

SAWDUST

SFA ALUM ★ STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY ★ THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM



SFA volleyball coach
Debbie Humphreys'
record-breaking
career recognized
with lasting tribute



COACH OF THE YEAR 9X

800+
WINS



the Fredonia Hotel



WHERE LUMBERJACKS CHECK IN

President's Letter



DEAR
LUMBERJACKS,

What an exciting time to be part of the SFA family! As we begin a new academic year, I am filled with pride and optimism about the future of our university. You can sense the energy and enthusiasm surrounding our institution, and I believe great things are on the horizon.

There has been a whirlwind of activity, progress and growth this summer. Kristi and I enjoyed seeing so many of you at events like SFA Ballpark Days and Showcase Saturday, which continue to be a wonderful way to connect with Lumberjacks and their families. Interest in SFA is soaring! So much so, we had to add an additional orientation session to accommodate all the new students choosing to make SFA their home. We also received over 20,000 undergraduate applications for fall 2025, marking the highest number in the university's history. While official numbers will be available soon, I am thrilled to share that we anticipate our first overall enrollment increase in six years. All of these developments are strong indicators of the excitement and momentum at SFA.

This summer, we welcomed a new leader to our academic community. Dr. Jordan Barkley joined us in July as provost and executive vice president for the Division of Academic Affairs (see Page 8). Dr. Barkley brings nearly two decades of higher education leadership, having served at institutions such as the University of Northern Colorado, Tarleton State University and Jacksonville State University. He demonstrates a strong dedication to student success, academic excellence and strategic innovation. We are excited to see how his leadership will help shape the future of our academic programs and faculty development.

This fall marks the launch of SFA's first comprehensive marketing campaign in nearly six years. Since it was so popular among alumni and students, we are bringing back a refreshed version of the "Lumberjacks Make Great" campaign. This iteration will focus on

highlighting the stories of our remarkable alumni and the transformative paths their SFA experience has helped create. This month, you will see the new creative material shared across billboards and inside airports throughout Texas, as well as on social media and digital platforms. This campaign will help enhance brand awareness for prospective students and their families, reinforcing what we already know to be true: from SFA, you can go anywhere and accomplish anything.

In this issue of Sawdust, you'll read about the opening of our new Pineywoods Dining Hall and plans for a \$40 million entrepreneurship building recently approved by The University of Texas System. This state-of-the-art entrepreneurship facility will not only strengthen SFA's commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation but also serve as a key resource in East Texas' entrepreneurial ecosystem, fostering regional economic growth by guiding students to collaborate with local businesses and government entities to discover their vision. These additions reflect our continued investment in student experiences, academic innovation and community impact.

Meanwhile, our Campus Master Plan and Strategic Plan committees made great progress over the summer. Be on the lookout later this fall as we share the final plans (sfasu.edu/masterplan) to set a course for the next era of growth and opportunity at SFA.

As always, I invite you to make the trip home to Nacogdoches to see the progress we have made and attend an event to support our talented students. There's an unmistakable energy here that's rooted in tradition, fueled by progress and driven by the incredible spirit of our Lumberjack community. Your support and involvement are vital to our continued success. I look forward to seeing you on campus this fall!

Axe 'em!

Dr. Neal Weaver
President
Stephen F. Austin State University



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Dr. Neal Weaver
president

Dr. Jordan Barkley
*provost and executive vice president
for academic affairs*

Jane Ann Bridges '87 & '91
chief audit officer

Michael Coffee '94
*vice president for information technology
and chief information officer*

Damon Derrick
*chief of staff
vice president and general counsel*

Judith Kruwell '85
vice president for finance

Michael McBroom
director of athletics

Gina Oglesbee '11
*senior vice president
for organizational effectiveness*

Jill Still '00
*vice president
for university advancement*

Dr. Charlotte Sullivan
director of governmental relations

Dr. Kent Willis '08
*senior vice president for enrollment and
student engagement*

Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution in The University of Texas System 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.

Memory lane never looked better.

This fall, mix a little nostalgia with a lot of color for one great weekend. Come back to the place where leaves are turning, friendships were forged and stories began. Plan your trip back to Nac at VisitNac.com



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On the Cover



Head Volleyball Coach Debbie Humphreys currently has the second most wins among active coaches with 846 and is the only coach with at least 800 wins at one institution. During her tenure, she has also led her teams to nine NCAA Tournament appearances and 20 conference championships.

Photo by Lizeth Garcia

Sawdust

UNIVERSITY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Korbin Pate '12 & '22
*executive director for
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coordinator for advertising and public relations*

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

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

News Briefs

SFA mathematics alumna receives nation's highest award for STEM education



Voke (Gbemre) Ogueh '06, who graduated with a master's degree in mathematics, earned the President's Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

The White House and former President Joe Biden's administration announced the award recipients in January. She joins 336 award recipients in the United States and

U.S. territories this year.

Each awardee received a certificate signed by the president of the United States, a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation, and a trip to Washington, D.C. In addition, awardees join a national cohort of award-winning teachers that provides opportunities to impact teaching on a state and national scale.

New report shows SFA's impact on Nacogdoches economy

SFA accounts for more than \$348 million of local economic activity and supports 4,819 local jobs, or 18% of total local employment, according to a 2025 economic report produced by the Center for Business and Economic Research in SFA's Rusche College of Business.

Given Nacogdoches County's total regional output of about \$3.3 billion, SFA is responsible for \$1 out of every \$9.50 of economic activity in the county, the report indicates.

UT System approves design, budget for new SFA forestry and agriculture buildings



The University of Texas System Board of Regents approved an additional \$5 million to be added to the nearly \$80 million previously

allotted to SFA for the construction of new state-of-the-art forestry and agriculture buildings on campus. The expanded budget supports the addition of an Agricultural Engineering and Technology Building next to the Forestry Building's construction site.

SFA chosen as one of 13 state institutions to expand secondary computer science education



WeTeach_CS

SFA's JacksTeach program was selected as one of 13 in the state to participate in the Texas Computer Science Pipeline initiative, a program designed to increase the number of teachers certified to teach secondary computer science courses.

Led by The University of Texas at Austin's Texas Advanced Computing Center through its nationally recognized WeTeach_CS program, JacksTeach will coordinate the initiative locally to provide training and support to educators, ensuring students have greater access to high-quality computer science education. As part of the TXCSP initiative, SFA will serve as a WeTeach_CS certification hub, offering professional development and certification support for current Texas educators who wish to expand their qualifications to include computer science.

SFA establishes student ambassador group to represent university

SFA announced the launch of SFA Delegates, a dynamic student ambassador program designed to provide exceptional students with the opportunity to represent SFA at special events and official gatherings, acting as the face of the university under the direction of the Office of the President.

"The SFA Delegates are all great examples of the student body of SFA," said SFA first lady Kristi Weaver, who spearheaded the group's creation based on similar programs she and SFA President Neal Weaver cultivated at past institutions. "They help us represent the university in positive ways to the constituents who help the university. Dr. Weaver and I enjoy the opportunity to work with these students as they develop their skills and help them attain valuable experiences while representing SFA."

Four students selected for 2025 Best of SFA Awards

SFA's Division of Student Affairs named Garrett Bates of Frisco, Kate Middleton of Mansfield, Kently Northcutt of Crandall, and Olivia Wintz of Killeen as recipients of the 2025 Best of SFA Award.

"Our student leaders all deserve recognition for the incredible impact they have on the university," said Dr. Lacey Folsom, Student Engagement director. "Out of all our wonderful students, the committee selected these four recipients for consistently demonstrating the spirit of the Best of SFA Award through their enthusiasm, commitment and hard work."

News Briefs

SFA's Fraternity and Sorority Life raises more than \$11,000 for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals



SFA Fraternity and Sorority Life raised \$11,770.88 to donate to their shared philanthropy, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, during Greek

Week, an annual weeklong series of competitions.

"We're proud not only of the friendly competition but of the heart our community showed this year," said Dr. Lacey Folsom, Student Engagement director. "Raising over \$11,000 for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals shows the power of our students when they come together for a cause greater than themselves."

New program breaks down college entry barriers for students from regional high schools



SFA leaders and nearly 200 high school students from more than 15 regional partner schools promised to work together to achieve the

students' higher education goals with the introduction of SFA's new Lumberjack Launch Guaranteed Admissions Program.

Designed to provide a seamless transition for students from participating regional schools into the SFA community, Lumberjack Launch fosters strong connections between local schools and the university to encourage college readiness and early engagement with campus life.

SFA and regional community colleges team up to streamline transfer process for students

SFA has partnered with Kilgore College, Panola College, Tyler Junior College and Angelina College — adding them to SFA's Lumberjack Transfer Alliance. Because of this alliance, students who are ready

to transfer to a four-year university will benefit from guaranteed admissions, scholarships and enhanced services at SFA.

"We're excited and we're thankful to be partners," said Dr. Neal Weaver, SFA president, during SFA Day at Kilgore College. "We hope that many students will take advantage of this opportunity. We know it will be good for SFA and each of the colleges, and we are absolutely sure it will be good for East Texas."

Students serve as Archer Fellows



Marking the second time in university history, three SFA students represented the university in the Archer Fellowship

Program in Washington, D.C., during the spring semester — joining peers from across The University of Texas System and getting a front-row seat to the policymaking process through the elite program.

Jada Cartwright (right), a criminal justice major from Lockhart; Casper Dirkx (middle), a political science major from Spaarndam, Netherlands; and Nathan Lyons (left), a political science major from Lufkin, represented SFA in the fellowship during the spring 2025 semester.

Students leave mark in Austin during Legislative Internship Program



Through SFA's Legislative Internship Program, five students served during the 89th Texas Legislature and learned the intricacies

of Texas lawmaking and civic leadership. While gaining hands-on experiences, they left a strong impression in Austin.

Interns during the spring 2025 semester included, from left, Miguel Koch, political science major from Allen; Dylan Miles, political science major from Center; Wil Stafford, management major from Lufkin; Trent Bush, political science major from Timpson; and Sydney Shifflett, criminal justice major from Carrollton. ➔

News Briefs

SFA earns Carnegie recognition for access and research



The Carnegie Foundation and the American Council on Education designated SFA as a Higher Access, Medium Earnings institution due to its work to advance opportunity in a rural service area. Because of SFA, East Texas students benefit from greater access to a college education and above-average

wages upon completion of their degrees, according to the designation.

"This designation highlights a commitment to serving first-generation, rural and underrepresented students who might not be served by larger or more selective universities," said Dr. Neal Weaver, SFA president. "SFA is transforming lives by preparing students for success, strengthening community partnerships and driving economic mobility across our region. We remain steadfast in our commitment to offering affordable and accessible education that meets the needs of East Texas."

JacksTeach program launches fellowship to support STEM educators

In recognition of exceptional public school science teachers, SFA's JacksTeach program launched the JacksTeach Science Teacher Fellowship to support their continued professional growth.

Inaugural fellow Jessica Mayes is an accomplished middle school science teacher at Central Heights Middle School, and will work alongside Mindy Wurtz, clinical instructor and JacksTeach master science teacher, to design and deliver high-impact professional development workshops for educators. As part of her fellowship, Mayes will gain hands-on experience in lab instruction and curriculum development while receiving a \$5,000 stipend.

SFA faculty member earns 2025 Inspirational Geoscience Educator Award



The American Association of Petroleum Geologists, a nonprofit foundation supporting educational and scientific activities in the field of geology, has named Dr. Julie Bloxson, associate professor of earth sciences and geologic resources at SFA, as its 2025 Inspirational Geoscience Educator.

The annual award honors college and university professors within 10 years of their initial tenure-track appointment who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in geoscience education. The recipient receives \$6,000 and a commemorative plaque. ★

Oh Future Bright



The University of Texas System celebrated a milestone with the investiture of Dr. Neal Weaver as the 11th president of SFA in a May ceremony.

During the ceremony, the president was officially vested with the powers of the office, symbolizing the beginning of a new chapter in the university's history.



To listen to Weaver's speech and view images from all investiture events as well as the ceremony, visit sfasu.edu/investiture or scan the QR code.

SFA RECEIVES GIFT TO HONOR DANCE PIONEER

STORY BY TRISHA WHEELER '22
& NATHAN WICKER '19



Priscilla “Prissy” Sliva ’59 contributed a generous donation to support SFA’s School of Theatre and Dance programmatic efforts and to honor the legacy of her late uncle, Denard Haden ’29 (pictured), one of the university’s most influential figures in the arts. Two studios were named in his honor — the Denard Haden Performance Hall and the Denard Haden Dance Studio.

SFA announced a generous donation from distinguished alumna Priscilla “Prissy” Abshier Sliva in support of the School of Theatre and Dance. A proud member of SFA’s Class of 1959, Sliva made the generous commitment to enhance programmatic efforts and honor and commemorate the legacy of her uncle, Denard Haden ’29, one of the university’s most influential figures in the arts.

Haden, a beloved SFA alumnus and faculty member, established the university’s dance program and was widely known for his creative vision and innovative choreography. He taught dance classes, choreographed musicals and introduced groundbreaking techniques that continue to influence dance and drill teams to this day. His gift for staging and movement left a lasting impression on generations of performers and students.

“My uncle had a tremendous impact, not only on me and my family, but on so many in this area and beyond,” Sliva said. “So, this makes me very happy to recognize, remember and honor him in this way.”

Sliva’s gift includes two prominent naming components within the Griffith Fine Arts Building. The dance performance studio will be dubbed the Denard Haden Performance Hall, and the ballet studio will be named the Denard Haden Dance Studio.

“We are incredibly grateful to Prissy Sliva for her generosity and vision,” said Dr. Gary Wurtz, dean of the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts at SFA. “This gift not only supports the continued excellence of our theatre and dance programs but also honors a legacy that helped shape the foundation of dance education in East Texas.”

Sliva was joined by her sister Donna Abshier Houston, Class of 1966, during the announcement. The gift serves as a tribute to their family’s deep ties to SFA and to the profound impact of a pioneer who brought dance to the forefront of the university’s arts programming.

For more information on how you can support SFA’s Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts, visit sfasu.edu/giving. ★

Q & A

with

DR. JORDAN BARKLEY

SFA'S NEW PROVOST
AND EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT FOR THE
DIVISION OF
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy
in Reading Education
Auburn University

*

Master of Science in
Reading Education
Auburn University

*

Bachelor of Science in
Secondary Education
Auburn University

*

Barkley joins SFA with a distinguished record of academic leadership and a deep commitment to institutional analysis, professional development and strategic academic initiatives. He offers nearly two decades of administrative experience at institutions including the University of Northern Colorado, Tarleton State University and Jacksonville State University.

Q: *What drew you to the higher education world?*

A: I fell in love with the rhyme and rhythm of education as an elementary student and have enjoyed participating in, creating and leading educational experiences since. College, for me, was an opportunity to meet and learn from people I likely would have never met otherwise, opening my eyes to thinking, understanding and problem-solving in evolved ways. I chose to move into higher education from the middle school classroom because preparing future teachers meant impacting significantly more students across the state and nation. Likewise, serving as an academic leader has afforded me the opportunity to help others on campuses ensure that students have optimal opportunities to become the best educated versions of themselves.

Q: *What do you enjoy most about your role at SFA?*

A: As SFA's provost and executive vice president for the Division of Academic Affairs, I have daily opportunities to interact with and learn from students, staff, faculty and community members. This role allows me to strategically advocate for all of our learners and work with my colleagues across campus to ensure that faculty have the resources they need to deliver meaningful learning experiences in

environments that encourage introspection, creativity and growth.

Q: *What do you hope students gain from SFA?*

A: My hope is that our students take advantage of the numerous opportunities we offer at SFA to explore the ways they see the world around them, as well as how they can best impact Nacogdoches, the state and the nation. I sincerely hope that each of our students looks back fondly on their time at SFA and can confidently say, "I am prepared to make a difference because of my time at SFA!"

Q: *What are you passionate about outside of your role at SFA?*

A: I am, and always will be, an educator at my very core. Most of my activities outside of my role here are grounded in education and making a difference in the community. Where I've previously lived, I have been active in community organizations and boards that focus on improving both educational experiences and quality of life. Most recently, I served as a court-appointed special advocate for children in Colorado, and I look forward to exploring that opportunity in Nacogdoches. Aside from engaging in university or community initiatives, my wife and I enjoy spending as much time as we can with our two sons, our extended family and our friends! ★



While at SFA, Ford Sparks "Sparky" Cartwright (Aug. 26, 1947 - July 1, 2025) was a member of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity. His love for SFA never faded; he wore the purple with pride and continued to support his alma mater in many meaningful ways throughout his life.

PHOTO BY SCOTT GOODRICH



1970s Lumberjacks make the best lifelong friends: Danny Butts '74 & '78, Patricia Nolan Butts '74, David Smith '75, Carolyn Rice Smith '74, Jackie Selman Beaulieu '76 and Sandy McDade Rader '74.



SFA art student Monique Coleman's wonderful work continues on the bee observation hive at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center.

SFA GARDENS / FACEBOOK



Lumberjacks make great mission volunteers! SFA alumni and former Yellow House members visit Arusha, Tanzania, Africa, for two weeks working at Neema Village. Mike and Dorris Fortson, former Yellow House ministers, founded Neema Village as a rescue center for orphaned, abandoned and at-risk babies.

MELISSA LOFTIN / FACEBOOK

FROM THE KNOTHOLE,
NOV. 29, 1973

"Do wide fluctuations in timber prices reflect short-term factors? Do new timber supply-demand relations involve permanent higher levels of timber process? Are we exporting our wood products too much?

It is a known fact that we can expect substantial increases in timber demands in the years ahead, but only limited increases in available lumber supplies. Projections indicate a substantial price increase in order to balance timber demands with prospective supplies.

Journal of Forestry, 1973"



FROM THE KNOTHOLE,
DEC. 11, 1970

"When an overfed squirrel somehow wedged itself in a hole of a tall pine tree outside Gibbs Hall, several pleas went out to hasten its rescue. In the weeks preceding this event, foresters had been observed in the very tops of trees, fearlessly trimming them. But alas! When one small squirrel needed a crusader, not a forester could be found. Finally, help arrived in the name of the Fire Department. It was a very embarrassing situation – for the squirrel."



A REMEMBRANCE OF THE SYLVANS CLUB KNOTHOLE

VOLUME IX | NUMBER 1 | SEPTEMBER 2025

STORY BY ALYSSA FAYKUS '19

For the fall 2025 edition of Sawdust, the editorial team wanted to commemorate the legacy of the Sylvals by compiling a brief history of the organization, celebrating its winning legacy, and sharing memories from the Lumberjacks who made it happen.

Before GroupMe or Facebook groups, the Sylvals and forestry students relied on a publication called The Knothole for the goings-on of the college. Within these pages, students shared club news, notes from faculty members and how to sign up for the long-standing tradition of Lumberjack Day.

Entries in this student-run publication included book reviews, where recent graduates found employment, "tea parties" information at the Sylvals cabin and expected silliness. College kids never really change, do they?

This publication hit its stride in the late '60s and early '70s. Within the pages of these meeting notes, stories of forestry students can be remembered some 50-odd years later. Times have changed, yet a lot has remained the same. Concerns over the wide fluctuations in timber prices is still a theme that modern foresters are debating.

Forestry students at 1969 Lumberjack Day. Photo courtesy of the East Texas Research Center, forestry scrapbook



Excitement around a new forestry building being built is also on the minds of today's students, just like it was in 1970 when the original building was erected.

These pages hold stories about campus squirrels, mishaps at Sylvans practices, hopes and dreams for victory at Conclaves, and welcomes for new forestry faculty members.

FROM THE KNOTHOLE, SEPT. 11, 1970

"As we 'old timers' returned to the campus a couple of weeks ago, many new things met our eyes, especially in the forestry area. No longer present were the office building and U.S. Forest Service building – instead, the beginning of an attractive lawn filled that new area. The 'White House' has been replaced by [Oh, joy!] a parking lot.

In the midst of the forestry area, we beheld a true thing of beauty – a dream come true: Our new Forestry Building: spacious and lovely – and well worth waiting for!!"

FROM CONCEPTION TO CONCLAVE

The Department of Forestry was organized at SFA in 1946 under the direction of W.R. Owens. The Sylvans Social Forestry Club was officially recognized on campus with the adoption of its constitution Dec. 17, 1946. Most, if not all, of the initial students in forestry in the early days of this program were involved in the Sylvans.

The Sylvans name likely was chosen to avoid confusion; the campus' primary men's social club at the time was called The Foresters. The primary function of the Sylvans at its establishment was to provide a forum for professional development for the students.

The Sylvans created the tradition of an annual Forestry Field Day that was a major event at SFA. The field day was replaced with Lumberjack Day, which is now held annually during Homecoming week to demonstrate Lumberjack sports, such as crosscut sawing.

In 1958, the Association of Southern Forestry Clubs was organized by the University of Georgia in Athens. The first ASFC Conclave was hosted by UGA, and representatives from SFA attended and participated. The Sylvans thus became one of the founding members of the ASFC. The annual Conclave eventually became the primary focus of the Sylvans.

Each year, the Sylvans host a runoff day to select the participants for the annual Conclave. They have built a strong reputation among the participating schools as a club to be reckoned with. ➔



This brief history of the Sylvans was prepared by Dr. Mike Fountain, professor emeritus and Sylvans Club advisor from 1981 to 2011, and updated by Dr. Jeremy Stovall, professor of forestry and current club advisor. Fountain retired in 2010 and passed away May 4, 2024. The Sylvans are forever grateful to his decades of dedication to the club and the winning and collegial culture he fostered.

LEFT: Students hoist a participant to assist him in pole climbing.

RIGHT: Dr. Mike Fountain watches intently as a crosscut competition takes place. Photos courtesy of the East Texas Research Center, forestry scrapbook



RIGHT: Holly Parkin and Maddie Sweeten, current Sylvals, go for the win during the women's crosscut competition at the 66th annual ASFC Conclave. Photo courtesy of SFA Sylvals



A WINNING LEGACY

The Sylvals have placed first or second in 36 of the 38 Conclaves from 1985 to 2025, and have won 10 of the past 11. Conclave was not held in 2020 or 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Texas A&M University hosted Conclave in 1986 and 2002. SFA placed first both times. The Sylvals remain one of the strongest organizations at SFA.

The Sylval's most recent victory was at the 66th annual ASFC Conclave marked the Sylvals' 19th overall Conclave title and extended their winning streak to seven consecutive Conclaves — tying with the University of Arkansas at Monticello's historic run from 1987 to 1993 as the longest ever.

Not only did the Sylvals take home the hardware, but SFA students Holly Parkin, senior from Needville, and Maddie Sweeten, senior from Midlothian, set a new Conclave record, completing their cut in an astonishing 4.69 seconds — the fastest time recorded since the event's inception in 1979. These outstanding Lumberjacks set a world record with this feat — no faster cut on an 8-by-8-inch yellow poplar has ever been recorded in the women's division of any timber sports competition worldwide.

To show the scope of the team's winningness, throughout the multiple events in the 2025 competition, the Sylvals demonstrated their dominance against 13 other universities, securing the following first-place finishes:

- **Women's Crosscut:** Holly Parkin and Maddie Sweeten, 4.69 seconds — new Conclave record
- **Archery:** Jacob Barrett, 140 points — including a perfect 54 points from 20 yards
- **Men's Log Chop:** Trent Kline, 49.8 seconds — finishing nearly one minute ahead of second place
- **Chain Throw:** Paige Sumner and Katie Grenier, 76.86 seconds — 16 seconds ahead of second place
- **Pole Climb:** Weston Williams, 6.81 seconds — three seconds ahead of second place
- **Men's Bowsaw:** Trent Kline, 15.645 seconds — edging out Virginia Tech by 0.2 seconds
- **Jack & Jill Crosscut:** Holly Parkin and Trent Kline, 7.08 seconds, which would have earned third place in the men's division
- **Knife Throw:** Jacob Barrett, 7 points

Other events that are typical fair for Conclave include tree identification, axe throwing, tree-diameter estimation, wildlife identification, log rolling and more.

Students compete in birling, a sport in which two contestants run (or birl) on a floating log while trying to make the other person fall off, at Louisiana Tech University in 2023 for the 64th ASFC Conclave. Photo by Cloey Ashworth/Louisiana Tech University



COUNTING THE MEMORIES

The Knothole wasn't the only student publication widely shared among Sylvans. The Texas Tally was a yearbook published by the Sylvans from 1958-71, and in 1974, 1984 and 1985. It covered most of the activities that occurred that year in forestry, including reports on all the Sylvans activities, such as Conclave.

Modern students swapped yearbooks and scrapbooks with digital counterparts, such as Instagram (@sfa_sylvans) or websites like sylvanstimbersports.com. No matter the medium, Sylvans have been generous in sharing recollections of "happy mem'ries" with Lumberjacks, past and present. ★



JACOB SCHULER '09

- Competed with Sylvans from 2004-08
- Sylvans president from 2007-09
- Events: Men's crosscut sawing, Jack and Jill crosscut sawing, DBH (diameter at breast height) estimation

"The most fulfilling part was being able to pass on our traditions to people like Chelsea Lopez, who is still active and sponsoring Sylvans today.

I still meet people I went to Conclave with 20 years ago. Almost always at professional conferences, all over the country, we talk about Conclave and forestry clubs. It has made a lasting impact on me and anyone who has come in contact with Sylvans and SFA over the years.

I'll always remember my time as a Sylvan. The late Dr. Fountain was a mentor, friend and coach through those years. Forestry is just a small part of what it means to be a Sylvan. It's awesome to win conclaves and leave a legacy, but it means more to me than that as the years go by."



Jacob Schuler and Josh Bardwell

AARON FRIAR '10

- Competed with Sylvans from 2005-10
- Events: Compass and pacing, pole climbing, chain throwing

"The most fulfilling part about the Sylvans forestry club wasn't the actual competitions. It was the skills we learned and the legacy we passed on to the next cohort of foresters.

For instance, one of my proudest achievements was teaching a classmate, Otis Lackey, how to pole climb. During practice, I showed Otis a few tricks on how to improve his time. Then during run-offs, when we decided who would represent SFA during competition, I performed a personal best climbing a 20-foot pole in 3.8 seconds flat. Otis ended up beating me! He then went on to win his own trophies.

This taught me a valuable lesson. It is not always about winning yourself that is important, it is about passing on a tradition. That is the greatest achievement."





JOHN ROGERS '12

- > Competed with Sylvans from 2010-12
- > Events: Log roll, chain throw, log chopping

"I joined Sylvans the semester I returned home from Iraq, fall 2010. Dr. Michael Fountain kept on me about needing to join, and, to be honest, I joined so he would shut up about it. It was one of the best decisions I made in my college career.

From the physical and competitive nature of Conclave to the camaraderie of the Sylvans club, it felt like a perfect fit for me. I attended my first Conclave in spring 2011 at the University of Georgia, and I was hooked. My partner, Travis Fountain, and I placed first in log roll and chain throw, and I placed third in the log chopping.

That was Dr. Fountain's final Conclave, and to see what it meant to him and to the college really made an impression on me. I became the Sylvans vice president for the 2011-12 school year. I attended my second Conclave in spring 2012 at North Carolina State University, where my partner, David Robinson, and I placed second in chain throw. That was Dr. Stovall's first conclave. I feel like I was present to help pass the torch from one great Sylvans faculty sponsor to the next.

After we placed second at the 2012 Conclave, Dr. Stovall went from a willing participant to true believer. It was obvious that Dr. Stovall would bring new enthusiasm to the club and continue the time-honored tradition of the Sylvans well into the future. I have enjoyed watching their continued success and following them each spring as they embark on a new Conclave. Throughout my 12-year career in forestry procurement, every time I meet a new forester, the subject of Conclave always comes up regardless of school and regardless of state. I frequently find common ground and shared sentiment about our forestry club days."

CHELSEA LOPEZ '14

- > Competed with Sylvans from 2009-14
- > Events: Women's crosscut, Jack and Jill crosscut, women's bowsaw, wildlife identification, wood identification

"I was in Sylvans from 2009 through 2014 as a student, and, after I graduated, I stayed on as a coach/advisor to help Dr. Stovall with coaching the students through some of the events. I remain active as a coach and advisor to the club.

I have had so many amazing memories from my time in Sylvans, but my favorite was winning our first Conclave at Auburn in 2013. I had been to two conclaves already, and we had come in second both times. SFA had not won Conclave in several years at that point, and we also had a newer advisor after Dr. Fountain retired two years previously.

The entire club had put a lot of work in that year, led by Dr. Stovall's guidance, to ensure we were in the best shape possible to excel in competition. When they announced we won at the awards ceremony, the entire room erupted! Every other school was excited and ready to celebrate our win with us, as it had been so long since SFA's last win. It was an amazing feeling to have our entire team celebrate their first win together, especially after the months of preparation and hard work that we had put in!

This fueled my desire to ensure our team remained on top for as long as possible. As my time as a student came to a close, I spent more time with upcoming competitors to ensure the techniques and traditions we had learned and developed were passed on. This has led to a legacy of long-standing success, resulting in us winning every Conclave except one since that first win at Auburn.



Photo courtesy of Chelsea Lopez

Sylvans is a very special organization that fosters camaraderie, hard work, grit, determination and a unique connection to the history of forestry (in that most events we compete in have some basis in historic forestry practices and activities). This organization has created a tight-knit group of students who transitioned into a tight-knit group of alumni that continue to connect in both their personal and professional lives for years after they graduate."

Special thanks to the "You Know You Went to SFA" Facebook group for connecting Sawdust staff to Lumberjack alumni.

The SFA Sylvans need support to attend Conclave each year. Donations cover club costs including registration, travel, maintenance and equipment. Consider donating on Giving Day, Sept. 18, or at sfasu.edu/sylvans. ★



STREAMING SEPT. 1



STARRING SFA STUDENTS

RYDER BRADY ♦ MARGO BUHAY
TRINITY MANTO ♦ ALEX MARTY
RORY PRICE ♦ ALAINA RIDDLE
ANNABELLE SHRADER ♦ MATTHEW SMITH
CAMARI TAYLOR ♦ OLIVIA WINTZ

STORY BY PARASTOO NIKRAVESH '18 & '23
PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMAZON PRIME VIDEO

“The College Tour” is an Amazon Prime TV series created by some of Hollywood’s most recognizable producers. The creator of the series is Alex Boylan, second season winner of the “The Amazing Race,” who developed “The College Tour” after his niece was searching for colleges across the nation. SFA’s episode will tell the story of the university through the authentic lens of its students.

During the spring semester, Boylan and the rest of the Amazon Prime Video series’ crew visited with 10 Lumberjacks across campus to record

their stories about SFA’s academics, community, traditions and more. The following students are featured in SFA’s episode, which premieres Sept. 1.

The series is free to be viewed on multiple channels through streaming platforms. It will also be on “The College Tour” app and website that is served to over 60,000 high school counselors nationwide. Learn more at sfasu.edu/tct or scan the QR code. ➔



RYDER BRADY

The Woodlands High School
Political science major, military science minor



MARGO BUHAY

Westside High School
Sound recording technology major

Why did you choose SFA?

“I honestly chose SFA for the ROTC program. It really got my foot in the door, but I also chose it because I fell in love with the campus. The whole area gives a hometown feeling, and it definitely feels like home.”

What do you love most about SFA?

“The people make SFA. It’s just big enough to where you can find your crowd but not so overwhelming you feel lost. I think anyone can make a friend here and also make it their home.”

Why did you choose SFA?

“All of my previous mentors from middle and high school came here, and they talked nothing but praise about the music program. They talked about the SRT program because they knew I had an interest in making music, and after doing some research, I just knew I had to audition and come to SFA.”

What do you love most about SFA?

“Definitely the communities I’m in and friends I’ve made. Those people have become a second family to me. Everyone I’ve met is down to earth, and they’re the sweetest people.”



TRINITY MANTO

Central Heights High School
Nursing major

Why did you choose SFA?

"I chose SFA because of its outstanding nursing program and the incredible opportunities it offers. I also selected it because of the fun campus traditions like The Big Dip ring ceremony and Homecoming!"

What do you love most about SFA?

"I love that the campus is relatively small compared to other universities, and that it doesn't overwhelm you. I also love the support that the community of Nacogdoches gives to SFA, bringing everyone together."



ALEX MARTY

James E. Taylor High School
Environmental science major, communication minor

Why did you choose SFA?

"There were several factors that made SFA my top choice: the faculty's evident passion for teaching, the beautiful scenery and environment surrounding the campus, the incredible environmental science and forestry program, and the abundance of opportunities to join organizations and get involved."

What do you love most about SFA?

"The 68 acres of recreational trails provide hands-on experience for students studying forestry and environmental science. I have had lots of research opportunities starting my freshman year, which has been a great foundation for my résumé."



RORY PRICE

Edgewood High School
Entrepreneurship major

Why did you choose SFA?

"In the sixth grade, I visited SFA for a Model United Nations competition. The student center and the whole vibe of the campus felt welcoming and real. When it came time to apply to colleges, I applied only to SFA because I knew this was where I belonged. No other campus ever felt quite like home."

What do you love most about SFA?

"SFA doesn't just welcome you in — it makes you feel like you were meant to be here all along. One of my favorite things is seeing familiar faces everywhere I go. No matter how much SFA grows, it still has that close-knit, home-away-from-home feeling."



ALAINA RIDDLE

Vandegrift High School
Acting and directing major, general business minor

Why did you choose SFA?

"The School of Theatre and Dance was the main pull for me to attend SFA because of the diverse concentrations and hands-on approaches to studying the arts. I knew I would get widespread knowledge of the theatre and get to experience lots of different roles on and off the stage."

What do you love most about SFA?

"The tight-knit community built on campus. Professors and peers alike are incredibly encouraging and supportive, and I truly feel like I am growing in my craft. I get to do what I love every single day, which is all anyone can ask for."

Why did you choose SFA?

"I chose SFA because the moment I walked on campus, I immediately felt at home. The Jack Walkers who greeted me, students I interacted with and faculty I ran into on my tour all made the school feel like it could be my second home."



What do you love most about SFA?

"I love how supportive the community is. Everyone is so quick to help you and be there for you. It truly has become my home away from home."

Why did you choose SFA?

"When I found out SFA's aviation program offers top-tier flight training experience while allowing students a chance to earn a four-year degree, I knew this was the place to start my journey."



What do you love most about SFA?

"One of the things that drew me to SFA was its commitment to innovation in aviation education. As one of the first schools in Texas to offer a four-year aviation degree, SFA provides an exceptional blend of classroom instruction and hands-on flight training."

Why did you choose SFA?

"SFA had a STEM partnership with my high school, so I would visit the campus often. Those experiences helped me fall in love with the university and its STEM program."



What do you love most about SFA?

"What I love most about SFA is the strong STEM program and the calm, welcoming atmosphere on campus."



Why did you choose SFA?

"SFA was immediately the most welcoming college I had ever experienced, and testimonies from hometown alumni about the environment and my program encouraged me to choose SFA over other universities."



What do you love most about SFA?

"While academics is my priority, I love that I can give back in different ways — whether that's by giving tours of the campus, leading Orientation and Jack Camp, volunteering with Lambda Theta Alpha and Omicron Delta Kappa, mentoring, or just offering a smile on the way to class. I pour into my university because it has poured into me, and I am proud to be a Lumberjack!" ★



ANNABELLE SHRADER

Hargrave High School
Agricultural communications major



MATTHEW SMITH

Quitman High School
Aviation sciences major, family and consumer sciences minor



CAMARI TAYLOR

Lufkin High School
Mechanical engineering major, combined sciences minor



OLIVIA WINTZ

C.E. Ellison High School
Acting and directing major, hospitality administration minor

TURNING BIG IDEAS INTO BIGGER REALITIES

UT System approves \$40 million
SFA facility to boost entrepreneurship and
economic development in East Texas

STORY BY KORBIN PATE '12 & '22

PHOTO BY TREY CARTWRIGHT '04, '06 & '12

“This state-of-the-art facility
not only will strengthen
SFA’s commitment to
entrepreneurship and innovation
but also will be a key resource
in East Texas’ entrepreneurial
ecosystem, fostering regional
economic growth by guiding
students to collaborate with local
businesses and government to
discover their vision.”

Dr. Neal Weaver
SFA President

In May, The University of Texas System Board of Regents approved a transformative new facility that will house both SFA’s Greg Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship and the university’s Center for Applied Research and Rural Innovation.

The Greg Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship building will be constructed next to the future home of SFA’s \$85 million Forestry and Agriculture Building and Agricultural Engineering and Technology Building on Raguet Street between Hayter and East College streets, with substantial completion anticipated by mid-2027.

The \$40 million project includes \$21 million from the state’s Permanent University Fund bond proceeds and \$19 million from general revenue appropriated by the 88th Texas Legislature in 2023.

“The regents are proud to make another investment in this great university, and we are especially pleased that such an important program for students and faculty will have a new facility,” said Kevin P. Eltife, UT System Board of Regents chairman. “The Greg Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship continues to establish itself as a signature center for all of East Texas.”

ACE, which was recognized again this year as one of the top three emerging entrepreneurship programs in the nation by the United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, was established in 2023 in the Nelson Rusche College of Business to support innovation, collaboration and entrepreneurial growth across campus and East Texas.

In addition to moving to a new physical location in 2027, ACE has transitioned administratively from the Rusche College of Business to SFA’s Division of Academic Affairs as part of its goals to serve the



The University of Texas System Board of Regents approved a \$40 million facility that will house SFA's Greg Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship and the Center for Applied Research and Rural Innovation.

PICTURED FROM LEFT: Dr. Raymond Jones, entrepreneurship program director and associate professor for Rusche College of Business; Dr. Todd Brown, associate vice president for academic affairs - entrepreneurship; Dr. Jason Reese, interim dean of Rusche College of Business; Greg Arnold '87, SFA benefactor and CEO of TAC - The Arnold Companies; Dr. Neal Weaver, SFA president; and John Branch '96, associate vice president for facilities and campus operations.

entire campus. Dr. Todd Brown, former associate dean of the Rusche College of Business, has moved to the role of associate vice president for academic affairs - entrepreneurship to lead ACE.

"Our goal is to increase the interest in entrepreneurship among our entire student body," Brown said. "We want every student, regardless of major, to get a chance to fuel their entrepreneurial spirit while they are at SFA."

He added that an entrepreneurial foundation can help all students succeed — not just those launching businesses.

"An entrepreneurial mind is great for starting and running a business," Brown said. "However, even if the student works for a large firm, the employer will embrace the worker that comes up with new ways to accomplish things. That's entrepreneurship."

In addition to ACE, Brown will oversee SFA's Center for Applied Research and Rural Innovation, which works to advance economic growth in the rural, 12-county Deep East Texas region. Established in 2021, CARRI collaborates with education, industry and community members to leverage, promote and advocate activities that result in a direct impact on economic development in this region.

In his new leadership position, Brown will focus on entrepreneurship, economic development and building partnerships with the help of Dr. Hollie Smith '00 & '02, former executive director of Student Life in the Division of Enrollment and Student Engagement, who has moved to the role of executive director of community partnerships. Monica Loa '20, CARRI associate director, and Matthew Smilor, ACE director, also have transitioned into the broader, campuswide vision for the ACE building, which

SFA President Dr. Neal Weaver said will be a hub for business development in the region.

"This state-of-the-art facility not only will strengthen SFA's commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation but also will be a key resource in East Texas' entrepreneurial ecosystem, fostering regional economic growth by guiding students to collaborate with local businesses and government to discover their vision," Weaver said.

The two-story, 39,170-square-foot building will offer immersive and flexible spaces tailored to modern entrepreneurial education, including simulated learning environments, dedicated coworking spaces and innovation labs.

The facility's multipurpose LED volume production studio, which will feature technology to create realistic and immersive virtual environments for film, television and video production, will be available for collaborative projects and entrepreneurial ventures across SFA's areas of study. These disciplines encompass media and communications; forestry and agriculture; health care; science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM; and education, including the university's construction management and aviation sciences programs.

With the approval of the design development plans and funding allocation, SFA moves one step closer to creating a dynamic hub for future business leaders, visiting entrepreneurs and students eager to bring their ideas to life.

For more information on ACE and CARRI, visit sfasu.edu/ace and sfasu.edu/carri, respectively. ★

GUTS & GRIT



DEBBIE ☆
HUMPHREYS

Debbie Humphreys, center, stands in amazement after the newly dubbed Debbie Humphreys Court was unveiled in Shelton Gym May 3, 2025. Humphreys currently has the second most wins among active coaches with 846 and is the only coach with at least 800 wins at one institution.



Debbie Humphreys' record-breaking career recognized with lasting tribute

STORY BY NATHAN WICKER '19

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SFA ATHLETICS

For the first time in her 37-year career, Debbie Humphreys didn't know what to say.

She thought it was just another run-of-the-mill ceremony — a routine unveiling of Shelton Gym's new Taraflex court, the gold standard in collegiate volleyball surfaces and the only institution in the Southland Conference to boast such luxury.

Settling into a seat alongside her coaching staff, players, family, fans and members of the Department of Athletics, Humphreys was eager to finally lay eyes on the finished design she helped choose. As her gaze drifted

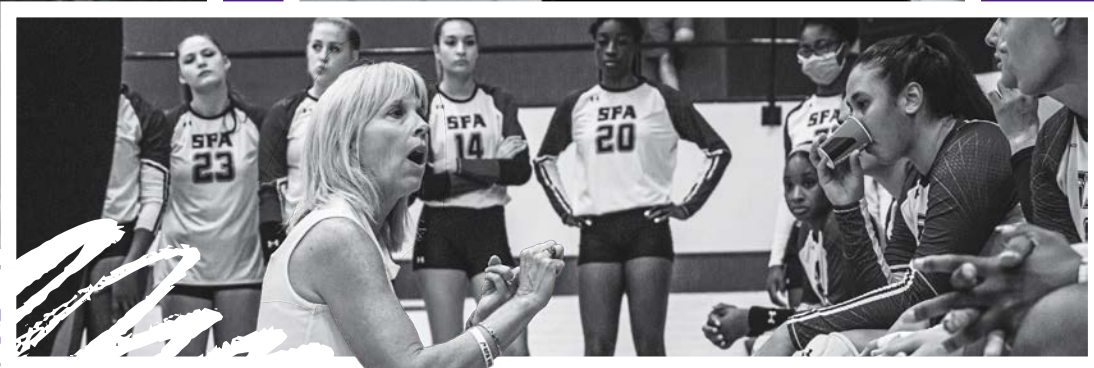
to the center logo, faintly visible beneath the coverings, everything felt exactly as expected — nothing out of the ordinary, at least not yet.

Then, the tarp was pulled.

The crowd inside Shelton Gym erupted — all rising to their feet. And there it was, permanently stamped on both ends of the court in regal cursive lettering:

"Debbie Humphreys Court."

This wasn't just a court unveiling. It was a tribute to a legacy — nearly four decades of leadership, 846 wins and counting, and a name forever etched onto the very floor she helped build. ➔



Roots before the rally

Born in Olney, Illinois, and raised two hours north in Rochester, Humphreys found her way to sports early, rekindling memories of evenings on the back deck with her father listening to St. Louis Cardinals broadcasts, serving as a golf caddy for her parents and shooting hoops in the driveway until the light faded.

If there was a sport to play, she played it, and by the time the stat sheets were printed — whether from an organized sport or in the metaphorical sense from the neighborhood game of kick-the-can — chances were, Humphreys' name was on them. But it was in seventh grade, when she first stepped onto the court for organized volleyball, that things truly began to take shape.

"I was going to play whatever opportunities were there," Humphreys said. "Volleyball seemed to be the one that just stuck and the one I was best at. It became what I wanted to do."

An outside hitter who found ample success through the middle and high school ranks, Humphreys pursued her desire to continue playing volleyball collegiately. To do so, she began learning the setter position with advice from a club coach and traveling throughout Illinois and Missouri for tryouts. During that time, women's collegiate volleyball championships were conducted by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, or AIAW, before the NCAA began offering the sport in 1981.

It was during a club tournament in Kansas City, Missouri, however, that Humphreys first caught the attention of Texas Tech University. What followed was an 18-hour drive south and a dramatic shift — trading the wooded hills and warm summers of Central Illinois for the arid, sunbaked plains of West Texas. It was, in every sense, a culture shock.

"We came down to Lubbock and we saw it and I thought I had fallen off the face of the Earth because West Texas is its own animal," Humphreys said. "I mean the people were great, but it was flat. There's no trees. The wind blows all the time. It was like, 'wow, this is so different.' But, you know, I ended up taking that opportunity."

Known for her ball control but slightly undersized for the front row, Humphreys transitioned from setter back to an outside hitter position and later garnered All-Southwest Conference honors in 1985. According to Humphreys, if the libero position had existed at the time, that likely would have been her role.

"My game was more like my coaching style: guts and grit," Humphreys said in an interview on SFAVolleyblog.net. "I think I was more of a glue piece. I think I was a glue-type piece that allowed some of those crazy good athletes and good players that I played with to do their thing."

When setting foot on campus, coaching wasn't the plan. Not even a thought. Instead,

after a brief dabbling in computer science, she shifted her focus to exercise science with a path toward the medical field. During graduate school, she even worked in cardiac rehabilitation at a nearby hospital.

Despite the sense of accomplishment after successfully interpreting electrocardiograms, a new idea began to take hold — the thought of coaching. Once it entered her mind, she couldn't shake it.

A career above the net

Following a year as a graduate assistant for the Red Raiders, Humphreys scoured assistant coaching listings, with little to show for it. Then something caught her eye: the head coaching gig at SFA.

Thoughts began swirling. "Where's Nacogdoches?" "How in the world do you pronounce that?" "They surely wouldn't hire a 23-year-old right out of college, would they?" "Why not?"

On a whim — and with little expectation — she threw her name in the hat. Weeks later, to her surprise, she received a call from Sadie Allan, former Ladyjacks athletic director and softball and badminton coach. Interviews followed. Then came the offer. Just like that, she was a head coach — unknowingly taking the first step in what would become a remarkable career.

"It's probably extremely rare for a head coach to be hired right out of college, especially in this day and age," Humphreys said. "But it's not the same game as it was back then."

She began piecing together her coaching style, values and philosophy, building upon things she liked from past coaches, and avoiding facets she didn't. The result was a lasting tradition of excellence — built on a

drive to excel in every aspect; a commitment to recruiting not just athletic talent but coachable, all-in players; and a deep reliance on the relationships that define the program.

"We've got to have people who truly are striving to be excellent in all aspects of life, because I fully believe they're not going to give us 100% on the court if they're not also giving 100% in the classroom," Humphreys said. "You're either all into what you're doing or you're not."

Guided by these core values, Humphreys quickly led the volleyball program to success, earning her first collegiate win in straight sets over Houston Baptist University, now Houston Christian University, on Sept. 13, 1988.

From there, Humphreys and the SFA volleyball program began their ascent to the upper echelon of mid-major collegiate volleyball.

Of all the milestones in the program's storied career, a few still bring a proud smile to Humphreys' face: SFA's first conference title and NCAA Tournament berth in 1994, the program's historic first NCAA Tournament win in 2006 over The University of Alabama, and the thrill of back-to-back tournament appearances in 2018-19 and again in 2022-23. Each moment a testament to the program's evolution.

"I've come across very few coaches as respected and admired as Debbie Humphreys, and not just in volleyball, but all college athletics," said Michael McBroom, SFA director of athletics. "She has such high standards for excellence, has stayed true to her core values, treats everyone with respect but also holds them to a higher standard. As a coach, she has an incredible ability to get young players and young coaches to believe in themselves and do more than they ever thought they could do." ➔



Debbie Humphreys, center, poses with members of the SFA volleyball team after Humphreys earned her 800th career victory in a reverse sweep over Boise State University Sept. 8, 2023. During her tenure, Humphreys has led her teams to 846 wins, nine NCAA Tournament appearances and 20 conference championships.

Debbie Humphreys

C O U R T

Despite the achievements on the court, “success” to Humphreys isn’t the 800+ wins. It’s not the overflowing trophy case — it’s the lifelong bonds, the growth she’s witnessed and the impact that stretches far beyond the court.

“Success is tied more to the relationships than it is to anything else,” Humphreys said. “Did we create an environment where they were great teammates to each other and wanted to take care of each other? To me, if we’ve done that and have people doing things the right way — and we happen to fall short on the scoreboard — we still have been successful.”

According to Ariana Pagan ’23 & ’24, an outside hitter from 2019-2023, Humphreys’ high standards shaped the players into champions on and off the court.

“Coach Humphreys is the definition of dedication — disciplined, organized and relentlessly driven,” Pagan said. “She shows up every single day, not just to run a practice, but to shape us into champions on and off the court. Her high standards aren’t pressure, but belief. She sees the best in us, pushes us to reach it, and never settles for less because she knows greatness is within our reach. Year after year, she continues to build a legacy, and I am proud to be a part of it.”

Voice behind the volley

Dr. Greg Miller’s office overlooks Shelton Gym, and aptly so.

A professor in SFA’s Department of Mathematics and Statistics, when he’s not breaking down equations during a lecture, Miller is calling the action as SFA’s longtime play-by-play commentator on ESPN+ and

internet radio via SFAVolleyblog.net — a platform he launched in 2009 to record and celebrate SFA’s often unfaltering program.

Aside from Humphreys, it’s likely no one has seen more SFA volleyball over the past two decades than Miller. And throughout his countless hours of writing articles, calling games, and enduring the long bus rides with the team, he has gained something truly valuable — Humphreys’ trust.

“It’s not just lip service at creating a family atmosphere,” Miller said about Humphreys. “She values having loyal people around her. And I think through all these years, that’s given me enough time to prove my loyalty to the program. She has a high deal of respect for people that are devoted to the program as a whole.”

Now, in his 29th year at SFA, Miller considers Humphreys not only a friend, but one of the three people who have most influenced his time at the university. In his eyes, she’s an all-star, a permanent fixture at SFA, and, perhaps most fittingly, an architect of excellence.

“Debbie has a way of consistently maintaining excellence,” Miller said. “It’s one thing to build a program. It’s another thing to maintain the excellency of a program for decades and decades and decades. And that’s what’s been true. There have been very few periods when the program has seen a two-year dip. That’s been one of her greatest attributes — she’s an architect.”

Match point

When she finally stood from her seat at the unveiling, Humphreys didn’t have any words — she just looked at the court with eyes wide and

her hands covering her mouth.

She had known every inch of that court — every sideline, every scuff mark, and every spot where a player dove for a well-earned point. But nothing prepared her for this. And for once, the woman who spent a career inspiring players and coaches with her voice couldn’t find the words.

“I’m rarely at a loss for words,” she said to a packed Shelton Gym. “I have lots of words, but not right now. I’m beyond thankful for what everyone in this room means to me and even to those that could not be here.”

The decision was an easy one for McBroom, Department of Athletics administration, and Alan and Kim Jones, the generous donors who funded the new court.

“The volleyball court has been and will continue to be her office, her lab and her home, and is the place so many incredible moments in volleyball have occurred,” McBroom said. “Thus, Debbie Humphreys Court is a representation of her values and standards. She is unique to the volleyball world and epitomizes the values and standards we should all aspire to at SFA.”

It will forever be known to Lumberjacks — now and for generations to come — as “Debbie Humphreys Court at Shelton Gym.”

“I feel extremely blessed,” Humphreys said. “We always talk to our current players about how they’re a part of something that’s way more than just those of us who are in this locker room on any given day. They’re part of a very large SFA volleyball family. So, I would hope that future generations would know that. I would hope they realize it’s their responsibility to keep that tradition of excellence going.” ★

37th
season
at SFA

2nd
longest tenured
D1 coach at one
institution

2nd
most wins
among active
D1 coaches

846
career
wins



Debbie Humphreys, left, talks to Dr. Greg Miller, professor in SFA's Department of Mathematics and Statistics. Miller is SFA's longtime volleyball play-by-play commentator on ESPN+ and internet radio via SFAVolleyblog.net — a platform he launched in 2009 to record and celebrate SFA volleyball. Aside from Humphreys, it's likely no one has seen more SFA volleyball over the past two decades than Miller.



Special thanks to Debbie Humphreys; Dr. Greg Miller, SFAVolleyblog.net; Michael McBroom; Amanda Paver; and SFA's Department of Athletics for helping make this story possible.

Debbie Humphreys, second from right, poses for a photo on the newly dubbed Debbie Humphreys Court with, from left, Alan and Kim Jones and Humphreys' husband, Richard. The Joneses generously funded the new Taraflex court, the gold standard in collegiate volleyball surfaces, making SFA the only institution in the Southland Conference to boast such luxury.

9

NCAA
Tournament
appearances

9X

Coach of
the Year

20

conference
championships

27

20+ win
seasons



9

unique dining stations ranging from Mexican cuisine and farm-to-table options to fresh-baked desserts and homestyle favorites. Add in a soft-serve ice cream machine and a tortilla maker to round out the culinary choices.

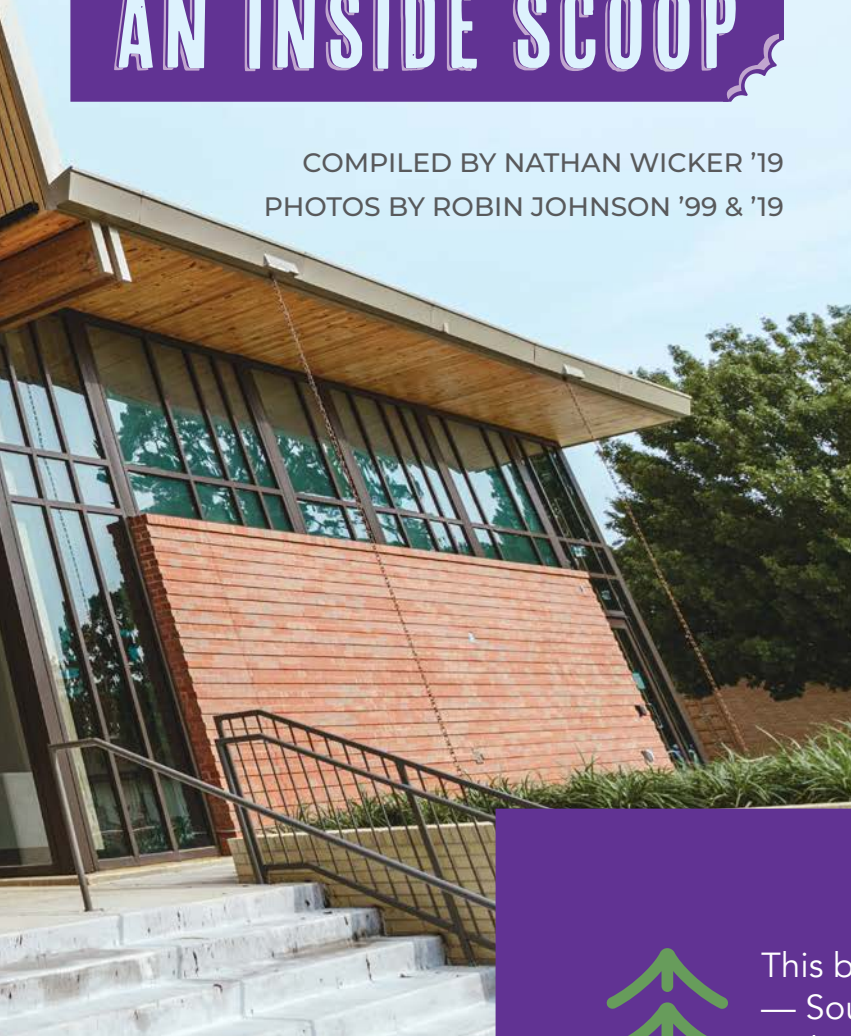


PINEY WOODS

DINING HALL

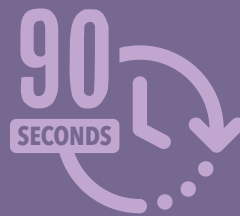
AN INSIDE SCOOP

COMPILED BY NATHAN WICKER '19
PHOTOS BY ROBIN JOHNSON '99 & '19



This building shows off the power of mass timber — Southern yellow pine, that is. Cross-laminated timber layers boards at right angles to form strong, waffle-like panels, while glue-laminated timber bonds wood layers into the big beams and columns that frame the structure. The result?

**A building that's strong, sustainable
and naturally beautiful.**



Assembled in Italy,
this pizza oven was
built to bake the
best-tasting pizzas
for our Lumberjacks
in just 90 seconds!



These rain chains are
used to guide rainwater
from the roof to the
beautiful greenery that
surrounds the dining hall.



The main dining area
can seat up to

375

patrons

The Pavilion area can
seat approximately

350

patrons



The kitchen features a powerful
72-quart mixer — capable of
handling up to **40 pounds**
of mashed potatoes at a time!



Inaugural ceremony highlights SFA's endowed faculty members

STORY BY ALYSSA FAYKUS '19
PHOTOS BY LIZETH GARCIA AND CONNOR BRONSON

In celebration of SFA's dedication to academic excellence, the University held its inaugural Endowed Faculty Recognition Ceremony in the spring to honor 25 distinguished faculty members who hold both new and continued endowed professorships.

Faculty members were awarded medallions inscribed with the name of their endowment to represent their contributions to world-class research, teaching and scholarship. The medallions will be worn at academic events and ceremonies. Dr. Judy Abbott, former interim provost and executive vice president for the Division of Academic Affairs, presided over the ceremony.

"Endowed positions are important to a university because they help to attract and retain high-quality faculty," Abbott said. "The funding also helps increase and enhance research activities. Each professorship is made possible thanks to the generous contributions from alumni and friends of the university."

The recognition ceremony — held as part of a week of events leading up to the Presidential Investiture Ceremony — was a way to "shine a very

bright light on Stephen F. Austin State University, the great quality that exists here and the impact we are making on Texas and the world," according to Dr. Neal Weaver, SFA president.

"There is no more important function that we do here at the institution than quality education," Weaver said. "There is no symbol greater in high-quality education than an endowed professorship faculty member. You have raised the bar for all of us here at this institution."

Weaver stated a goal to double the number of endowed faculty positions over the next decade and announced SFA has received commitments for seven more positions in the future. ★



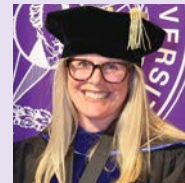
NEW ENDOWED POSITIONS



Dr. Kwame Badu Antwi-Boasiako
Dr. Donald Gregory Professorship
College of Liberal and Applied Arts



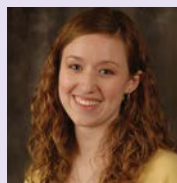
Dr. Justin Blount
Sanner-Berry Business Professorship
Nelson Rusche College of Business



Dr. Janet Jones
Temple-Inland Employees Distinguished Professor in Accounting
Nelson Rusche College of Business



Dr. Kelly G. Noe
Beverly Hatfield Smith Professorship
Nelson Rusche College of Business



Dr. Nikki Shoemaker
Michelle and Harmon Smith Professorship
Nelson Rusche College of Business



Dr. Pat Stephens Williams
Dr. Hiram and Gloria Arnold Distinguished Professorship
Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture

RECOGNITION OF EXISTING ENDOWED POSITIONS

ARTHUR TEMPLE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE



Dr. I-Kuai Hung
*Robert E. Minton
Professorship*



Dr. David Kulhavy
*Laurence C. Walker
Distinguished Professorship*



Dr. Matthew McBroom
TLL Temple Chair Fund



Dr. Brian Oswald
Joe C. Denman Professorship



Dr. Jeremy Stovall
*Bone Hill Foundation
Distinguished Professorship*



Dr. Daniel Unger
Kenneth Nelson Professorship



Dr. Yanli Zhang
*Marilyn Cranford
Professorship*

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL AND APPLIED ARTS



Dr. Emmerentie Oliphant
Buddy Zeagler Professorship

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS



Dr. Dan Bruton
*Micky Elliott Engineering
Professorship*



Dr. Michele Harris
*Tom F. and Deborah Nichols
Pruitt Patent Education
Professorship*

JAMES I. PERKINS COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



Dr. Lauren Burrow
*Margaret Hoover Perkins
Research Professorship*



Dr. Barbara Qualls
*E.J. Campbell Distinguished
Professorship*



Dr. Sarah Straub
*Montgomery Professorship
for Humane Education*

MICKY ELLIOTT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS



Dr. Gregory Grabowski
Gene Moon Professorship



Dr. Stephen Lias
*Dean's Circle Endowed
Professorship of the College of
Fine Arts*

NELSON RUSCHE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



Dr. Emiliano Giudici
John Lewis Professorship



Dr. Matthew Jaramillo
*John and Karen Mast
Professorship*



Dr. Stephanie Ross
*Sammie L. Smith
Professorship*

UNIVERSITY-WIDE PROFESSORSHIP



Dr. Elizabeth Spradley
*Jim Towns Mentoring
Professorship*



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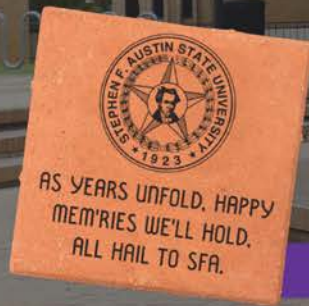
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From the Association



As I sat down to write this letter for the Sawdust, I received the somber news of the passing of Bob Sitton, former director of the SFA Alumni Association and a true ambassador

of our university. Bob was not only a staple in Nacogdoches and the surrounding area but also a prominent champion of our beloved university.

The news of Bob's passing paused my thoughts for this letter, leading me to reflect on the countless memorable interactions I had with him over the years. I was always struck by his remarkable memory — his ability to recall details about everyone he met, from their hometowns and graduation years to their careers and service histories, especially among our veterans. During his tenure, Bob forged lasting bonds with many World War II veterans, affectionately referring to them as "one of our WWII boys."

As our association embarks on its next chapter, advancing into our second centennial, we stand ready — both as an association and as individual alumni — to significantly impact the lives of our current students. Student engagement is pivotal to recruitment and retention, and as alumni, we play a crucial role in fostering this engagement. Reflecting on your time at SFA, whether through social or professional organizations, or activities clubs, underscores how these experiences shape our identities and futures.

Giving back and supporting the university is not just about large gifts. Equally important are those who contribute to enriching student experiences, thereby enhancing the value of our diplomas and exemplifying what it means to be a Lumberjack.

Bob's passion lay in connecting Lumberjacks with one another. His legacy reminds us of the power of these connections. To me, this was Bob; this was part of his legacy, and it is one I believe we should all embrace.

I urge you to consider how you can support student experiences that enhance recruitment and retention, and how you can foster connections among current and future Lumberjacks. These efforts leave a lasting impact on our university.

Join us in this endeavor — become an ambassador, elevate your membership level, reconnect with Nacogdoches. Embrace the opportunity to make a difference. You won't regret it. You can begin by joining us for Homecoming weekend — Oct. 17-18.

The future is bright
'Neath the purple and white!

Axe 'em, Jacks!

Brian Dawson '03
Conroe

President, SFA Alumni Association

SFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

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president

Larissa Philpot-Brown '03 & '06
Nacogdoches
president-elect

Erika Tolar '02, Nacogdoches
past president

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Charlotte Ashcraft '80, Nacogdoches

Larry Brooks '01, Houston

James "Jim" Drennan '73, Pittsburg
Autumn Finchum '08 & '08, Nacogdoches

Bob Francis '78, Bullard

Devin Greer '07, Spring

Patrick Jackson '94, Mesquite

Jaclyn Partin '08 & '14, Tyler

Alex Ranc '11 & '13, Nacogdoches

Ted Smith '07, Nacogdoches

Mike Harbordt '63, Nacogdoches
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Steve McCarty '65 & '70, Alto
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executive director of alumni relations

Amber Lindsay
recording secretary

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

Amber Lindsay
assistant to the executive director

Derek Snyder '01
director of alumni relations

Sawdust

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

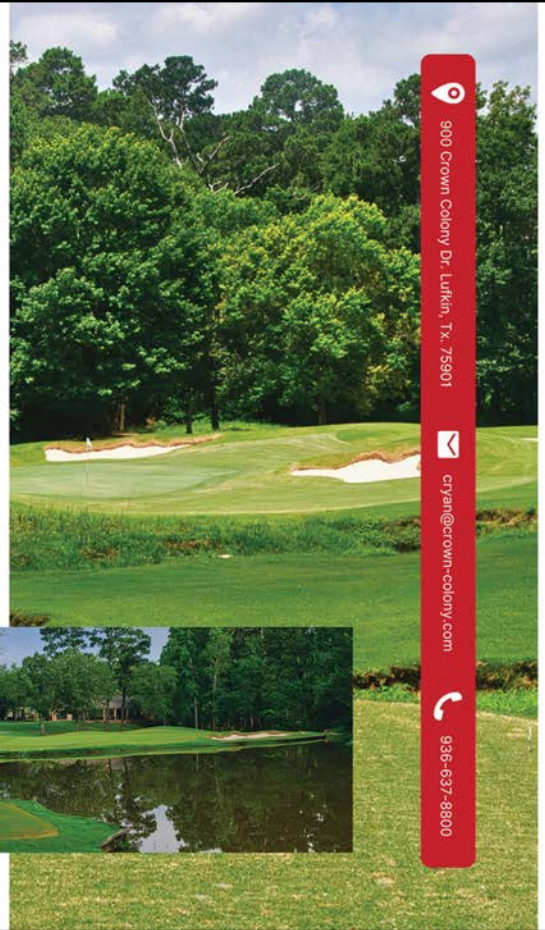
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is a nonprofit organization dedicated to engaging SFA students, alumni and friends to create an attitude of continued loyalty and support.



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Class Notes

1960s

Dan Jarrell '63 taught one of the first high school computer programming classes in the U.S. at Arvada West High School in Arvada, Colorado. Jarrell participated in a program sponsored by the National Science Foundation in which he and others created curriculum for the courses. Jarrell earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics.



Twenty members of the **PIKES** of the 60s attended the organization's 26th annual reunion. Throughout the years, 113 individuals have attended a reunion at least once, and nine members have been named SFA Distinguished Alumni.

1970s

Gary Edmondson '71 & '74 was honored with a First Amendment Award in the Spirit of Molly Ivins by the Walker County Democratic Club. Edmondson, a featured columnist for The Oklahoma Observer, earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and philosophy and a Master of Arts in English.

Dr. Carolyn Conn '72 was recently named a Piper Professor, a statewide honor for college teachers in Texas. Conn was a faculty member at SFA and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting.

Dr. Cordell L. Klein '72 retired after 41 years of practice in urology in Texarkana. Klein earned a Bachelor of Science in biology.

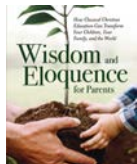


Marilyn Griffith '73 was named the 2025 Woman of the Year by the Nacogdoches branch of the American Association of University Women. Griffith earned a Bachelor of Science in home economics.



Richard Greer '78 was awarded the Franchise Brokers Association's Lifetime Achievement Award. Additionally, Greer is the author of the book "Finding a Better Version of You Through Franchising." Greer earned a Bachelor of Science in computer science.

Marvin Mardock '78 retired as a professional land surveyor, licensed in nine states. Mardock earned a Bachelor of Science in forestry.



Dr. Robert Littlejohn '79, with Charles T. Evans, published "In Wisdom and Eloquence for Parents." Littlejohn earned a Bachelor of Arts in biology.

1980s



Sidney Evans '85 was selected as one of the Top 25 Business/Civic Leadership Forum Alumni by the Center for Houston's Future. Evans serves as the director of community engagement for Reliant. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.



Bret Foster '87 was named president of the North Texas Roofing Contractors Association. Foster received a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance.



Jeff DeFord '88 was named vice president and chief technology officer at Parkland Health in Dallas. DeFord earned a Bachelor of Arts in radio/television.

Chris Mueller '88 was named vice president for development and alumni relations at Texas Lutheran University. Mueller earned a Bachelor of Science in education in physical education.



John Thannisch '89 was promoted to lead of Wealth Management and Trust at Commercial Bank of Texas. Thannisch earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting.

1990s



Grey Burton '95 & '04 was named superintendent for Nacogdoches Independent School District. Burton earned a Bachelor of Science in education and a Master of Education in educational leadership.

Scott Green '96 was named head football coach and athletic director at Groveton Independent School District. Green earned a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

2000s



Dr. Travis Young '00 was named superintendent of Dayton Independent School District. Young earned a Bachelor of Arts in radio/television.



J. Grant Barber '01 was named director of environmental services at BGE Inc. Barber earned a Bachelor of Science in sociology.



Elizabeth Lade '01 earned the Arts in Teaching Excellence — High School award from the Young Audiences of Northeast Texas. Lade earned a Bachelor of Arts in art. ➔

Class Notes



Amanda Stoneking Leifeste '03 published her debut novel, "The Bean and Bun." Leifeste earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.



Dr. Son Mai '03 was named dean of the Division of Business, Computer, and Information Studies at Midland College. Mai earned a Master of

Arts in history.

Justin Cowart '04 & '16 was named superintendent of Winona Independent School District. Cowart earned a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology and a Master of Education in educational leadership.



Jennifer (Berry) Taylor '04 was promoted to manufacturing operations project manager at Holt Manufacturing. Taylor earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in management.



Matt Hardman '06 has been awarded a Lone Star EMMY Award and two Telly Awards for work on promotional videos. Hardman earned a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences.



Kelcey Trotty '06 was named 2025 Firefighter of the Year by the State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas. Trotty, a captain for the Longview Fire Department, earned a Bachelor of Science in agriculture development.



Brian West '06 started a bankruptcy law firm. West earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance.

Dr. James Daniel Hobbs '07 earned a doctorate in education from Arkansas State University. He is an administrator for Kaufman Independent School District and adjunct professor for the University of North Texas at Dallas. Hobbs earned a Bachelor of Science in biology.



Charlie '08 and Whitney Younts '10 announced the birth of twin boys, Levi Henry and Beau Younts, Dec.

24. Charlie earned a Bachelor of Science in agriculture machinery and Whitney earned a Bachelor of Science in interior design.

2010s



Igor Gusyakov '11 & '17 was named superintendent of Diboll Independent School District. Gusyakov earned a Master of Education in early childhood

education and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership.



David Hernandez '11 celebrated three years at PwC within the Technology and Transformation consulting practice. Hernandez earned a Bachelor of Business

Administration in finance.



Kenneth Cosme '12 received Angleton Independent School District's Secondary Teacher of the Year Award. Cosme earned a Bachelor of Science

in kinesiology.

Patty Collins '14 was named assistant vice president of operations and institutional services for Lamar State College Orange. Collins earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in general business.

Dallas Cameron '17 was named head boys basketball coach at Central Heights High School. Cameron earned a Bachelor of Arts in mass communication.

Anais Saenz '18 was named program coordinator at the Periwinkle Foundation. Saenz earned a Bachelor of Arts in theatre.



Tyler McHenry '19 & '21 was named head boys basketball coach at Central High School. McHenry earned a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science

in kinesiology.

2020s



Rachel (Rucker) Bartschi '20 graduated magna cum laude from Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law. Bartschi earned her Bachelor of Science in data science.

Jack W. Adams '23 was named one of Nacogdoches Independent School District's Teacher of the Year award recipients. Adams earned a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Kathryn (Katie) Willsey '23 was named the head rehabilitation technician at the ProCare Medical Centers Central Austin location. Willsey earned a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.



Javier '24 and Gabriela (Kilmer) Gonzales '22 & '24 celebrated their marriage Feb. 22. Javier earned

a Bachelor of Music in sound recording technology and Gabriela earned a Bachelor of Science in psychology and a Master of Arts in professional counseling. ★

Life Members

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8729. Jan Dobbs Barton '78, Tyler | 8744. Trevor L. Riley '24, Carthage |
| 8730. Dr. Douglas Smith, faculty/staff, Nacogdoches | 8745. Jeremy A. Ice '05, Montgomery |
| 8731. Tina K. Smith, faculty/staff, Nacogdoches | 8746. Tonya M. Ice '05, Montgomery |
| 8732. Shakeria Y. Clark '02 & '02, Houston | 8747. Brandon S. Smith '96, Manvel |
| 8733. Rhonda A. Hieronymus '80, Nacogdoches | 8748. Stephanie Smith '95, Manvel |
| 8734. Steven W. Hieronymus '81, Nacogdoches | 8749. Ariana E. Pagan Munoz '23 & '24, Isabela, Puerto Rico |
| 8735. Courtney R. Burns '14 & '16, Lufkin | 8750. Emily A. Mathews '25, Katy |
| 8736. Ethan Burns, friend, Lufkin | 8751. Capt. Caleigh D. Doherty '14, Carrollton |
| 8737. Dr. Dallas W. Ryan '76, Edinburg | 8752. Byron C. Cryer '24, Lufkin |
| 8738. Avery M. Nichols '25, Lago Vista | 8753. Dr. Kent L. Willis '08, Nacogdoches |
| 8739. Madison Caroline Romero '25, Carthage | 8754. Ashley Willis, friend, Nacogdoches |
| 8740. Tristin L. Smith '25, Central Heights | 8755. Macey A. Little '25, Lufkin |
| 8741. Dawson L. Diggs '25, Greenville | 8756. Jason C. Harkness '25, Nacogdoches |
| 8742. Tristen C. DuRee '25, Huntington | 8757. Matthew W. Seale '02, Houston |
| 8743. Emily J. Conner '25, Mineola | 8758. Robin L. Johnson '99 & '19, Nacogdoches |

In Memoriam - Bob Sitton



Robert "Bob" Sitton '60, former executive director of the SFA Alumni Association, passed away July 8.

Before working for SFA, he was a teacher and coach at Cushing High School (his alma mater), C.E. King High School in Houston and Klein High School in Spring. He made it to the state finals in football and basketball

and was named District Coach of the Year in 1970.

Sitton joined the SFA staff in 1972 and spent the next 26 years at the helm of the SFA Alumni Association.

Under his leadership, the alumni association endowed more than 530 scholarships that generated more than \$13 million. His family and friends have endowed two Sitton Scholarships at SFA in his honor.

He stepped down as executive director in 1998 but remained with the organization on a part-time basis as the

association's public relations director. He retired fully in 2006.

Sitton received the alumni association's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1998 and was inducted into SFA Athletics' Jacks of Honor in 2003.

In 2015, he received the Hall of Fame Alumni Award. During Homecoming 2021, he was honored again when the annual Homecoming golf tournament was renamed the Bob Sitton Classic and when SFA dedicated the new Bob Sitton head men's basketball coach office at Johnson Coliseum.

He continued to serve as an SFA ambassador in his retirement through his work on alumni-related projects.

Sitton was former chairman of the College Alumni Directors of Texas as well as a member of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Council of Alumni Association Executives, Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce, Gideons, Nacogdoches Breakfast Lions Club, Rotary Club of Nacogdoches and Grace Bible Church. ★

In Memoriam



CURTIS BRADSHAW '79, former director of financial aid, passed away March 8. Bradshaw served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War from 1951-55. He worked for Angelina College, SFA and The University of Texas at Tyler. He was the director of financial aid for each of these institutions until his retirement.



BETTY JEAN CARTWRIGHT, friend of SFA, passed away June 11. Cartwright graduated from San Augustine High School. During her seventh-grade year, she became the drum major for the high school band.

At just 14 years old, she began working at Home Life Insurance Company, where she later became an officer, serving there until the mid-1980s. She attended SFA, where she was a member of the Pine Burrs social club, served as a soloist for the college band and was voted Campus Beauty.

Cartwright was a charter member of the Ezekiel Cullen Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. She was also a Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star and, in the 1950s, served as a den mother for the Cub Scouts. In 1967, she launched her career in real estate by founding Cartwright Real Estate, a business she continued to broker until 2019. In the 1970s, Cartwright made history as one of the first women to serve as president of the San Augustine County Chamber of Commerce.



FORD "SPARKY" CARTWRIGHT '69, champion of SFA, passed away July 1. Cartwright attended SFA on a golf scholarship, graduating in 1969 with a degree in business. While at SFA, Cartwright was a member of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity.

Cartwright was a proud member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas. He was also a distinguished member of the Society of Seniors, a prestigious national organization for elite senior amateur golfers. His talent, dedication and competitive spirit were evident in his many accomplishments, including being a three-time champion of the Senior Temple Cup and winning the Azalea Senior Four Ball. In 2020, he added the Texas Golf Association Super Senior Four Ball Championship to his impressive list of accolades.

Professionally, Cartwright was a distinguished real estate agent. His deep commitment to the industry led him to serve two terms as president of the Pineywoods Board of Realtors. He also served as past president of the SFA Alumni Association and past chair of the SFA Alumni Foundation Board of Governors.



DR. DON FARE, former professor, passed away Feb. 2. After serving in the U.S. Army, Fare pursued higher education with determination and excellence. He earned his bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian College (now Abilene Christian University) and went on to achieve master's and doctoral degrees from Texas

Tech University. Fare's first collegiate job was at Arizona State University. He moved to Nacogdoches with his wife, Peggy, where he joined the SFA faculty as a professor in the elementary education department. He dedicated his career to inspiring future educators until his retirement.



MATHEW GOOLSBY '76, geologist and businessman, passed away May 18. Goolsby's career as both an oil and gas wellsite geologist and as a minerals exploration geologist spanned 49 years. He was president of Goolsby Bros. and Associates Inc., an oil and gas geologic consulting company established in 1981. Beginning in

2008, he was vice president of operations for Vecta Oil & Gas Ltd. He also was a partner in Geotesoro LLC and Coyote Oil & Gas Ltd.

Professional memberships included Alpha Chi National College Honorary Society, The Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon scholastic geological organization, Sigma Pi Sigma national scholastic physics society, Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists, American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Society of Petroleum Engineers.



DR. PATSY JOHNSON HALLMAN '52, former professor and dean, passed away May 15. A renowned educator, esteemed administrator, prolific author and dedicated community leader, Hallman's contributions to education and community development leave a legacy, reflecting a life committed to excellence, service

and leadership. Hallman earned degrees from Texas A&M University-Commerce (now East Texas A&M University), SFA and Texas Woman's University. Among her many accomplishments, Hallman served as dean of the James I. Perkins College of Education.

Hallman and her husband, Leon, were the visionaries behind the inaugural Blueberry Festival in 1989, which has since evolved into the celebrated Texas Blueberry Festival. In recognition of her contributions to education and community development, Hallman received numerous accolades, including SFA's Distinguished Professor in 1990, the American Association of University Women's Woman of the Year in 1993 and induction into the Nacogdoches Women's Hall of Fame in 2003. She was named Citizen of the Year in 2009 by the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce. During her career, she published over 60 academic and nonfiction works. Her exceptional career culminated in her retirement in 2005, following 36 years of service at SFA.



TERRY HARDEMAN '63, past board member of the SFA Alumni Association, passed away March 23. Hardeeman earned a Bachelor of Business Administration at SFA before joining the U.S. Army Reserves. He earned his Master of Business Administration at the University of Houston in 1969 and gained his Certified Public Accountant license the following year.

Hardeeman was active in many organizations and civic groups, including the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy, Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants, National Society of Accountants, Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of the Republic of Texas, SFA PIKES of the 60s as a charter member and Bible study fellowship. One of his noted favorites was being a member SFA's Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.



ROBERT HARPER '74, prolific forester and veteran, passed away June 1. Harper earned his Bachelor of Science in Forestry, marking a significant achievement in his life and reflecting his deep connection to the outdoors and the beauty of East Texas forests. He felt truly at home in the forest and dedicated over 35 years

to the profession. Harper was a proud member and past president of the Texas Forestry Association, and he was actively involved with the Society of American Foresters and the Association of Consulting Foresters.

In recognition of his impact and legacy, a subdivision in Spring, was named Harper Woods in his honor. The streets within the subdivision were named after his father's B-17 crew, preserving a meaningful tribute to his father's military service.

In Memoriam



WANDA HIGHTOWER, former staff member, passed away May 25. Hightower graduated from Woden High School in 1969 and Massey Business College in 1970. She worked in the Business Services office at SFA for 34 years. She was a longtime member of Calvary Baptist Church, where she served her church and community

on various committees. Hightower enjoyed traveling the United States, and she was heavily involved in supporting the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox outreach.



CLARA CAROLYN CROSS HOOKER '67 & '70, former adjunct professor, passed away Feb. 20. Hooker displayed immense generosity throughout her life, often helping students with school supplies and food for their families. She was a beloved educator and principal at Tenaha Independent School District, where she served

for many years and was instrumental in improving the special education department and developing the gifted and talented program. She served as the elementary principal for almost 10 years.

Hooker was involved in numerous organizations, including the Tenaha 4-H Club, the Texas Association of School Administrators, the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association, the Texas Community Education Association, Phi Delta Kappa and the Delta Kappa Gamma international society, for which she held various leadership positions.

After retiring from 40 years in public school education, she was employed by Panola College as an educator and by SFA as an adjunct professor supervising student teachers. Hooker also served nine years on the Tenaha ISD school board.



SHERRY CHANEY MORGAN '94, former executive director of the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, passed away May 23. Morgan was known in the industry as a brilliant mind. Morgan returned to Nacogdoches to head the Nacogdoches CVB in 2017. In 2018, she launched a campaign to promote

Nacogdoches as a pet-friendly destination, adopting a canine mascot for the center she named "Charlie Doches." Morgan began her career in hospitality while working in student housing at SFA and Sam Houston State University.



KAY BOSTICK O'NEAL, former staff member, passed away Feb. 13. From 1983-2004, O'Neal worked as an administrative assistant for several university presidents and vice presidents at SFA. O'Neal had a passion for painting. She started painting after her retirement in 2004 and loved sharing her work with her fellow

Christ Episcopal Church members. She will be missed for her kind heart, generous spirit and infectious smile.



DR. CARL J. PFAFFENBERG, former professor, passed away April 7. Pfaffenberg earned his Bachelor of Arts in hotel, motel and club management and his Master of Business Administration in international marketing from Michigan State University. He later completed his doctoral degree in human ecology at the

University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Pfaffenberg served as an associate professor at SFA from 2004 until his retirement in 2015. His courses spanned topics like casino management, lodging, cost control and alcohol responsibility, and his commitment to student growth was unwavering. Prior to joining SFA, he held academic

positions at the University of Tennessee and the University of Hawaii - Manoa. He was also the first Driving Jacks faculty advisor.

He served on the boards of Nacogdoches Main Street, the East Texas Chapter of the Texas Restaurant Association and the Association of Casino Educators.



SARAH RICHARDSON '78, SFA retiree, passed away June 3. Richardson had a huge heart for service, participating in multiple organizations serving as a hospice volunteer, driving friends to doctors' appointments and participating in garden clubs. She was a member of the American Association of University Women, Nacogdoches County Retired Teachers Association and the Newcomers Club. She relished being out in nature and earned her Master Gardener Certification from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service shortly before retiring.



DR. PAUL HERALD RISK II, former TLL Temple Distinguished Professor of Forestry, passed away Oct. 22. Risk was a groundbreaking environmental communicator and interpreter whose work inspired people to love and appreciate the outdoors.

After finishing a bachelor's degree in botany, Risk taught high school science classes while continuing work toward his master's degree. He worked for the National Park Service as a seasonal ranger at Grand Canyon National Park and Lassen Volcanic National Park during summers between college coursework. Following the completion of his master's degree, he was offered a position at Michigan State University.

While at MSU, Risk developed an environmental interpretation program while finishing his doctoral degree and created a curriculum centered around outdoor survival techniques, which became extremely popular on campus, often having enrollments of hundreds of students.

Risk was a pioneer in the field of environmental interpretation, which he helped develop during his time at MSU beginning in 1969. He went on to establish environmental interpretation programs at The Pennsylvania State University and the University of Maine in Orono before becoming the TLL Temple Distinguished Professor of Forestry at SFA in 1990. He retired in 2003 as professor emeritus.

Risk was a prolific writer during his professional life. In 1983, he published the book "Outdoor Safety and Survival," which is still a highly sought-after guide 40 years later. He also wrote a biweekly column called "Field and Forest Facts" for The Daily Sentinel newspaper in Nacogdoches. The column appeared in local newspapers for more than 25 years.



DR. JAMES ROSE '64, neurosurgeon, educator, aerophile and veteran, passed away Feb. 11. Rose earned a Bachelor of Science in biology at SFA, where he was president of the student body, a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and a Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. In 1968, he earned his Doctor of Medicine from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, where he completed his internship in general surgery.

Rose's commitment to serving his country led him to Vietnam as a senior flight surgeon and captain with the U.S. Army. He earned several military honors including the Air Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

His career flourished in Houston, where he practiced neurosurgery for 30 years. He was an associate professor at Baylor College of Medicine, and he helped establish the renowned Houston Methodist Neurological Institute. Rose was a member of numerous professional societies, including the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, Congress ➔

In Memoriam

of Neurological Surgeons and Houston Neurological Society. He retired in 2021, but his passion for neurosurgery and mentorship continues to inspire the medical community.

Outside his esteemed medical career, Rose was a lifelong aviation enthusiast. A licensed pilot for over 63 years, he took pride in his Stearman biplane, affectionately called "Brother," which he flew for 35 years. His contributions to aviation were recently recognized when he was awarded the prestigious Wright Brothers Award.



DR. JOHN PAUL "JP" SCHWARTZ '76, doctor and folk musician, passed away April 14. Schwartz earned a Bachelor of Science in biology from SFA. He later received his medical degree from the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth. His medical

specialty was family practice, and he enjoyed a 40-year career.

Schwartz loved listening, playing, discussing and writing music. His musical career started in high school when he and some classmates founded a rock and roll band. Schwartz went on to become a mainstay in the Texas folk music scene for many years, and he made many close friends with whom he shared a love of music. He also had a weekly music program on Marfa Public Radio, where he was affectionately known as "Doc Cactus." Every Monday night for over a decade, Schwartz's show entertained and educated people about the wonders of blues music.



HELEN LOUISE STANFIELD, former staff member, passed away Feb. 28. Stanfield was born and raised in Nacogdoches. She graduated from Nacogdoches High School in 1953 and studied at Massey Business School. Stanfield was an administrative assistant in the Business Services office at SFA, from which she retired in 1997.



DR. GREGORY TONEY '81, pharmacist and advocate, passed away June 19, 2024. Toney earned a Bachelor of Science in biology at SFA and a Doctor of Pharmacy at The University of Texas at Austin. He had a long-standing interest in advanced treatment and the eradication of the stigma associated with mental illness.

He was a founding member of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists and spent his pharmacy career caring for people with severe mental disorders. He also trained pharmacists in psychiatric clinical pharmacy while working at a veteran's hospital.



BRENDAN WALSH, former faculty and staff member, passed away Dec. 10. Walsh, who was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting and economics and a Master of Business Administration before becoming a CPA. He taught accounting at SFA at the beginning of his career and then served as a CPA in the Office of Financial Aid for over 30 years. Walsh proudly volunteered to serve in the U.S. Navy from 1969-1972 even though he was not a U.S. citizen. ★

Casey Acker '06, June 17
Michael "Bo" Alexander '90, June 5
Patricia "Missy" Allen '53, June 4
Dennis Angus '78, June 9
Sharon Atkins '72, Feb. 22
Linda Banks, former staff member, Feb. 8
Thomas Bankston '86, March 12
Matthew Bartell '03, May 22
Robert Barth '84, Oct. 1, 2023
Joyce Barrett '91, Feb. 24
Robert Bass '68, March 30
William Beavers '62, March 25, 2023
Janet Bemenderfer '76, June 11
Norma Braden '62, Feb. 6
William Book Jr. '67, April 22
Billy Booker '59, Jan. 24
Garry Boyd '76, May 19
Carrie Camp '95, April 30
Denise Carriveau '82, March 23
Dr. Robert Chappell '68, May 2
Emily Bell Coats '62, Feb. 26
Larry Cook '68, Feb. 5
Debra Crawford '75, March 2
Tony Dallas '91, May 14
Stephen Draper '71, April 20
Tim Flanagan Sr. '66, May 2
Votto Gaddis '58 & '62, May 29

John Greenleaf '80, May 23
Robert "Buddy" Griffis Jr. '87, Feb. 23
Michael Hasley '78, Dec. 5
Ellen Handberry '76, Feb. 15
David Lynn Hardy '70, May 16
Steve Hartman '98, Feb. 24
The Rev. Michael Hunter '84, Feb. 18
Thomas "Tommy" Jimerson '66, Jan. 31
Elizabeth Kolb '03, March 11
Randolph "Randy" Kott '65 & '67, April 14
Gary Laswell '82, Feb. 9
Robert "Bobby" Long Sr. '68, March 15
Josie Loria '76, Feb. 25
Mike "Big Mac" McDaniel '75, June 13
Joy Miller '87 & '90, April 22
Stephanie Milligan '59, Nov. 14
Gary Mills '73, July 22, 2024
David "Frank" Minton '57, Feb. 28
Patsy Murdock '94 & '98, Feb. 20
Johnnie Nichols '49, Feb. 21
Bradley Norvell '93, April 6
Joyce Nutt '57 & '68, Aug. 29, 2024
Glenda Oxsheer-Brown '78, March 25
Stephen Palmer '03, Jan. 26
Virginia Parker '70, Feb. 7
Sheri Pennington '78, May 1
Johnny Perkins '72, March 30

Wendy Perry '60, Feb. 4
Roger Pollex '89, Dec. 5
Jimmy Powers Jr. '75, March 15
Randy Price '70 & '72, Feb. 25
Linda Robbins '76 & '82, June 4
Sam Kendall Roquemore '80, April 7
Zayad Roumaya '80, May 11
Anita Seago '79 & '94, April 4
David Seago '65 & '68, March 24
Signa Segrest '69, March 23
Phyllis Smith '79 & '85, April 26
Mark Stoddard '70, Feb. 13
John Streetman '71, May 5
David Swank '70, Dec. 18
Grace Torma '71, Jan. 26
Toni Trees '02, March 29
Cheryl Turkett '74, Jan. 30
Jerry Watt '74, Jan. 12
Mary Wellman '91, Feb. 27
Henry Whittlesey Jr. '61 & '68, April 2
Mark Williams '80, March 26
Kathleen "Kathy" Williamson '95, former staff member, May 18
Clifford Wilson '69, April 26
Marilyn Olson Wise '76, Nov. 4
Kenneth Woodard '77, March 27

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SEPT. 13
VS. SUL ROSS STATE



SEPT. 20
VS. CAL POLY



SEPT. 27
VS. MCNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY



OCT. 18 (HOMECOMING)
VS. NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY



NOV. 1
VS. UTRGV

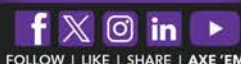


NOV. 15
VS. LAMAR UNIVERSITY

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members celebrated for their philanthropic impact. **OUR GOAL THIS YEAR IS TO REACH 3,500 DONORS ALL ACROSS THE U.S. AND WORLD.** Your contribution will help us reach our goal and make a lasting impact on higher education.



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