

the WEST TEXAN

A Publication of the West Texas A&M University Alumni Association // Spring 2022

NEW LIFE FOR 'OLD ED'



WT President Walter V. Wendler and Bucky are ready for the rebirth of the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building.

the WEST TEXAN

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WRITE TO US // We welcome your letters. The editor reserves the right to determine the suitability of letters for publication and to edit them for accuracy and length. Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and include the writer's full name, address and telephone number. If an alum, please include degree and year of degree.

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EXECUTIVE TEAM LETTER



Ronnie Hall has had the opportunity to meet thousands of students and alumni in his 26 years of employment at West Texas A&M University. Ronnie is living his dream job of working with people who believe in the vision and mission of an incredible university. He began his career with WT in 1995, and through the years, he has been fortunate to meet faculty and staff who modeled servant leadership, creating in him a desire to do the same for students and alumni.



Brittney Lee graduated from West Texas A&M University in 2014. Immediately following graduation, she started her career with the University and has since discovered her passion for university engagement, community building and event planning. Brittney loves getting to meet and work with WT Alumni. She hopes to engage and connect alumni to keep their WT pride stronger than ever, no matter where they live now or when they graduated.

Dear Buffs,

At WT, we are grateful to be surrounded by alumni and friends who have pride in our University and community. One of our goals is to create opportunities for you to be connected to other WT Alumni and connected back to WT. If you haven't already joined the Alumni Association, we hope you will consider helping us build our WT Alumni community through chapters and membership. Now is a great time to get involved with the WT Alumni Association. Your financial support allows us to provide engagement in a way that's meaningful and beneficial to you, our students, and our alumni.

If you haven't heard, Homecoming 2022 has been set for Oct. 1. Homecoming is a beloved tradition dating back to 1920 where you can reminisce and create new fond memories of WT. We hope to see you here!

In this issue of The West Texan, you will see stories of encouragement, success and philanthropy of our students, alumni and friends. We hope you enjoy!

Whether you graduated or only spent a few semesters at WT, once a Buff, always a Buff!

Have a blessed day, and Go Buffs!
Ronnie & Brittney

Ronnie Hall Brittney Lee



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online at [BuffAlum.com](https://buffalum.com).

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WT Alumni Association

Take this to the bank

A business classroom and two scholarship funds were named for a prominent regional bank known for its support of farmers and ranchers following a recent major gift to West Texas A&M University. Renovations are beginning on the new Wellington State Bank Cybersecurity Lab in WT's Classroom Center following a \$100,000 gift from the bank, which has locations in 14 Texas towns, including Canyon and its namesake, Wellington. The gift also provides two scholarship endowments for students majoring in business or agricultural business and economics who plan to enter the banking profession.

First-Gen Forward

West Texas A&M University's commitment to first-generation students is being recognized nationally. The Center for First-Generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation, announced March 1 that WT is part of its 2022-23 First-Gen Forward cohort. A total of 53 institutions from around the country were named to the cohort. The First-Gen Forward designation recognizes institutions of higher education who have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. Selected institutions receive professional development, community-building experiences, and a first look at the Center's research and resources. WT, a Hispanic Serving Institution since 2016, offers numerous programs, services and initiatives for first-generation students, including the F1RSTGEN student organization. Currently, WT's student population is more than 46 percent first-generation.

Students to run ECU branch in Canyon

West Texas A&M University students will make up the majority of the workforce at a newly redesigned branch of Education Credit Union, University and Credit Union officials announced Jan. 19. ECU will convert its existing branch at 2100 Fourth Ave. in Canyon into the student-led Buff \$mart Branch after construction is complete on the new ECU Branch located at 1900 Farm-to-Market Road 2590 in Canyon. The full-service retail branch will provide the same financial services to ECU members that all branches offer, but outside of a few management-level ECU staffers, all other employees will be WT students.

Buff Alums unite in workplace

WT and Education Credit Union have partnered for a first-of-its-kind organization for Buffs in the workforce. The ECU WT Alumni Network will serve as a focal point for additional volunteer opportunities for ECU employees and solidify their bonds to WT. Companies that agree to form a corporate network pay membership fees for their WT alumni employees. When employees join a corporate chapter, they get all the benefits of a WT Alumni membership, including a subscription to The West Texan, the University magazine; alumni discounts and perks; and a yearly membership gift.

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

faculty and staff accomplishments

WT faculty and staff members have received awards, published works and been elected to serve in various capacities.

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West Texas A&M University has joined a national collaborative research partnership to increase opportunities in the Air Force for minority science, technology, engineering and mathematics students and graduates. The Air Force Research Laboratory Minority Leaders - Research Collaboration Program enables collaborative research partnerships between AFRL and academia that engage a diverse pool of scientists and engineers in addressing foundational research challenges in support of the nation's air, space and cyberspace technology needs. **Dr. Vinu Unnikrishnan**, assistant professor of civil engineering in WT's College of Engineering, is the University's inaugural recipient of the ML-RCP cooperative agreement award for a period of two years. During this period Unnikrishnan will work closely with his collaborators at AFRL on composite materials and their applications of relevance to AFRL.

.....

West Texas A&M University's One West campaign has picked up several honors for the Office of Communication and Marketing. The campaign won five honors at the 2022 American Advertising Awards, hosted by American Advertising Federation-Amarillo: a gold, two silver and two bronze awards. The One West campaign also scored two national Collegiate Advertising Awards for the campaign itself and its logo design. CAA awards also were won for a Día de los Muertos T-shirt and a brochure for The Arts at WT Subscription Series. WT's Communication and Marketing team members recognized in the awards include **Kelly Carper Polden**, assistant vice president; **Chip Chandler**, senior communications specialist; **Caitlin Doyle**, senior graphic designer; **Darcy Lively**, content coordinator and producer; **Alyssa Mince**, former print shop technician; **Dwanya Pierce**, graphic designer; **Chris Rea**, web director; and **Meghan Watts**, print shop manager.

.....

Dr. Jean Stuntz retired this spring after 21 years of service at WT. During her tenure, she helped found WT's gender studies program more than a decade ago. Stuntz has been actively advancing women's and gender studies in her research and teaching throughout her career at WT. She has taught dozens of courses on women's history, as well as introductory courses on gender studies, and has prolifically published books and articles in the field.

A familiar face has taken the reins of the “Texas” Outdoor Musical.

Stephen Crandall, formerly head of West Texas A&M University’s Department of Art, Theatre, and Dance in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities, is the new artistic director of the musical. Crandall stepped down from his department head position at WT but will continue as a professor in the department. **Anne Medlock** now serves as department head for Art, Theatre and Dance.

.....

Twenty West Texas A&M University faculty members were awarded more than \$70,000 in aid for significant projects through the WTAMU Foundation. The foundation annually awards grants of up to \$5,000 to assist in professional development activities or projects. This semester’s grantees include:

- College of Education and Social Sciences: **Dr. Laura N. Bell**, assistant professor of political science; **Dr. Minseok Yang**, assistant professor of education; **Dr. Areen Omary**, assistant professor of social work; and **Dr. Beth Garcia**, Sylvia Nugent Professor of Education and director of teacher preparation program;
- Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities: **Jon Revett**, associate professor of art, art program director and Doris Alexander Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts; Misty Gamble, assistant professor of art; **Dr. Kimberly Hieb**, assistant professor of music; **Dr. Tim Bowman**, associate professor of history and head of Department of History; **Dr. Sarah Rushing**, assistant professor of music; **Dr. John Gavin Shanks**, assistant professor of music; **Dr. Choong-ha Nam**, professor of piano; Angelo O’Dierno, assistant professor of theatre; **Dr. Min Wha Han**, assistant professor of communication; **Dr. Enyonam Osei-Hwere**, associate professor of media communication; **Patrick Osei-Hwere**, instructor of media communication; and **Sarah Beckham-Turner**, assistant professor of music and director of WT Opera;
- Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business: **Cheng Zhang**, assistant professor of business; and
- Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences: **Dr. Kendall Samuelson**, assistant professor of animal science; **Dr. Keshav Shrestha**, assistant professor of physics; and **Dr. Travis Tennant**, assistant professor of animal science.

The grant pool is funded through donations to the WTAMU Foundation, including gifts made as part of the historic, \$125 million One West comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Doctoral degrees made more affordable

All tuition and fees may be waived for West Texas A&M University faculty and staff interested in pursuing a doctoral degree through The Texas A&M University System beginning this summer. Through the TAMUS Doctoral Education Assistance program, WT faculty and staff—and those throughout the System—can apply to have all of their mandatory tuition and fees reimbursed for any course required to complete their degree at any doctoral-granting TAMUS university. That’s a savings of at least \$27,000 per student.

Musical partnership crosses border

Musical performance students in Mexico will be able to earn a graduate degree through West Texas A&M University, thanks to a new pipeline program. Qualified students at the University of Colima’s School of Music can begin their master of music degree through WT in the fall. The University of Colima does not offer and nor does it plan to offer its own graduate degree in music, and only about five accredited graduate programs in music exist in the country. Colima students will apply to the WT Graduate School and become WT students in order to enter the program. A combination of exchange teaching and online course delivery will allow students from Colima who enter the master of music program in the WT School of Music to remain in Mexico for the first year of the two-year program. Students will then come to the Canyon campus for the second year to complete their master’s degree.

Feedlot expansion coming

Merck Animal Health announced a \$500,000 donation to West Texas A&M University for its feedlot renovation and expansion project at the Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. WT’s feedlot, a scale model of larger commercial feedlots in the West Texas region, helps students gain real-life experience with modern feeding systems and advanced technologies. Merck Animal Health has provided support for scholarships and internships as well as research projects at the university.

WT Woman, Man of the Year

The West Texas A&M University Woman and Man of the Year were honored at an April 22 celebration, along with several other top students. Hannah Scarborough, a senior ag media and communication major from Decatur, and Allan Baltazar, a senior criminal justice major from Houston, were given the respective honors during the All-University Honors Ceremony, held by the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership in Legacy Hall in the Jack B. Kelley Student Center. The Presidential Order of the Silver Buffalo Award, presented to individuals and groups who have brought national or international recognition to WT, was given to national track & field champion Zada Swoopes, Olympian runner Benjamin Azamati and the NCAA Division II national champion WT Lady Buff Softball team.

WT Advances Rural Education

By Kelly Carper Polden

Dec. 11, 2021, was a historic commencement day for West Texas A&M University and 18 educators who were the first to receive doctorates in education leadership from the Panhandle's University.

The Ed.D., the second doctorate offered by WT, emphasizes rural education and addresses a need that affects not only the Panhandle but all of Texas and many other states across the country. School districts serving fewer than 1,000 students comprise more than 50 percent of the districts in Texas. Rural education is the learning backbone of the Texas Panhandle.

The full online Ed.D. degree program was launched in 2018, preparing educational leaders for rural schools as well as in higher education and educational organizations. The inaugural cohort represented eight rural West Texas school districts, Amarillo, and Guymon in the Oklahoma Panhandle, as well as four regional colleges. One new WT doctoral graduate is from a public school district in Jacksonville, Fla.

"This first cohort of Ed.D. graduates significantly advances WT's vision of attaining recognition as a regional research institution while maintaining the University's historic tradition of excellence in teaching and service to the region," said Dr. Eddie Henderson, dean of WT's Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences. "Our rural-focused doctoral program empowers professionals to positively impact the future of rural communities by promoting excellence

through research-based exploration of current problems and the development of research-based solutions."

The 60-hour program specifically addresses issues such as academic success amidst poverty, ethical decisions in student athlete discipline, leadership practices to engage Latino parents, and trust factors between principals and teachers.

The Ed.D. program is a reflection of **WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World**, the University's ambitious long-range plan launched in 2019. The plan emphasizes WT as a regional research university focused on improving issues that affect the Panhandle's 26 counties and beyond.

The program currently includes 77 students in four cohorts.

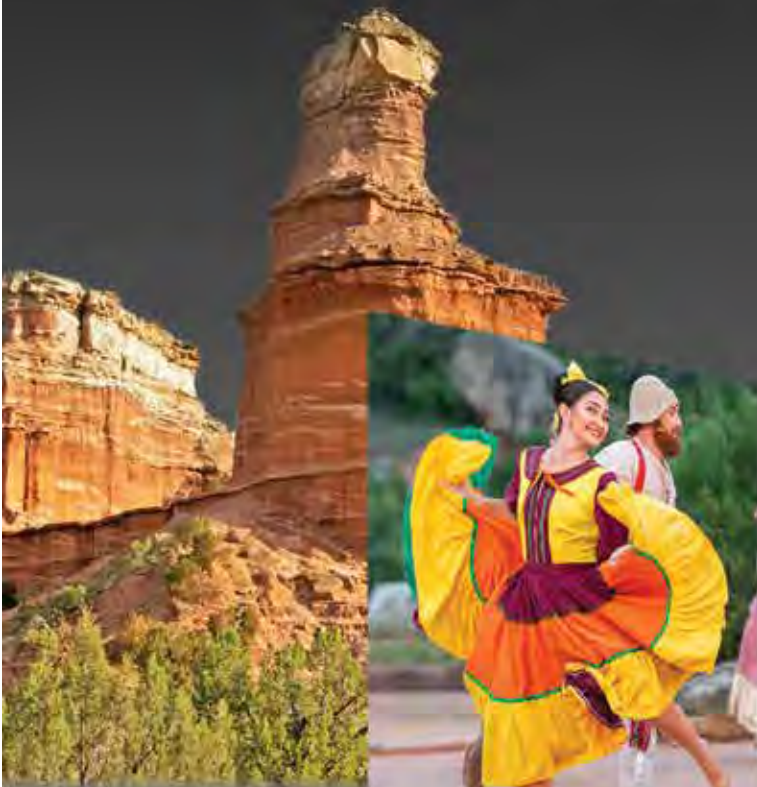
Congratulations to West Texas A&M University's first class of doctoral graduates in educational leadership:

- Gabriela Arriazola-Rivera, Amarillo Independent School District assistant principal;
- Linda Castaneda Aranda, Amarillo Independent School District educational diagnostician;
- Amy Clifton, WT College of Education and Social Sciences data specialist;
- Bethany Davis, Pampa Independent School District assistant principal;
- Mike Dominguez, Stratford Independent School District superintendent;
- Matthew K. Driver, Canyon Independent School District teacher;
- Jerry S. Findley, South Plains College dean of health sciences;
- Misty Heiskell, Dalhart Independent School District principal;
- Tiffany Longoria, Denver City Independent School District assistant principal;
- Felix Isaac Martinez, Levelland Independent School District middle school teacher and coach;
- Byron May, Pampa Independent School District principal;
- Teresa Mora, former director of Hispanic Student Services and Upward Bound at Oklahoma Panhandle State University;
- Angelica Garcia Okamoto, Dimmitt Independent School District director of student services;
- Kelley Porter, Lefors Independent School District superintendent;
- Liz Marie Rascón-Alaniz, Wesley Community Center executive director;
- Justin Richardson, chief learning officer of lead4ward in Canyon;
- Eric Sosa, WT Business Office post-award manager of sponsored research; and
- Zeina Spaulding, executive director of professional development for the Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Fla.

Enjoy!

TEXAS. HISTORY.

Sometimes we forget ALL that's in our own backyard.
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Texas-Show.com



PPHM

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WELLINGTON'S SKYROCKETS: A MODEL OF ALUMNI SUPPORT

BY CHIP CHANDLER



West Texas A&M University alumni are helping young people in one Panhandle town rocket to success.

The Wellington area's alumni chapter, the West Texas Skyrockets, formed in 2016 and have since helped finance the educational dreams of about 40 Wellington High School graduates who chose to attend WT.

"We realized that we had several WT alumni living here in Wellington and more and more Wellington High School graduates who wanted to attend WT," said Margret Wood '72, chapter vice-president. "We really love WT and care about it and want to see more of our kids go there. And since starting the chapter, we really have seen more decide to to WT. Last year, both the valedictorian and salutatorian decided to go, which is wonderful."

In its history, the Skyrockets chapter has distributed \$21,500 in scholarships.

It's a grassroots effort to raise those funds. Chapter members regularly host basketball tournaments, golf scrambles, daddy-daughter and mother-son dances—even a pet jamboree.

In 2022, eight WHS graduates were awarded scholarships at the chapter's annual banquet: Marlene Jantes, Kyla Kane, Creighton

Killian, Luis Moreno-Cerda, Willy Olvera, Isabella Rodriguez, Desyre Sanchez and Dylan Skelton.

Ultimately, the Skyrockets envision a Wellington Alumni Chapter Scholarship Endowment to provide permanent and sustainable funding for student scholarships. When a scholarship endowment is created, the funds are invested and a portion of the income from the investment is used to support annual scholarships.

The Skyrockets chapter welcomes members from Wellington, Quail and Dodson. Membership is \$6 per month or \$70 per year; proceeds support the Wellington chapter and provide members with full WT Alumni Association benefits.

"The Wellington area's alumni chapter is a stand out in my mind because they do a great job at engaging WT alumni in a variety of community and fundraising events," said Lesly Bosch Annen, assistant vice president for leadership gifts and development. "That helps them retain members and recruit future Buffs. They are an amazing asset."

Any regional town can form its own chapter, Wood said.

"You just have to get together and establish a goal," she said. "What's especially great in a small town is that the chapter is able to create some fun activities for people to enjoy and let them support a great cause."

**IN ITS HISTORY,
THE SKYROCKETS
CHAPTER HAS
DISTRIBUTED
\$21,500 IN
SCHOLARSHIPS.**

For more on the chapter, visit facebook.com/westtexaskyrocks.

Falling
INTO DANCE
Happy State Bank Studio Theatre
November 17-20, 2022

WT Theatre & Dance WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY 2022-2023 SEASON

Portraits of
DANCE
Branding Iron Theatre
April 28-30, 2023

The 25th Annual Patrum County **SPELLING BEE**

Music and Lyrics by William Finn
Book by Rachel Sheinkin
Conceived by Rebecca Feldman
Happy State Bank Studio Theatre | Rated PG-13
September 28 - October 2, 2022

THE LARAMIE PROJECT

By Moisés Kaufman and the Members of Tectonic Theater Project
Branding Iron Theatre | Rated R
October 28-30, 2022 | November 4-6, 2022

BULL IN A CHINA SHOP

By Bryna Turner
Happy State Bank Studio Theatre | Rated R
March 29 - April 2, 2023

SWEENEY TODD

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim | Book by Hugh Wheeler
From an Adaptation by Christopher Bond
Originally Directed on Broadway by Harold Prince
Branding Iron Theatre | Rated R
February 10-12, 2023 | February 16-18, 2023



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you want to receive.



alumni SPOTLIGHT

Regina Blye →

After successfully founding a Texas nonprofit dedicated to ensuring equal access for people with disabilities, **Regina Blye '01** has taken her mission to a national level.



Blye recently was hired as chief program and policy officer for the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, following five years at the Administration for Community Living, monitoring compliance with the Rehabilitation Act and overseeing 155 federal grantees. Previously, Blye was executive director of the Texas State Independent Living Council, which she expanded from a solo operation to one with 17 employees, 30 volunteers and a \$2 million budget.

In 2011, she was appointed by President Barack Obama to the United States Access Board.

At the Reeve Foundation, she'll work directly with community members.

"After 35 years of living with a spinal cord injury, I wanted to focus on the most important part of who I am," she told the Reeve Foundation. "I wanted to work specifically with people with spinal cord injuries and paralysis."

Blye sustained a C6-C7 spinal cord injury in 1988 when she was shot through the neck at an end-of-school-year slumber party in her hometown of Brownfield, according to the Reeve Foundation.

She regained movement in her arms and returned home, where her mother became her caregiver.

"My mom didn't know where or how to look for resources or services," Blye said. "It was truly a family on a rural island trying to figure out how to get things for this little girl to help her live her best life."

She became her own advocate, pushing back when school leaders suggested home schooling rather than providing accommodations at her school.

At WT, Blye thrived in the Department of Communication and around campus. After graduating, she worked in Amarillo media, then entered the Ms. Wheelchair Texas competition in 2002, which she won. That's when she pivoted to a career helping other people with disabilities.

"Without knowing what is out there, people can get stuck," she said. "And it will dim their light. Sometimes having the right person walk in your space at the right time can make a difference. I think that's what the Foundation does, and I want to be part of that."

↓ Brent Scott, left



Rear Admiral **Brent Scott '76** retired May 16 as the 26th Navy Chief of Chaplains.

Scott, an Amarillo native, served for 30 years in the U.S. Navy.

"From the moment he swore the oath three decades ago, he has been a beacon of light and a consummate leader in our Navy," Admiral Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations, said at Scott's retirement ceremony. "Our Navy is more resilient and stronger in heart and mind having you at our spiritual helm."

Scott credited Navy chaplains and religious program specialists for the success of his tenure.

"This is my tribe," Scott said, according to a press release from the U.S. Navy. "These enablers of spiritual strength are the men and women who have thrust themselves in the middle of the muddle with Sailors, Marines, and Coastguardsmen. I am forever indebted to you and will spend the rest of my days grateful for you and your service and support."

Scott and wife Marilyn will remain in Virginia and use their farm as a ministry for military members and veterans.

"We have had the blessing of an enduring journey that began when we were 15," Scott said of his wife. "We have chosen some pretty risky things in life and you have been with me all the way, through sickness and in health."

2022 WT FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

SEPT. 3

vs. WESTERN COLORADO

SEPT. 10

AT ADAMS STATE

SEPT. 17

vs. TEXAS A&M-KINGSVILLE

SEPT. 24

AT ANGELO STATE

OCT. 1 \ HOMEcoming

vs. UT PERMIAN BASIN

OCT. 8

AT MIDWESTERN STATE

OCT. 15

AT WESTERN OREGON

OCT. 22

vs. CENTRAL WASHINGTON

OCT. 29

AT WESTERN NEW MEXICO

NOV. 5

vs. EASTERN NEW MEXICO

NOV. 23

AT SIMON FRASER



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HOME GAMES PLAYED AT THE BAIN-SCHAEFFER BUFFALO STADIUM IN CANYON, TX



KEEPING THE PANHANDLE HEALTHY

BY BRAD NEWMAN

**WT NURSING
PROGRAM
MARKS 50 YEAR
ANNIVERSARY**

In 2005, a worsening case of pneumonia hospitalized Dr. Debbie Davenport for 11 days.

She was assigned to the intensive care unit at Baptist St. Anthony Health System and awaited surgery to remove part of her lung.

But when Davenport woke from the procedure, she knew she would be in good care. The two nurses standing over her were former students of hers—graduates from West Texas A&M University's Department of Nursing.

"I looked up and thought, I'm going to be just fine," she said. "I was so proud in that moment." Davenport's students were two of thousands of nurses who have been trained and educated at WT, now for 50 years.

WT marks its long tradition of excellence in nursing this year—half a century after it opened its Department of Nursing in 1972.

"All of our graduates are fantastic," said Davenport, who taught in the program for more than 30 years and retired in 2019. "They make a difference wherever they go."

A Legacy

WT began its two-year nursing program in 1972, one of the first baccalaureate nursing programs in Texas.

In 1974, WT—at the time, West Texas State University—graduated 14 students out of the program. Kathy Shipp was one of them.

"I was at another university when I heard about WT offering this new nursing degree, and transferred there for my last year," Shipp said.

Since her graduation, Shipp has taught nursing (she has been on the faculty at WT since 2013). She obtained her family nurse practitioner certificate from WT in 1994 and operates a private family practice. And Shipp also serves as the president of the Texas Board of Nursing,

appointed first by former Gov. Rick Perry and reappointed by Gov. Greg Abbott.

She is a snapshot of the success that WT's nursing graduates have earned since the program was established.

"In 50 years of graduates, we know this program and our graduates have made a difference," said Dr. Holly Jeffreys, head of the nursing department.

WT's nursing graduates include notables Anita Perry, former First Lady of Texas and longtime healthcare advocate who also was part of the first graduating class in 1974; and Casie Stoughton, director of public health for the City of Amarillo, who provided oversight during the region's COVID-19 response.

"WT has had a strong legacy of producing very qualified and high-level practicing registered nurses," Shipp said.

In 2021, WT's nursing program relocated to the Baptist Community Services Nursing Education Floor on the second floor of the Harrington Academic Hall WTAMU Amarillo Center in downtown Amarillo. The program currently includes a faculty and staff of 25, with a total of 662 students enrolled from pre-nursing to graduate level.

Admittance into the program has nearly doubled in the past two years since Jeffreys was named department head. As hospitals in the region faced nursing shortages, WT sought to respond by creatively expanding the program.

"Right now, we're focused on strengthening the degree offerings and leaving our mark on healthcare in the Texas Panhandle," Jeffreys said.

Not to Ourselves Alone

That "mark" is distinctive.

WT's philosophy of nursing education is aimed not just at training nursing skills, but modeling nursing values, Jeffreys said.

"We want to demonstrate to each individual student genuine concern and kindness, because our hope is that they will demonstrate those qualities to their patients. It's a purposeful effort, and it's part of the success of our students."

That motto—which Jeffreys said reflects the culture of the Texas Panhandle—is etched on every nursing graduate's pin.

The pin, specially designed by Eddie Garner, another 1974 graduate of the nursing program, features the Latin phrase, "Non Nobis Solum." It means, "Not to ourselves alone."

"That's what nursing exemplifies for me," Shipp said. "It is a profession, a job—but we're doing it to serve others. To care for others and respond to their needs."

The nursing program's handbook summarizes the program's holistic approach this way:

"We believe caring, commitment, honesty, integrity, dependability, respect, responsibility, accountability and initiative are values which are central to nursing scholarship."

Davenport estimates she has helped educate more than 2,000 nurses during her tenure – and those values are impressed on each one.

"Our graduates have the right mentality for taking care of people," she said. "The students have heart. They have compassion. They really are excellent."

'WT Has Prepared Me'

"Nurses are the constant in healthcare," Shipp said. "They're the ones who staff hospitals 24/7 – they're foundational."

And yet, nurses are in high demand. Texas faces one of the worst nursing shortages in the U.S., which means that educating new nurses is crucial, especially in rural areas like the Texas Panhandle.

"For the most underserved areas, it's critical that we continue to train nurses," Jeffreys said.

Gage Climer, 22, graduated from WT this May, and before the end of the month, he had finished his first week as a nurse in the surgical intensive care unit at Northwest Texas Healthcare System in Amarillo.

Climer is not the only WT nursing graduate who opts to remain and work in the region. WT currently provides about 70 percent of nurses employed throughout the Texas Panhandle.

"I grew up here," said Climer, who is from Bushland. "And for me to get a degree here, and then use that degree in the community, helping people heal, that's important to me."

"And from everything I've seen so far, WT has prepared me for working in healthcare."

Davenport boasted that WT's affordability and the nursing program's quality examination pass rates are two factors that make WT an exceptional choice for prospective nursing students.

And a bachelor's degree in nursing adds significant value in the workforce.

"When you have nurses who are prepared at the bachelor's level, statistics show that those nurses can greatly improve patient longevity and quality of life," Jeffreys said.

WT's commitment to offering a high-quality nursing program will continue as the university enters the next 50 years.

"I want to become the best nurse possible," Climer said. "I want to provide care and touch as many lives as I can. To use my skills to make the community a better place. And WT has given me that opportunity."

Faculty and staff members pose in these archival photos from the 1980s.







Congratulations, _____ **GRADUATES!**

PHOTOS BY DARCY LIVELY AND CHIP CHANDLER

Nearly 1,500 Buffs confidently strode toward their future on May 7, diploma in hand.

Spring graduates totaled 1,125 at three commencement ceremonies, and 303 potential August graduates also walked the stage.

The oldest graduate was 65, and the youngest was 19. The graduating class includes 137 with a perfect 4.0 GPA and 45 veterans; 50 percent of the undergraduates are the first in their family to earn a college degree. Students from 41 states in the nation and 18 different countries graduated.







"STUDENTS, YOU ARE THE
FUTURE OF WT, OUR STATE, OUR
NATION AND INDEED, OUR WAY
OF LIFE. YOU HOLD US IN THE
PALMS OF YOUR HANDS. "

PRESIDENT WALTER V. WENDLER



ONE WEST SPOTLIGHT

BOLD

STEPPING INTO THE



OLY THE FUTURE

By Chip Chandler



WT President Walter V. Wendler poses with Bucky at the iconic entrance to "Old Ed," now named the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building.



"When I heard they were closing it, I was just praying they wouldn't tear it down."

Lana Gregory '75, '79 speaks for countless West Texas A&M University alumni who attended classes in the Education building before it closed its doors in 1988.

"That was my fear, that it would be demolished," Gregory said. "I know it takes a lot of money to renovate it, so I'm so happy to hear that it's going to happen."

In fact, the Education Building—lovingly referred to as "Old Ed"—is more than simply being renovated. It's being utterly transformed—complete with a new name.

Following a \$2.5 million gift announced in February, the building will now be known as the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building, named for a late but beloved WT supporter whose connection to the University began in the building's halls.

Geneva Gressett attended the demonstration school for primary-school students through fifth grade. After

marrying her beloved **Stanley Schaeffer** in 1951, **Geneva '55** earned a degree in education and taught in Houston, then Dimmitt. She was awarded an honorary doctorate in philosophy from what's now known as WT's Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences in 2016, and died later that year.

When **Stanley '55** and their children—**David '79, Jackie and Jerry '81**—announced their naming gift in February, University officials also revealed that the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building would serve a new purpose on campus.

In October, WT announced that it was allotted \$45 million from Senate Bill 52, which allocated \$3.35 billion for capital projects at Texas higher education institutions. When extensive renovations are complete, the building will be occupied by the WT Graduate School, recognizing the significant growth it has achieved in the past five years. Plans call for new spaces for research and new areas to connect with off-campus students and potential new students.

But primarily, the second-oldest building on University



Liz Murphy Crittendon, friend of the Schaeffer family and Stanley Schaeffer.

grounds will be reimagined as a space that will put WT on the bleeding edge of innovation in distance learning.

Since 1997, WT has been a pioneer in online learning, fundamentally because it offers students in the Panhandle region easier access to higher education.

“Our goal with the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building is to be a first-mover in the next phase of distance learning, whether that’s virtual reality or advances we don’t even know about yet,” said **Dr. Neil Terry**, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

“Our goal is to be as cutting-edge as we can possibly be, and the building will be the vehicle that will propel those strides.”

Those kinds of advances weren’t remotely on the horizon when **Neva Barker ’58** took education courses in the building.

“When my husband got a job coaching in Amarillo in 1955, I decided I’d go back to school and get a teaching certificate, even though I didn’t know a thing about WT,” Barker said. “I

never dreamed I’d ever be able to go to college, so I really enjoyed my time in that building. I think it’s wonderful that they’re bringing it back to life.”

So does her son, **Brett B. Barker ’87**.

“Mom told me she loved all of the hours she spent in that building, but I think I only took one class in there,” Brett Barker said. “But it’s wonderful to hear that.”

“I was so sad when I heard that they shuttered it, so I cannot wait to see how they revitalize it and put it back to use,” said

Gwen Hicks ’81, ’00, a retired teacher who now runs the nonprofit organization Amarillo Angels.

“I just treasure the education I received in that building. It set me on my path throughout my career—a great foundational experience,” Hicks said. “I think about all the educators who went through that building who I admire professionally and personally, and I cannot wait to see how it’s revitalized and serves new generations.”

.....
*“The building will be
the vehicle that will
propel those strides.”*
.....

The renaming and rebirth of the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building is only one of the major advances made possible by gifts to WT's One West comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences

West Texas A&M University's anchor college was named for a prominent regional educator following a \$5 million gift. The newly dubbed Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences was unveiled March 9 at a press conference in Legacy Hall in the Jack B. Kelley Student Center. **Terry Rogers** was one such teacher. A single mother of two at the time, Rogers put herself through school, attending classes on nights and weekends to earn her master's degree in education to better her career prospects.

WT opened in 1910 as West Texas State Normal College, a school that trained teachers. Today, about 75 percent of all teachers and administrators throughout the Panhandle region have at least one

degree or certificate from WT. In addition to teachers and school administrators, the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences is responsible for the preparation of school psychologists, social work professionals, and students for graduate programs in psychology, sociology, the law and public services and administration, as well as direct engagement with the community through its programs in criminal justice and emergency management administration. The College currently serves more than 1,700 students, making it the second-largest College at WT. It includes three departments: the Department of Education; the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice; and the Department of Psychology, Sociology and Social Work.



Dyke Rogers honored his wife Terry B. Rogers at the March 9 college renaming event.

Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium

Two families whose generosity to West Texas A&M University stretches back generations now have given an additional \$5 million to the University. In recognition, the premiere football stadium in all of Division II Athletics now bears their names: The Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium. The gift was announced by **Mike Bain '90, David Schaeffer '79** and their families. Along with the stadium, the Bain Athletic Center serves as a cornerstone of the excellence of WT Athletics "that is second to none in the Lone Star Conference, Division II NCAA Athletics and the State of Texas," according to President Walter V. Wendler. The Athletic Center facility, the vision of **Ray and Barbara Bain '60**, is in Phase III of construction. When



complete, the facility will house sports performance, sports medicine, football and Olympic sport offices, academic success programs, team meeting rooms and the Hall of Champions. The Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium seats 8,500 along the west and east sides with an estimated total capacity of 12,000 when including overflow berm seating and standing-room-only space at the concourse level. Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium offers opportunities for future expansion of up to 14,000 permanent seats.

Hill Chapel



Exterior and interior work will begin in the summer of 2023 on the Joseph A. Hill Memorial Chapel following a \$1.5 million gift from High Plains Christian Ministries Foundation. Named for the University's second president, the chapel's first cornerstone was laid on June 9, 1950. One of few chapels on the campus of a public university in Texas, the Hill Chapel serves students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community at large.

High Plains Christian Ministries Foundation, in the largest gift in its history, donated \$3

million in February 2021 to fund the Baptist Community Services Nursing Education Floor in Harrington Academic Hall WTAMU Amarillo Center. This additional donation is meant to be "a continuing spiritual gift to WT and its students, faculty, employees and guests," said Steve Dalrymple, president, CEO and chief legal officer of Baptist Community Services.

The foundation's gift will supplement an existing endowment for the chapel, set up in 2018 by **Patsy Cunningham Vaughn '59** in memory of her husband, **Dr. Ronald D. Vaughn '60**, a longtime dentist in Guymon, Oklahoma, among other cities. The couple attended WT and were married Aug. 15, 1959, in the chapel.

"My mom and dad came from the Great Depression, and education was really important for them," said daughter Ronna Vaughn Baird. "They appreciated what WT gave to them, and they really loved that chapel in particular. When the renovations are complete, I really hope mom is able to come visit it again."

WT's One West Campaign Thunders Past \$100 Million in Just Six Months

West Texas A&M University's One West campaign has raised a record-breaking \$108 million just six months since its public launch. The current total—specifically, \$107,755,000, as of March 22—surpasses WT leaders' expectations and more than doubles the amount raised by the University's last fundraising campaign, officials said. The \$125 million comprehensive campaign is the largest and most ambitious fundraising effort across the Texas Panhandle. Thus far, 5,532 donors have given 42,984 gifts as part of the One West campaign. Approximately \$17 million is needed to reach the five-year goal of \$125 million, which was announced when the One West campaign went public Sept. 23 in a massive event held on the floor of the newly renamed Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium.



CAMPUS UPDATES

West Texas A&M University continues to expand, with remodeling and new additions taking place all over the Canyon campus.

As the One West campaign continues, expect to see more transformations across WT.

Here's a glance at some of the University's most recent campus updates:

BAIN ATHLETIC BUILDING:

An approximately 14,000-square-foot addition will provide modern office space for administrators and coaches, academic and meeting room spaces for teams, and enable the program to develop a culture of collaboration and support that are critical to most successful organizations. Bringing the majority of the daily functions of the athletic department under one roof, as part of Buffalo Sports Park, will set the stage for continued excellence in NCAA Division II and the Lone Star Conference. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$9 million.

OLD MAIN:

The campus' oldest building received extensive exterior masonry and stone repairs, totaling about \$367,000. Additional phases of work will take place, as well.

PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM:

The museum underwent \$25,000 in masonry repairs.

WT HORSE CENTER:

The facility is being tied to City of Canyon domestic water system in a \$369,000 project.

VARIOUS LOCATIONS:

Automatic door operators were added to 36 doors across campus to aid in handicap access and enhance minimal touch operation. This was a \$259,000 project. Elevators in Cornette Library, First United Bank Center and Virgil Henson Activities Center also were modernized in a \$407,000 project.

AG SCIENCES COMPLEX:

A new Storm Water Detention Pond was added north of the complex to further improve the University's handling of stormwater.

RODEO ARENA:

About \$85,000 in grading improvements were made to avoid run-off issue from Canyon Independent School District's Happy State Bank Football Stadium, formerly Kimbrough Memorial Stadium.

KILLGORE RESEARCH CENTER:

The building's roof was replaced in a \$294,000 project.

UNIVERSITY DINING HALL:

The Caf's Late Night Dining space received a new look, and additional graphics were added to freshen the area in a \$126,000 project.

CORNETTE LIBRARY / HASTING ELECTRONIC LEARNING CENTER:

The fire alarm system was upgraded in a \$456,000 project.

FIRST UNITED BANK CENTER:

The roof was replaced in a \$666,000 project.

MARY MOODY NORTEN HALL:

Fire alarm upgrades took place in a \$457,000 project.

PARKING LOTS:

More than \$316,000 in repairs were made to lots around campus. An additional \$83,000 was spent to repair various sidewalks.

NANCE RANCH:

More than \$115,000 was spent for studies on upgrades for the research facility.

BIVINS NURSING CENTER:

Space in the building was converted into a research and human motion analysis lab at a cost of about \$64,000.



OPENING SOON

You can count on us. Whether you are traveling for business or pleasure, we're ready to help you experience an unforgettable visit.

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WT Alumni Association

Tradition never Gra

West Texas A&M University is home to one of the most successful athletic programs in all of NCAA Division II, and the 2021-22 campaign continued to prove that. The Buffs and Lady Buffs claimed six Lone Star Conference Championships, three LSC Tournament crowns, two regional championships, and four Top 5 track and field finishes, including the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track & Field Women's National Championship.

The accomplishments on the court, field and track weren't the only milestones for WT Athletics as the department surpassed the 3.0 grade point average mark for the first time in school history. Twelve student-athletes earned Lone Star Conference All-Academic honors while four others were tabbed Academic All-Americans.





For the second time in school history, the Buffs and Lady Buffs finished second in the LEARFIELD Division II Director's Cup with a program-record 862.25 points

Graduates

BY BRENT SEALS



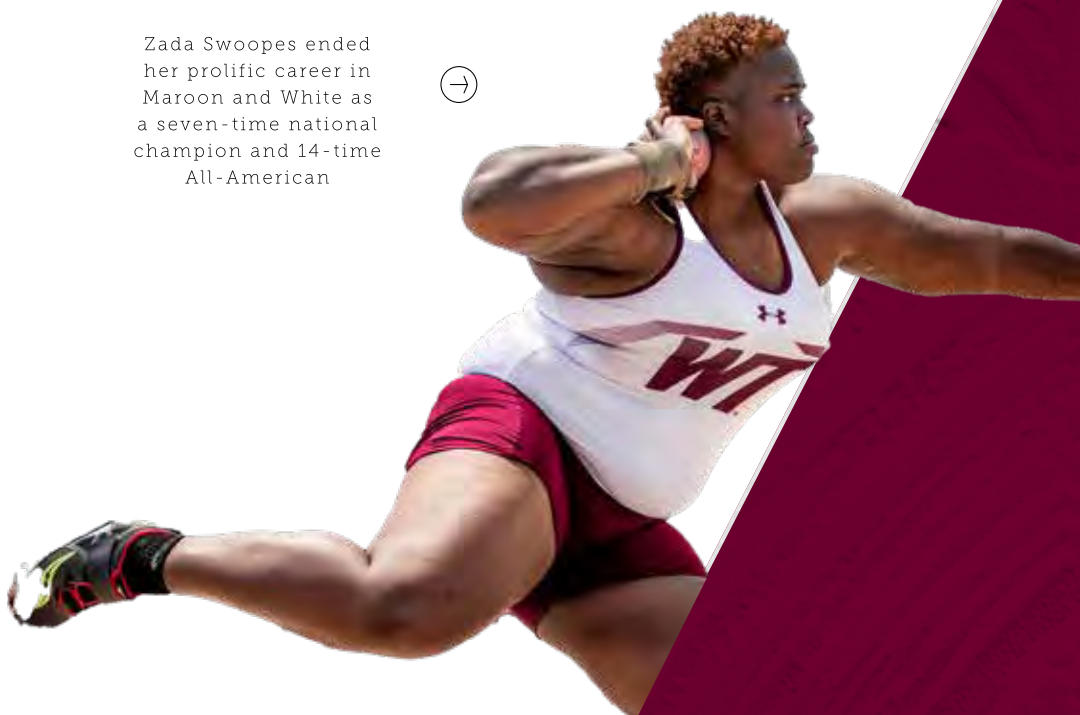
The Lady Buffs are once again atop the Division II Track & Field world as they secured the 2022 Outdoor National Championship in late May. WT claimed its second national title in four years as the Lady Buffs tallied a program record 77 points with 15 All-Americans and four individual national crowns.

Zada Swoopes cemented herself as the top overall thrower in Division II track and field history as the senior from Whitewright scored 25 of the Lady Buffs 77 total points. Swoopes shattered her own school records and greatly improved her position in the hammer throw competition, coming into nationals ranked 15th yet finishing fourth overall. Swoopes ended her prolific career in maroon and white as a seven-time national champion and 14-time All-American.

The men's track and field team made some history of their own in Allendale, Michigan, as they finished second overall at the DII Outdoor National Championships. WT finished on the podium for the second consecutive year, finishing with a program-high 61 points with 16 All-Americans and the 4x100-meter relay National Championship team.

Benjamin Azamati, the fastest man to ever walk the WT campus and the entire Division II track world, busted the elite 10-second mark in the 100-meter dash several times and owns the Division II all-time record at 9.90. That time ranks him fifth all-time of college runners in any division, and he holds Division II's top seven fastest times ever run in the 100.

Zada Swoopes ended her prolific career in Maroon and White as a seven-time national champion and 14-time All-American



The baseball diamond saw one of the top individual single-seasons in program history as infielder Adam Becker was named the 2022 Lone Star Conference Player of the Year. The Midland native finished his junior campaign hitting .402 with 22 doubles, two triples and 22 homeruns to drive in an incredible 92 RBIs.

The Buffs advanced to the NCAA Postseason for the eighth consecutive season, finishing with an overall record of 39-19. Becker earned All-American accolades by three different publications as he and teammate **Ryan Johnson** became the 13th and 14th All-Americans in program history. Johnson was also honored for his efforts in the classroom as a member of the CoSIDA Academic All-America Second Team.

Ruby Salzman moved into sixth on WT Softball's all-time homerun list with 47.

Gam Songprasert received First Team All-American honors, registering Top-25 finishes in all 11 tournaments



WT Softball's **Ruby Salzman** continued her storied career in maroon and white as the California product started all 45 games for the Lady Buffs in centerfield, hitting .385 with 11 doubles and 10 home runs for 37 RBI. She moved to sixth on WT's all-time leaderboard with 47 career home runs, becoming the sixth Lady Buff to reach the 40-mark on her way to D2CCA Honorable Mention All-American honors.

Axel Ochoa has put the WT Men's Golf program on the map as the Buffs qualified for their first NCAA Regional Championship since 2015 following a run to the Lone Star Conference Medal Match Play Championship.

Women's Golf continued their consistency on the national level as **Meredith James** led the program to their sixth NCAA Division II National Championship, advancing to WT's first National Quarterfinal Medal Match Play. Gam Songprasert received First Team All-American honors, registering Top-25 finishes in all 11 tournaments.

Josh Prock guided Lady Buff Basketball to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight during his first season in maroon & white, finishing the campaign with an overall record of 26-11 as WT claimed the LSC regular season and tournament titles followed by a run to the South Central Regional Championship.

Buffalo Basketball finished the 2021-22 campaign 29-7 overall, winning their fifth consecutive LSC Tournament Title and making the program's 20th trip to the NCAA Tournament. **Julius Brown** was rewarded for his efforts on the hardwood as an Honorable Mention All-American.

Eemeli Jarvinen capped off his men's golf career with a scoring average of 73.53 which is the second lowest in program history

For the first time in school history, WT claimed both men's and women's LSC Cross Country Runner of the Year honors with **Innocent Murwanashyaka** and **Florance Uwajenza**. The brother-sister duo each claimed the LSC Crowns while also earning All-America honors.

WT Football finished the campaign with an overall mark of 7-4 with five of those victories coming at the newly renamed Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium. **JT Cavender** and **Tobias Harris** claimed All-Region honors for their efforts in the gridiron while Brandon Blair was named to an Academic All-American.

Hannah Kelley-Lusk was dominant on the pitch for Lady Buffs Soccer in 2021 as the senior was named the Ron Lenz National Player of the Year as well as the Academic Player of the Year. The Farmington, New Mexico, native led the nation in scoring, setting a new school record with 26 goals.

In his 31st year, soccer head coach Butch Lauffer guided the Buffs to the program's seventh trip to the NCAA Division II postseason, advancing to the regional quarterfinals with an overall record of 14-4-1. **Giancarlo Saldana**, **Chris Palomino**, **Anthony Perea** and **Rotem Weiss** earned All-Region honors.

Adam Becker was named the 2022 Lone Star Conference Player of the Year as well as the Panhandle Plains Hall of Fame Baseball Player of the Year, driving in a program single-season record 92 RBI



WT Alumni Scholars & WT Alumni Scholars – Graduate School programs

As WT Alumni, we want to empower you to identify scholars for the WTAS and WTAS – Graduate School programs, those potential students who may benefit from the recognition of someone they know and trust, who need encouragement down the path of higher education.

You become admissions officers - Your choices can change the trajectory of people's lives, impacting entire families and the generations to follow.

All you need to do to recommend students for admission to WT is complete the WT Alumni Scholars Recommendation Form or WT Alumni Scholars – Graduate School program.

WT will contact each person you recommend as a potential WT student and let them know of your confidence in them and our confidence in you.

The WTAS program is in alignment with the Alumni Association's mission:
to foster pride in the University, build and enrich relationships, and create opportunities for lifelong engagement among the University, alumni, and community.

To nominate a student, contact the WT Alumni Association at 806.651.2311 or BuffAlum.com

Brotherly Love

By Chip Chandler

At first, **Randall Boles '74** wasn't sure he wanted a baby brother.

"I was the baby in family until he came along 11 years later and spoiled my whole deal of being the favorite," Boles said.

"He" is **Reggie Boles**, the youngest of four brothers from Winters, near Abilene. And these days, the brothers are closer than ever, reflected in a gift Reggie made in 2021 to West Texas A&M University to establish the Randall M. Boles '74 Scholarship, which awards a minimum of \$1,000 annually to one or more students in the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business.

The youngest Boles didn't go to WT, but he knows how important being a Buff was to Randall, who studied in Canyon in the early days of a discipline that has since changed the world.

Randall Boles graduated with a degree in business administration, but his focus was on Computer Information Systems.

"At the time, computers were in a small bedroom with an air-conditioning unit that was the size of the rest of the house," Randall Boles laughed. "But I was really interested in them—not in the engineering side, but the programming side, where you could have all of this impact pertaining to business. They were just coming onto the scene where a lot more businesses could use them."

He studied under pioneering CIS professors, whom Boles credited with putting WT on the map in the 1970s in the technology field: "Only West Texas State University had a business

degree in computer science."

Randall Boles' path after WT led him through several corporate roles where he created and managed systems for business operations.

"I've been reasonably successful myself," Reggie Boles said, "and most of that, I owe to the trailblazing of my three brothers.

"All three of them went to college. They taught me about business. They taught me how to be kind, all of the things I need to know to be a good husband and a good father," the younger Boles said. "Along with my parents, they raised me well. I owe all of my brothers more than what I can put in a scholarship, but this is one way to give them a bit of recognition for what they've done for me."

In addition to the WT scholarship, Reggie Boles made donations to Texas A&M University and Tarleton State University.

"It's humbling, very humbling," Randall Boles said. "I'm honored and couldn't love and appreciate him more."



Setting up an endowed scholarship enables you to make a direct impact on people, programs and places at WT.

Endowments are a critical mechanism to provide perpetual sustainability for students, faculty, programs and research. When an endowment is created the funds are invested and a portion of the income from the investment is used to support its purpose. This preserves the donor's original gift in perpetuity. In collaboration with WT staff, you can determine the purpose of the endowment. An endowment can also accept additional contributions from other supporters, allowing your impact to extend beyond the scope of your original gift.

Contact the WT Foundation at 806-651-2070 for additional information and to discuss your giving plans.



Analyzing a victory: WT financial team celebrates decade of success

By Chip Chandler

⤴ Daniela Pesic, Trevor Reid, Dylan Janota, and Levi Zemanuel

Students are tested on their core knowledge of equity investments; leadership, management and communication skills; and standards, ethics and regulations. Students present their recommendations to and answer questions from prestigious industry judges.

Four months of intense works culminates in a 20-page analyst report, a 10-minute presentation and a 10-minute question-and-answer session, said Dr. Anne Macy, Gene Edwards Professor of Finance and faculty adviser.

"The students gain skills in financial forecasting and analytics as they create their recommendation," Macy said. "It is an incredible learning experience for our students."

Former team members agree, like Dr. Ashley Morgan '16, assistant professor of marketing and Macy Professor of Business at WT.

"Based on my personal experience, being a member of the CFA team provided the foundation for the research that I enjoy doing into looking at how different aspects of a firm's marketing influences its performance," Morgan said.

The competition showcases what students learn during their time in the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business, said Dr. Barbara Wang, Gene Edwards Professor of Banking and faculty adviser.

Zemanuel agreed.

"Having completed the challenge now, I realize how many of my courses really did prepare me for the CFA Research Challenge," Zemanuel said. "As with most group projects there are some hiccups and our group had those as well, but my principles of management course taught me how to deal with these sorts of occurrences. The marketing course I took allowed me to ensure we were sending an effective message in our report, and we guided readers' eyes in a specific way to help gain the edge to advance. All the finance and economics courses I have taken in undergraduate and graduate coursework was applied in detail."

Other former team members concurred, as well.

"CFA forced me to push through uncertainty and self-doubt. I have mentally and physically navigated uncharted waters," said Alexis Hext '19, a member of the 2019 squad who is a purchasing manager for Ben E. Keith and is working on her master of science in finance and economics at WT. "Without my team and support from faculty and friends, I would not have been able to find success in competition and determine a career path."

Ultimately, the CFA Research Challenge is a proving ground for the selected team members.

"The CFA challenge is special to me because I showed what I can produce as well as it created a solid understanding of what financial analysts do in the industry daily with a much shorter time frame," Zemanuel said. "I was also very proud to represent the Engler College of Business the team selection process is rigorous, and I am glad that Dr. Macy and Dr. Wang gave me the opportunity to compete."

"I understood from the very beginning it was going to be an absolute beast of a task."

Levi Zemanuel, a graduate student in finance and economics from Amarillo, knew he was adding on an immense workload by joining West Texas A&M University's team for the Chartered Financial Analysts' Global CFA Institute Research Challenge.

More than that, he and his three teammates had a legacy to live up to.

WT's CFA team has ranked highly regionally and nationally about a decade. In 2022, Zemanuel worked alongside Dylan Janota, an accounting major from Amarillo; Daniela Pesic, a finance major from Zagreb, Croatia; and Trevor Reid, a finance major from Plainview. The team advanced to the regional championships in February.

Chance Haugen has been promoted to the position of assistant vice president for Student Enrollment, Engagement and Support. Haugen has been at WT since 2005, serving in various and increasingly more senior roles in Campus Rec and the JBK Student Center. Most recently, he coordinated the creation of Thunder Vision, which supports production of content for online streaming of events and content for our venue video boards. Haugen will oversee the departments of Campus Community (JBK Student Center, Kids Kollege and Military and Veterans Services); the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership; and Residential Living.

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Dana Melcher is the executive director for the newly formed Student Financial Services Office. The new office was established with the merger of Scholarship Services and Financial Aid. The office is located in Room 108 of Old Main. The office plans to provide improved financial services and support for all WT students, both current and future.

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Dr. Kristina Drumheller, associate dean for the Departments of Communication and Art, Theatre and Dance, recently was awarded the Chancellor’s Medallion for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The medallion is one of three honors—also including Regents Awards and the Chancellor’s Academy of Teacher Educators Award—given by TAMUS to recognize outstanding System employees. Drumheller has been a champion for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives since she arrived at WT in 2006.

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Research by a West Texas A&M University professor and two students that may help in the search for theoretical particles has been published in a prestigious journal. **Dr. Keshav Shrestha**, assistant professor of physics, and student researchers Duncan Miertschin, a senior physics major from Amarillo, and Thinh (John) Nguyen, a graduate chemistry student from Da Nang, Vietnam, published research on superconducting materials Jan. 10 in Physical Review B, the world’s largest dedicated physics journal. Their research examines topological compounds—materials that conduct electricity faster than anything currently in use. The research team recently conducted experiments at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory in Tallahassee, Fla., and a related study was published in June in Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter.

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The Myrna Raffkind Professorship of Global Education was established following a \$125,000 gift from private donors in memory of Raffkind, a community activist and WT instructor emerita of psychology and sociology, who died in 2017. **Dr. Eddie Henderson**, dean of WT’s Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences, is the first professor named to the position. The endowment will support the Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences’ Go Global initiative, established in 2003 by Henderson and Dr. Angela Spaulding, vice president for research and compliance and dean of the Graduate School. Go Global connects graduate and undergraduate course content with the development of cultural knowledge and cross-cultural understanding, offering students short-term, faculty-directed experiential learning in international settings.

A West Texas A&M University nursing professor is among a handful of higher education professionals around the state who will help a prominent organization bring meaningful change to the profession. **Dr. Priscella Correa**, WT’s Baptist Community Services Professor of Nursing, is one of 12 Texans chosen for the 2022 cohort of Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education’s Career and Leadership Development Institute.

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Drs. Paul Morley, Benjamin Newcomer and **Matthew Scott** from the Texas A&M Veterinary Education, Research & Outreach program were recognized for their research and teaching excellence at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences’ 2022 Honors & Awards Ceremony. They were lauded for exemplifying excellence in research and teaching.

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Dr. Russell F. Miller, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, is the first Lanna and Bob Hatton Professor of Education, following a \$125,000 gift by the Amarillo couple. Miller joined the WT faculty in fall 2021 and will be the director of educator preparation beginning in September. An Amarillo native, Miller worked in K-12 schools in Amarillo, Missouri and Central Texas for 16 years, including working as a teacher, coach and administrator. The Hattons established a major endowment fund in December 2020 for the WT Department of Education, one of the early gifts in the historic, \$125 million One West comprehensive fundraising campaign. This additional \$125,000 gift supports teaching and research related to virtual instruction and learning.

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Jeremie Middleton is the new executive director of Title IX and Community Standards. He will lead the University efforts for matters dealing with Title IX, Civil Rights and Student Conduct. “Jeremie is a proven and effective leader in his current role as Student Conduct Officer as well as the interim role of Title IX Director” said Randy Rikel, vice president for business and finance. “He is an asset to the Buffalo family.”

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A new initiative that will shine a spotlight on the contributions of Mexican Americans in the High Plains will be funded through a newly announced grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Center for the Study of the American West at West Texas A&M University was granted \$148,728 to fund its “Forgotten Frontera: The Mexican American Southern Plains” initiative, the NEH announced Jan. 11. This initiative responds to the lack of recognition of the unique Mexican American presence in our region, according to **Dr. Alex Hunt**, CSAW director, Regents Professor of English and Vincent-Haley Professor of Western Studies.

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Dr. Mikyung Shin, assistant professor of special education, was named to the Bill Piehl Professorship, and **Dr. Mallory Vestal**, associate professor of agricultural business and economics, was named to the Plug Piehl Professorship. The positions were established following a gift of \$250,000 by businesswoman and philanthropist Helen Piehl in honor of her daughters, Puff Niegos and Plug Piehl.

'60s

Bill '67 and Liz (Brownlee) '70

Briscoe met during their time at WT and currently reside in Canyon. Bill retired from a career with State Farm, and Liz is a retired teacher. He recently published "Perfect Playback", his fourth book in The Pepperman Mystery series. The first two books were released during the year of his 50th anniversary of WT graduation, and the third book was published during their 50th wedding anniversary year. Liz helps Bill in marketing the book series.

Jack Woodville London '69

visited Antarctica during a recent expedition involving biodiversity testing. Jack served in the US Army, served as court room lawyer for 42 years, and has authored award-winning historical and military novels.

'70s

Karen Baggerly '75 recently retired after serving 45 years as a nurse and nurse administrator with the Lubbock Methodist Hospital/ Covenant Health System. She also served as the



Covenant Health System Regional Chief Nursing Executive.

'80s

Tonya Detten '89 recently was appointed by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to the Red River Authority of Texas Board of Directors. Tonya, a Panhandle native, is a labor relations senior specialist for CNS Pantex. She is a member of Project Management Professionals and the State Bar of Texas Grievance Committee, District 13. Previously, she served on the board of the Amarillo Little Theatre. She is the President of the Highland Park Independent School District School Board.

class notes

WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

Shannon Gillespie '85 is currently the director of operations at Valero Energy Corporation. He and his wife, **Rachel '86**, currently live in Dumas and have five children, two of whom will earn their degrees from WT. Shannon is the founding member of the Top of Texas Alumni Chapter which covers the top six northwest counties in the Panhandle. Rachel is currently a student advisor for Amarillo College. They own a cabinet company, Beacon Cabinetry, and have a family farm west of Dumas.



Plains Bancorp, Inc., holding company for First United Bank, is proud to announce the addition of **Gary Hinders '81** to the Canyon team. Hinders will serve as a Senior

Vice President of Commercial Lending and will office at the Canyon Banking Center located at 801 23rd St.

Hinders, a longtime resident of Canyon, comes to First United Bank with 29 years of experience in the financial industry. He is an '81 graduate of West Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Business and Economics. Hinders and his wife of 39 years, Linda, have three children and five grandchildren. Hinders is an active member and leader of the Canyon community. He currently serves as Mayor of Canyon and is a member of the Noon Lions Club, WTAMU School of Business Advisory Committee, WTAMU School of Agriculture Advisory Committee, the Canyon EDC Board, the Dreamland Cemetery Board and is a member of Summit Church. When Hinders isn't banking or serving his community, he enjoys backpacking and skiing with friends and family.

'90s

Rosalind Alderman '91 is vice president for enrollment management at St. Mary's University where Rosalind has worked at St. Mary's for 29 years and has excelled in the profession of higher education.

Della Watson '90, '94 was awarded a 2021 Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award by Humanities Texas. While she has taught English language



arts and reading, junior high and high school band, elementary music, and dyslexia at Paducah High since 2018, Watson's classroom career spans 15 years.

Willie Daughters '91 has been named the chief operating officer and executive vice president of operations at Reynolds & Reynolds. Willie has been with the company since 1992. He, wife Amy and family live in Tomball.

April Pollreis '99 recently was reappointed to the Rehabilitation Council of Texas by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. The statewide council works with the Texas Workforce Commission to advocate for people with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process. April is also the chair of the State Independence Living Council.

Wade Callaway '95 is the superintendent of Gruver Independent School District. Under his leadership, both the elementary and junior high school have been nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Schools awards from the US Department of Education. Also with Gruver ISD is Girls' Athletic Coordinator **Trent Lankford '97**, who led the Gruver Lady Hounds to the 2022 Class 2A State Championship in an undefeated season.

'00s



Nolan '02 and Salem Wieck Silvey '00 are back in the United States after serving several years abroad with the Christian

Midwife Initiative. Together they oversaw member care and mobilization efforts in the Philippines. They now reside with their four children in Fritch.

Sedrick Knowlton '09 has been named associate director for marketing & fan experience for West Texas A&M University Athletics. Sedrick will oversee the development and execution of sport marketing plans as well as the experience fans have while attending games.

The following WT Alumni were named to the 2021 Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Top 20 under 40 Young Professional Award: **Kathryn Coppinger '13, Lori James '12, Tucker Lee '08, Sabrina Meck Perez '13, Megan Reed '20, and Trevor Spradling '09**. This award is given to outstanding young professionals in the Amarillo area.

'10s

Katie Trujillo-Acosta '13 has published two children's books: "Growing Spaghetti" and "Navidad Means Christmas: A New Mexican Holiday Story." Each of the books shares a heartwarming story plus a recipe to enjoy with your family.

JT Sherrer '14 is the customer service manager at AT&T Stadium. He recently helped out with Super Bowl LVI as customer service support. He, wife Natalie and son Harrison Michael live in North Richland Hills.

Kelsey Ward '14 and **Joel Enriquez '10** were named the 2021 Canyon of Chamber of Commerce Woman and Man of the Year. Kelsey serves as the Canyon branch manager for Education Credit Union and Joel serves as the assistant vice president at Wellington State Bank, Canyon Branch.

Ben Arbuckle '18 has been named the co-offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach and play caller at Western Kentucky University. That makes Ben



one of the youngest coordinators in all of Division 1 Football. During his time at WT, Ben was the quarterback of the Buffalos Football team.

Continued from Pg. 3

That's Dr. Engler to you

Paul Engler, the self-made entrepreneur who revolutionized the cattle-feeding industry, was awarded an honorary doctorate May 7 by West Texas A&M University. Engler was presented with an honorary Ph.D. in business administration and agriculture from both colleges that bear his name: WT's Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business and Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. Honorary degrees offer the University opportunity to recognize excellence in the fields of public affairs, the sciences, humanities and the arts, scholarship and education, business and philanthropy and social services with significant and lasting contributions to community. In 2017, Engler and the Paul F. and Virginia J. Engler Foundation agreed to donate \$1 million a year for at least 80 years to the University for both the Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences and the Engler College of Business. It currently stands as the largest gift in WT history.

WT Programs Receive High Rankings – Again!

West Texas A&M University once again received high rankings from multiple sources. WT's online MBA program ranked No. 9 this year in Fortune Magazine, up from No. 12 the year before. University Headquarters, which has published more than 150 degree guides and more than 100 college reviews, ranked WT's software engineering degree program at No. 30 on its list of most affordable software engineering rankings. WT's online undergraduate program is the best in Texas and No. 24 in the country, according to newly released 2022 rankings from U.S. News & World Report. Several graduate programs also rank highly state- and nationwide in the new standings, with eight total programs earning the magazine's coveted Best Program status: overall undergraduate, undergraduate business, specialized graduate business, MBA programs and graduate programs in computer information technology, education, engineering and nursing. OnlineMastersDegrees.org, a national ranking body that uses data from the U.S. Department of Education, placed WT's online master's in information systems at No. 17 and master's in communications at No. 34 among its 2022 college rankings.

One of WT's essential nursing programs is the best in Texas and one of the best in the country, according to a respected analyst. Nursing Process ranked WT's online RN-to-BSN program No. 6 in the nation in a recent report. WT's program is the only one in Texas to make the list. And, for a fifth consecutive year, a WT graduate program in business landed at No. 2 in rankings compiled prestigious analyst TFE Times. WT's master of science in finance and economics has been in the Top 10 for a total of eight consecutive years.

Major Gift from Bivins Foundation Supports WT Nursing

West Texas A&M University student nurses in the region's most successful nursing program have a new place to study and recharge, thanks to a generous gift from the Mary E. Bivins Foundation. The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on Feb. 17 approved a proposal to name a student lounge in the Bivins Foundation's honor in the Baptist Community Services Nursing Education Floor at Harrington Academic Hall WTAMU Amarillo Center in downtown Amarillo. The Mary E. Bivins Student Lounge is located on the second floor of the center, which was completely renovated ahead of classes beginning in fall 2021. The extensive fundraising effort to accomplish that transformation included a \$250,000 grant from the Bivins Foundation.

WT Alumna Pledges \$1.8 Million for Women's Athletics Scholarships, Program Support

A former WT female athlete who played at a time when women had to hustle not only in their sport but also for resources to play will give nearly \$2 million to provide scholarships for student athletes and assistance for each of WT's women's athletics teams. Judy Fugate, an Amarillo resident who played badminton and bowled for the University in the 1960s and early 1970s, has set up the Judy Fugate Lady Buff Scholarship endowment, a \$1.85 million legacy gift to the One West comprehensive fundraising campaign that will ensure top female athletes will receive annual scholarships. In its inaugural year, that means that at least one athlete in every women's sport at WT will receive a scholarship. The money also will allow the creation of the J. Fugate Fund for Lady Buffs Athletics, which will provide critical program support for every women's team.

Showcase in a Suitcase gets upgrade

A program that brings performances by West Texas A&M University artists to towns around the Texas Panhandle has now been permanently funded by a Dalhart couple. The Louise C. and Gene F. Rahl Endowment for the Showcase in a Suitcase program was officially celebrated during an April 9 concert by WT Jazz at the La Rita Theatre in Dalhart. The Rahl's \$300,000 gift to WT's One West comprehensive fundraising campaign will enable WT's cultural impact to extend around the Texas Panhandle.

WT Alumni Association
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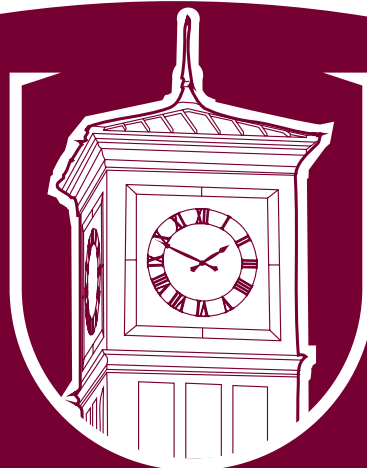
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