take a taste. That’s interesting, right?” Bruck chuckled. “It turns out, dolphins don’t have a sense of smell. The only way they could identify each other through chemical perception is with taste.”

Bruck confirmed with colleagues that dolphins are the only known vertebrate to have gustatory — or taste-based — social recognition. The logic behind this discovery was that if dolphins could identify others by urine then they should be able to tell their familiar social partners apart from other dolphins.

Bruck and colleagues then paired the signature whistles to the urine cues and observed that the dolphins would get excited if the urine cue matched the signature whistle. If the urine cue did not match the signature whistle, the dolphin was more likely to ignore it. If a dolphin was given just the urine of another dolphin, it would sometimes whistle the signature whistle of the dolphin to which the urine belonged.

All of this served as evidence that dolphins, like humans, have a representational understanding of their individualized identity signals.



“Physiologically, they are very different in many ways; but cognitively, they share a lot of similarities with us,” Bruck said. “The study of biology is the study of ourselves in the most comprehensive way possible. I think the struggle occurs when we don’t tie these animal studies back to ourselves and how we work in the world, then it becomes less relatable and harder for people to understand. Making those connections can make biology relevant to everybody, even when we are embracing the diversity of life on this planet.”

Bruck has no end goal in sight with his dolphin research. As more questions are asked about these mammals, more research will be done by him and his lab.

“From the research point of view, I get to be the first person in the world to know a fact,” Bruck said. “There’s nothing cooler than that because you are discovering things that are going to be part of society’s shared knowledge of the world, and that outlives me.” ★

Dr. Jason Bruck, assistant professor of biology at SFA, discusses the anatomy of a dolphin skull with his marine biology students.

Photo by Lizeth Rodriguez Santes

GUIDING the GUGGENHEIM

PRESTIGIOUS
NYC MUSEUM
APPOINTS
ALUM AS
ADMINISTRATOR
OVER EMPLOYEE
CULTURE

STORY BY CHRISTINE
BROUSSARD '10 & '20

TY WOODFOLK '81 is a helper. He's many other things, of course, like a doer, forward-thinker, organizer, actor (in his spare time), and former pre-dental student (don't tell me your career aspirations haven't drastically shifted before). But his heart is in helping — he just can't help it.

Generations of Lumberjacks have been helped by the part Woodfolk played in creating SFA's iconic "axe 'em" hand sign. He also built a career in compassion, working initially in personnel management and human resources before bridging those talents in recent years to enter the culture and access world.

Woodfolk's successes in this realm have been swift and apparent. His first trek into employee access and belonging was at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he was director of HR. His efforts stood out so much that he was soon after poached by an organization whose name holds prestigious weight (drum roll, please) — the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

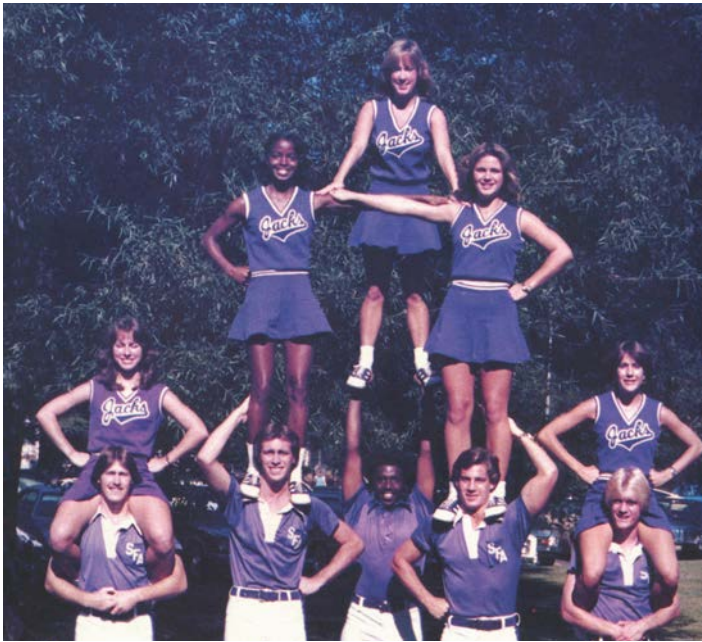
Since being named the Guggenheim's inaugural chief culture and inclusion officer in 2021, he still has moments of disbelief.

"Every time I hear that title now, I have to pinch myself," Woodfolk said over a video call in early January, seated in his Guggenheim office with a shelved wall full of cleanly organized bits and bobs behind him. "This is my ultimate job. From the first day I started here, it's almost like something released. I thought, 'Okay, you're here. You did what you wanted to accomplish.'"

Some of the first steps of his journey into employee culture and access began on the SFA campus, where he started honing his desire to build a life helping others. ➔



*Photo by David Heald ©
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Foundation, New York*



Ty Woodfolk, pictured in the middle at the base of a cheerleading pyramid, was a member of the cheer squad that created SFA's iconic "axe 'em" hand sign.

Photo courtesy of the Stone Fort yearbook, 1980

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's towering silhouette is well known the world over for its unique design. Created by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the building opened in 1959.

Photo by David Heald © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York

CHEER, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Hold up either hand in front of your face and bend your pinky and ring finger.

Ancient histories of this hand symbol tell of multiple meanings — the hand forms the shape of an axe handle and blade; the crook of the thumb forms either an “L” or “J,” depending on its positioning (for “Lumberjacks,” of course); and, if we can briefly suspend reality and pretend the hand looks like Texas, the tip of the pinky points to Nacogdoches.

OK, so the symbol isn’t ancient — it’s only been around for less than half of the university’s existence. But it’s become an enduring symbol for Lumberjack pride, and Woodfolk served as head cheerleader on the squad that created it.

“That’s one of the things I’m probably most proud of, is knowing that, through the sign, we had input in so much of what you see at the university,” he said. “It still gives me chills we were able to do that.”

Decades later, it continues to represent the enduring spirit of the SFA Lumberjack.

“In my 18 years with SFA’s Cheer and Dance Teams, our hand sign remains the one thing that unites all Lumberjacks from the beginning of their time at SFA,” said T.J. Maple, coordinator of SFA’s Cheer and Dance



Teams. “Everyone who attends SFA knows — whether you’re in an airport, shopping out of town or pretty much anywhere — if you run into an alum, you can almost guarantee to be greeted with an ‘axe ‘em’ and the hand sign.”

Woodfolk graduated from Clear Creek High School in League City, where he was the only male cheerleader and was named an All-American cheerleader. After touring multiple universities, SFA won him over with its pine-filled charm.

So much of Woodfolk’s helping-shaped heart was impacted by his time at SFA — by both good and not so good memories.

“Limited opportunities for involvement were probably the part of SFA that I didn’t like. Of course, this was 40 years ago, when there were a lot of racial issues, in East Texas particularly,” Woodfolk said candidly. “It was just a hard time to be a Black student at SFA. But, you know, that experience led me to the work I’m doing now. I have a lot of empathy because I went through that.”

At SFA, Woodfolk initially toyed with joining a pre-dental program then opted to major in theatre. After his “parents kind of talked [him] out of that,” he laughed, Woodfolk became drawn to personnel management because it let him tap into his helper-driven nature. He graduated from SFA in 1981 with a Bachelor of Business Administration.

“I’ve grown so much — my career has taught me the importance of listening to employees, understanding them, supporting them. And Stephen F. Austin started that flame for me, and I can proudly say that.”

TY WOODFOLK ’81



The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum collects, preserves and interprets modern and contemporary art. Visitors from across the world come to study its unique exhibitions.

Event view, Open Access Weekend made possible by the Ford Foundation, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photos by Filip Wolak © Filip Wolak Photography



THE BIG LEAGUES

The world of human resources wasn't all Woodfolk was hoping it might be.

"When I first started, it was a lot of dealing with policies and procedures," he said. "I started in Dallas working for a utility company that had a great human resources program. That really built my résumé, but I've always had a desire to concentrate more on helping employees than enforcing policies."

Leaving the energy sector, Woodfolk merged his love of the arts with his goal to position others to succeed and was hired as HR director for the Houston Ballet Foundation. He then moved on to the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he could test out his ideas for centering employee access across the spectrum of operations.

"That's why I got the opportunity to work at the Guggenheim — I guess the word got around about my work in workplace inclusion, and I finally made it to New York, to the big leagues."

Woodfolk also more deeply entered the culture and access world during a time of immense cultural change. Months after taking the job in Chicago, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced an overhaul of the traditional workplace; and soon after, the death of George Floyd in May 2020 spurred a global call for racial justice that changed the world — and led most companies to investigate their own cultural shortcomings.

Then Guggenheim hired Woodfolk in August 2021, putting him in a position to help the foundation reckon with its past and lead efforts to help shape its future.

"Like so many others, the Guggenheim had to really determine its fundamental role within the arts industry from a cultural standpoint, not only in terms of taking care of their employees, but also in addressing a long history of collecting predominantly European art," Woodfolk said. "The Guggenheim made a conscious shift to change the culture of the organization, both for their employees and for the art they collect and protect."

In his role as the Guggenheim's inaugural chief culture and inclusion officer, Woodfolk works with museum leadership to "foster an environment that supports the institution's commitment to ... [inclusion] principles and values," according to the Guggenheim website.

"In this position, you're improving professional development opportunities for every individual, regardless of whether they're frontline workers or executives," Woodfolk said.

Despite the inroads made in prioritizing equal access in the workplace, he still believes it takes time. And in the meantime, he'll keep growing his role as a leader at one of the most prestigious fine arts institutions in the world.

"Turning the culture is like turning a big ocean liner very slowly," Woodfolk said. "But 10 or 20 years from now, I can look back and say, 'I really had input in changing the culture of the Guggenheim.' And that's an amazing thought."

"I've grown so much — my career has taught me the importance of listening to employees, understanding them, supporting them. And Stephen F. Austin started that flame for me, and I can proudly say that." ★





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From the Association



WELCOME TO THE
100th year of our beloved
SFA, Jack nation!

Does anyone else
feel like we've just run
a marathon in 2022?
It's been a marathon of
sprints, to be honest.

Thank you to everyone who took time to reach out, comment and participate in the feedback for our alumni stakeholder group through the system affiliation process.

The evaluation of what would be in the best interest of our beloved institution to carry us boldly into our next 100 years was some of the most intense purple-passion work I've done to date — all with the goal of preserving, protecting and helping to voice our 115,000+ alumni so you could be a part of the solution. I read every comment. I heard you loud and clear, as did our Board of Regents and entire university leadership team.

The historic decision by our board to affiliate with The University of Texas System was one that, quite frankly, will launch SFA into such a positive future we cannot begin to imagine it. I often hear many alumni across the state say, "SFA has so much potential" and "We can grow and evolve without losing what makes us special." Well my friends, hold on — I cannot agree more. We are about to do just that by elevating to the next level!

Our incredibly rich SFA history is undoubtedly memorable because of each of you who have contributed to crafting the traditions and memories of our unique SFA culture. This carries on in all we do, and I am honored to lead and serve each of you as we embark on our next 100 years.

Keep the memories and nostalgia going strong on the Facebook group "You Know You Went to SFA" and on other social platforms — it puts smiles on alumni faces and reminds us we

wouldn't be where we are in this life without our amazing, incredible experiences at SFA.

As we launch into the next 100 years with energy, enthusiasm and purple pride — and with unlimited potential and possibilities through our new UT System affiliation — we celebrate Lumberjacks everywhere. The "art of the possible" has never been stronger than it is today. All I ask of you is to assume positive intent and have the willingness to see and positively participate in all that is to come!

We are on a mission to grow from good to better and from better to best in class at SFA. So, what can you do as a critical purple member of the SFA family? Keep the passion alive. Recruit a student. Attend an SFA athletic, university or alumni event in Nacogdoches or when SFA comes to where you live and work. If you haven't already, join our Alumni Association at sfaalumni.com. Consider becoming an ambassador to help grow Lumberjack pride. And the easiest of them all: wear your SFA purple swag with pride everywhere you go!

Wherever you are, keep up with us on social media by liking and following us!

Most importantly, there will be many centennial events happening throughout 2023. Check out the SFA centennial website at sfasu.edu/centennial for details, and plan a trip back to Nacogdoches to be a part of the historic celebrations in 2023!

Our future is so very bright 'neath the purple and white — all hail to SFA!

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Erika Tolar '02
Nacogdoches
President, SFA Alumni Association

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Erika Tolar '02, Nacogdoches
president

Brian Dawson '03, Conroe
president-elect

Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches
past president

Mike Harbordt '63, Nacogdoches
president emeritus

Bob Sitton '60, Nacogdoches
director emeritus

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Bob Francis '78, Bullard

Mark Friedman '91, Allen

Patrick Jackson '94, Mesquite

Samuel Khoury '97, Longview

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Darla Murphy '73, Plano

Jaclyn Partin '08 & '14, Tyler

Larissa Philpot '03, Nacogdoches

Alex Ranc '11 & '13, Nacogdoches

Ted Smith '07, Nacogdoches

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
coordinator of gifts and records

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

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

CONTACT

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

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to create an attitude
of continued loyalty and support.

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Centennial

ALUMNI EVENTS

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EVENTS SPOTLIGHT



April 28

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*We welcome alumni to join us and participate
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Visit our website for pregame information. Game times listed below.



SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS
Friday, April 14 | **7:05 p.m.**



ROUND ROCK EXPRESS
Saturday, April 15 | **7:05 p.m.**



FRISCO ROUGH RIDERS
Friday, May 12 | **7:05 p.m.**



SUGAR LAND SPACE COWBOYS
Saturday, May 13 | **6:05 p.m.**



HOUSTON ASTROS
Saturday, July 8 | **6:15 p.m.**



TEXAS RANGERS
Saturday, July 15 | **3:05 p.m.**



For questions, please contact the SFA Alumni Association at (936) 468-3407.

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Twitter - @SFASU

Use #AxeEm or tag SFA on social media.



Lumberjacks make great runners! #AxeEm

CATHARINE DARST KNIGHT /
FACEBOOK



Ellie can't throw up the AXE yet, but she does finally fit into her very first SFA gear!

BRITTANY SCARAFIOTTI / TWITTER



In front of the handsome STEM building at @SFASU. Great to spend time on the lovely campus grounds this morning. @VisitNac @NacChamber

JAMES B. MILLIKEN / TWITTER



SFA Hall of Famer and Ladyjack legend got us crying in da club.

THE W CLUB
@THEDUBCLUB21 / TWITTER



Since we don't get enough cheer at home, we are in Nac for @SFA_Cheer clinic.

MATT ADKINS / TWITTER



When in Aruba, wearing @SFASU purple is always appropriate. #axeem

ALAN JONES / TWITTER



Thank you for your service, Jacks! #SFAWay #MLKDay

@SFASU / TWITTER

Naymola
Basketball
Performance
Center and
Johnson
Coliseum

PHOTO BY SFA
FAN LUIS PEREZ



Future Projects Make Way for Transformative Construction Boom

STORY BY RICHARD MASSEY / PHOTOS BY LIZETH RODRIGUEZ SANTES

WITH THE NEW Naymola Basketball Performance Center addition to the Johnson Coliseum in 2021 and the expansion and renovation of the Griffith Fine Arts Building underway, SFA is headed into a transformative building boom this decade.

Hall 16 has been razed to make way for a new dining hall. After the scheduled fall 2024 opening, one of two on-campus dining halls, Eatery on East — known by many as the East College Cafeteria — will permanently close. In its place is a proposed new green space area.

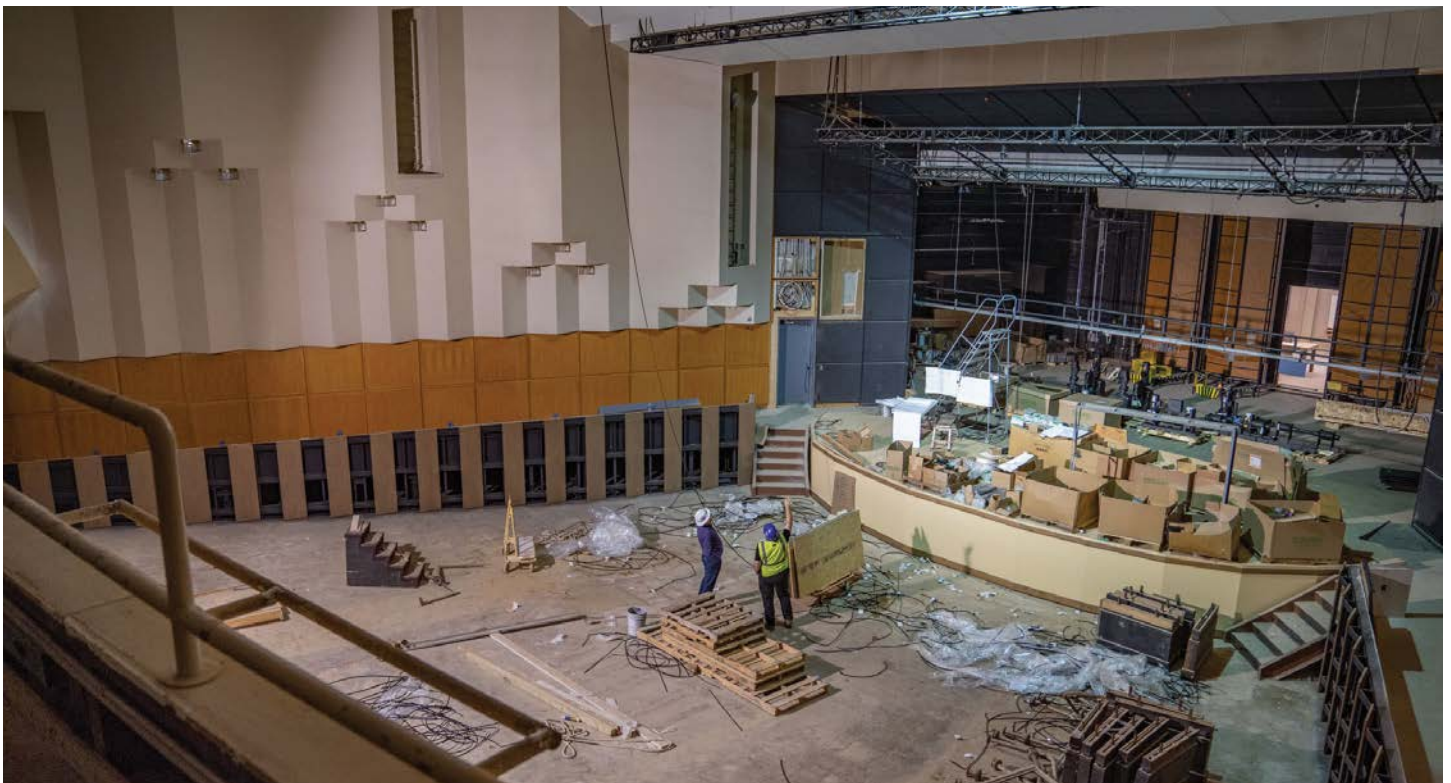
Meanwhile, The University of Texas System, which SFA will join pending a Texas legislative vote, has recommended around \$77 million be infused into renovations and replacements for the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture — with specific references to the Forestry Building, the Agriculture Building, the Forestry Laboratories and the Agricultural Mechanics Shop.

On the south side of campus, Mays Hall, which hasn't been in use as a residence hall since fall 2019, is set to be demolished this summer. Once

that has been leveled, the remaining residence halls on what's known as the horseshoe — Hall 10, North Hall and South Hall — are under consideration to be torn down as well. While there are no immediate plans to redevelop the site, once the halls are gone, a tantalizingly available piece of real estate will be sitting right across from the Cole STEM Building.

And in the center of campus, the Kennedy Auditorium and Miller Science Building, constructed at the same time in 1968 and joined by an antiquated mechanical operating system, are expected to be torn down and replaced with an interdisciplinary building, or buildings, at some point in the future. A funding request for the project has already been proposed.

SFA's centennial year is the perfect time to celebrate this cross-campus facilities face-lift. Take a quick look into some of these ongoing and future projects. ★



Performing Arts Center

The largest capital project on campus in years, the \$53-million expansion and renovation of the Griffith Fine Arts Building in the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts will be completed this spring with classes set to resume in the facility this fall. The state-of-the-art addition will feature two dance studios and theatres, a recording

studio, a sound stage, audio and video editing rooms, an art gallery, multiple classrooms, rehearsal facilities, and dean and faculty offices. The expansion will house the programs of sound recording technology, filmmaking, theatre and dance. The project also includes renovations to Turner Auditorium, pictured above.



New Dining Hall Architectural Rendering

The demolition of Hall 16 was completed during the early part of the spring 2023 semester. The structure will be replaced with a 20,000-square-foot dining facility. It will include outdoor seating for additional capacity and flexible space for such events as culinary expos and instruction. After the scheduled fall 2024 opening, the current dining hall, Eatery on East, will permanently close. In its place is a proposed new green space area. The exterior of Hall 14, which will abut the green space, will be refreshed.

Rendering courtesy of Kirksey Architecture



Mays Hall Opened in 1951

Mays Hall, which hasn't been in use as a residence hall since fall 2019, is set to be demolished this summer. Once Mays Hall has been leveled, the remaining residence halls on what's known as the horseshoe — Hall 10, North Hall and South Hall — are under consideration to be razed as well. At this point, there are no plans to redevelop the space. However, with the obsolete dorms removed, the area will emerge as a prime piece of real estate adjacent to the Cole STEM Building, said Carrie Charley, interim vice president for student affairs.



New Facilities for the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture

Forestry Building opened in 1970

Entry into The University of Texas System is expected to be a boon for the College of Forestry and Agriculture. As part of its offer, the system plans to input around \$77 million toward improvements for the Forestry Building, the Agriculture Building, the Forestry Laboratories and the Agricultural Mechanics Shop. Dr. Hans Williams, dean of the college, said overdue improvements are needed throughout the college, from the main campus to the Todd Agricultural Research Center on U.S. Highway 259 north of town.

Scholarships

Lindsey Nevels Turner Scholarship



LINDSEY TURNER '04 & '07 graduated from SFA with a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and a master's degree in education with a specialization in early childhood education.

In 2004, Turner began teaching at Huntington Elementary School in Huntington, where she was awarded teacher of the year in 2006. Five years later, she began teaching at Raguet Elementary School in Nacogdoches where she was awarded teacher of the year and district teacher of the year in 2012.

She became the assistant principal of curriculum in 2018, and then she was hired as the early childhood

coordinator at Nacogdoches' Nettie Marshall Early Childhood Center in 2022.

Turner also serves as a Sunday school teacher at First Baptist Church in Nacogdoches and is actively involved in other areas of service to the local community. She is married to Trey Turner and is mother to Avery, Sydney and Kennedy.

The purpose of the endowment is to provide an annual scholarship for an academically achieving undergraduate student pursuing any major within the James I. Perkins College of Education. ★

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:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 8541. Gabriela L. Kilmer '22, Nacogdoches | 8560. Riley R. Rodriguez '22, Jacksonville |
| 8542. Joshua H. Crawford '03, The Colony | 8561. Brad E. Wilkinson '94, Rockwall |
| 8543. Kevin L. Malone '78, Plano | 8562. Kerri S. Wilkinson '94, Rockwall |
| 8544. Daniel I. Rochester '22, Dallas | 8563. John E. Fortier '92, Katy |
| 8545. Tammy E. Purser '87, Nacogdoches | 8564. Mary Beth Fortier '91, Katy |
| 8546. Brook E. Morello '94, Richmond | 8565. Meaghan P. Morton '19 & '22, Nacogdoches |
| 8547. John Brad Van Kampen '85, Tomball | 8566. Megan D. Ward '22, Katy |
| 8548. Margaret A. Van Kampen '89, Tomball | 8567. Herbert J. Fuentes '10, Nacogdoches |
| 8549. Fredrick A. Herrera Jr. '95, Waco | 8568. Michael E. Magnuson '22, Spring |
| 8550. Blake Aaron Flores '22 & '22, Nacogdoches | 8569. Michael Dehnisch '98, Plano |
| 8551. Robert G. Messer '09, New Braunfels | 8570. Kellie J. Dehnisch '98, Plano |
| 8552. Jake W. Vickers '21, Phoenix, Arizona | 8571. Emily K. Petty '24, Nacogdoches |
| 8553. Jose A. Gonzalez-Aparicio '22, Cypress | 8572. Hollyn P. Coleman '21 & '21, Houston |
| 8554. Mark W. Bush '83, Lufkin | 8573. Kristen R. Mitchell '05, Cushing |
| 8555. Baily C. Wilson '22, McKinney | 8574. Joseph G. Mitchell '05, Cushing |
| 8556. Koral E. Hughes '21, Austin | 8575. Kaci M. Foster '22, Magnolia |
| 8557. Jill Stephens Smith '88, Pittsburg | 8576. Miguel M. Nunez '19, Houston |
| 8558. Libby L. Partin '09, Austin | |
| 8559. Kacie M. Brown '22, Lufkin | |

Class Notes

1970s

Charlotte Corbell Ingle '71, '74 & '00 of Lufkin published "Under the Pines of Deep East Texas," a book of family stories from the early 1800s to 2020. Ingle received a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Arts in art, as well as a Master of Arts in psychology.



Kay Kittrell Pearce '72 of Denton retired as director of primary care physician recruitment for the Methodist Health System in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Pearce received a Bachelor of Science in sociology.

Don Dowd '73 of Linden retired as Cass County court at law judge after a 40-year career. Dowd received a Bachelor of Science in political science.

Valerie Eggleston Peace '78 retired as an adult protection worker in August after 42 years with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Peace received a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition dietetics.

1980s

Steve Hallmark '81 was named principal advisor of the operation company Iapetus Infrastructure Services. Hallmark received a Bachelor of Science in Forestry.



Winston Sauls '81 received the designation of certified public manager from Texas Tech University in June. He works as an assistant director of public works in Borger and serves on the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission board of directors. Sauls received a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.

Karen Stanfill '81 was reappointed by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to the Rehabilitation Council of Texas. Stanfill received a Bachelor of Science with a double major in general business and rehabilitation.



Rebecca Locklear '82, multiple-subject teacher and writer of educational materials and general interest books, has a new biography, "The Surfman's Daughter: Growing

up in a Cape Cod village 1904-1929." Locklear received a Master of Arts in music.

Garrett Moynihan '82 of Frankston recently retired from both the U.S. Navy and Department of the Army. During his 47-year military and federal service career, he served in myriad maritime planning and intelligence-related positions in locations like South Korea, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Panama, Thailand and Japan. Moynihan received a Bachelor of Arts in political science.



Sidney Evans '85 received the inaugural Comcast Agent of Change Award for providing transformative change in the Houston community through volunteerism. He is a senior advisor for business affairs at Reliant, an NRG Energy company in Houston. Evans received a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.



Michele (Beadle) Wheeler '87 was named president and CEO of Jackson-Shaw, a national real estate development company. Wheeler received a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.

Dr. Tim Rocka '89 & '93 was named deputy superintendent for Carthage Independent School District. Rocka received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with an emphasis in ag education and a Master of Science in general agriculture.

1990s

Paul Evans '91 was named chief operating officer for America's Group. Evans received a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting.



Debra (Miller) Gorov '91 of Las Vegas, Nevada, was named the events and development coordinator with the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Gorov received a Bachelor of Arts in communication.

Jon Haft '92 of Tyler was named boys head basketball coach at All Saints Episcopal School. Haft received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.



Kathy Haraldson Rifaat '92 was named director of development for the Montgomery County Food Bank. Rifaat received a Bachelor of Science in biology.

Paul A. Robbins '92 & '94 was appointed by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott as district attorney of the 1st Judicial District in Sabine and San Augustine counties. Robbins received a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Business Administration, both in general business.

Michael Jones '93 was appointed the executive director of transportation with Fort Bend Independent School District. Jones received a Bachelor of Science in psychology.

Ben Norton '93 and his wife, Kelli, welcomed their son, Spencer Lewis Norton, in May. Ben received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

Scott Weems '93 was named chief of police for the Nacogdoches Police Department. Weems received a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice.



Kenneth Williams '94 was appointed Beaumont city manager in September. Williams received a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business.

Brad Hunt '95 was named chief of police for the Gatesville Police Department. Hunt received a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice and law enforcement.

John Barrar '96 was named senior vice president of IT and systems integration at Sandpiper Hospitality. Barrar received a Bachelor of Science in computer science.



Dr. Larry Hygh Jr. '97 & '99 joined the faculty of California State University Dominguez Hills as an assistant professor of advertising and public relations. Hygh received a Bachelor of Arts in radio/TV and a Master of Arts in communications. ➔

Class Notes

John Niederhofer '97 & '00 of Houston was promoted to vice president of Thompson Custom Homes. Niederhofer received a Bachelor of Science in Forestry with an emphasis in wildlife management and a Master of Science in environmental science.

Srini Gajula '99 was appointed chief solutions officer at Sage IT. Gajula received a Master of Science in computer science.

Brady Ortego '99 joined the law firm of Steptoe & Johnson PLLC with a focus on community association law. Ortego received a Bachelor of Science in psychology.

2000s

Wes Schminkey '00 was named athletic director and head football coach with Arp Independent School District. Schminkey received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

Bill Brunken '01 & '01 had his exhibition "Inspired by Nature" on display at The Confluence in New Castle, Pennsylvania, in November. His paintings are a collection of thickly textured landscapes. Brunken received a Master of Arts and a Master of Fine Arts, both in art.

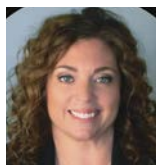
Jenny McGhee '01 was named director of championships for the NCAA Division I Big 12 Conference. McGhee received a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.

Dr. Son Mai '03 was hired as an associate professor of organizational management at Midland College. Mai received a Master of Arts in history.



Amanda Carruth '04 of Lewisville is a licensed project management professional and has been promoted to digital workplace administrator for Sonic Healthcare USA. Carruth received a Bachelor of Science in interior design.

Jacob Daniels '04 was named vice president of land with the U.S. Energy Development Corporation. Daniels received a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance.



Allison Haley '04 of Carrollton joined Ob Hospitalist Group as senior clinical recruiter. Haley received a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business.

Cory Blake '06 became the AP micro- and macroeconomics instructor and economics team leader at Klein Oak High School. Blake received a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences.



Kristina Tvrz Suberbielle '06 was recently appointed by the City of Tyler's council and mayor as chairperson of Keep Tyler Beautiful. Suberbielle received a Bachelor of Arts in English.



Cody '09 & '11 and Brandi Derouen '10 & '18 welcomed their first child, Harvey, in September. Cody also was named



president and CEO of Doches Credit Union. Cody received a Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration, both in general business. Brandi

received a Bachelor of Science in hospitality administration and a Master of Arts in student affairs and higher education.

Taylor Kovar '09 of Lufkin was named one of the top 100 financial advisors in the U.S. by Investopedia. He is CEO and founder of Kovar Wealth Management. Kovar received a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance.

2010s



Justin Pelham '10 & '11, clinical instructor in SFA's School of Human Sciences, and **Kelsey (Treusdell) Pelham '11 & '14**, lecturer in SFA's Department of Languages, Cultures and Communication, welcomed

their third child, Oliver Graham, in November. Justin received a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition dietetics and a Master of Science in human sciences. Kelsey received a Bachelor

of Arts in Spanish and a Master of Arts in Hispanic studies.



Courtney Short Brennan '11 & '12 and husband, Ryan Brennan, of Columbus, Ohio, welcomed their daughter, Sofia Elizabeth, in September. Courtney received

a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business and a Master of Business Administration in management.

Deshmond Johnson '11 & '19 was named director of fine arts with the Nacogdoches Independent School District. Johnson received a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Music.

Josh Worsham '11 was named assistant principal at Pine Tree Junior High School in Longview. Worsham received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

Eric Holton '13 was named superintendent for Somerville Independent School District. Holton received a Master of Education in educational leadership.

Brian Miller '13 was named executive director of the Grammy-award-winning Houston Chamber Choir. Miller received a Master of Music in conducting.

Kenshara Cravens '14 & '16 was named a 40 Under 40 honoree by the Galveston County Daily News for the work she does as executive director and founder of Craving for a Change Foundation Inc. Cravens received a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Social Work.

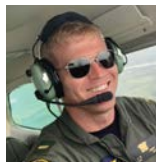
Dr. Stephen Decker '14 & '16 successfully defended his doctoral dissertation titled "Mechanisms of Cigarette Smoke-Induced Mitochondrial Dysfunction in Striated Muscle and Aorta" in October 2022. Decker received a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science, both in kinesiology.



Shelbe Rodriguez '14 was cast on the new Peacock original competition series "The Traitors," which premiered in January. Twenty contestants, some traitors and some loyal, move into a castle and work

Class Notes

as a team to complete a series of dramatic and challenging missions to earn money for the prize pot. Rodriguez received a Bachelor of Arts in journalism.



Chase Curry '15 became an aviator with the U.S. Navy in July 2020. Prior to that, he graduated with a Master of Business Administration from Tulane University.

Curry received a Bachelor of Arts in communication studies.



Tyler Cardwell '16 worked with director Taylor Sheridan on Paramount's "1883," which filmed in Texas and Montana. Cardwell received a Bachelor of Music.



Ashlie (Clark) Pair '16 married Colton Pair and settled in Baytown. Ashlie received a Bachelor of Arts in communication studies.



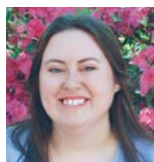
Justin Salge '16 was named assistant baseball coach at Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon, and also is a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State

University. Salge received a Bachelor of Arts in history.

Vicente Sanchez '16 was promoted to chief of staff for the Texas Legislature in 2020 and celebrated his third year in the highest senior staffer position in January. Sanchez received a Bachelor of Arts in political science.



Ronnisha Peterson '17 was crowned Miss Dallas USA 2022. Peterson received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies.



Taylor Sherva '19 received Delta Zeta Sorority's 35 Under 35 award, which highlights alumnae of the sorority who have made a significant impact in their industry. She

is the social studies department chair and instructional coach at Manor Middle School. Sherva received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies.

2020s



Austen White '20 of Dallas celebrated his one-year anniversary with Keller Williams Realty. White received a Bachelor of Music.

**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY**



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1923-2023*

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In Memoriam

DR. JANELLE C. ASHLEY



Dr. Janelle C. Ashley of Nacogdoches, former dean, faculty member, and 1962 and 1964 graduate of SFA, passed away Oct. 7.

In the fall of 1965, Ashley launched her career at SFA as a business teacher. She later served as the dean of business from 1981 to 1992 then as vice president for SFA's academic affairs until she retired in 2002.

After spending 30 years in education in Texas, she became the first female president of Worcester State University in Worcester, Massachusetts. After nine years as WSU's 10th president, she retired for a second time in 2011.

PATRICIA ANDERSON BARNETT



Former SFA Music Preparatory Division program director Patricia Anderson Barnett of Nacogdoches, a 1994 SFA graduate, passed away May 18.

Barnett worked many years as secretary at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, taught Sunday school, sang in the choir and rarely missed a worship service. She also managed the late Dr. Larry Walker's office while earning a Bachelor of Arts at SFA. In 1999, she began a 20-year stint strengthening the Music Prep program at SFA as its director.

DR. WAYNE C. BORING SR.



Dr. Wayne C. Boring Sr., former professor in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, passed away June 26 in Nacogdoches.

In 1968, Boring moved to Nacogdoches and taught chemistry at SFA for 42 years. He served as chair of the chemistry department for a portion of his tenure. Boring had a great passion for his students, with whom he built strong connections and lasting relationships. He made them feel welcome and was always available for counsel when they needed him.

WILLIAM H. BRYAN



William "Bill" H. Bryan of Nacogdoches, former faculty member and co-founder of SFA's orientation and mobility program, passed away July 22.

Bryan, along with his colleague Bob Bryant, began and administered the orientation and mobility program with support and guidance from the Texas State Commission for the Blind, which provided grant funding. The program was affectionately known as the "Bill and Bob program" for 33 years until the two retired.

Bryan was a professor of special education. He worked at SFA from 1975 to 2008 and was promoted to department chair prior to his retirement.

DR. WILLIAM D. CLARK



Longtime professor Dr. William D. Clark of Nacogdoches passed away Dec. 10.

Clark received a Doctor of Philosophy in mathematics from The University of Texas in 1968 and taught at SFA for more than 50 years. He enjoyed a distinguished career filled with numerous honors and awards, including the Teaching Excellence Award for the College of Sciences and Mathematics and the Distinguished Professor Award. He was a fellow of the Texas Academy of Science.

Clark was a published author of numerous mathematic workbooks that were co-authored by his friend and colleague, Dr. Sandra McCune, and was recognized as a professor emeritus upon his retirement at the age of 84.

MELISSA SUE DARLINGTON

Melissa Sue Darlington, a 1976 and 1978 graduate of SFA, passed away Sept. 28 in Nacogdoches.

Darlington dedicated her professional life to education. In the late 1970s, she worked as a graduate intern in SFA's English department and later returned to SFA in 1989 for the remainder of her career. From 1990 to 1997, she worked in the Academic Assistance and Resource Center, first heading the center's developmental writing program and finally directing the AARC.

In 1997, she rejoined the adjunct faculty in English; from 2001 to 2007, she worked as a research specialist in SFA's Center for East Texas Studies; and from 2007 to 2013, she served as the history department's writing coordinator. She retired from SFA in 2013, having spent more than 30 years at the university in different capacities.

DR. JOHN WILLIAMS GOODALL



Dr. John Williams Goodall of Nacogdoches, former oboe professor, associate and interim dean of the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts, and interim director for the School of Art, passed away Aug. 2.

Goodall was the first person to hold the title of associate dean of fine arts at SFA. In this position, he continued to serve as the programming and development officer for the college, booking visiting artists for the University Series and obtaining sponsorships for various events.

During his music career, he was a founding member of the Stone Fort Wind Quintet, performing with the group across the nation.

DR. LEON HALLMAN



Former SFA geography professor Dr. Leon Hallman of Sulphur Springs passed away Jan. 14.

Hallman's career at SFA flourished and expanded to areas beyond teaching — he worked as a department chair, in the community education program, and ultimately as the director of the Office of International Programs, heading up exchange programs with such countries as China,

In Memoriam

Japan and Ukraine. He loved his work and always said curiosity is what kept him learning, traveling and creating.

Hallman was an avid Lumberjack and Ladyjack sports fan. He attended football and basketball games until he was not physically able and followed them on TV every chance he could. Purple was his favorite color to wear.

DOUGLAS "DOUG" KEES HIGGINS



Recipient of the SFA Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2010, 1971 graduate and donor Doug Higgins of Fort Worth passed away Aug. 17.

Higgins was known for his sense of humor, natural ease, quick wit, business acumen, generosity and love of his family. His work ethic was apparent early in life.

In high school, he delivered papers at 3:30 a.m. every morning. While in college, he sold Bibles door to door and worked construction in the summer. He became assistant manager at Pizza Hut in Nacogdoches, which led to his career in the food industry.

In 1983, he and his partner invested everything to start their first company, H&M Food Systems. They believed in taking good care of their employees, holding picnics for them during the summers and offering "Friday lunch" for everyone all year.

DR. JERRY LEE IRONS

Former professor Dr. Jerry Lee Irons of Nacogdoches passed away Dec. 20.

Irons was a faculty member at SFA for 30 years and retired in 1997 as a professor emeritus of elementary education. He inspired hundreds of students to pursue teaching.

Irons began his career as a principal at Hanby Elementary and McWhorter Elementary in Mesquite while he continued his education, ultimately earning his Doctor of Philosophy in education from East Texas State University, now known as Texas A&M University at Commerce. After retiring from SFA, he joined the faculty at the University of Dallas, where he taught for 15 years before retiring for good in 2012.

DR. ADAM E. PECK



Dr. Adam E. Peck, former assistant vice president and dean of students, passed away Sept. 30 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Peck served SFA for 13 years and cultivated an environment of unity across campus. His guidance and support could be seen across many student organizations, including the Student Government Association, SFA "For the Kids" Children's Miracle Network and The Big Event, to name a few.

Peck lived "The SFA Way," revived the axe handle tradition and was a key member of the campuswide COVID-19 response team. He joyfully created and took on the role of Purple Santa at SFA every December.

Peck moved to Bloomington, Illinois, in 2021 to serve as assistant vice president for student affairs at Illinois State University. Always an ally and an advocate, he worked on many diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and raised safety awareness through various programs.

DR. WENDALL SPREADBURY



Former professor Dr. Wendall Spreadbury of Nacogdoches passed away Aug. 1.

Spreadbury began his teaching career in Boerne in 1959 then taught physics and math at the Isidore Newman School in New Orleans in 1961. He later joined the faculty of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater in 1965 before becoming a faculty member at SFA in 1967.

At SFA, Spreadbury was given a joint appointment to the physics and education departments. During his tenure, he taught physics, science education, computer science and radio television, as well as directed the campus TV facilities and several aerospace workshops for public school teachers. He retired in 1995.

DR. JACK L. SPURRIER



Former professor Dr. Jack L. Spurrier of Bossier City, Louisiana, passed away July 11.

Spurrier retired from SFA after 27 years as a professor of counseling and special education programs. His commitment to the education of his students at SFA for more than two decades was the cornerstone of his professional career. Upon his retirement from SFA, he continued practicing as an independent licensed counselor in the Shreveport-Bossier City area.

JOYCE BRIGHT SWEARINGEN



Joyce Bright Swearingen, a 1943 SFA graduate and donor to the university, passed away Dec. 25 in Nacogdoches.

Born and raised in Nacogdoches, Swearingen was the poster child for what a Lumberjack should be. She pledged the Pine Burrs, was the Stone Fort yearbook editor and participated in the Lumberjack Marching Band, playing clarinet. During her senior year at SFA, she was elected Miss SFA.

Swearingen was passionate about serving the community, including being a founding member of The Fredonia Hotel. She held many board positions for the East Texas Group of the National Association of Bank Women and was later named to its Hall of Fame. She also was an active member of the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce and became the first female chamber president.

She raised funds for the Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, SFASU Foundation, Friends of Music, Nacogdoches Heralds and for the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, among other groups. In 1984, friends and co-workers established the Joyce Bright Swearingen Scholarship at SFA for women studying finance.

In Memoriam

Mary Elise Adams '70 and '84 of Nacogdoches, Dec. 9
 Cindi B. Adler '77 of Dallas, Dec. 1
 Michael W. Alders '88 of Conroe, Jan. 7
 Elizabeth D. Allen '70 & '71 of Lilburn, Georgia, Nov. 23
 Debra Cauley Armstrong '80 of Lufkin, July 8
 Gloria W. Baggett '70 of Kilgore, Dec. 10
 Kate Evelyn Barnes '93 of Hewitt, Jan. 9, 2022
 Dolores Barrow '65 of Longview, Aug. 3
 Carol S. Biggs '75 of Tyler, Dec. 30
 Andrew J. Brazil '54 & '54 of Irving, May 18
 Clovis O. Britton '51 of Carthage, Oct. 5
 Barbara Brookshire of Lufkin, friend of SFA, Oct. 16
 Helen R. Brown '64 of Nacogdoches, July 27
 Victor V. Bruce Jr. '64 of Lufkin, Oct. 10
 Nancy Q. Bryan '88 of Zavalla, Oct. 20
 Curt W. Campbell '79 & '80 of Brenham, Aug. 1
 Karen S. Cegielski '76 of Jasper, Dec. 8
 Ernest C. Chastain '82 of Tyler, Jan. 15
 Jack C. Christian '51 of Tenaha, Nov. 4
 Maxine N. Christian '54 & '65 of Henderson, July 27
 Billie M. Colwell '45 & '56 of San Augustine, Oct. 24
 Sewell D. Cox '66 of Tyler, Oct. 10
 Lloyd Douglas Coyne '70 of Jefferson, Jan. 18
 Velma C. Craft '60 of Nacogdoches, Jan. 6
 Dr. Roy G. Creech '56 of Starkville, Mississippi, Nov. 26
 Erwin M. Dabbs '60 of Frankston, Nov. 8
 Gregory A. Dale '85 of Durham, North Carolina, Nov. 24
 Paul H. Davis Jr. '58 & '60 of Nacogdoches, Dec. 8
 Wayne M. Davis '70 & '74 of Rusk, Jan. 14
 Ronda C. Deso '74 of McKinney, Aug. 3
 James "J.P." Dobbs '63 of Garrison, Oct. 16
 James D. Dollens '79 of Pasadena, July 10
 Elsie Ann Dorsett '65 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 14
 Milton T. Estrella '72 of Houston, Oct. 29
 Charles L. Evers '61 of Carthage, Dec. 13
 Ethelyn A. Fisher '72 of Tyler, July 18
 Rebecca J. Fleming '71 & '72 of Plano, Jan. 6
 Aaron T. Foster '13 of Casper, Wyoming, Nov. 9
 Shigal J. Foster '99 of Houston, Oct. 13
 Wayne F. Gandy '74 & '77 of Joaquin, Nov. 17
 Gilbert P. Garrett '56 of Lindale, Jan. 9
 Virginia W. Garrison '52 of Houston, Dec. 1
 Paul P. Gilbert '55 of Longview, Oct. 29
 Juanita K. Giles '54 of Tyler, Aug. 9
 Larry A. Grimes '71 of Kennesaw, Georgia, July 22
 Victor H. Hamilton '66 of Longview, Nov. 5
 Melvin L. Hazelwood '67 of Fordyce, Arkansas, Aug. 22

LaNell L. Helms '81 of Dallas, Jan. 18
 Teresa L. Hensarling '86 & '88 of Nacogdoches, Aug. 22
 Shirley R. Hibbard '57 & '64 of Nacogdoches, Dec. 24
 Nell P. Hill '62 of Lufkin, Aug. 15
 Martha C. Hirsch '65 & '68 of Trinity, Dec. 27
 Raymond H. Holder '90 of Muskogee, Oklahoma, Sept. 5
 Clarence D. Holsapple Jr. '67 of Shreveport, Louisiana, Aug. 25
 Eleanor E. Hurst of Austin, friend of SFA, Dec. 12
 Sharon T. Ivey '77 of Carthage, Dec. 8
 Joe Pat Johnson '61 & '65 of Springfield, Tennessee, Aug. 10
 Shirley M. Joiner '77 of Nacogdoches, July 15
 Harland F. Jones '77 of Texarkana, Dec. 16
 Joseph H. Judith III '67 & '69 of Sheridan, Arkansas, Sept. 1
 Anna M. Kalbitz '87 of Houston, Jan. 14
 James R. Keasler '68 of Iowa City, Iowa, Oct. 14
 B. Jamon Kirby '60 & '70 of Tyler, Aug. 12
 Bryla K. Lewis '20 of Opelousas, Louisiana, Oct. 5
 John C. Lewis '78 of Nacogdoches, Nov. 25
 Brenda J. Lynch '95 of Jasper, July 26
 George K. Mallard Jr. '73 of College Station, Nov. 17
 Linda I. Matzke '67 & '83 of Jasper, Aug. 29
 Elizabeth C. McBroom '59 & '77 of Henderson, Oct. 29
 Chester F. McCann '43 of Richardson, Dec. 14
 Sally A. McCreary '75 of Athens, Sept. 20
 Lisa M. McGahen '83 of Richardson, Aug. 9
 Jimmie N. McLemore '59 of San Augustine, Oct. 18
 John D. Merritt Jr. '73 of Lake Jackson, Sept. 26
 Carl G. Miller '61 of Marshall, Oct. 21
 Troy A. Miller '86 of Mexia, Aug. 16
 Michael W. Moores '64 of Henderson, Dec. 23
 Gervis L. Nagle '91 of Wichita, Kansas, Oct. 11
 Lisa M. Newman '92 of Chandler, Oct. 3
 Linda K. Nix '66 of Timpson, Aug. 29
 Frances L. Norris '73 of Lufkin, Dec. 12
 Dr. Robert P. O'Neil '89 of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Sept. 15
 Georgia A. Owens '70 of Georgetown, Oct. 4
 Helen P. Padgett '76 of Kilgore, July 7
 Donald L. Pitts '74 of Fort Worth, Sept. 14
 Karen Darnell Poole '77 of Carthage, Sept. 20
 Rebecca G. Purcell '83 of Humble, Nov. 4
 Jonathan D. Rayburn '02 of New Braunfels, May 12
 Tyler A. Rayburn '19 of Lufkin, Jan. 4
 John R. Reeves '59 of Humble, Nov. 15
 Kathryn "Kay" S. Reinke '76 of Waco, Jan. 2

Laquita J. Rogers '80 of Petrolia, Jan. 2
 Lori D. Rogers '91 of Athens, Jan. 12
 Wan Delle G. Rutland '57 & '70 of Sugar Land, Oct. 2
 Kayla D. Scalise '95 of Colmesneil, Nov. 22
 Bettie F. Scott '79 of Lufkin, Jan. 9
 Billie Kathleen Crow Scott '72 of Houston, June 20
 Jan C. Scott '72 of Austin, Jan. 12
 Eunice G. Sitton '55 & '57 of Waller, Nov. 7
 Dr. Dan Spivey '47 of Lufkin, Oct. 26
 Patricia Richardson Steelhammer '73 of Palestine, Aug. 11
 Howard M. Stephens '81 of Kilgore, July 9
 Dorothy J. Strong '69 of Austin, Dec. 2
 Robert M. Stuteville '60 of Elkhart, Aug. 26
 Margaret Thayer '74 of Sabinal, Oct. 22
 Melissa A. Toon '97 of McKinney, Oct. 21
 Sara J. Trammell '85 of Lufkin, Aug. 7
 Jana Van Valkenburgh '87 of Sugar Land, March 11
 Penny J. Valkner '83 of Dayton, Nov. 21
 Sandra K. Vanover '81 of Nacogdoches, Jan. 3
 Martha A. Vaughn '70 of Huntington, Aug. 25
 Virgia J. Walker '68 of Lufkin, Oct. 6
 Dr. John P. Walter of Nacogdoches, former faculty member, Sept. 2
 Gloria A. Warren '71 of Holly Lake Ranch, Aug. 25
 Patricia A. Watson '87 of Liberty, Aug. 13
 April R. Welch '13 of Key Largo, Florida, June 30
 Dennis D. Williams '01 & '01 of Kilgore, Oct. 26
 Sarah E. Williams '53 of Lufkin, Aug. 28
 Jordan C. Williamson '07 of La Vernia, Dec. 18, 2021
 Douglas F. Wong '91 of Washington, D.C., Dec. 3
 Connie M. Woodward '04 of Tyler, Dec. 22
 Dr. Gilbert P. Worely '02 of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Nov. 30



SFA students

Micah A. McAfoose of Houston, Jan. 20
 Benjamin Mitchell of Austin, Sept. 16
 Christian Morris of Pearland, Nov. 5
 Indiana J. Renaud of Mineola, Sept. 16
 Graylan P. Spring of Austin, Jan. 21

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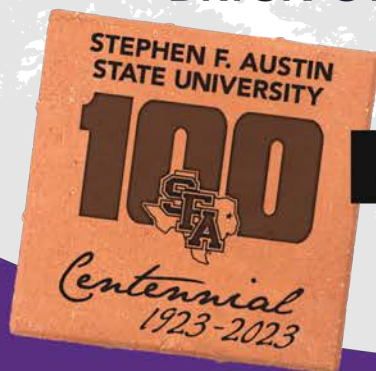
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