

vol. 48 no. 2 | 2017 | MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

# hillviews



## RAMPING UP RESEARCH

A culture where undergraduate research thrives.

TEXAS  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY

The rising STAR of Texas





## Ramping up Research

Undergraduate research is expanding at Texas State University, giving students opportunities in discovery and expression generally not as robust at that level. It also helps attract top students and faculty.

**ABOUT:** *Hillviews* is produced three times a year by the University Advancement division. We'd love to hear from you. Send us your comments about the articles in this issue, or send story suggestions. Email [Hillviews@txstate.edu](mailto:Hillviews@txstate.edu); fax to (512) 245-3817; or mail to *Hillviews*, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666-4613. Find the latest and past issues of *Hillviews* online at [hillviews.txstate.edu](http://hillviews.txstate.edu)

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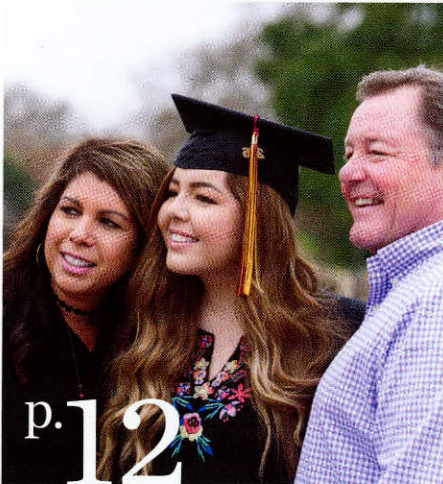
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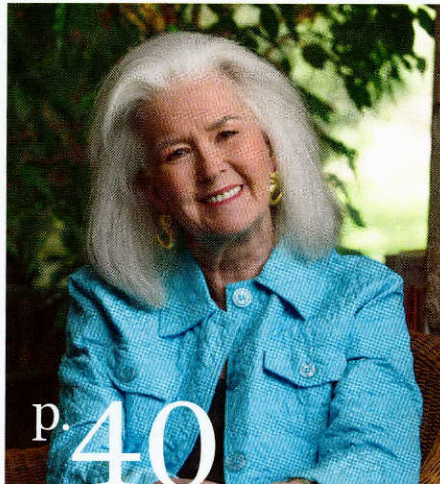




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# hillviews

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Texas State University

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## (from the president's desk)

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Dear Friends,

Research and creative expression have become a growing part of the Texas State University narrative. Since fiscal year 2007, externally funded research has nearly quadrupled, and as a result Texas State has been on an increased trajectory toward greater national prominence. In 2012, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designated this institution as one of eight Emerging Research Universities in the state; and in 2016, Texas State attained the second-highest designation for research activity under the respected national Carnegie Classification system.

Our research and creative expression encompasses many disciplines, and like other universities with high research activity, one can expect to see a significant concentration of Texas State graduate students immersed in some type of academic discovery.

What is truly amazing is that Texas State also extends many research opportunities to our undergraduate students. We have students engaged in a wide range of projects. For example, one student is researching mobility for people with disabilities. Another is studying how gender affects the way players experience video games. There is an organometallic chemistry student who is researching how compounds decompose in air and an Honors College student who is studying the sources of influence on Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi.

Opportunities such as these give our undergraduate students an outstanding academic experience that directly correlates to graduation success. Our reputation of providing excellent research opportunities for our students also helps us attract bright students and high-quality faculty. We are committed to expanding undergraduate research opportunities in the future. Due to its importance, we've made undergraduate research the topic of this issue's cover story.

Speaking of research, this issue also includes an article on the recent opening of the Sandra Cisneros Archive at The Wittliff Collections. This exquisite collection of manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and other artifacts chronicling a renowned author's life provides researchers with an extraordinary look into her history that no textbook could ever match. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Hillviews*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Denise M. Trauth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise M. Trauth





# Bludgers, brooms and Bobcats

High-flying fantasy sport forges family bonds in club members

*By Tracy Hobson Lehmann*

Surprises were ahead for Alex Aguirre when she said yes to joining the quidditch club as an incoming freshman in 2012. The fast-paced outdoor game that flew into real life from the fictitious wizarding world of author J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter intrigued her.

Aguirre was new to sports and expecting "funsy-type play," she says. She didn't expect to forge deep friendships and participate in a college club sport. She couldn't have been more surprised by the athletic demands of the game if the players had flown on brooms — as in the books and movies. "I quickly realized how intense and athletic it was."

Quidditch might be ripped from the pages of fantasy literature, but the Bobcats play seriously. The team, established in 2011, is among about 180 under the US Quidditch (USQ) governing umbrella. Texas State Quidditch, one of 29 sport clubs offered through the Department of Campus Recreation, consistently ranks near the top of the USQ's Southwest region.





On the quidditch pitch, members of the coed teams run, jump, dodge, throw, and body check as four balls fly around the oblong field. They do all that astride 40-inch lengths of PVC pipe – the modern version of the broom – meaning they play one-handed. The objective is to get one of the balls, the quaffle, through a hoop while dodging the other three balls, bludgers.

Chaos ensues when the two teams – initially six players each – scramble at the “brooms up!” call. Late in the game, craziness builds when the seekers – one additional player from each team – enter the field to capture the snitch – a tennis ball in a sock tucked into the waistband of an independent player’s shorts. That player, dressed in yellow, is the snitch runner.

Unlike most club sports where men and women compete separately, USQ reinforces equality and inclusivity. Under its gender maximum rule, a team can have no more than four players of the same gender – determined by how the player identifies – in active play before the seekers and snitch runner enter the game.

Observers see elements of rugby, dodge ball, and lacrosse in the action. Positions of snitch runner and seeker demand speed and agility. Wrestling skills come in handy, too.

“If you have experience in any team sport, it will transfer over to quidditch,” says Katie Stephenson, who joined the team as a sophomore transfer student in 2012 and continued to play as a graduate student. Quidditch appealed to her for both its athletic demands and its social possibilities.

“There is such a large diversity of people in the club that you can

find somewhere to fit in,” says Aguirre. It’s where she made “99.99 percent” of her college friends.

With almost 100 members, quidditch is the largest non-Greek student organization on campus. Members organize social events such as a holiday ball and a Halloween party, and they perform community outreach through projects such as food drives and teaching children to play the sport.

The activities on and off the field, including recruiting, leadership, and fundraising, enhance the educational experience, says Mario Rios, assistant director of sport clubs. “Students forget they learn these valuable skills that will transfer to any organization or profession,” he says.

As an upperclassman, Aguirre became too busy for tournaments, games, and twice-a-week practices. But she stayed active in the club through graduation in December 2016.

That’s common, says club president Brigid Rhoden. “One of the things that cannot really be measured, but I feel like is a real accomplishment, is that once a person has been in quidditch they continue to support us and stay involved long past their graduation. We are a family,” she says.

The family bond is especially strong for Aguirre. Quidditch teammate Michael Comer, still in his cap and gown from commencement, surprised her when he dropped to one knee on the banks of the San Marcos River and asked her to marry him.

She said yes.





# Quidditch for muggles

Quidditch players must master skills such as running on a PVC pipe “broom,” along with the game’s rules and vocabulary (below).

## Muggle

A person without the magical powers of witches and wizards.

## Team

### 3 chasers (white headbands)

Carry, kick, and pass quaffles to get them through opposing team’s hoops.

### 2 beaters (black headbands)

Stop opposing chasers by tackling or hitting with bludgers. Players struck by a bludger are out of play until they tag their own goal.

### 1 keeper (green headband)

A goalie who defends the hoops.

### 1 seeker (yellow headband)

Enters field at 17-minute mark to chase the snitch runner and capture the tail attached to the runner’s shorts. (Think flag football.)

### 1 snitch runner (yellow shorts)

A neutral player dressed in yellow who enters the field after 18 minutes of play and dodges seekers from both teams as they try to snatch the snitch dangling from their back waistband.

## Scoring

### 10 points

Chaser goals; can be scored from front or back of hoop.

### 30 points

Snitch capture.



## Equipment

### Brooms

PVC pipes about 40 inches long, sans bristles, are the muggles’ choice for nonflying brooms that don’t scrape thighs. If you were good on a stick horse as a kid, you’ve got this.

### Goals

Three hoops — like hula hoops — stand in a row at varying heights at each end of the field, or pitch.

### 1 quaffle

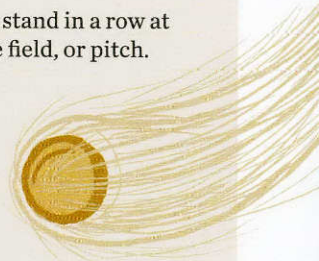
Slightly deflated volleyball the chasers use to score goals.

### 3 bludgers

Dodge balls, also slightly squishy, thrown by the beaters at opposing players to disrupt momentum.

### 1 snitch

In lieu of the flying golden ball in Potterworld, muggles capture a tennis ball in a sock.



**The game ends when the snitch is captured, and the team with the most points wins.**

Source: [USQuidditch.org](http://USQuidditch.org)







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# KAREN CHISUM HAS 'THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD'

She is the sixth winningest head coach in Division I volleyball

*By John Goodspeed*

Peers at national conventions call Bobcats volleyball head coach Karen Chisum “the legend,” and it’s easy to see why.

Heading into her 38th season, her career record stands at 842-533-3 and she’s the sixth winningest active head coach in NCAA Division I volleyball. The Bobcats have won seven regular season conference championships and eight tournament championships. The team finished the 2016 season 21-12 and placed third in the Sun Belt Conference with a 13-3 record.

Chisum, though, maintains an aw-shucks attitude about all the attention.

“When they call me ‘the legend,’ I just kind of grin at them. I know it’s supposed to be a compliment, but sometimes it’s kind of embarrassing,” the 67-year-old says. “I don’t want to draw attention to myself. I’m the Texas State volleyball coach, and it’s a privilege to be here and stay as long as I have.”

Chisum’s roots at Texas State reach back to her freshman year in 1968. She graduated in 1972 with a bachelor’s degree in education and later earned a master’s degree. Her career as a volleyball coach began as an assistant at Goodnight Middle School in San Marcos. She also was an assistant at San Marcos High School and head coach at New Braunfels High School. Texas State hired her as an assistant coach in 1978.

“To have an opportunity at the time — I was 28 years old — to go back to my alma mater, wow. I couldn’t pass that up,” she says. “It was a dream come true.” Two years later, she became head coach. She was named a Texas State Distinguished Alumna in 2011.

Over the years, other universities tried to lure Chisum. It was more than having family in the area that kept her in San Marcos. “I love the Bobcats and take

a lot of pride in this university and what it can offer,” she says. “I stayed because I was being successful and thought I was giving back to the kids and this university. Why would I leave the best job in the world?”

She credits the consistency of her coaching staff and their recruiting efforts and interaction with the student-athletes for the Bobcats’ success over the years.

“I can’t say enough about my staff,” she says.

“Associate head coach Tracy Smith has been with me 15 years and assistant coach Sean Huiet (for) 10. It’s not just about the head coach. You’ve got a lot of spokes on that wheel. I may be at the center of the wheel, but you need assistants, administrators, and academic advisors.

“I give the assistants power and responsibility, and they coach and teach these young people as much as I do. I share the wealth and share the responsibilities.”

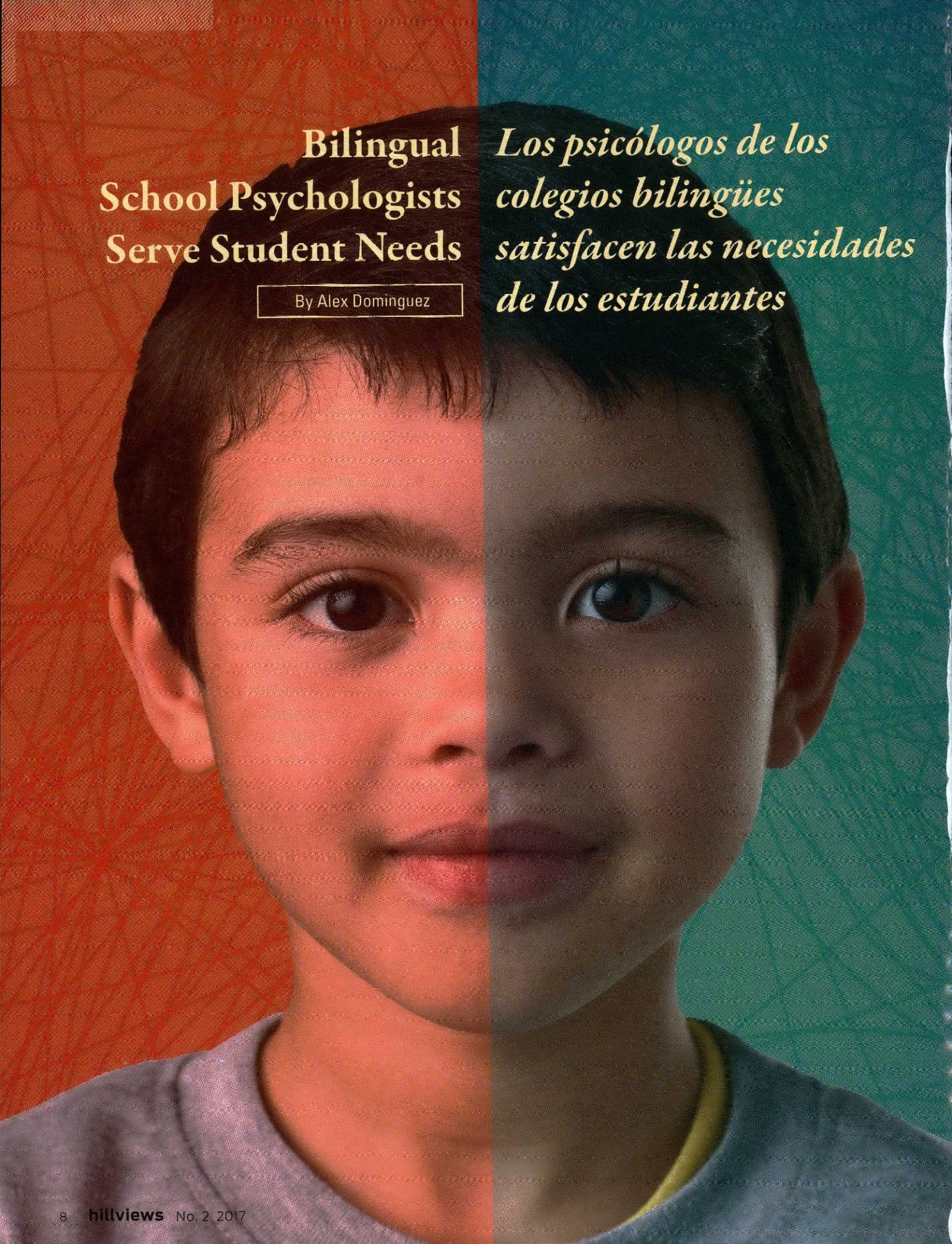
Her office walls display group photos of the teams from every season — upward of 400 students. She can name every one and stays in contact with most of them. Some have children who are in college. Chisum mentors them, too.

She stresses that lessons about competitiveness and teamwork do not stay on the court, but also carry on to the classroom and life after college. “I want to help develop these young ladies into good citizens as they graduate and go into the world. Winning builds self-esteem and confidence,” Chisum says. “You’ve got to be a winner in life.

“We talk about being competitive and winning all the time. Whether it’s in sports, the classroom, or on the job, be the best you can be, set an example, and be a role model or mentor.”

In other words, Chisum wants everyone to grow into a legend.





**Bilingual  
School Psychologists  
Serve Student Needs**

By Alex Dominguez

*Los psicólogos de los  
colegios bilingües  
satisfacen las necesidades  
de los estudiantes*



**I**n her 37th year in education, Irma Pedraza is reliving her childhood and redefining her future as a bilingual school psychologist in Texas State University's Project SUPERB program. "I lived the experience of segregation and feeling like something was wrong with me because I spoke a second language," says Pedraza. As a child, like many of her classmates in Beeville, Pedraza began to anglicize her native language to survive the school system that was not set up to work with students whose native language was not English.

Project SUPERB (Scholars Using Psychology and Education to Reach Bilinguals) is a \$1.05 million U.S. Department of Education grant-funded program in the College of Education that adds a training and certification track in bilingual school psychology to

**"Because we can evaluate the child in English and in Spanish, we get to see the whole child. Being able to speak to the parents about the evaluation helps me advocate for the child and the family."**

the existing approved university graduate program. This program recruits, prepares, and supports scholars in specialized course work and supervised bilingual field experiences to promote multicultural awareness and build professional Spanish vocabulary in the areas of education and psychology. Over its first five years, the program will graduate 28 students. It will continue past the years of the grant award, admitting students to this new, permanent Spanish-English bilingual track in school psychology.

Pedraza says she had an epiphany during the program's language immersion experience. "I couldn't stop crying one day because I felt bad for having lost my native



tongue, but the professor helped me understand I was a survivor. I survived the cancer of discrimination and segregation and now I will be able to help families and children with their needs.”

Texas State, with a Hispanic student population of 35 percent, was designated a U.S. Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in 2012. In 2016, the university ranked 14th in the nation for the number of bachelor degrees awarded to Hispanics. Dr. Michael O’Malley, chair of the Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education & School Psychology, says the HSI designation provides an additional lens for his department as it trains people for roles as principals, superintendents, school counselors, and school psychologists. “In addition to everything else that we are doing, what kind of impact can the university have for serving Hispanic communities in Texas? We are consistently looking across our programs and asking, ‘What is the need in our schools that our (university) students will be working in? What can we do to respond to that need?’”

Project SUPERB is a perfect fit for their students and the communities their students are moving into, says Dr.

Jon Lasser, School Psychology program coordinator. “We have some very talented bilingual students, but they did not have formal/specialized training in the assessment of English Language Learners and (education) in cultural competencies to meet the needs of this population.”

Program scholars learn specific tasks that help them to filter out children’s linguistic proficiencies, and help educators determine if a child’s academic struggle is because of educational gaps or language deficiencies. Scholars will graduate with a 69-hour specialist degree in school psychology and a certificate in bilingual school psychology.

“I’m really proud of our program in being able to acquire this grant and develop this project. It’s perceived that we were awarded such a large grant because of the university’s infrastructure,” says Dr. Cynthia Plotts who co-wrote the grant with Lasser. “(Project SUPERB) has its own culture in its own way. When the scholars are all together, there is a bonding and communication between them that is special. They are preparing to go out and share their special set of skills and I feel really proud of that.”

Carol M. Zecena Leiva, who is in her third year with Project SUPERB, will graduate in December. She interned in the spring. “Because we can evaluate the child in English and in Spanish, we get to see the whole child. Being able to speak to the parents about the evaluation helps me advocate for the child and the family,” she says. “Many of the families I have worked with consider the schools the experts. I want to make sure they are getting the whole message about their child so that they can make informed decisions.”

Though the final grant-funded cohort was admitted into the program in fall 2016, O’Malley says the university plans to continue to offer the training and certification track, minus the federal financial support. “We have a very diverse student population here at Texas State,” he says. “Seeing the faculty come together and be innovative about meeting the needs of Texas schools and families, understand what the challenges are, think ahead of the curve, and help our students use their natural skill sets through graduate education — this is very exciting.”

## Doctoral Research Paves Way for School Success

Del Valle school district implements program for better parental communication



Research has proved that children whose parents are involved in their education are more successful in school. It was this research that Dr. Celina Bley, assistant superintendent of operations for the Del Valle ISD, wanted to explore as she pursued her doctorate from Texas State’s Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education & School Psychology.

“As I was learning how to build a program in my study, some things came up with parental involvement within our district. I told my supervisors this is an area I can clearly address. I knew I could do it because I was learning the message in school — organizational change and organizational management,” says Bley. “It was applying the research to practice. As a student, I had to understand how to read the research to understand what would work and wouldn’t work for us.”

Bley began working with liaisons and principals to set monthly goals and think systemically about what parents wanted. Along with the campus staff, Bley surveyed parents, asking what they needed to know during the year to better help their children. Parent liaisons began addressing the 33 percent mobility rate between Del Valle ISD schools to ensure parents had advocates to ask questions of when they reached that campus.

Del Valle Superintendent Kelly Crook says the simple task of asking and listening to parent feedback has been a great tool for the district. “Our climate is certainly more welcoming and parent feedback is key. Parents are our greatest resource and together we can work together for student success.”



# Legacy of Texas writers L.D. and LaVerne Clark lives on through literary endowment

## Holocaust novel wins first \$25,000 Clark Fiction Prize

By Anastasia Cisneros-Lunsford

A novel describing the horror of the Holocaust through the eyes of a child has won the first L.D. and LaVerne Harrell Clark Fiction Prize from Texas State University.

*The Book of Aron* (Knopf, 2015) is a masterfully written book by Jim Shepard, a National Book Award finalist, says Doug Dorst, director of the Creative Writing program at Texas State and director of the Clark Fiction Prize competition. “Jim Shepard is a writer with a remarkable imagination, a remarkable gift for empathy, and a writer who handles the comedic and the tragic with equal skill,” Dorst says. Shepard, the author of seven novels, accepted his prize at Texas State on March 8. He is a professor of creative writing and film at Williams College in Massachusetts.

Tom Grimes, Texas State English professor, says he nominated Shepard’s book because the author managed to do the next-to-impossible. “He wrote a contemporary novel capable of illuminating the horror of the Holocaust through the often comic perspective of a child,” Grimes says. “It’s an incredible, and incredibly moving, book.”

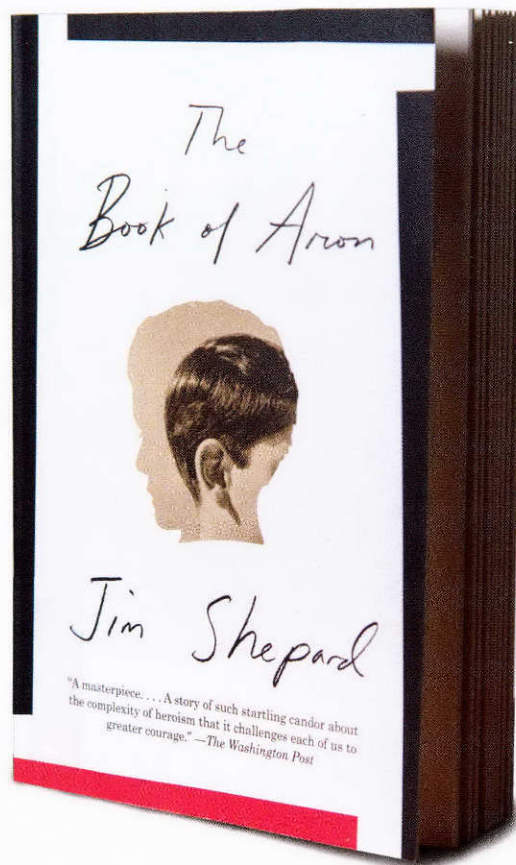
With this first honor, the Clark Fiction Prize is poised to be one of the most prestigious fiction prizes in the country. The \$25,000 prize was made possible by the talents and generous gifts of L.D. and LaVerne Harrell Clark, writers who forged a longtime relationship with the university to create the literary endowment that bears their names.

The Clarks, both native Texans, met while taking creative writing classes at Columbia University. They married in 1951 and moved to Arizona after L.D. received his doctorate from Columbia. L.D., a well-known D.H. Lawrence scholar, retired as professor emeritus of English at the University of Arizona after 33 years. A novelist, folklorist, and photographer, LaVerne served as the first director of the University of Arizona Poetry Center, where her 12,000-portrait collection of well-known poets from the 1960s and 1970s is housed.

After retiring to Smithville, the Clarks were invited to become members of the Texas Institute of Letters. That’s when they met Dr. Mark Busby, a Texas State English professor and former director of the Center for the Study of the Southwest. “Somewhere along the way, LaVerne began to research and write about folklore,” Busby says.

One of LaVerne’s earliest works, *They Sang for Horses*, is a collection of Navajo and Apache horse mythology, which won the University of Chicago Folklore Prize in 1967 and was recognized by the Smithsonian Institution as a classic in Native American studies. She later wrote *Keepers of the Earth*, which earned the Best First Novel Award in 1996 from the Western Writers of America.

“L.D. grew up in Gainesville and he had something of a mixed relationship with Texas in the sense that his grandfather and several others in the area were sympathetic to the Union,” Busby explains. “Forty-plus were hanged by the Confederacy and some were L.D.’s relatives. Early on he wrote a nonfiction piece about the event, *A Bright Tragical Thing: A Tale of Civil War Texas*, and later he



fictionalized it and wrote a novel about it.

“They wrote about their interest in the Southwest and Texas,” Busby says. “Even though it was later in their lives that they became committed fiction writers, they came back here to Texas and this was their life — their life as writers. If there was a literary gathering in any small town or big town in Texas, they were going to be there and they’d have a booth set up to sell their books.”

Each year, the Clark Endowment funds a graduate student of Texas State’s prestigious Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing who lives and works at the Smithville house, as well as numerous scholarships that attract talented writers to the program.

“We see the Clark Fiction Prize on the national literary landscape, and we do hope it brings attention to the university, the English department, and the M.F.A. program,” Dorst says.

In 2012 at a university event honoring the Clark Endowment, L.D. spoke with Dr. Daniel Lochman, professor and chair of the Department of English, about the legacy he wanted for the Clark Fiction Prize. LaVerne died in 2008. L.D. died in 2014, at age 91.

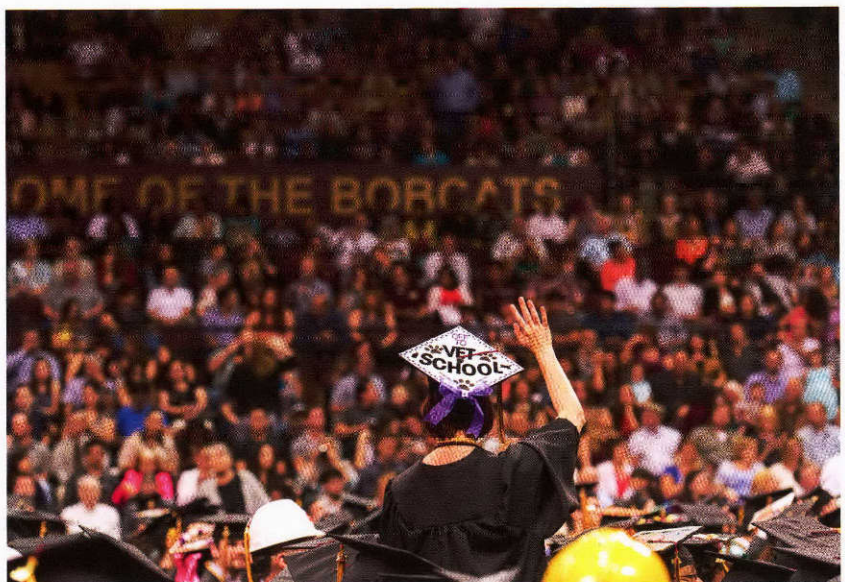
“The Clark Prize fulfills the wish of the Clarks and recalls their accomplishments and generosity,” Lochman says. “The prize is sure to catch the attention of writers and readers of fiction from across the nation. We are honored to have the opportunity to manage the selection process of the prize and to celebrate it each year with the achievement of a leading writer of fiction.”



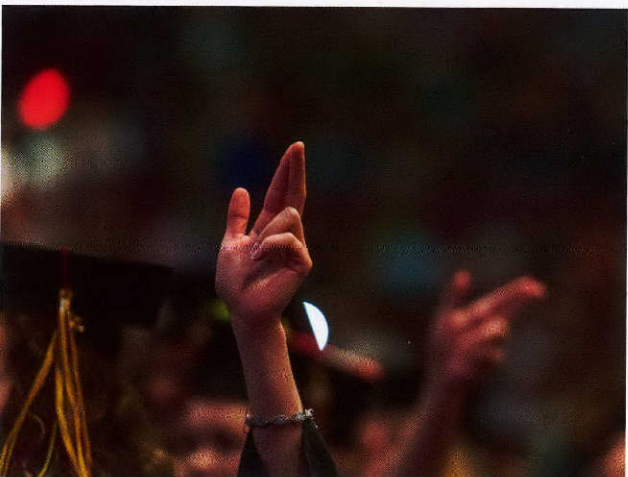
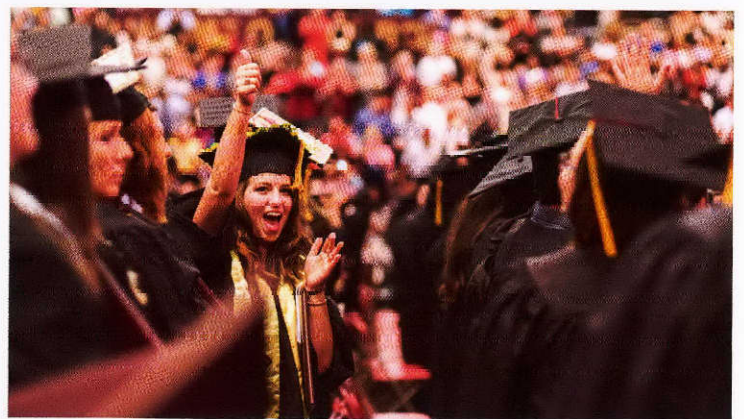


# Graduation at Texas State

The commencement ceremony in May is the largest for the university. This year nearly 5,000 candidates in eight ceremonies walked the stage during the three-day graduation event. And while the number increases each year, the traditions seldom change: jumping into the San Marcos River at Sewell Park, adding bling to their mortarboards, and posing for photos in front of campus landmarks.







**OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:**

*Ready, set, flip — a graduate makes a grand splash into the river.*

*Hi, Mom and Dad. Next stop, vet school for this graduate.*

*A little bling and a Bobcat dress up a graduation cap.*

**THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:**

*The Fighting Stallions statue on the Quad makes a good backdrop for a farewell photo.*

*For many graduates, like Jayme Bisbano, commencement day is one day you can't stop smiling.*

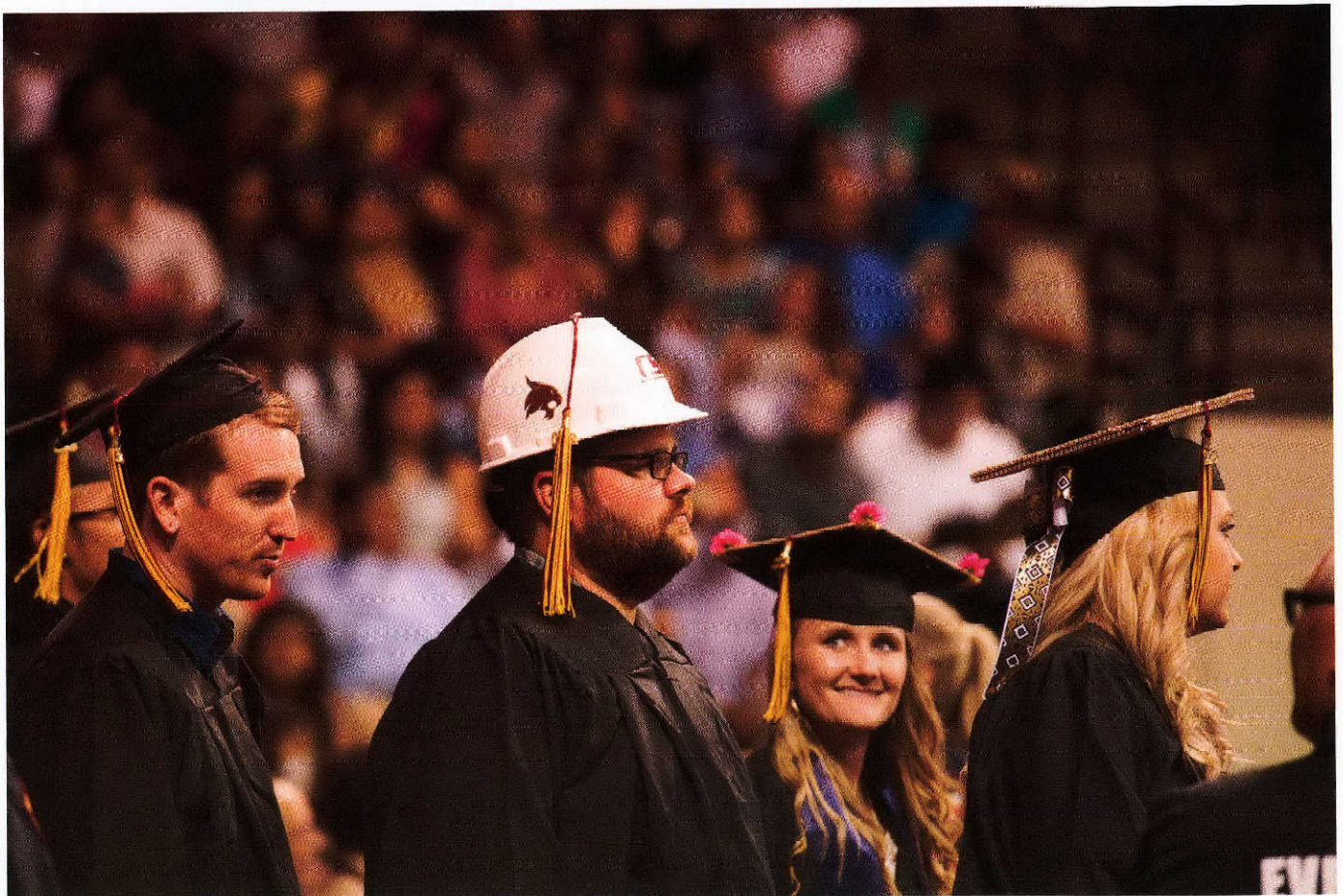
*The "Heart of Texas State" hand sign is everywhere on commencement day.*

*Tasia Irvin gives the "Heart" sign and "Eat 'Em up, Cats" sign for her special photo.*

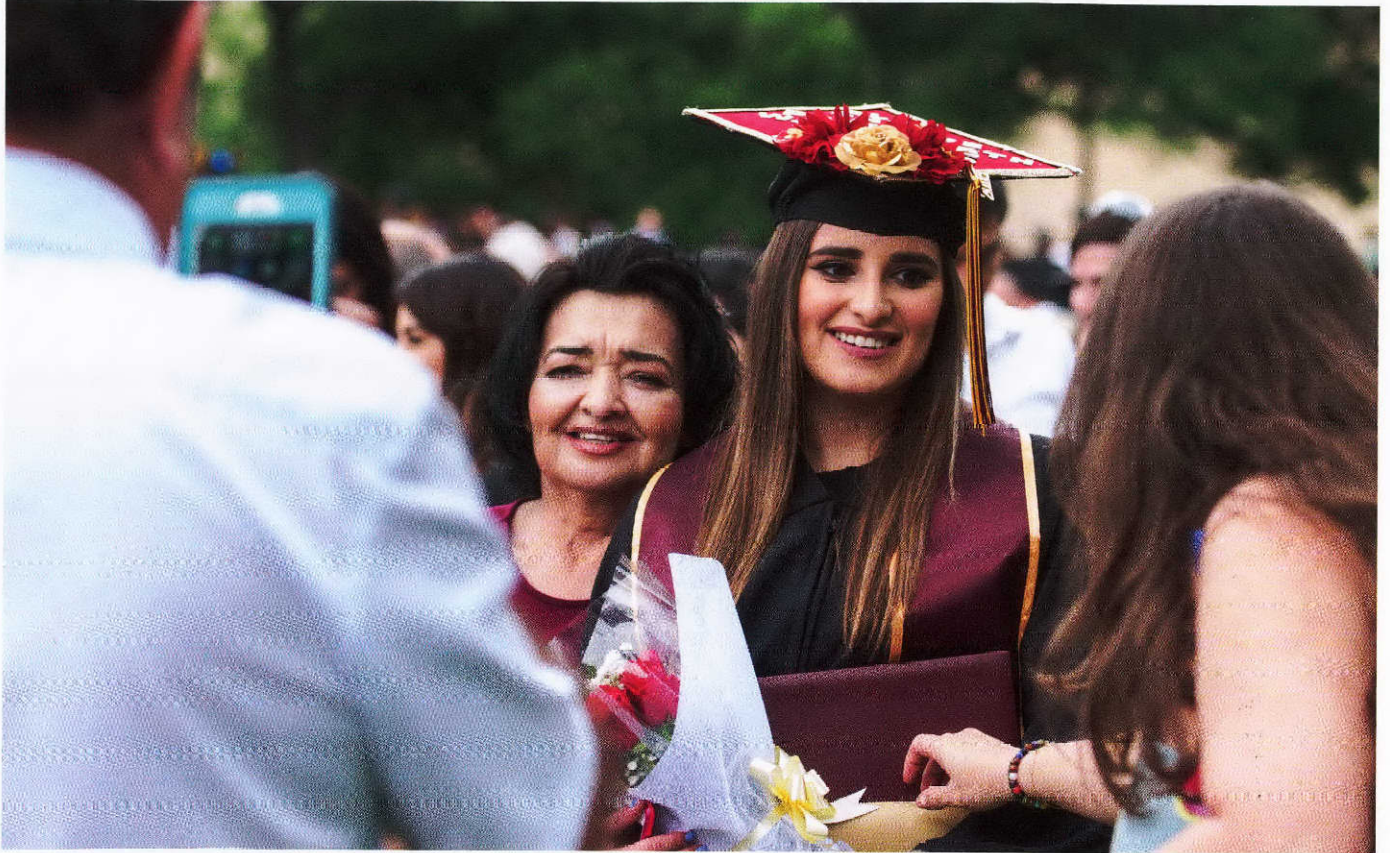
*Photos by Chandler Prude, Stephanie Schulz*



# Graduation at Texas State *continued from page 13*







*OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:*

*It's a wonderful feeling to be standing among peers on commencement day.*

*The Australian flag makes an appearance at the river as two graduates splash down on graduation day.*

*Candidates from the Construction Science and Management program wear construction hardhats complete with Bobcat and tassel as a sign of their field of study.*

*THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:*

*Flowers, photos, and family make graduation day special for many candidates.*

*The music helps set the mood when the orchestra plays "Pomp and Circumstance."*

*A newly minted graduate shows off her class ring.*

*Texas State President Denise Truth speaks at eight commencement ceremonies during the three-day event.*



# RAMPING UP RESEARCH

*By Mark Wangrin*

Texas State's undergraduates are getting unique opportunities to discover new knowledge



humb through the Texas State University course catalog looking for the amazing opportunities for undergraduate research.


Go ahead, we've got time.

We'll give you a hint. You won't find many. There are some undergraduate research classes in the sciences, sure, but like a plume agate begging for some pumice and a rubbing cloth, the promise of undergraduate research is the hidden gem in the Texas State academic culture.

Hidden, in plain sight. When students arrive on the Texas State campus, sometimes they find it. Sometimes it finds them. Sooner or later, the very qualities that make a student interested in knowing what others do will cause them to fall, headfirst, into undergraduate research.

Anthony Ledet worked his way through high school at a Houston Arby's, not because he liked the extra pocket money, but because his family needed him to. College didn't seem to fit his otherwise bright future, but his single mother shipped him off to Texas State four years ago with this message about affording his education: "I'm a mother. I can make a way."





**Anthony Ledet**

Graduated 2016  
Bachelor's in  
Chemistry and  
Biochemistry

**Faculty  
advisor**

**Dr. Todd Hudnall**  
Associate  
Professor of  
Chemistry

**"I know in some shape or form, everything can be tamed.  
It may explode for others, but maybe I can tame it."**



In 2011, the **Undergraduate Research Initiative** was created and the Honors College and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs began awarding **\$1,000 Undergraduate Research Fellowships (URF)** to between five and 10 qualified undergraduates each May and November.

Clearly, that's a message that's encrypted in his DNA. Through Advanced Placement and dual credit courses, he graduated high school with two years' worth of college credits for his chemistry degree. Science came naturally to him, as did a sly sense of adventure. All it took was hearing Dr. Christopher Dorsey, a senior lecturer in organometallic chemistry, remark: "Everything I work with explodes." And Ledet's imagination followed suit. After all, growing up he was always the kid with the Mentos and the 3-liter plastic soda bottle.

"It explodes?!" he gleefully recalls thinking. "Why not work with that?"

Of course, Ledet later discovered that Dorsey exaggerated somewhat to get students excited about organometallic chemistry when he mentioned that all his compounds "explode." However, synthesizing the compounds in the lab of Dr. Todd Hudnall, he discovered ones that easily decompose in air. Ledet, a December 2016 graduate, proudly claims a clean record. "I'm the only (student) who hasn't caught fire," he jokingly says, meaning that he has always been able to successfully isolate his compounds. "I know in some shape or form, everything can be tamed. It may explode for others, but maybe I can tame it."

That's the attitude Texas State has long been seeking in its students, and undergraduate research provides the tools.

## Emerging Research University

In January 2012, Texas State became the eighth university in Texas to be named an Emerging Research University, which gives it access to incentive funding created by the Texas Legislature. This designation keeps it on track to join other Texas institutions as a research institution. That distinction primarily recognizes postgraduate and faculty research, but it also includes undergraduate research.

In the 1990s, President Jerome Supple began a concerted effort to burnish and promote the school's academic reputation by establishing Ph.D. programs and

encouraging a nascent undergraduate research presence. Dr. Denise Trauth, who became president in 2002, has accelerated that effort, promoting the faculty's reputation as researchers.

"We've had a history of outstanding scholarship since the doors opened," says Dr. Michael Blanda, assistant vice president for Research and Federal Relations. "As the school evolved, the flavor of research took on all things."

One of the first things Blanda did after being hired in 1992 was author a white paper on undergraduate research opportunities. Slowly it gained traction, but something was missing. "What we were lacking," he says, "was a champion."

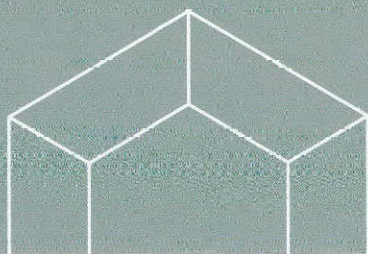
Enter John Hood. A theatre professor and adjunct faculty member in the Honors College who taught a class called The Art of Storytelling, Hood so loved instructing and interacting with students that he was still teaching at age 80. (He passed away in July 2015.)

Hood knew that cajoling and encouraging could only go so far. They needed money. He landed a grant from the Mind Science Foundation that included recruiting undergraduates to perform research in psychology.

"We found each other," Blanda says. "That became the nucleus we built on. We cobbled together money with the goal of becoming a self-funded program."

In 2011, the Undergraduate Research Initiative was created and the Honors College and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs began awarding \$1,000 Undergraduate Research Fellowships (URF) to between five and 10 qualified undergraduates each May and November. Though the drive for undergraduate research flourished mainly in the Honors College, it's not limited to those students.

Ron Haas, a senior lecturer in the Honors College, says those schools that dedicate research funding for undergraduates usually limit it to STEM fields. "We have defined undergraduate research in broad terms to include STEM, the humanities and social sciences, fine arts, and even community-based research," Haas says. "We aim to fund a wide variety of projects that reflect the diverse







**Hallie Nix**

Graduated 2016  
Bachelor's in Family  
and Consumer  
Sciences (Nutrition)

**Faculty  
advisor**

**Dr. Ramona  
Salcedo-Price**  
Assistant  
Professor  
of Nutrition

**“It’s significant the impact that nutrition has  
on everything going on in your body.”**



**TXSTUR**, the interdisciplinary journal of undergraduate research, annually publishes peer-reviewed research papers by any Texas State student. **The Undergraduate Research Conference and Honors Thesis Forum** also gives them a way to present their findings, often serving as a litmus test on whether graduate school might be an option.

interests of our students.” The goal is to create a research culture and community in which undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty researchers collaborate, present, and publish their work, Haas says.

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Dr. Heather Galloway, dean of the Honors College, would like to see a summer program funded, and hopes for the day when there’s enough external funding to make sure all interested students have an opportunity.

“I know that some disadvantaged students have to work a job, at say H-E-B, to make ends meet, and think all they have time to do is get their grades,” she says. “I really want to see the same openings for all students, and to raise visibility so more students know that this is possible.”

## Getting to know students

The result has been astonishing in the depth and breadth of the research undertaken. It can show up in the thesis of a student who spent four weeks negotiating the campus in a wheelchair and wrote about the challenges and perceptions, or in the thesis of the physical therapy student who, while huddled in a quiet corner of an orphanage in Kazakhstan, whispered via Skype her thesis presentation on the warehousing of those with disabilities because it was, after all, 3 a.m. And then there were the theses on how gender affects the way players experience the World of Warcraft video game, or on different Cinderella stories over the years, on human trafficking, or Lyme disease or any of hundreds of other topics.

“The favorite part of my job,” Galloway says, “is reading all the theses.”

Galloway has other perks — like getting to know the students as people. She warmly recalls a picture of Ledet in a suit and tie — apparently an extremely rare occurrence — with Hudnall, who’s wearing a “Go Geek” T-shirt. And she’s participated in a musical group with another undergraduate researcher, Andrew McNair.

McNair, a spring 2017 graduate, loves music. Interviewing him about his undergraduate research is easy. His passion for the work and influences of Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi, whose career spanned the Renaissance and Baroque eras, is so palpable, you only

have to ask maybe three questions to fill your notebook.

The trouble with Monteverdi, though, is that there’s just not much new to discover.

“Think of research as a wall,” McNair says. “You have to find a hole in the wall and your scholarship has to fill the hole. You have to come up with something, within reason, that hasn’t been discovered yet.”

Easy in theory. Different in practice. “Monteverdi has been researched (extensively),” McNair says. “Baked. Cooked. Done. There’s nothing left for a project of my scope and size. So I was like, ‘What do I do now?’”

One day as he was leaving a conference with his thesis advisor, Dr. Kay Lipton, McNair mentioned that Monteverdi was born in a region of Italy that was under Spanish control. Just like that, he had a topic: What influence did the 17th-century Spanish composer Sebastian de Vivanco have on Monteverdi?

For McNair, though, it went further than that. In researching, he searched exhaustively for a recording of a relevant piece, one of Vivanco’s Magnificat settings. He couldn’t find one, probably because it had never been recorded. Ever.

He applied for and won a URF Grant to fund the project to make a professional recording. “I kind of feel like it’s my cosmic duty,” he says with a shrug.

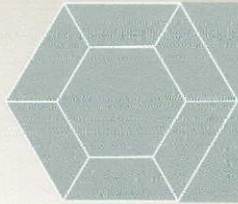
## Nutrition to fight cancer

Hallie Nix, who graduated in December 2016 with a bachelor’s degree in Family and Consumer Sciences, is one of eight sisters who were home-schooled from preschool through high school. When she was a freshman in high school, her grandfather, Frank Holland, succumbed to liver cancer. Holland, who was 82 when he died, had battled various types of cancer for some years. She remembers her mother, a registered nurse, telling her that he smoked tobacco and had poor eating habits. She pondered the correlation to his disease. “It’s significant the impact that nutrition has on everything going on in your body,” Nix says.

Doing research on the effects of obesity on liver cancer was natural for Nix for other reasons. Her mother had seven other girls to home-school, so she’d hand Nix a textbook, assign the reading and tell her to come to her with questions. “So I started early with self-taught, independent learning,” Nix says. “I learned how to ask ‘good’ questions. That’s something being home-schooled helped with.”

Nix wishes she’d have discovered the research





Listen to Andrew McNair's  
recorded ensemble at  
<http://bit.ly/2qLqFp1>



### **Andrew McNair**

Graduated 2017  
Bachelor's In  
Music Studies  
(Choral)



### **Faculty advisors**

Dr. Kay Lipton  
Senior Lecturer  
Dr. Joey Martin  
Professor  
of Music

**“You have to find a hole in the wall and your scholarship has to fill the hole. You have to come up with something, within reason, that hasn’t been discovered yet.”**



**Daisy Jaimez**

Graduating Fall 2017  
Bachelor's in  
International  
Studies

**Faculty  
advisor**

**Dr. Diego E.  
Vacaflares**  
Associate Professor  
Finance and  
Economics



possibilities earlier than during a career exploration class before her senior year. So she encourages younger students to take advantage of the opportunities every chance she gets.

**Added to experience**

“That’s something that really can change the way people see Texas State if they knew,” she says. “There’s so much support for research from the leadership roles here it’s amazing. I expected (them to say), ‘Why are you doing this?’ I wish more students knew about it. It would add so much to their experience.”

Daisy Jaimez, who researches how economic indicators influence Mexican immigration, found out about opportunities for undergraduate research as a freshman.

“It depends a lot on us as students to find it, to know it’s there,” says Jaimez, a senior. “You can’t just go to class, take exams, and get your grades. You have to get involved. Faculty support is very present. If you speak up on your interests, you’re bound to get guided to something.”

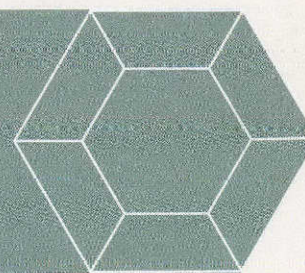
“I think that Texas State really has helped me evolve. I didn’t think I’d get to do this as an undergraduate. I thought I’d have to wait until graduate school or law school. To have this available, thanks to the faculty here, has really sent me in the right direction,” Jaimez says.

It’s a direction toward knowledge. Toward helping others. Curing cancer. Recording the unrecorded. Not blowing up.

“I want to be the person who knows everything,” says Ledet, the chemistry graduate.

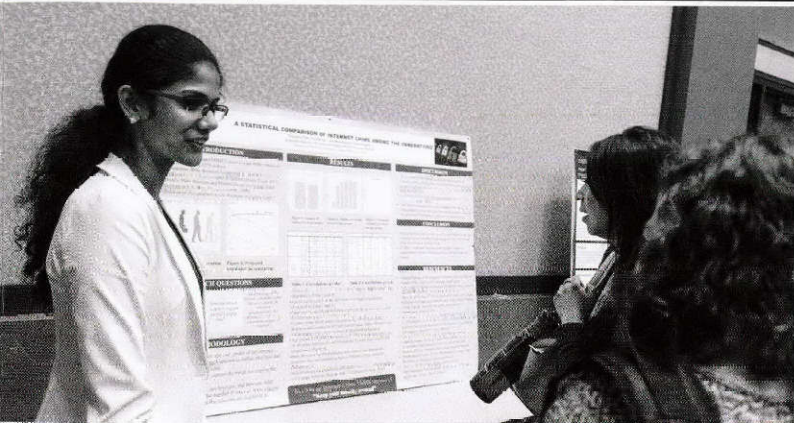
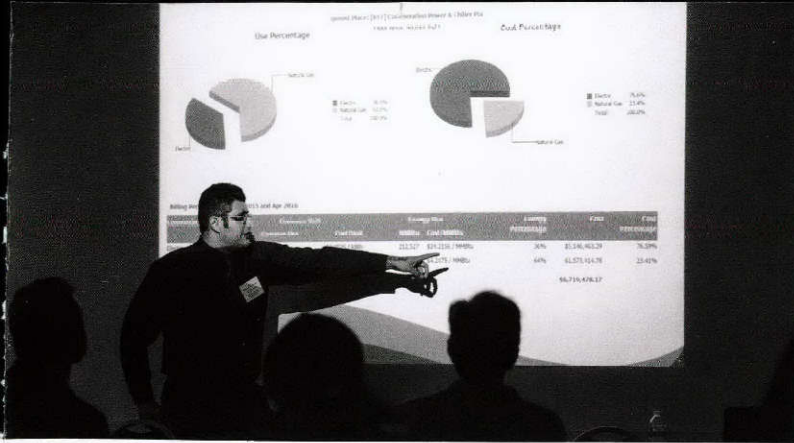
“You never know what you’re going to find,” adds McNair, the music grad. “What a cool thing.” 🍷

**“You have to get involved. Faculty support is very present. If you speak up on your interests, you’re bound to get guided to something.”**



On the web:  
[txstate.edu/undergraduateresearch/resources.html](http://txstate.edu/undergraduateresearch/resources.html)





# Presenting their papers

Graduate students get opportunity to network, show research efforts

By Julie Cooper

If there were a one-stop shop for presenting and reviewing research, learning about its scope and impact, and then networking for opportunities to collaborate on future research, then Texas State's International Research Conference for Graduate Students would be it.

Hosted each November by The Graduate College, the interdisciplinary event highlights graduate students' original scholarly research efforts. Besides drawing on participation from all of Texas State's academic colleges, the research conference also involves the Office of Research and Federal Relations, the International Office, the Graduate House, the Common Experience Committee and the University Bookstore.

"The conference aligns with the university mission in providing graduate students with an opportunity to present their research and receive feedback from faculty and peers, to gain a deeper understanding regarding the impact of research, and to develop contacts for future collaborations in a nurturing environment," says Dr. Sandy Rao, who launched the conference in 2009 when she joined The

Graduate College as assistant dean.

The two-day conference includes a faculty panel, reception, and poster session. A graduate student moderates the award-winning faculty panel, delving into relevant topics such as research execution, time management, publication expertise, and grant writing. The poster session and reception cultivate stimulating conversation and networking between authors, faculty respondents, and attendees in a relaxed yet inquisitive environment.

On day two, several panels run concurrently in three sessions throughout the day. Dr. Andrea Golato, dean of The Graduate College, explains that panel topics are grouped thematically rather than by disciplinary field, reinforcing the interdisciplinary nature of research. Attendees at the 2016 conference listened to presentations from graduate students in the departments of Mass Communication and Health and Human Performance in the same social and visual media-related panel.

Students also have the opportunity to enter a research paper contest. The conference helps students develop presentation skills, whether they are

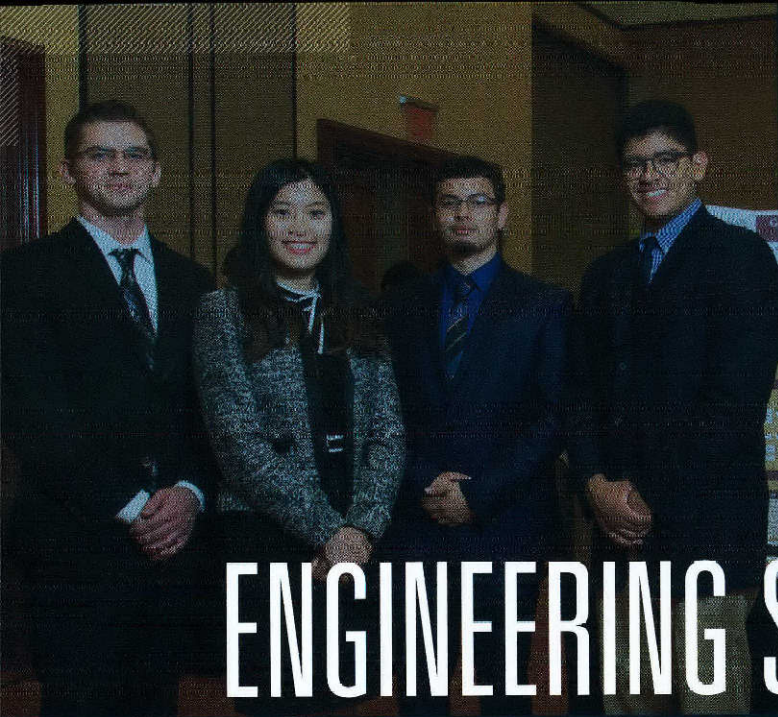
presenting in groups or as individuals. For some students, the conference is their first time to present outside their classroom; for more seasoned students, it helps them fine-tune their presentation skills. Students also may pick up new research techniques from their peers in other disciplines.

"I've presented three times at this conference," says Joni Schneider, a math education doctoral student. "Not only did I learn how to reframe my research for people outside my field, I've also learned how differently research can be conducted in other disciplines."

The conference also sheds light on how integral research is to graduate education. "It helps them realize that their research can go beyond the classroom and potentially have a major impact on society," Golato says.

Rachel Mosley, a mass communication graduate student, agrees. "The research conference gave me a new way of thinking. The ability to share research beyond your field brings up new ideas that others may have never thought before, creating endless possibilities to explore." 🌟

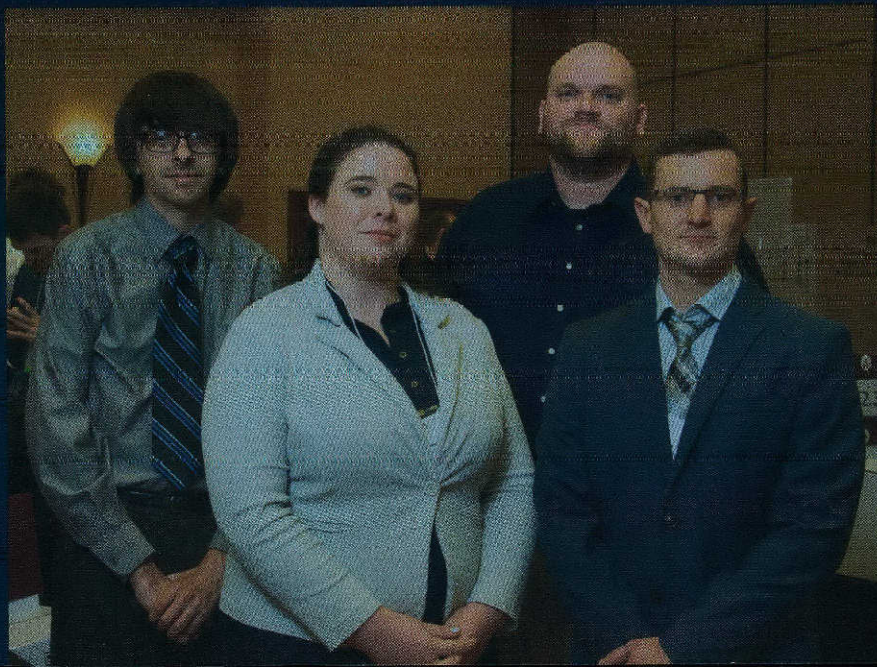
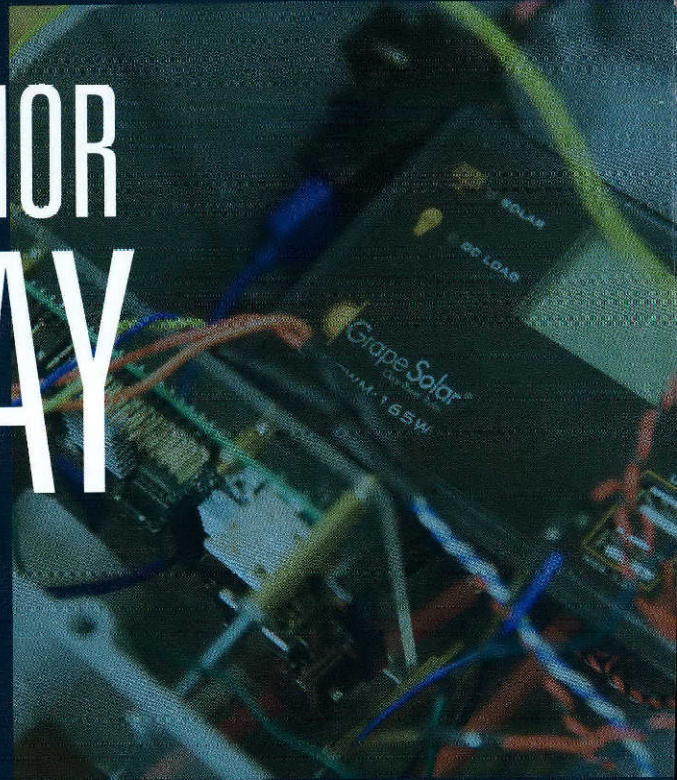




# ENGINEERING SENIOR DESIGN DAY

**Engineering students,  
industry meet over  
real-world projects**

BY JACK MCCLELLAN



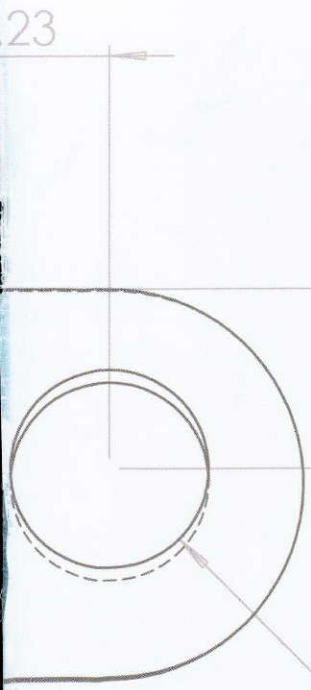




An engineer can truly appreciate the evolution of the Ingram School of Engineering’s biggest showcase, called Senior Design Day. After all, the one-day event each fall and spring is all about design concepts such as efficiencies and scaling. The first Senior Design Day was held in spring 2014. But even then, the Ingram School’s director, Dr. Stan McClellan, had a vision for an event with greater visibility – and presented on a grander scale.

So Senior Design Day was moved from the confines of the Mitte Complex to the more spacious Embassy Suites San Marcos Conference Center, and the event itself took on a much more professional tone: Engineering students now wear business suits; leaders from local, state, and national industries circle the exhibit space for potential new recruits; and industry sponsors are tied to each senior design project.

“Two ways students interact outside of the somewhat contrived, academic environment are research and design of products, and processes based on realistic constraints. It’s closer to the real world,” says McClellan.



Top: Team Bravo, from left to right: Taylor Henry, Alison Chan, Michael Rodriguez, Darryl Balderas.  
Middle: Team Charlie’s water discharge detection and alarm system made for Senior Design Day.  
Bottom: Team Charlie, from left to right: Davis Votra, Tyler Shafer, Matthew Smith, Jeff Kilgore.

Senior Design Day is held each fall and spring semester.  
The writer covered the December 9 event. The spring design day was held April 28.



A senior design or capstone project is a two-semester sequence class, which acts as an introduction to the design process. Students form groups, industry partners offer potential projects, and students choose a partner and project. This type of capstone project is a requirement for an engineering program to maintain accreditation, as well as a chance for students to gain valuable experience outside the typical classroom environment.

“We want the students to stretch out beyond their experience,” McClellan says. “Industry-sponsored projects have a lot of depth and interest. It helps students get jobs after they graduate. We’ve had situations where students finish their senior design presentations and representatives from companies chase them out into the hall.”

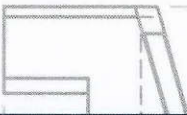
Indeed, there were more than just a few business cards distributed as the fall event progressed. Industry members also asked pointed questions of the students, sat in on presentations, and assisted in grading the projects.

“There are many benefits to working with industry partners,” says electrical engineering major Michael Rodriguez. His team developed a rainfall detection and alarm system for Ingram Readymix Inc. Teammates included fellow electrical engineering majors Darryl Balderas, Chui Sian Chin, Matthew Smith, Tyler Shafer, and Jeff Kilgore.

“Students are able to work on real-world problems and use their engineering skills to address the task given. That prepares the students for their professional careers because they have been exposed to the simulated professional environment of senior capstone. The industry partners provide great technical support and mentorship,” Rodriguez says.

“Industry-sponsored projects have a lot of depth and interest. It helps students get jobs after they graduate. We’ve had situations where students finish their senior design presentations and representatives from companies chase them out into the hall.”

— *Dr. Stan McClellan*



Capstone students  
form groups



Industry partners  
offer potential projects



The 25 Senior Design Day projects on display last December were spread across the disciplines of electrical, computer, and manufacturing engineering.

Among these was an olfactory delivery system, designed for NASA. The “proof of concept” system the students designed holds six scents that are released on demand through a computer system, using induction heating. Because fragrance is linked to memory, the system is aimed at combating the negative psychological effects of the “clean environment” of space travel. Senior manufacturing engineering major James J. Cerda was grateful for the opportunity to work with the government rocket scientists.

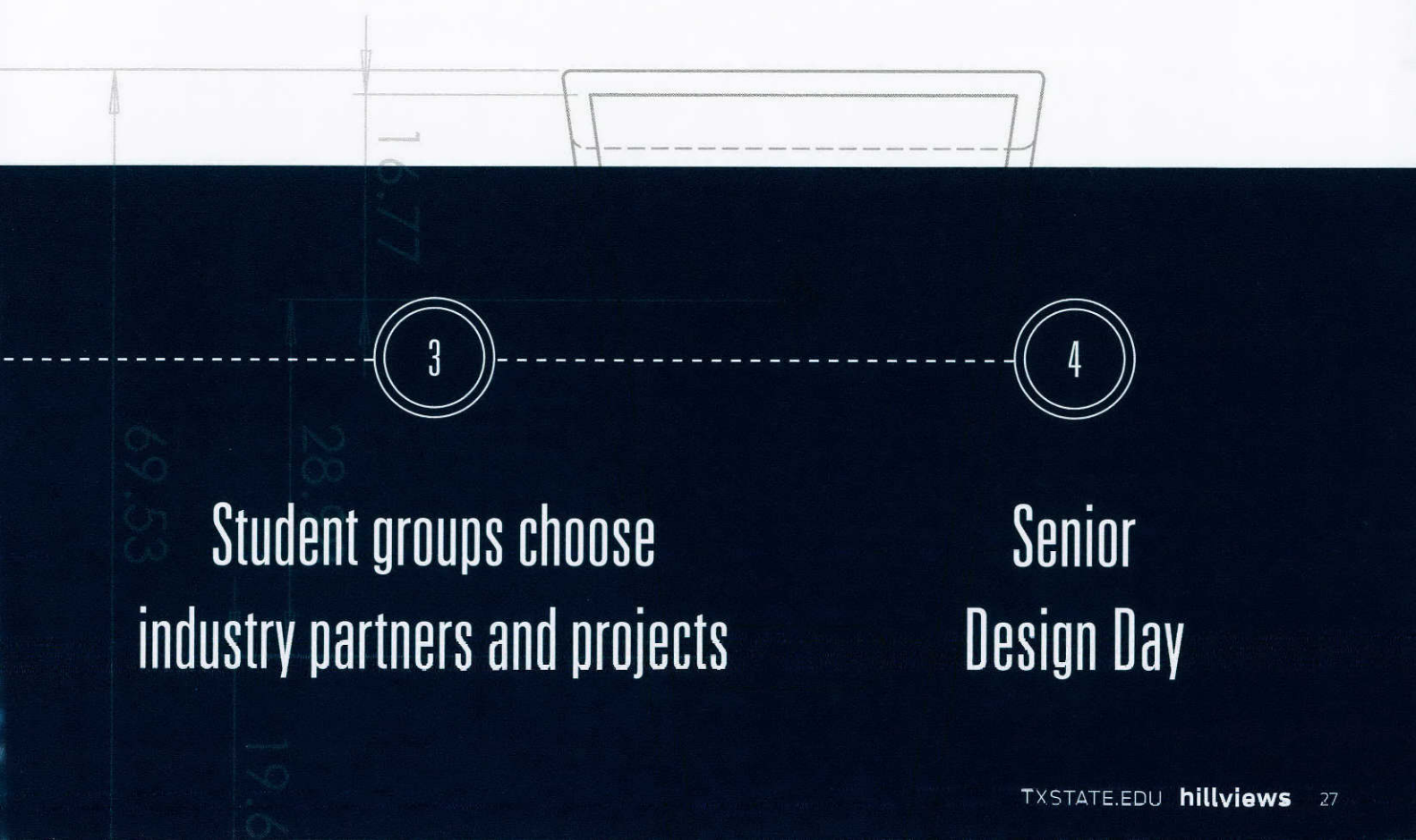
“Working so closely with NASA has awakened me to industry standard practices and concerns that as a student you don’t have to take in consideration,” Cerda says. “The capstone event feels more like a ceremony commencing the student into the industry, which, to me, has more value than graduation itself.”

Along with Cerda, engineering students working on this project include Kelsey Melhorn, Daniel Slaughter, Daniel Shafer, Ivan Juarez, Robert Fernandez, and David Jaime, the group’s chemistry major.

Seniors Jaime Perez, Joshua Sorenson, and Yohannes Derso developed a system for aligning charges of perforating guns – used in fracking – for Hunt & Hunt, a Houston-based precision machine shop with ties to the oil and gas industry. This system uses intelligent image analysis, the same kind used in facial recognition software, to correctly place the segments of the gun. The students were given a target of 30 seconds in which to align each segment; their latest tests achieved alignment in four seconds.

The industry members likewise found the day educational and opportunity filled. “From our end, we’re getting exposure in the college and with the students,” says Kevin Kemp, with NXP Semiconductors of Austin. He sits on the school’s Industrial Advisory Board, which helps with curriculum alignment and development of industry-friendly processes.


NXP sponsored four projects at the fall event and Kemp confirmed the symbiotic nature of the event from the industry side. “Of course, we also recruit from the university – identifying potential students for hiring is part of the deal, as well,” he says. 🍷



Student groups choose  
industry partners and projects

Senior  
Design Day



A composite image of Mars. The top half shows a colorful sky with a gradient from yellow to green to blue. The bottom half shows the reddish-orange surface of Mars with a rocky terrain. A large, bright orange semi-circle is on the right side. A constellation of stars is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

# ONE GIANT LEAP



An abstract geometric design consisting of thin grey lines connecting small grey circular dots. The lines form various shapes, including triangles and polygons, scattered across the page. A large, faint arc is also visible in the background.

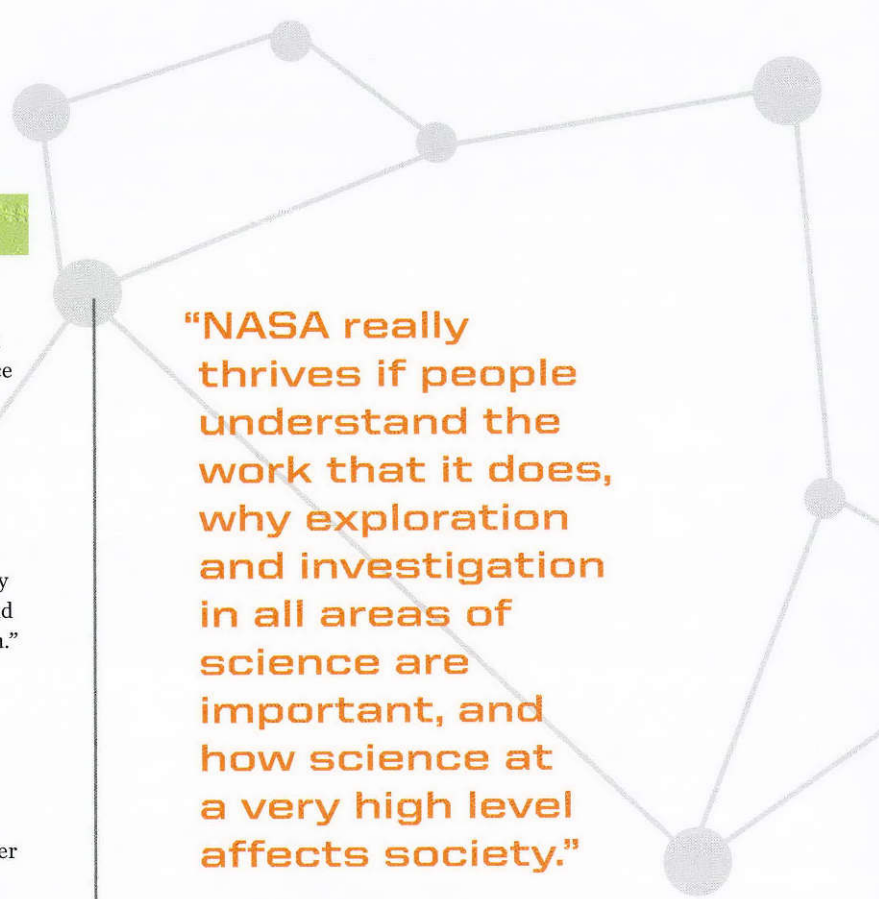
## Texas State's LBJ Institute is NASA's partner in a nationwide professional development program for STEM educators

*By Michael Agresta*

**W**hen most Americans think about what NASA does, we imagine flight tests launching state-of-the-art robot-driven spacecraft, not high school physics tests launching young careers in science fields. But supporting education in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) has long been a cornerstone of NASA's earthbound mission.

These days, a large chunk of NASA's national education program runs through Texas State's LBJ Institute for STEM Education and Research. This partnership is halfway into a five-year, \$15 million grant from NASA to reach out to educators and educators-in-training all across the United States with resources, training, and support.





“NASA really thrives if people understand the work that it does, why exploration and investigation in all areas of science are important, and how science at a very high level affects society,” explains Dr. Araceli Martinez Ortiz, executive director of the LBJ Institute and associate research professor of engineering education at Texas State. “That means not just letting the public know what NASA does, but also supporting what we do: improving STEM instruction and advancing the workforce pipeline by developing more teachers who are well-prepared and understand real-world contexts of science and math.”

In practical terms, the university outreach program, known as the NASA STEM Educator Professional Development Collaborative (EPDC), employs STEM education specialists at 10 NASA research centers around the country, including such well-known locales as the Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Houston, the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California. These 10 on-site specialists — all employees of Texas State — work directly with schools and colleges in addition to developing online professional development resources related to the specific research areas of their NASA home base. Last year, EPDC reached 34,209 educators through almost 250 face-to-face workshops and over 200 web-based events.

### That ‘aha’ moment

These in-person training and online resources are eventually folded into their classroom instruction plans by teachers at all levels across the country. The feedback so far has been out of this world. “I no longer introduce a topic in my math class without an incredible lesson or video from NASA or about NASA,” says Michael Bresk, a high school geometry and algebra teacher in Live Oak, Florida. He spoke with the LBJ Institute last year. “I have become more of a let-my-students-explore math teacher, and there have been many more moments where my students say ‘Aha, I get it.’”

Texas State’s on-site specialist in Houston is Brandon Hargis, a former middle school teacher from Kentucky who has been involved in NASA-led professional development for STEM teachers since 2009. Hargis describes his work schedule at the JSC as a mix of planning lessons and virtual events, meeting with on-site experts to learn about the latest research and technologies, and visiting

**“NASA really thrives if people understand the work that it does, why exploration and investigation in all areas of science are important, and how science at a very high level affects society.”**

— DR. ARACELI MARTINEZ ORTIZ

*executive director of the LBJ Institute  
and associate research professor of  
engineering education at Texas State*

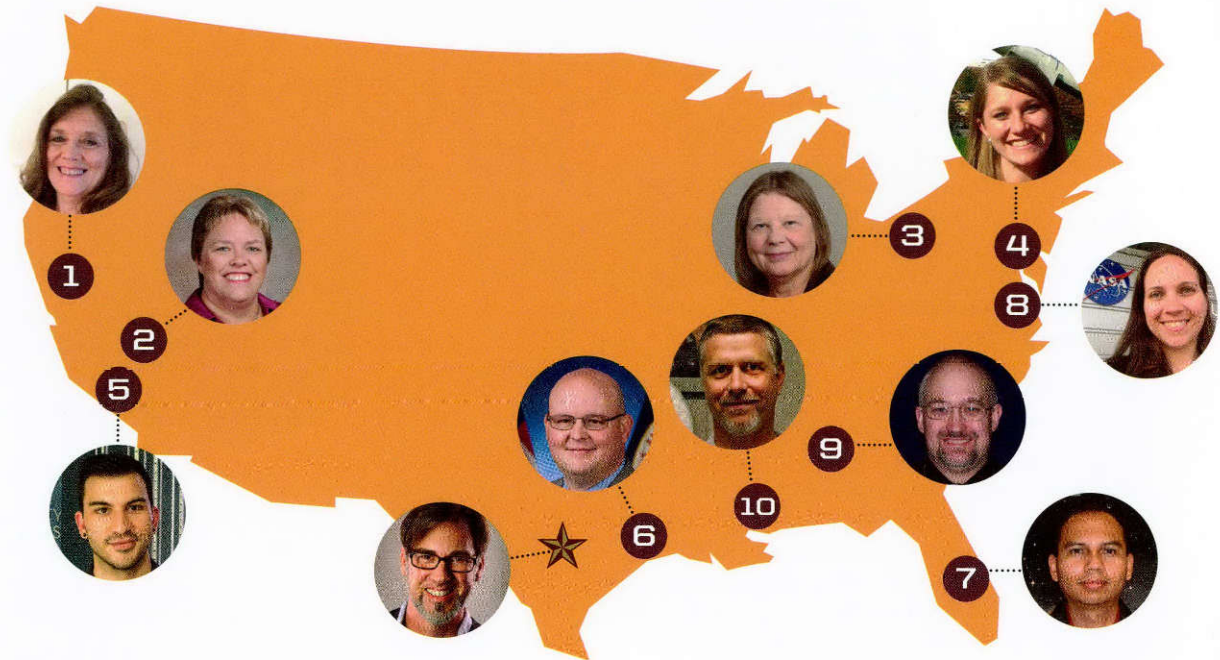
schools to conduct workshops. Most recently, he’s been working with pre-service teachers in the Rio Grande Valley and with K–12 educators in the Weslaco and Dallas ISDs.

“They call it the ‘just in time series’ because it’s all set up around what teachers are teaching in the next six weeks,” Hargis says of his Dallas ISD professional development workshops, which take place on Saturdays throughout the school year. “I go into NASA and find activities that target those concepts.”

Recently Hargis has been able to involve NASA experts in his professional development workshops. For example, Jared Daum works with the JSC Parachute Lab to develop parachutes for the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, a spacecraft designed to someday take humans beyond the orbit of Earth. “When Orion returns to Earth, it needs powerful parachutes to land safely in the Pacific Ocean,” Hargis explains. “Jared came to talk to our teachers about his expertise in working with parachutes and engineering. Then we had the teachers actually build parachutes to slow down a flight capsule.”



Texas State University educational specialists  
located at each of **10 NASA Space Centers**



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1. DR. KAREN ROARK</b><br/>AMES RESEARCH CENTER<br/>MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA</p> <p><b>2. DR. BARBARA BUCKNER</b><br/>ARMSTRONG FLIGHT RESEARCH CENTER<br/>EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA</p> <p><b>3. SUSAN KOHLER</b><br/>GLENN RESEARCH CENTER<br/>CLEVELAND, OHIO</p> <p><b>4. KELLY KOHLI</b><br/>GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER<br/>GREENBELT, MARYLAND</p> <p><b>5. DR. BRANDON RODRIGUEZ</b><br/>JET PROPULSION LABORATORY<br/>LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE, CALIFORNIA</p> | <p><b>6. BRANDON HARGIS</b><br/>JOHNSON SPACE CENTER<br/>HOUSTON, TEXAS</p> <p><b>7. DR. LESTER MORALES</b><br/>KENNEDY SPACE CENTER<br/>MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA</p> <p><b>8. MARILE CONON ROBLES</b><br/>LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER<br/>HAMPTON, VIRGINIA</p> <p><b>9. JOHN WEIS</b><br/>MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER<br/>REDSTONE ARSENAL, ALABAMA</p> <p><b>10. STEPHEN CULIVAN</b><br/>STENNIS SPACE CENTER<br/>HANCOCK COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI</p> |
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★ **STEVEN SMITH**, TEXAS STATE LBJ INSTITUTE FOR STEM EDUCATION

**OUR SPECIALISTS AROUND THE COUNTRY TRAINED**

**34,209**

**EDUCATORS IN 2016**



The lesson plan was from a series of K–8th-grade learning challenges known as NASA BEST (Beginning Engineering, Science, and Technology). Hargis’s classroom of educators-in-training built parachutes out of ordinary household materials such as garbage bags and wrapping paper. Daum stayed after his lecture to participate in testing, judge the results, and discuss alternative engineering approaches that participants might not have considered. Afterward, the teachers-in-training returned to their schools to try the lesson plan with their own students.

### Minority-serving institutions

“I want to try to make my workshops as close as possible to what a teacher would do in a classroom, because we want to model best practices,” Hargis says, adding that he builds his lesson plans around the “Five E’s”: engage, explore, explain, extend, and evaluate. Of course, not every classroom can welcome a real-life NASA engineer as a surprise guest, but that’s where the online videos and other resources prepared through the program come in. “It’s all about giving them another tool for their toolbox, another way to excite and engage kids around STEM,” he says.

Many of the educators targeted by Texas State’s EPDC program work in struggling communities where the high-level science of NASA can feel like it’s taking place on another planet. The program has partnerships with nine minority-serving institutions of higher education across the country, working with pre-service STEM educators to build skills and acquaint themselves with NASA teaching tools before beginning careers in the classroom.

On a recent trip to Baltimore to visit Morgan State University, one of EPDC’s minority-serving institutional partners, LBJ Institute administrators were surprised to encounter a fellow Bobcat far from her Texas home. Katrina L. Robinson is the special projects coordinator at Morgan State’s Center for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Education, managing partnerships like the one with EPDC. She’s also a 1984 graduate of Texas State and living testament to the power of STEM programs targeting minority students and educators.

Robinson, born and raised in Waco, can’t remember the name of her first science professor at the university, but she does recall working hard on a project about the formation of fossils and being praised for her scientific acumen. “I have been out of school since 1984, but I will never forget that,” Robinson says. “Those words impacted me for life.



**“I have become more of a let-my-students-explore math teacher, and there have been many more moments where my students say ‘Aha. I get it.’”**

— MICHAEL BRESK

*high school geometry and algebra teacher in Live Oak, FL*



**“It’s all about giving them another tool for their toolbox, another way to excite and engage kids around STEM.”**

— BRANDON HARGIS

*Texas State University on-site specialist in Houston*



I'd never had a teacher tell me I was good at science. I didn't know."

After graduation, Robinson married, moved to Maryland, and began teaching in elementary schools. "Science was my favorite subject," she says. "I loved teaching it, which empowered my students, and they loved it as well." Robinson's passion for the subject led her to seek out further professional development opportunities, first through the Maryland Space Grant Consortium at nearby Johns Hopkins University, and then through an internship with NASA.

Bringing the science she learned at NASA home to her second-grade classroom was a challenge, but Robinson turned heads when she wrote and choreographed a rap song for her students about cloud types, comically comparing cirrus, stratus, and cumulus varieties. "We performed that for the professors at Johns Hopkins, the scientists at NASA, and my administrators at the school," Robinson says. "It was a really big hit." The next year, in 1996, Robinson was hired full time at NASA as an aerospace professional development specialist — a role similar to that of EPDC specialists today.

## Making a difference

Robinson was part of the early days of the NASA push for STEM education, crisscrossing the country giving workshops in most of the 48 contiguous states. "Things are more technology-based now," she observes. "What I like about what I see the NASA educators doing now is they're reaching out to everyone through blended learning — webinars, videos, and you can go and talk to them one-on-one." In past decades, NASA's STEM outreach grants were managed by Oklahoma State and Pennsylvania State universities. Texas State took the reins in late 2014.

These days, Robinson continues to work with efforts such as the EPDC, coordinating professional development workshops on her home campus. "What Texas State is doing with professional development, I think it's making a difference," Robinson says. "It gives our students an opportunity to see what's out there and see what their future can be. Yes, they can be a STEM professional in whatever area they love. And we need them, in all areas."

An engineer herself, Dr. Ortiz stresses the scientific, research-based approach to grant management at the LBJ Institute. With the help of participating faculty from across Texas State, Ortiz's team is investigating topics such as what content best engages and educates young students,



**"What I like about what I see the NASA educators doing now is they're reaching out to everyone through blended learning — webinars, videos, and you can go and talk to them one-on-one."**

— KATRINA L. ROBINSON, B.S. '84

*special projects coordinator at Morgan State's Center for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Education*

and what approaches improve student retention at the university level and why.

"We're a research organization," Ortiz says. "All these things we do are so we can learn about what teachers need in order to feel well-equipped to teach high-quality STEM education. What kind of professional development, support, and resources do they need? What do they value, what's missing? We're trying to assist the field by answering some of these research questions, but in so doing, we also intervene. Hopefully, we're doing two things. We're contributing as researchers, but at the same time, we're offering amazing learning experiences." 🌟



# By the numbers

Rankings by **public university size**

# 1st

in The Texas State University System

# 5th

in Texas

# 34th

in United States

## By Gender

# 58%

Female

# 42%

Male

## By Ethnicity

# 2%

Asian

# 2%

Multi-race

# 2%

International/  
unknown

African-  
American

# 11%

# 35%

Hispanic

# 48%

White

## Graduation/retention rates

# 54%

graduated  
within six  
years (by  
summer 2016)

# 77.4%

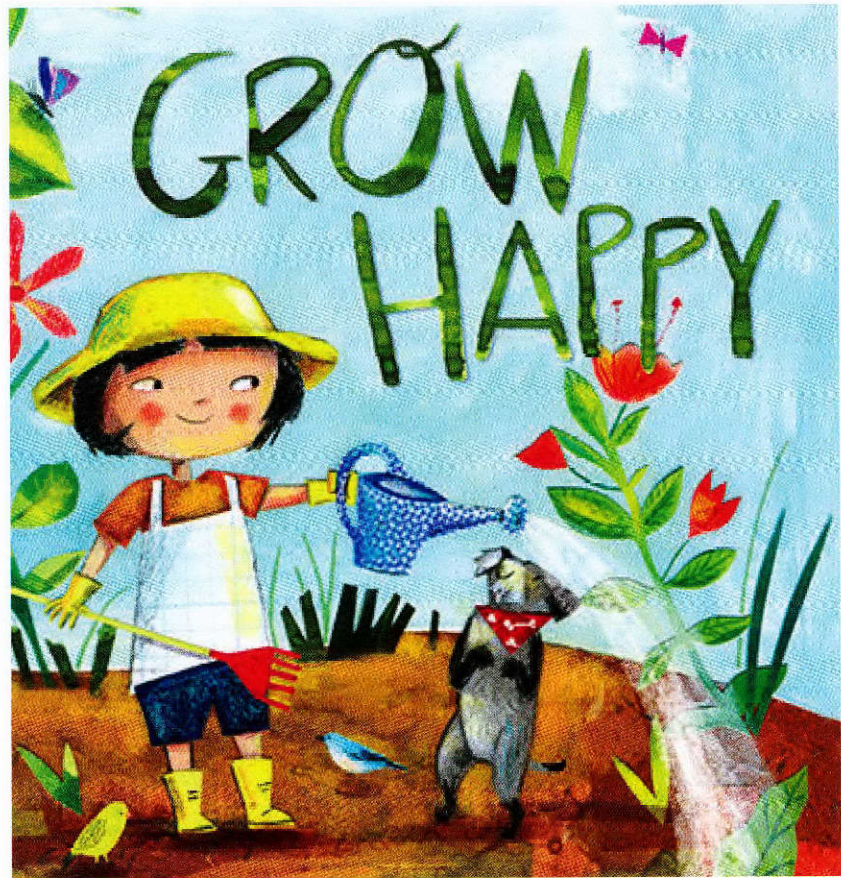
of fall 2015  
freshmen  
returned in  
fall 2016

Source: Office of  
Institutional Research

# Lasser writes children's book

**Grow Happy** (Magination Press, 2017) is a new children's book by Dr. Jon Lasser, professor of school psychology in the Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology.

The book uses positive psychology to help children cultivate happiness with a character named Kiko, who shows children that she grows happiness by making good choices. *Grow Happy* is co-authored by the professor's daughter, Sage Foster-Lasser, and illustrated by Christopher Lyles.



## CLS program graduates achieve 100% pass rate on MLS exam

Graduates of Texas State University's Clinical Laboratory Science program have achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the 2016 Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) credential exam.

Nineteen students took the exam after graduating in August 2016. Typically, the program maintains a three-year average of above 80 percent, which is higher than the national accrediting body's target of achievement. Upon passage of the MLS exam, candidates are credentialed by the American Society for Clinical Pathology.

## Nursing graduates achieve 100% passing rate on state exam

Graduates of St. David's School of Nursing at Texas State University achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the 2016 Texas Board of Nursing examination report.

Texas State is one of just five out of 44 Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs to attain a perfect pass rate. Of those five programs, the 82 St. David's School of Nursing graduates represent the largest group.



# Mobile app creates virtual safety network for students

By Julie Cooper

Texas State has rolled out a smartphone app that is incorporating technology to increase personal safety.

Launched in August 2016, Bobcat Guardian has a variety of features, including a virtual escort on campus. Here is how it works: Think it takes 10 minutes to get to your car in the parking garage? Activate the safety timer, and head to your vehicle. If you don't deactivate it, the app will text your chosen guardian with a message saying that you need to be contacted. If you don't answer your guardian's call he or she is urged to contact campus police.

"The idea of using a cellphone-

based application, was one of several initiatives the university adopted in order to leverage technology to improve student safety," says University Police Capt. Rickey Lattie. "After a review of the available products, the university selected Rave Guardian. This application changes to Bobcat Guardian when you register a Texas State University email address. This application is distributed by the same company as the Texas State Alert (Rave Alert) application that has been used successfully at this university for years." As of the spring semester 1,360 people had downloaded the Bobcat Guardian app.



## Other features of the app include:

- Call University Police — Provides a direct connection to university police with GPS location and personal profile information.
- Call 9-1-1 — will work anywhere there is a 9-1-1 system.
- Send a tip — Enables anonymous, two-way crime tip reporting through text and images. Examples include a disturbance on campus, a loud/abusive argument overheard in the residence hall, seeing someone vandalizing property, or see a suspicious person lurking in a parking area.
- Guardians — Students can identify friends, roommates, or family as guardians when setting the safety timer. A designated guardian is contacted in the event you don't deactivate the timer. Also, during a timer session, guardians and campus safety can check the status of the student.
- Safety profile — User can create a safety profile containing information such as a photo, residence details, emergency contact, allergies, or a medical condition. When a student requires assistance, the safety profile is displayed to university police and/or 9-1-1 operator.

## Campus safety tips from university emergency management:

1. Be aware of your surroundings.
2. Know your exits and entrances in case of emergency.
3. See something/say something — report suspicious behavior
4. Keep water and supplies available if there is a weather emergency or 'shelter in place' alert.
5. Have a safety plan in place with your friends or family. Make sure you know how to get information.

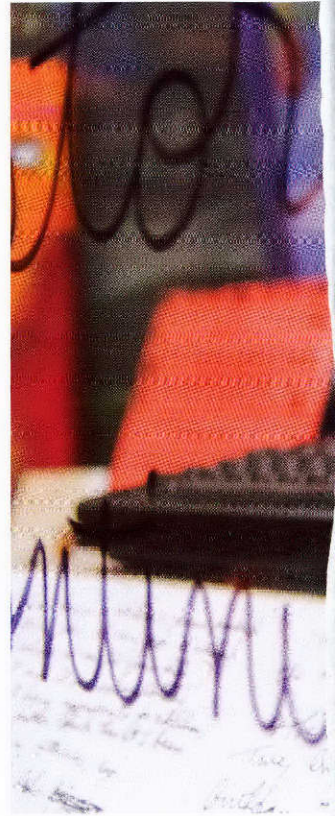


## Bobcat Bobbies

The UPD escort operates in the fall and spring semesters between dusk and 1 a.m. seven days a week. Students, staff, or faculty can call (512) 245-3451. Bobcat Guardian is available for Android from Google Play, and for Apple products at the iTunes store free of charge.

Go to: [police.txstate.edu/Personal-Safety/Safety-Apps.html](http://police.txstate.edu/Personal-Safety/Safety-Apps.html)



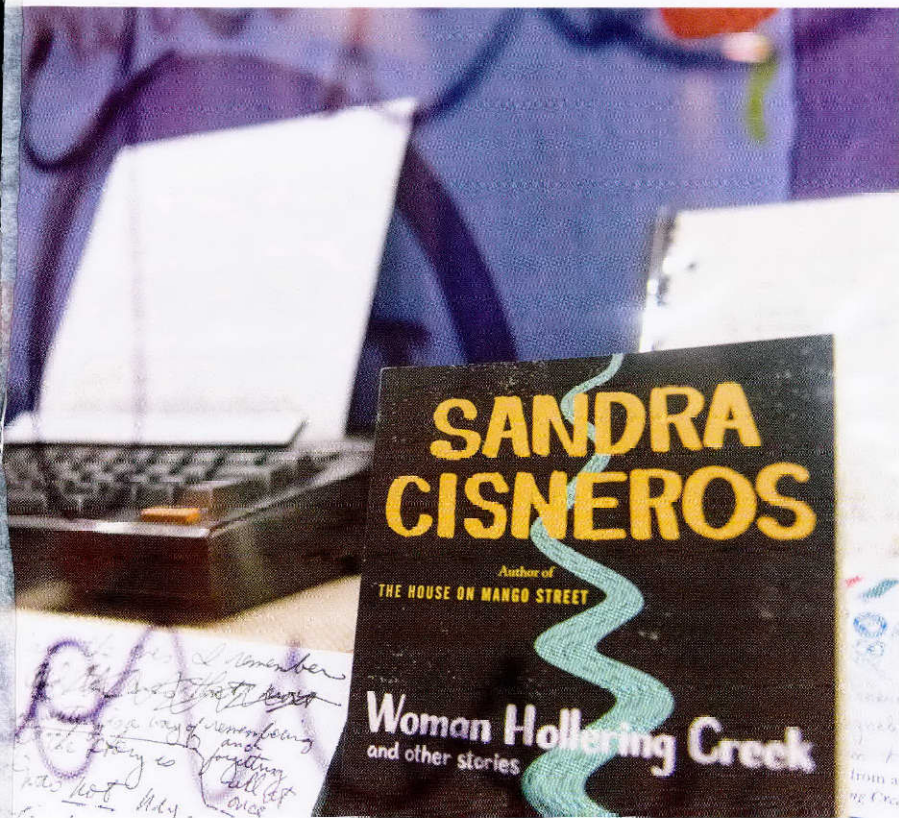


# Sandra Cisneros' works find home in The Wittliff

*Archives define Texas author's life, career*

By Anastasia Cisneros-Lunsford

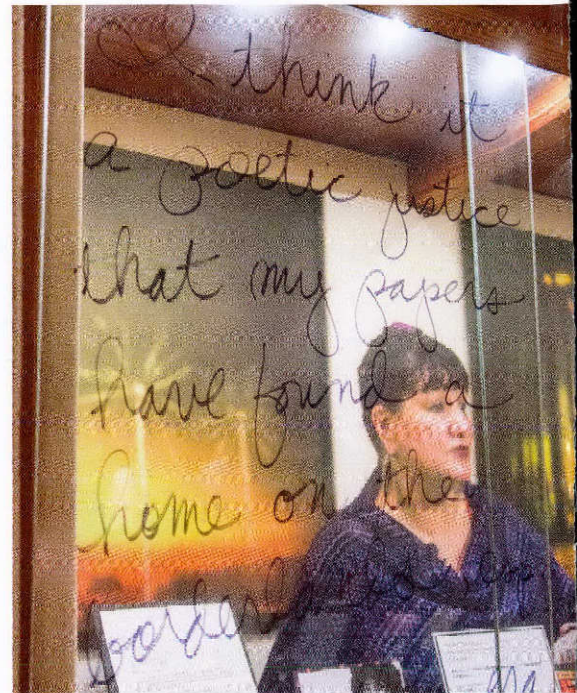
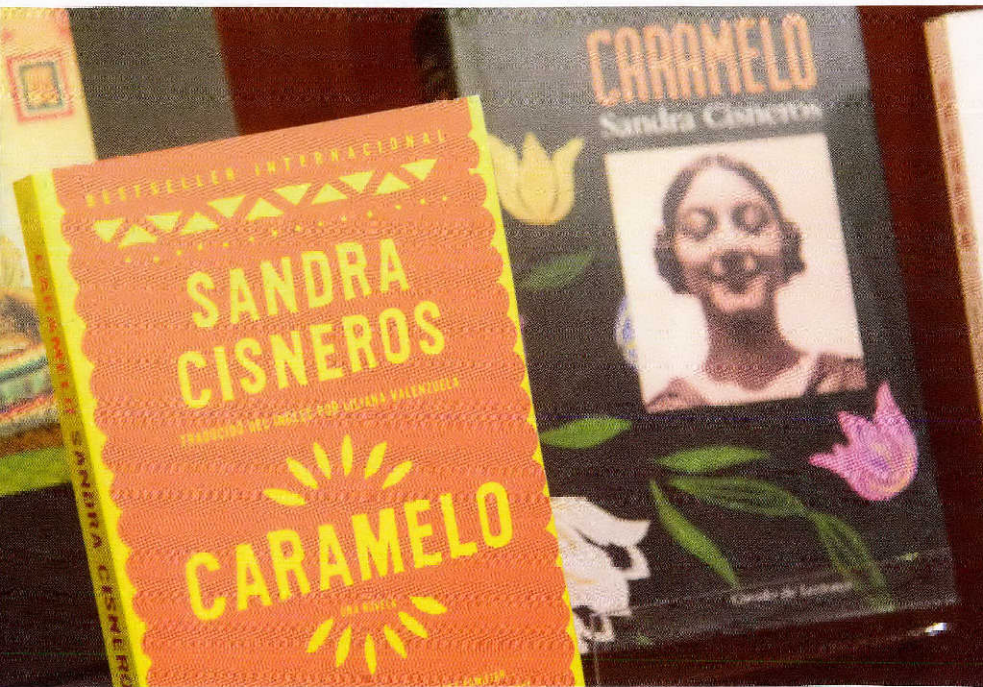




**T**he last time acclaimed author and National Medal of Arts honoree Sandra Cisneros walked into the Alkek Library at Texas State University, she said, “This is my new home.”

In October, Cisneros gave faculty and students a preview of her literary archive now permanently housed at the Wittliff Collections. Sandra Cisneros: A House of Her Own comprises 250 file boxes documenting the entirety of her literary career to date. Included are manuscripts for her major works, personal diaries, travel journals, correspondence, photographs, videos, awards, publicity material, personal effects, interviews and speeches, original drawings, files on her famous purple house in San Antonio, and the Canon portable typewriter she used to create many of her works. Also present is the original artwork used for the first edition of *The House on Mango Street*, which has sold more than 2 million copies.





**“I’VE BEEN ENGAGED WITH (SANDRA) CISNEROS’ WORK FOR A VERY LONG TIME, MAYBE MORE THAN HALF OF MY LIFE. IT’S BEEN A DREAM TO PUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS SYMPOSIUM TOGETHER.”**

**— DR. GENEVA GANO,  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH**

The Wittliff Collections acquired the archive in 2015 with the hope that her archive will inspire students and young writers. Wittliff Collections Director David Coleman says the collection will help young writers get a sense of how she defined her life and career.

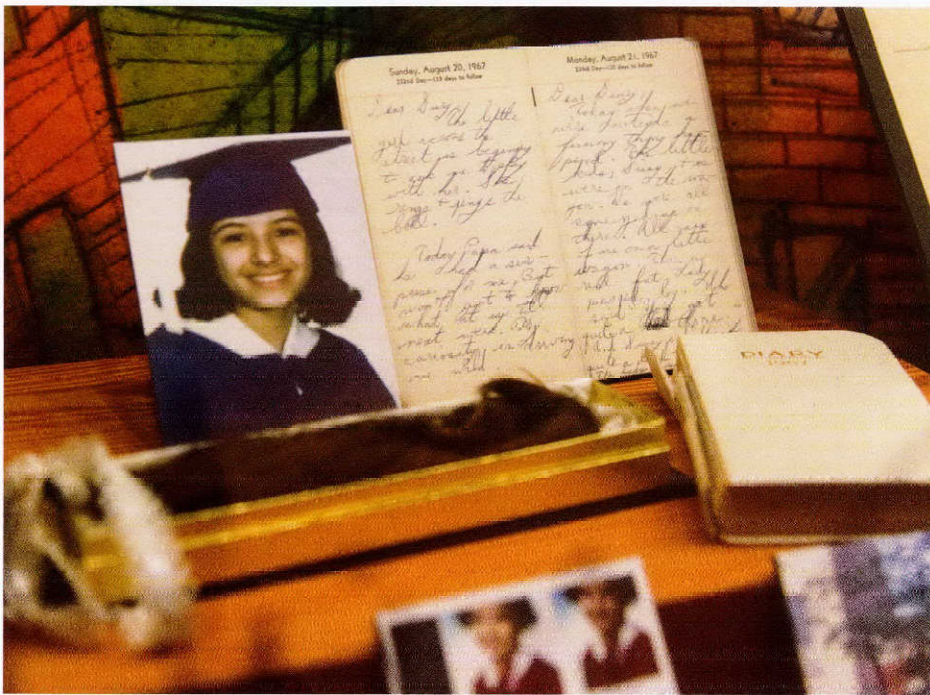
“She’s hoping that if students can pore through her papers here, they’ll see her path and maybe, be able to model it in some way,” Coleman explains. “(The collections) show young people how much work it is to be a writer and how much work it takes to write well. It doesn’t come easily for anyone but they shouldn’t be discouraged by how hard it is; they should see it as inspiration for their own careers as they see how much a writer has to work to perfect a poem, a story, a novel, or a screenplay.”

Cisneros returned to the Wittliff Collections this spring for a symposium celebrating her literature and an opening reception for the archives. The April 29 symposium featured renowned scholars of Cisneros’ work from across the United States, including Paula Moya, professor of English and director of the Research Institute of Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity at Stanford University.

“Sandra Cisneros was very interested in what other people think about her work,” says Dr. Geneva Gano, assistant professor of English, who planned the Cisneros symposium along with creative writing graduate student Claudia Cardona.

Gano, who focuses on American women writers, recently published an article that examines the narrative voice of Esperanza in Cisneros’ *House on Mango Street* and the young female narrator in Mexican author Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho*. “I’ve been engaged with Cisneros’ work for a very long time, maybe more than half of my life,” Gano says. “It’s been a dream to put something like this symposium together.”





**“(THE COLLECTIONS)  
SHOW YOUNG PEOPLE  
HOW MUCH WORK IT IS TO  
BE A WRITER AND HOW  
MUCH WORK IT TAKES TO  
WRITE WELL. IT DOESN’T  
COME EASILY FOR ANYONE  
BUT THEY SHOULDN’T BE  
DISCOURAGED.”**

**— DR. DAVID COLEMAN,  
WITTLIFF COLLECTIONS DIRECTOR**

In the spring, Gano taught a course dedicated to the work of Cisneros. “One of the things that we were able to do with the Wittliff’s help and encouragement was to build archival research projects for undergraduate students,” Gano explains. “They found an area about Cisneros that interested them the most — maybe it was her childhood or her time in San Antonio or her fan letters. I also incorporated some service learning in this class. Students moved beyond our campus borders to present Sandra Cisneros to the wider community.”

Cardona focuses on literary Mexican-American authors. “Cisneros is a literary hero of mine,” she says. “It was amazing to gain insight from the scholars who participated in the symposium.” Cardona plans to teach at the college level and work with undereducated communities to encourage writing.

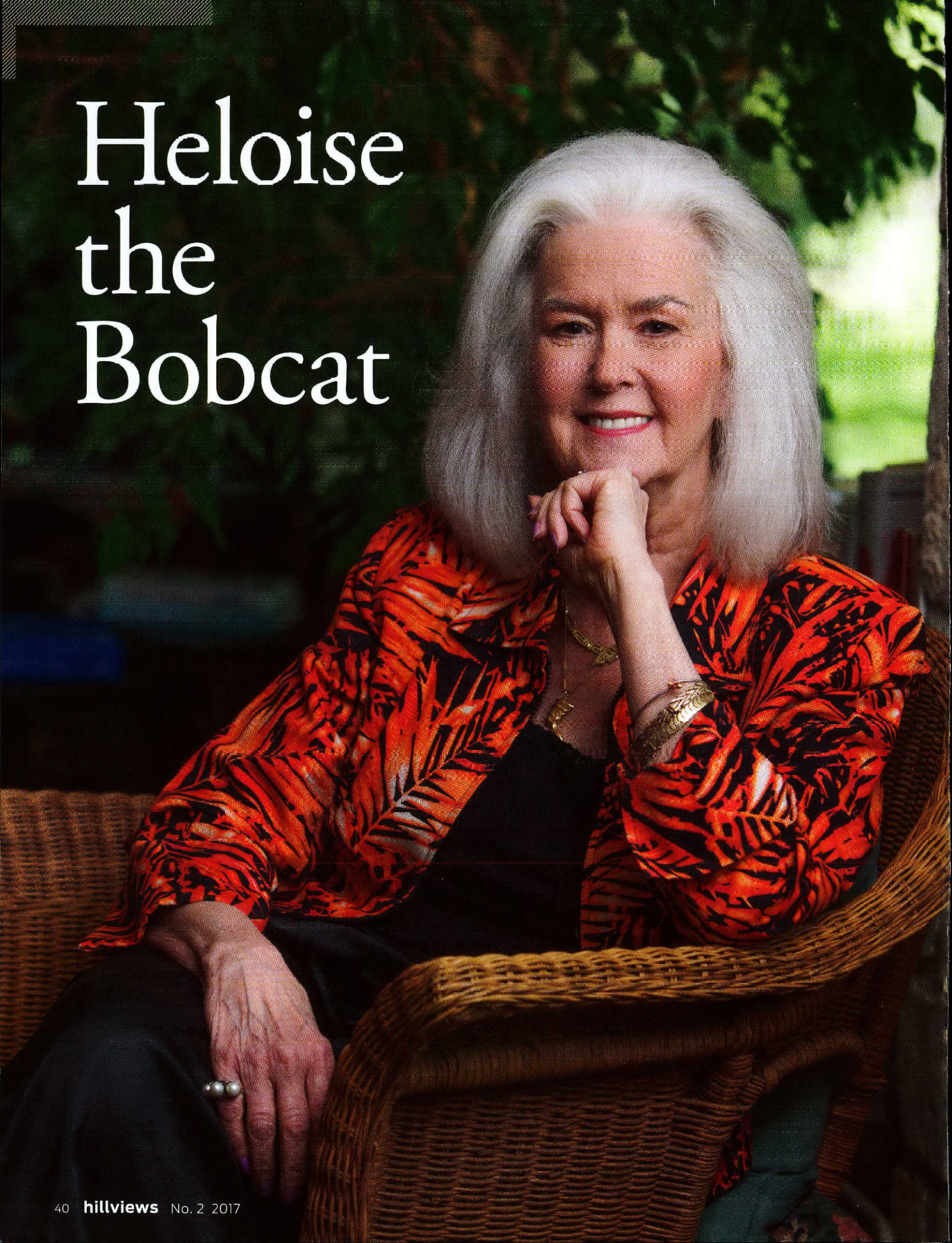
“We’re so fortunate to have someone like Sandra to be a part of the Texas State family,” Coleman says. “She is a great representative of building bridges between communities and being a spokesperson for peace, communication, and crossing borders, which are really important and part of the culture of the Southwest and a strong element for the Wittliff.”

The Cisneros collection is a foundation collection, Coleman says, right next to Cormac McCarthy. Winner of the National Book Award for *All the Pretty Horses* and the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *The Road*, McCarthy’s literary papers are part of the Wittliff’s Permanent Archive. Like McCarthy, Cisneros is also a recipient of a MacArthur “genius grant.”

“She is a leader of the pack in American letters,” says Coleman.



# Heloise the Bobcat





## America's top advice columnist has given helpful hints for 40 years

By *Jacque Crouse*

When Heloise graduated from Texas State University in 1974 armed with a bachelor's degree in math and business, she was on track to be a math teacher. Becoming America's top advice columnist on — well, just about everything — was not in her game plan.

Born Ponce Cruse, she is the daughter of the original Heloise who became a household name after her household hints column went into national syndication in 1962. Young Heloise agreed to work with her mom the summer after graduation just as she had helped her many times before. Having completed her student teaching at Canyon High School in New Braunfels, she saw her future as a math teacher at one of the military installations in San Antonio.

"My mother said, 'I would really like you to help in the office,'" Heloise recalls. "I did not want to. I wanted to teach mathematics, but I agreed to help for the summer."

As summer drew to a close, one of her mother's secretaries said they would miss her around the office. "I think your mother's going to miss you, too," the secretary told the younger Heloise.

"There was something in her voice, I don't know," Heloise says. "I went home to my apartment and thought about it, then I told my mom that I would stay for a year or two and help her, then go teach or further my education in computer programming." But in 1977, just three years later, her mother died.

"When she died, the syndicate called the next day and said, 'What are you going to do?'" Heloise says. "I said how long do I have to decide, and they said, 'Until the end of this phone call.' It was really something."

Heloise II, as she was originally called, says she was unsure how it would go. "I was a math major, not a writer," she says. "But they liked what I did, and here I am 40 years later."

Actually, her broader interests and skills only added dimensions to the Heloise dynasty that took the business of being Heloise to new heights and arenas that her mom probably never dreamed of conquering. As today's Heloise shaped the column, it grew to include more than 500

newspaper clients in 20 countries, and the work branched into regular weekly appearances on national and local television shows and radio programs, books, speaking engagements, national book tours, a website, and social media blasts.

From her home office in San Antonio, she still tackles household hints but has added consumer and fraud information; a "computer corner"; home improvement tips; information about travel, gardening, plants, pets, and entertaining; a "Just for Kids" section; information on school; and sports. Heloise and her staff often conduct taste and quality comparisons of foods (generic, store-brand, and name-brand).

In 1993, Heloise was honored by Texas State as a Distinguished Alumnus. In 2006, she established the Heloise Bowles Memorial Endowed Scholarship, named for her mother. The scholarship benefits Texas State students majoring in mass communication or mathematics.

For her followers, including college students, Heloise helps make real cleaning a little easier, less daunting, and more attainable. Some tips are timeless and others change with time and technology. For instance, new fibers and fabrics make even doing the laundry different from how it was done a few years ago.

Some students may be the first in their family to attend college, "and for most, it is the first time living away from home. One kid told me he never changed his sheets, just vacuumed them and sprayed them with Febreze. Another guy said he did not have bed sheets, he just put a sleeping bag on top of the mattress and slept in that."

Then there is "Rec Tech" (like how to fix a cellphone that falls into the toilet). And Heloise also goes over the economic realities of earning a college degree, having a high school diploma, or dropping out of high school. She continues to learn every day and loves to share what she finds.

"I have been lucky enough to do a lot of extraordinary things," she says.

While she wanted to teach, being Heloise has allowed her to continue learning and sharing knowledge — on just about every topic possible.

"I wouldn't do anything else," she says. "Really, I love my job."

## Heloise has tips for college students

- College athlete or dedicated runner? New high-tech fibers in athletic clothes can really hang onto odor, so wash quickly (do not leave in a gym bag in truck for a week), turn inside out and put laundry detergent on target areas. Rinse twice.
- If you drop a cellphone in the sink, toilet, or bathtub, act fast and you may save it. Pull the battery out and pat off as much water as possible with a microfiber cloth or hand towel, then dry the inside of the phone with a blow dryer set to cool air. Set on paper towels to dry for 24 hours and put the battery back in to see if the phone works.
- If you burn popcorn in the microwave, you may be able to get rid of the smell by filling a large microwave-safe bowl with one cup of water and sprinkling with your favorite spice, like cinnamon, or adding several drops of vanilla or lemon extract. Bring to a boil. You must let it sit inside for 10 to 15 minutes to cool down. Simply wipe the walls down with paper towels. Leave the door open to further air it out.
- Don't forget at the end of the year that your old towels and bedding would be welcomed by the local animal shelter (near college, back home, or wherever you land for the summer).

### On the Web

#### heloise.com

From her home office in San Antonio, she still tackles household hints but has added consumer and fraud information; a "computer corner"; home improvement tips, information about travel, gardening, plants, pets; entertaining, a "Just for Kids" section, information on school; and sports.



# BOKO BY THE NUMBERS

1920

The year Texas State adopted the bobcat as its official athletic mascot

17

Number of high schools in Texas with a bobcat mascot

Source: [hometeamsonline.com](http://hometeamsonline.com)

5

Number of mascots representing wildlife in the Sun Belt Conference. Besides the bobcat they are: red wolves, panthers, eagles, and jaguars.

8

Other U.S. colleges or universities that boast a bobcat mascot: **New York University, Bates College** (Maine), **Georgia College, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Quinnipiac University** (Connecticut), **Montana State University, Ohio University, and Frostburg State University** (Maryland)

Soon after **Oscar Strahan** came to the university in **1919** as the new athletic director, he discovered that Southwest Texas State Normal School had no gym or mascot. The student newspaper started an editorial campaign in support of adopting an athletic mascot to “raise the school spirit from the depths of oblivion.”

In **1964**, the university’s mascot was given an official name of **Boko** by Beth Greenless, a sophomore from Luling. She beat out about 100 other students in a “Name the Bobcat” contest, sponsored by Phi Delta Gamma sorority, now Alpha Xi Delta. The winning submission earned Greenless a \$5 prize. That would be equal to \$38.27 in 2016 dollars. Source: [dollartimes.com](http://dollartimes.com)

1961

1989

1971



1974



1985

1986

1988

1966





## Giving women a fighting chance

Alumnus stretches safety net worldwide

*By Brian Hudgins*

Kuro Tawil has a passion for keeping women safe from attacks in developing countries. And he's traveled thousands of miles in his quest to make their lives safer.

In 2012, the Texas State graduate began a journey in Pakistan where he crossed the border to India on foot. From there he traveled by various means, including trains and buses to Kathmandu, Nepal. Tawil, a first-generation American and a native of Austin, was aware that women in many developing countries face a daily threat of being attacked and sexually assaulted. In 2014, the Indian government reported 36,735 rape cases — a 9 percent increase over 2013.



During his journey, Tawil says he talked with fellow travelers about the helplessness of women in these situations. He explains on his website, kuros.com: “They told me how rampant these sexual assaults were and how it affected these women living there, even if they hadn’t been attacked. Having a little sister I could only imagine the helplessness the families felt. How helpless these women must feel living in these conditions, where being attacked is a daily and almost accepted part of life.”

This is what sparked his idea to help women prevent such attacks. Tawil knew that for women in India and El Salvador, the process of protection was more problematic. “It was very challenging at first,” Tawil says. “I had this idea, but how do I physically do it? Maybe we can ship pepper spray, but then that is a lot of paperwork for a controlled substance.”

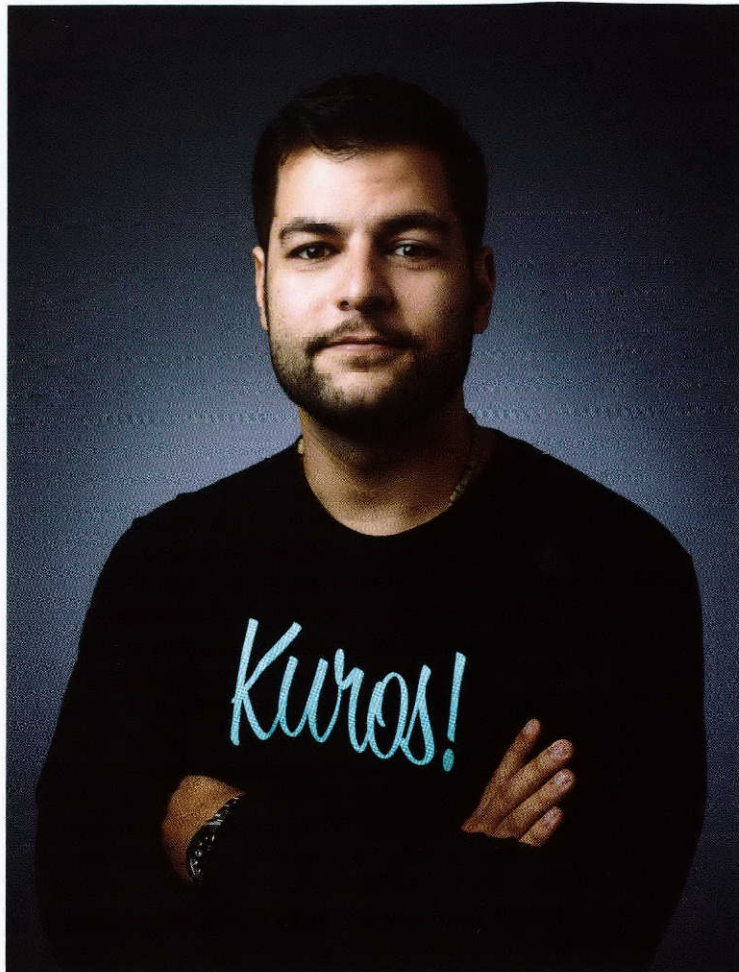
Tawil teamed up with Missouri-based SABRE, the world’s leading pepper spray manufacturer. In October 2013, the first shipment was coordinated. To finance this, Tawil established an online store — “Kuros! A Fighting Chance” — which sells items such as T-shirts, totes, wristlets, and lunchboxes made in South Africa and Nepal. For every item sold, a container of pepper spray is donated to a woman in one of the designated countries.

As the project progressed, there were questions that needed to be addressed. “We had to explain what pepper spray was and how to use it,” Tawil says. “There was no concept of what this (pepper spray) was at the beginning. We were starting from square one. The concept was a little overwhelming. We only distribute free pepper spray in countries where it is legal to own and use pepper spray for self-defense.”

According to Tawil, progress is not only measured by the ability of those women to defend themselves. It gives a person mobility — the chance to move more freely and seek out educational or work opportunities. “A lack of mobility is one of the most limiting things in developing countries,” Tawil says.

“Before, it was, ‘if I leave my village and come back at night, it was not *will* I be attacked, but *when*?’” he says. “Now, these women can carry themselves much more confidently and can be more relaxed in social situations.”

Today, 26-year-old Tawil works as a producer for Corridor Television, an Austin TV station. His journey has stretched from San Marcos to many points around the globe. “I



## On the Web

[kuros.com](http://kuros.com)

studied communications and a lot of my professors had a huge impact on me,” Tawil says. “Communicating with foreign distributors and organizations on the ground is really key to this program. One of the great things about Texas State is the well-rounded aspect of it, and the ability to learn critical thinking.”

Thanks to partners such as the Red Brigade Lucknow, a nongovernmental women’s rights group in India, thousands of women have been helped. The effort has now expanded to include South Africa, El Salvador, and the Philippines. The company is on track to distribute 30,000 cans of pepper spray by the end of 2017.



# Cale Cox

## Bobcat business graduate scores with Orioles

By Benjamin Gleisser

Spring training can be a stressful time for Cale Cox, assistant director of minor league and international operations for the Baltimore Orioles. That's when Cox must winnow 250 wannabe major leaguers into about 200 players who will fill the rosters of the parent club's six minor league teams.

"It's stressful for ballplayers who want to make the cut, and for us too," Cox says. "You have to trust your evaluating skills. For sure, there have been players we've cut that went on to other teams and had great careers, but 99 out of 100 times when you see someone, you just know whether he is or isn't going to make it as a major leaguer."

Cox, who graduated from Texas State University in 2007, grew up in Lampasas. He was a Texas Rangers fan whose heroes were Nolan Ryan and Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez. He spent lots of his free time in baseball chat rooms critiquing Rangers lineups, and played baseball and football in high school until an injury sidelined his playing career.

But Cox still wanted to be involved in the baseball world, so he studied business in the McCoy College of Business Administration, earned an M.B.A. at Texas A&M, then sent resumes to every MLB team. It was Johnny Almaraz, the former international scouting director for the Atlanta Braves, and a Texas State alumnus, who hired Cox as an intern for the Braves' Dominican Republic Academy baseball facility. Almaraz is currently the Philadelphia Phillies' director of amateur scouting.

"My job was to be an observer and compile statistics," Cox says, adding that he's got some interesting memories of the Dominican Republic. "There were a couple fights where teams ended up throwing rocks at each other, and brawls on sugar-cane fields. Guys sold coconuts at games and used machetes to open them up so you could drink the liquid from them with straws."

In 2012, Cox joined the Orioles



### IT WAS JOHNNY ALMARAZ ... A TEXAS STATE ALUMNUS, WHO [FIRST] HIRED COX AS AN INTERN FOR THE BRAVES' DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ACADEMY BASEBALL FACILITY.

operation. He was named to his current position in March 2015.

Before he headed to Sarasota, Florida, the Orioles' spring training home, Cox visited the team's baseball academy in the Dominican Republic where he evaluated Latin American athletes who want to play for U.S. teams. Cox rates his own Spanish proficiency as "conversational, but not quite fluent."

Spring training also means "working many 80-hour weeks," he says. At the end of each day, Cox huddles with the team's coaches, scouts, and player development officials and compares notes about players they've seen and those they should focus on tomorrow.

"A player should at least be outstanding in one of the five tools: hitting, power, arm strength, fielding ability, and speed," he says. "When they have that, you can work with them. If they have more than one

outstanding tool, then they're a project."

And personal feelings can't get in the way of evaluations, Cox adds. "Sometimes, you like a guy and want him to succeed, but you've got to cut him. That's tough."

One player he is especially high on is pitcher Donnie Hart, a 2013 Texas State graduate who won the Orioles' Minor League Pitcher of the Year Award last September. Hart, a left-hander, was called up from double-A to pitch in July 2016. This season, No. 58 Hart is part of the Orioles 40-man roster.

Once the regular season gets underway, Cox's job entails keeping track of 200 players at various levels — rookie leagues, class A, AA, or AAA. Those whose skills are developing nicely may be bumped up a notch or two. Injured players create holes in their teams that must be filled quickly by players drawn from another level. "Players always need to know where to go and sometimes, I've got to drive them to the airport," he says. "Luckily, most of our minor league clubs are within a short driving distance."

Growing up a Rangers fan, who does Cox root for when the team plays the Orioles? Cox laughs, then says, "The Rangers don't pay me!"



# Rocket man

## Robert Bardwell aims for the stars

By Natalie Chandler

Robert Bardwell had a childhood dream of riding a rocket into space. After graduating from Texas State University in 2000, his career course veered just a tad. He's now designing and building them.

"I like to set very lofty goals," says Bardwell, a rocket propulsion engineer for NASA. "When I was in the second grade, I was shooting for the stars. But luckily for me, I landed on a cloud of building rockets."

Change was a constant for Bardwell during his youth. By the time he began high school in San Antonio, the self-described Army brat had lived in seven U.S. cities and at a military base in Germany.

The first in his family to attend college, Bardwell liked the affordability of Texas State. There was also the 3-2 program that allowed undergraduates to transfer to The University of Texas at Austin or Texas A&M University after three years and graduate with two degrees — a liberal arts degree and an engineering degree.

Bardwell always knew he wanted to work for NASA or in a NASA-related field. And he was certain that he did not want to leave his new college family. "After three years, I decided to stay at Texas State," he says.

But by that point, finances became a bigger challenge. Unfamiliar with the process of applying for scholarships, Bardwell had begun college with just enough money saved for one semester. "By the second semester, I didn't have enough money to cover my finances," he says. "I was actually going to drop out."

A conversation with history professor Dr. Gregg Andrews — now retired — changed that. The department helped Bardwell obtain funds for the rest of his second semester. Later, he was accepted as a resident assistant at his residence hall, which paid for his room and board.

Books were another issue. Bardwell had been relying on the notes he took in physics class to get by. So he interviewed for a job as a physics lab instructor, which helped cover more of his expenses.



**"I GOT TO THE POINT WHERE I COULDN'T BE STOPPED BECAUSE I WAS SO DETERMINED TO BE THE FIRST ONE IN MY FAMILY TO GET A COLLEGE DEGREE."**

"It was very difficult to save up the money, but I had many people supporting me at Texas State and I never gave up," he says. "It was just an obstacle I had to break through, climb over, and go around." The challenge gave him the confidence "to not give up, and always find a way."

"I got to the point where I couldn't be stopped because I was so determined to be the first one in my family to get a college degree and live up to my mom's expectations," he says.

Bardwell's perseverance continued after graduation. He started working as a contractor at Boeing and earned two master's degrees. He then advanced

through the ranks with the aerospace company and later landed a job at NASA.

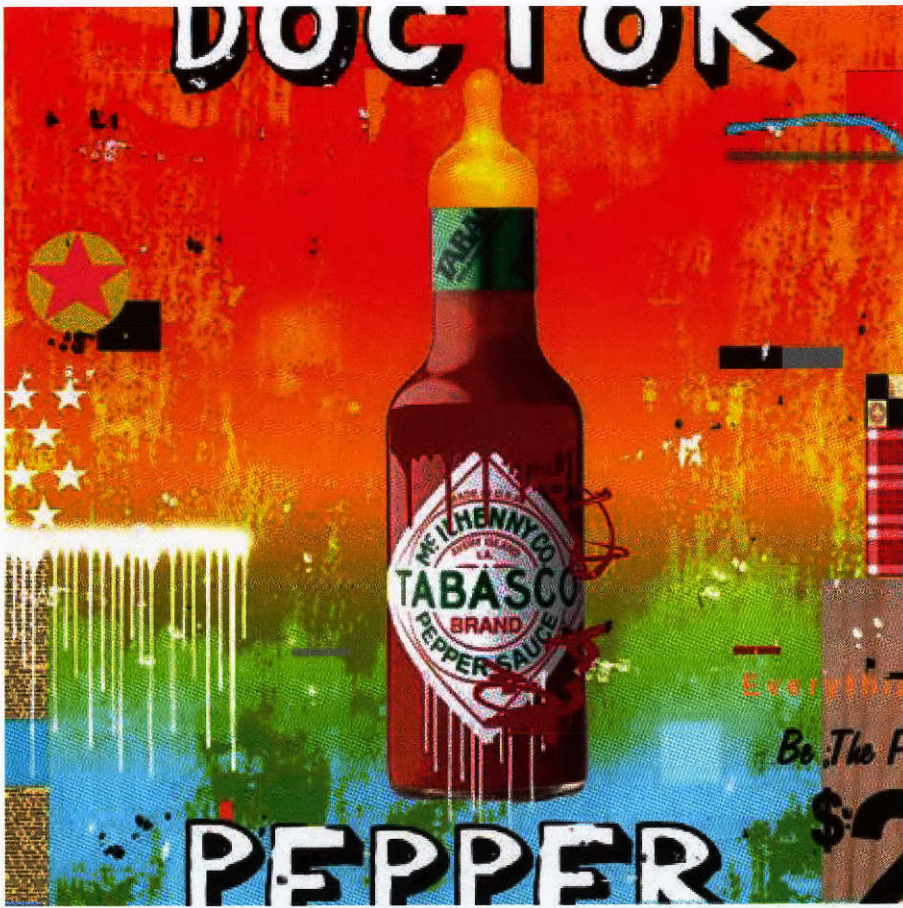
Since 2007, he has worked at NASA's Marshall Space Center in Alabama, where he is designing Space Launch System, NASA's largest and most powerful rocket that will eventually take humans to Mars.

When he's not building rockets, Bardwell is inspiring students with his success story, including his two nieces who just completed their freshman year at Texas State.

Bardwell was named a Young Alumni Rising Star in 2016, an award created to recognize Texas State alumni for their accomplishments in their profession, affiliations, and service. Bardwell has also been honored with the Stellar Award from the Rotary National Awards for Space Achievement and the NASA Space Flight Awareness Award.

Bardwell enjoys mentoring high school and college interns through the National Society of Black Engineers. "I tell students that there are a lot of great universities out there, especially in Texas, but if you want to be more than just a face in a classroom, Texas State is absolutely where you should go," he says. "The attention you get is unbelievable. You're a part of a family."





# Mark Andrew Allen



Bobcat jumps from commercial art to studio artist with renewed success



By Dan R. Goddard

**A**s a commercial artist Mark Andrew Allen rose to the top of his profession in Los Angeles. His high-profile projects included designing logos for Disney's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, the 60th anniversary of *The Wizard of Oz* and the Japanese manga series *Yu-Gi-Oh!* He worked for Diet Coke, Pepsi, Bud Light, and Miller Beer. He designed CDs for P. Diddy's Bad Boy Records and created merchandise for *The Simpsons*, *M\*A\*S\*H*, and *Family Guy*.

But in 2008 when the U.S. economy spiraled, Allen had to rely on a skill every artist should have — turning adversity into opportunity.

Allen says his degree from Texas State University in 1981 gave him the foundation and confidence to go out in the world and make a contribution. He went on to study at Parsons School of Design in New York City and Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

"I had reached the pinnacle of my career, but suddenly no one could afford me," Allen says. "They were hiring younger people for a third of what I made. But it turned out to be one of the best things that has happened to me because it forced me to do the thing I wanted to do — become a studio artist and show my work in galleries and museums."

After retiring from commercial work, he began to concentrate on his multimedia paintings, blending vibrant text messages into brilliantly colored backdrops, and using his background in advertising to take satirical jabs at American consumer culture.

Today, Allen is represented by galleries around the world, including establishments in Los Angeles, New York, Dallas, London, and Rome. His work has been shown at the Dallas Museum of Art, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, and the Experience Music Project in Seattle. His paintings can be seen in episodes of Disney Channel's *Wizards of Waverly Place*, *A.N.T. Farm*, and *Lab Rats*.

"Job No. 1 for me as a fine artist is to report on how I see the world," Allen says. "I try to start a new piece each day. For me, I have always included type in my art. It goes back to my Dad and his lettering and my 30 years of specializing in typography in my own design practice. I see type as a texture and include it in my palette of choices when I create."

His father, Harrison Allen, was a top commercial artist in Houston.

"When I was a kid, I would ask my Dad to draw something for me; he would always tell me to try drawing it myself. He always encouraged me," Allen says. "I knew from day one at Texas State that I was going to major in commercial art. I had a laser focus on



### On the Web

[markandrewallen.com](http://markandrewallen.com)

wanting to create great communication design. I liked the idea of creating something tangible that could communicate an idea and persuade someone to take an action."

Early on, his father advised him that he would have to move to a major market such as New York or Los Angeles if he wanted to make a good living as an artist.

"I saw an ad in a graphic design magazine for a clothing line based in San Francisco, looking for the best graphic designers in the world to come to work for them. I sent them a great package of things and waited to hear. Nothing," Allen says. "I didn't get the job, but I went to Los Angeles and found a job in one week. I have had this same experience many times in my life where someone turns me down and have found that it often motivates me the most when someone tells me that I *can't* do something. I usually say to myself . . . just watch me!"



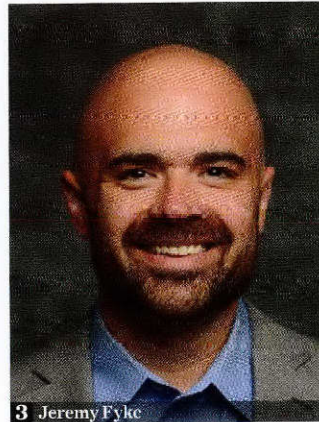
# (class)notes



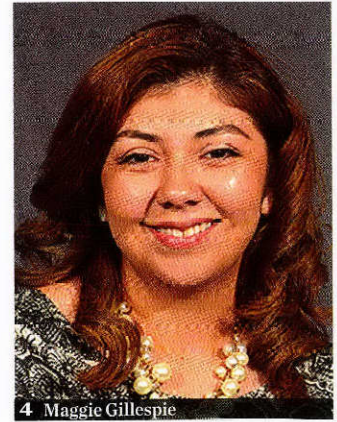
1 Jack Martin



2 Amber Simpson



3 Jeremy Fyke



4 Maggie Gillespie

## Richard Evans '69

Bandera, was appointed to the Governing Board of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission. Evans is the Bandera County judge, chair of the Alamo Workforce Development Corp., and current member of the Committee of Six and of the Alamo Area Council of Governments. The commission provides financial and technical support to counties to develop and maintain quality, cost-effective indigent defense systems.

## 1 Jack Martin '73

Austin, was recently inducted into the International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO) Hall of Fame. Martin is the global chairman and CEO of Hill+Knowlton Strategies. The ICCO is the largest global community of public relations and public affairs businesses, uniting 48 countries, almost 4,000 PR agencies, and close to 1 million employees.

## Eugene Lee '74

San Marcos, was named the 2016 Performer of the Year by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* for his stage role in *Between Riverside and Crazy* at the Pittsburgh Public Theater. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Stephen Adly Guirgis earned rave reviews for Lee, who is also an artist in residence with the Texas State Department of Theatre and Dance.

## Deborah J. Kissire '79

Dallas, has joined the board of directors of Axalta Coating Systems, a leading global manufacturer of liquid and powder coatings. She currently serves on the boards of directors and audit committees for Cable One Inc., and Omnicom Group Inc. In 2015, she retired as vice chair and regional managing partner for Ernst & Young.

## Barney Briggs '89

Addison, has been appointed the CFO of Think Finance Inc., a leading provider of software technology, analytics, and marketing services to lenders. He previously served as CFO for the International Global Consumer Technology Group at Citigroup.

## Ty Ann Tillman '93

Spring, has been named to the 2017 Board of Directors of Interfaith of The Woodlands. Tillman has a Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin and has administrative experience with The University of Texas Charter School. She also served as superintendent of schools for Lutheran Services and as adjunct professor for the University of Phoenix.

## John Hygh '95

Austin, was promoted from reporter to weekend sports anchor at KTBC-FOX 7 television. Prior to joining FOX 7, he worked at KAMR in Amarillo and KVUE in Austin.

## Jeffrey S. Cook '97

Austin, has been named CEO to lead the Texas Health and Aetna Joint Venture. Most recently, Cook worked for Ascension Health as national vice president. While at Ascension, Cook managed the insurance and value-based strategy for seven health plans, 20 ACOs, 145 hospitals, and 6,000 employed physicians across the United States. He also served as president and chief executive officer for Seton Insurance Services, Seton Health Alliance, and Seton Health Plan.

## 2 Amber Simpson '99

Von Ormy, was awarded the Milken Educator Award and a \$25,000 cash prize in a surprise ceremony attended by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Simpson, a master teacher at Barrera Veterans Elementary School in Somerset ISD, was the lone Texan among 35 teachers to be honored by the Milken Family Foundation in 2017.

## Randy Rogers '01

San Marcos, has purchased the Cheatham Street Warehouse from the family of Kent Finlay. Rogers began his musical career at Cheatham Street, as did George Strait and Stevie Ray Vaughn. Rogers was profiled in the spring 2016 issue of *Hillviews*.

## Chad Melton '01, '05

Wytheville, Virginia, is the new CEO of Fauquier Health, a 97-bed hospital in the LifePoint Health group. Melton recently served as CEO of Wythe County Community Hospital, also operated by LifePoint.

## 3 Jeremy Fyke '05, '07

Nashville, Tennessee, is an assistant professor in communication studies at Belmont University. He recently co-edited a case study book, *Cases in Organizational and Managerial Communication: Stretching Boundaries* (Routledge, 2016). Prior to joining Belmont, he taught in the Diederich College of Communication at Marquette University.

## 4 Maggie Gillespie '06

Kyle, has been named the Main Street program manager for the city of Buda. She was previously the San Marcos Main Street coordinator and has worked for the Kyle Area Chamber of Commerce, Hays CISD, and Texas State. In 2015, Buda was designated an official Texas Main Street City by the Texas Historical Commission.

Send your Class Notes contributions to:  
hillviews@txstate.edu



## IN REMEMBRANCE



**Mark S. Hendricks (B.A. '81)** of San Marcos, who spent 25 years as the spokesman for Texas State, died January 3, in San Marcos. Born June 10, 1953 in Spokane, Washington, Hendricks grew up on and around various military bases. His first job in journalism was for the *Laredo News*. He spent about a decade with the *San Marcos Daily Record* before joining the

university and eventually becoming director of media relations and publications. He retired in 2014. Survivors include his wife, Diana Finlay Hendricks; his mother, Mary Kading Hendricks; four children; three grandchildren; and his sister, Vicki Bruner.

**Murray William Barrett (B.B.A. '74)**, who spent his life teaching and mentoring students, died March 29. **Dianne Hayden Barrett (B.S. '84)**, his wife of 32 years, died April 11 at their home in New Braunfels. Born February 15, 1951, in Dallas, Murray Barrett served in the U.S. Marine Corps after graduation. He began his career in education at Hargrave Military Academy in Virginia. The couple met at Texas State when Murray returned to study for teacher certification and Dianne was studying computer science. Born May 21, 1961, in Wisconsin, Dianne's 20-year career in the Air Force took the family to various locations across the United States. The family settled in Texas in 2001 where Dianne taught at

Seguin and New Braunfels high schools. Murray taught math at New Braunfels Middle School until his retirement in 2010. He was also active in Big Brothers Big Sisters. Dianne served as a ministry assistant at First Baptist Church of New Braunfels. They are survived by four children, Matthew, Jennifer, Russell, and Cassandra.

**Rebecca Ann "Becky" Yeager (M.S. '76)**, who coached women's sports in Hallettsville and Yoakum for 50 years, died March 20, 2017, at the age of 82. Her teams went to state in basketball, volleyball, tennis, track and cross country. She received commendations and awards for the scope and excellence of her coaching and teaching. Yeager is survived by her daughters, Debra Flynn of Austin and Dawn Richardson of Brookshire; a son, James Yeager of Alice; three grandchildren; her sister, Mary Jo Dry of San Marcos; and her brother, Billy Eilers of Hallettsville. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Jim Yeager (B.S. '54)**.



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**DEBORAH KISSIRE, '79**

**MICHAEL MCGAUGH, '95**

**MICHAEL RAIFORD, '90**

**BRIG. GEN. DANA SIMMONS, '77**

## YOUNG ALUMNI RISING STAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

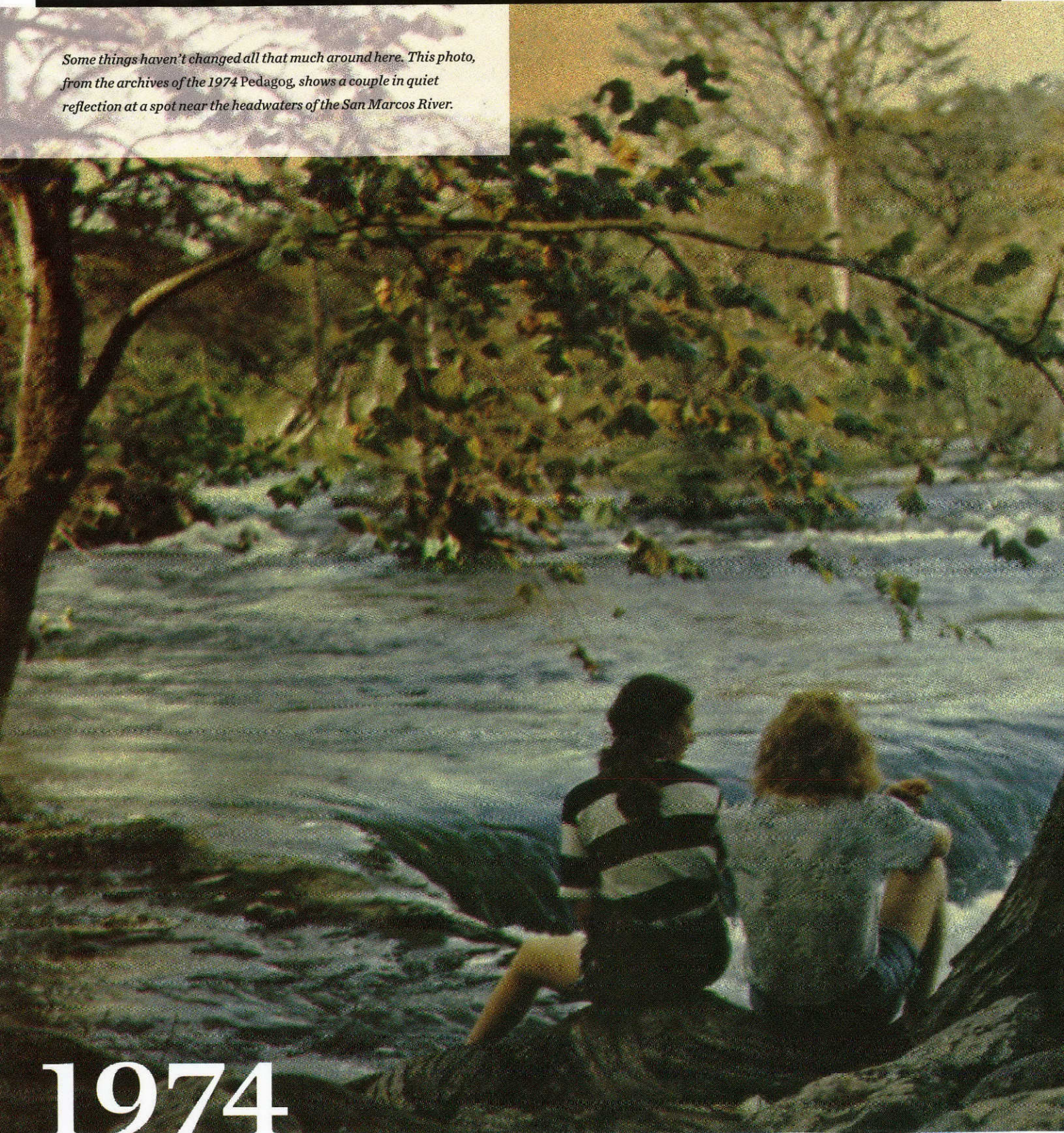
**CHRIS ELLEY, '00**

**RANDY ROGERS, '01**



# The (last) view

*Some things haven't changed all that much around here. This photo, from the archives of the 1974 Pedagog, shows a couple in quiet reflection at a spot near the headwaters of the San Marcos River.*



# 1974



# 2017 TEXAS STATE FOOTBALL



9.2  
HOUSTON BAPTIST



9.9  
AT COLORADO



9.16   
APPALACHIAN STATE



9.23  
UTSA



9.30  
AT WYOMING



10.7   
ULM



10.12   
AT LOUISIANA



10.28   
AT COASTAL CAROLINA



11.4   
NEW MEXICO STATE



11.11   
GEORGIA STATE



11.18   
AT ARKANSAS STATE



11.25   
AT TROY



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*Willie Nelson, by Bill Wittliff ©1980*



*Boy with Baritone, by Keith Carter ©1981*

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