

the WEST TEXAN

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



THUNDERING *on*

CONGRATULATIONS, LADY BUFFS!



NCAA DIVISION II NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!



VICTORY IS SWEET!

For the first time in 25 years, the West Texas A&M Lady Buffs are crowned the NCAA Division II National Champions!

The No. 9-ranked Lady Buffs defeated No. 3 Concordia-St. Paul in four sets on Dec. 3. WT finished the 2022 season with 26-match win streak, with Bryli Contreras, Abi Nash, Kayla Elliott and Torrey Miller earning All-Tournament honors. Miller also was named the National Tournament Most Valuable Player.

The 2022 WT Volleyball Team:

Emma Becker, Zahria Parker, Piper Warren, Taytum Stow, Ashlyn Vinyard, Jaycee Adams, Ainsley Malis, Camy Jones, Ainsley Meissner, Abi Nash, Blair Moreland, Bryli Contreras, Kayla Elliott, Lindsey Bullard, Angelina Oliver, Carly Evetts, Samantha Jordan, Katrina Johnson, Emma Patterson, Torrey Miller

Coaching Staff: Kendra Potts, Casey Shingler, Brooke Alverson

GO BUFFS GO!



CONGRATULATIONS!

KENDRA POTTS

AVCA National Coach of the Year

AVCA South Central Regional
Coach of the Year

CASEY SHINGLER

AVCA Assistant Coach of the Year

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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On the Cover: Thunder, WT's live mascot, roars onto the field at Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium with The Herdsmen during the Oct. 1 Homecoming game. Photo courtesy of WT Athletics.

EXECUTIVE TEAM LETTER



Ronnie Hall has had the opportunity to meet thousands of students and alumni in his 27 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,

Thank you for everything you do to represent our university, community and the Buff family! As a Buff Alum and friend, you're an integral part of West Texas A&M University. There are a lot of exciting things going on at WT, and if you are not engaged with the WT Alumni Association, we hope you will join us now.

Your membership is one of the best ways to stay connected to the WT family and to support the University. Your support provides services, programs and events for students and alumni. These activities would not be possible without people like you. Our goal is to create meaningful opportunities for our students and alumni to engage with each other and with our University. Your generosity speaks to the spirit of WT.

One thing to point out is that we now have two ways that you can join the WT Alumni Association. The Traditional Membership, where you get all the benefits and WT swag and the College Loyalty Membership, where half your membership goes back to the college of your choice and you get membership into your college specific network. Please see the back cover of The West Texan for more details and learn how to join.

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



Activate your
Alumni Association membership
online at BuffAlum.com.

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WT Alumni Association

Simply the Best

WT is one of the top regional universities and public schools in the West, according to new rankings from U.S. News & World Report. The magazine's recently released 2022-23 Best Colleges list places WT at No. 26 in the list of Top Public Universities in the West and at No. 57 in the full Regional Universities (West) list. WT also ranked among Best Value Schools, Top Performers on Social Mobility, Best Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programs and Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs.

First Fugate Scholars Honored

Seven women athletes from WT were named as the first recipients of the Judy Fugate Lady Buff Scholarship endowment, established in April following the announcement of a \$1.85 million legacy gift to the University's One West comprehensive fundraising campaign. The student-athletes—representing each of WT's women's athletics teams—are **Jayla Burgess**, basketball; **Alyssa Campbell**, golf; **Elliot Harrison**, track & field; **Reagan Matacale**, soccer; **Antonella Periotti Omisolo**, golf; **Emma Patterson**, volleyball; and **Emilee Wilson**, softball. **Fugate '72** played badminton and bowled for the University in the 1960s and early 1970s, competing in a time before Title IX guaranteed equal access and quality in athletic programs at federally funded educational institutions across the nation.

Safety First

An independent analyst has once again named Canyon, the home of West Texas A&M University, as one of the safest college towns in the country. SafeWise, a leading online site for all things safety and security, said that Canyon is the safest college town in Texas and the 21st-safest college town in America. Last year, SafeWise ranked Canyon No. 24 in America. Canyon is the only city in Texas to make the Top 50 either last year or this year.

Plugging into esports

WT hired **Levi Zemanuel '21** as its new esports coach to head its eight varsity-level squads and began offering scholarship opportunities for esports athletes. Esports, which is short for electronic sports, are video game competitions, frequently organized, multiplayer contests between individuals or teams. In the late 2000s, the popularity of esports grew enormously, as professional players competed in livestreamed matches that could be watched by fans around the world, often on YouTube or Twitch. Though considered a nontraditional sport, players must develop skills in planning, timing and execution to be successful.

Speaking Business

A pair of podcasts launched this semester are exploring leadership and entrepreneurship, thanks to students and faculty in the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business. BuffSpeak and the Stan Sigman Leadership and Innovation Podcast can be found at BuffSpeak.biz or Sigman.wtamu.edu, respectively, or any major podcast app. Both podcasts are co-produced by Media Minds, the student-run marketing arm of the Engler College of Business.

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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A Texas native with a deep passion for regional universities will be West Texas A&M University's new vice president for student affairs. **Dr. Christopher Thomas**, currently vice president for student affairs at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana, began his new duties at WT on Dec. 1. Thomas joins the WT administration in a new role following the elevation of enrollment management to the vice-presidential level. Mike Knox was named vice president for enrollment management Aug. 1 and assumed that role full time Oct. 3. **Amber Black '02, '14**, assistant vice president for student affairs, served as interim vice president for student affairs until Thomas' arrival.

.....

Two new leaders were named in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities. **Dr. Kristina Drumheller** now serves as associate dean for communication, art, theatre and dance, and **Anne Medlock** has been named head of the Department of Art, Theatre and Dance.

.....

A faculty member in WT's Department of Communication recently was named University Educator of the Year by the Texas Speech Communication Association. **Dr. Carolyn Baum '10**, assistant professor of communication, received the honor at the association's annual convention held in early October in Rockwall. TSCA is the largest state professional communication association in the nation. The association serves communication professionals and high school, college and university educators in 20 districts across Texas.

.....

Brian Enevoldsen has been named managing director of the WT Enterprise Center. A Texas Panhandle native, Enevoldsen previously served as WTEC's program manager, providing oversight of WTEC's 31,000 square-foot incubator and multiple programs, including Amarillo EnterPrize Challenge, commercialization, micro-loan packaging and client coaching. In his new role, he will focus on partnerships with local, state, federal, and non-profit organizations that together build a robust ecosystem supporting entrepreneurship across the entire Texas Panhandle. WTEC and its sister department, America's SBDC at WTAMU, will continue to provide economic development outreach on behalf of West Texas A&M University to local businesses including joint coaching and consulting, community programs, and training.

One of West Texas A&M University's longest-serving deans will return full-time to the classroom. **Dr. Eddie Henderson**, longtime dean of the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences, will step down Aug. 31 unless a successor is appointed sooner.

The position will be advertised nationally beginning in November, with interviews expected to begin in late February. A 14-person search committee of administrators, staff, faculty and community representatives has been formed. Henderson joined WT in August 2000 as head of the Division of Education. In addition, **Dr. Lisa Garza**, an associate professor of sociology, now serves as associate dean of the College; **Dr. Betty Coneway '06**, the Geneva Schaeffer Professor of Education and Social Sciences, is the head of the Department of Education; and **Dr. Laura Bell**, associate professor of political science, is head of both the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice and the Department of Psychology, Sociology and Social Work.

.....

Dr. Paul Morley, a professor at the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and director of research for the Veterinary Education, Research, & Outreach program, was selected as the holder of the newly established Sally Rau McIntosh Endowed Chair for Veterinary Strategic Initiatives. The chair was created by Sally Rau McIntosh in December 2021 to support the teaching, research, service, and professional development activities of its holder. Morley began his four-year term as the Sally Rau McIntosh Endowed Chair in September.

.....

WT will continue to bolster its acclaimed nurse practitioner program thanks to a newly established professorship. **Dr. Angela Phillips** is now the Mike Wartes Professor of Nursing and Health Sciences, a position that will enable her to continue the kind of work that has resulted in WT's program being ranked No. 1 in Texas for three consecutive years.

.....

Two WT professors received federal funding for their efforts to better understand refugees' needs and obstacles faced during emergencies in Texas. Leading the study are **Dr. Ming Xie**, assistant professor of emergency management administration in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice in the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences, and **Dr. Li Chen**, associate professor of media communication in the Department of Communication in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities. Their successful grant application will fund "Turning Every Disaster into an Opportunity: An Exploratory Study on Refugees Perceived Emergency Management Capacity and Disaster Resilience." Once the study is complete, the researchers hope to propose solutions to help refugees better prepare for disasters. The FEMA grant allocates more than \$7,800 in funding toward the two professors' research, which will run from Sept. 6 to July 31.

Continued on page 31

Making Science Fun

A West Texas A&M University professor and his students are making it easier for students around the Panhandle to understand climate science. **Dr. Naruki Hiranuma** and students in the WT Climate Science Society have developed an outreach program to teach climate science to various age groups—a program that they hope to loan out to schools around the state and the globe. Since September 2020, Hiranuma and the CSS students have presented the program to more than 750 students at 21 outreach events. Additionally, nine Canyon Independent School District after-school teachers and seven education officers at the Don Harrington Discovery Center and the Amarillo Zoo have trained to conduct the program.

Saddle Up

WT's horse judging team thundered into top positions at several recent national competitions. The teams were named champions at November's American Quarter Horse Association World Championship and the National Reining Championship. The team also was named reserve champion at the All-American Quarter Horse Congress judging competition and the American Paint Horse Association Collegiate World Championship, both in October.

Great WT Nurses

Ten nurses educated at West Texas A&M University were honored among the Panhandle Great 25 Nurses for 2022. The list, which includes eight WT-educated nurses, was chosen by a committee in collaboration with Texas Nurses Association District 2 and the Panhandle Organization of Nurse Executives. **Dr. Holly Jeffreys '97, '02**, the current head of the WT Department of Nursing, was named to the list along with **Silvia Garbalena-Esparza '07**; **Allison Henry '02**; **Mary Irwin '86**; **Lexi McAnally '15**; **Teresa McClain '17**; **Jamie Milton '11**; and **Melissa Smith '05**. **Sue Rankin '88** was named to the Texas Nurses Association District 2 Hall of Fame, and **Dr. Michael Evans '74** received the Legacy Award.

Making Beautiful Music

The WT Brass Quintet was one of only five quintets chosen from around the world to participate in Stockholm Chamber Brass's seventh Academy for Chamber Music in July in Leksand, Sweden. Comprised of faculty members of WT's School of Music in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities, WT Brass Quintet includes horn player trumpet **Dr. William Takacs**, professor of music; trumpet **Dr. Russell Teweleit**, professor of music; **Dr. Guglielmo Manfredi**, professor of music; trombone **Dr. John G. Shanks**, associate professor of music; and tuba **Dr. Jeremy Lewis**, associate professor of low brass. At the academy, WT ensemble members took part in masterclasses, recitals and a group concert with other quintet members.

Celebrating Donors

The West Texas A&M University Foundation honored generous and faithful supporters Oct. 13 at the University's Celebration of Donors. Amarillo couple **Lanna and Bob Hatton**, who have made significant gifts to the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences and the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities, received the Pinnacle Award. **Dr. Barbara Bain '60**, **Dr. Helen Piehl '71** and the late **Dr. Geneva Schaeffer '55** were named the shared recipients of the President's Panhandle Pioneer Award by WT President Walter V. Wendler. The event also recognized members of the Old Main Society and featured hands-on demonstrations of research and other scholarly activities by students and faculty members.

Continued on page 31

PLANTING A SEED

COLE'S ESTATE PLANNING WILL HAVE LONG-RANGE IMPACT

To pay his way through college, **Dr. Andy Cole '71** used proceeds from crops grown on his own land on the family farm.

Generations later, West Texas A&M University students are still reaping the benefits.

"When I went to school, college wasn't as expensive as it is today. I had a lot of money saved up to pay my way through, but it's a lot harder today to do that than it used to be," Cole said. "If I can do something to help students make it through college a little easier, I think I'm doing a good deed there."

Today, Cole—one of the newest members of the WTAMU Foundation board of directors—established the Cole Agriculture Scholarship in 2005, which has helped 40 students reach their educational goals. In addition, he has made a planned gift of nearly \$300,000 through a charitable annuity, his will and his life insurance policy.

"The annuity works very nicely," Cole said. "I get a fixed percentage of that each year as income for me, and when I pass on, the University gets the rest."

"It's economically smart as well as charitable," he continued. "It checked off a lot of good boxes, I guess you could say."

Cole earned his degree in agriculture, specializing in animal science. He later earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. in animal nutrition at Oklahoma State University before working 40 years at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Research Lab in Bushland as a nutritionist and, for four years before retiring, as the lab director.

Giving began early: Cole was one of the organizers of the Ag Development Association's Ag Day, which has raised more than \$1 million for the Department of Agricultural Sciences.

"We started by raising \$3,000 and were tickled to death by that," Cole said. "I like to think it's been good for the department."

In addition, Cole has contributed to multiple scholarship funds in the department, as well as funding the Dr. N. Andy Cole Collaboration Area on the third floor of the Happy State Bank Academic and Research Building in the Agricultural Sciences Complex.

"There is no better testimony of the value of an education than to have a graduate reach high success in their career followed by them making significant donations to their alma mater," said **Dr. Kevin Pond**, dean of the Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences.

Pond said Cole's donations specifically target areas that helped him be a successful scientist so that others can follow his path to make additional positive contributions to society.

"I'm in a unique situation," Cole said. "I have no kids of my own, and I've always thought it was good to give back. I've been very lucky. I've had an excellent career as a scientist—a career that I've really enjoyed and made good money from. I wanted to give back to the people and organizations that allowed that to happen, so WT and OSU came to mind."

"I just thought I needed to return the favor."

Makenzie Norden, a junior animal science major from Sugar Land, has won the Cole scholarship twice.

"This scholarship means a lot to me and my family because I have two other siblings in college and my mom is going back to finish her bachelor's degree and figuring out how to pay for school is challenging," Norden said. "The Cole Agriculture Scholarship has helped relieve some of the financial stress and allowed me to focus on academics and getting involved around campus. I can't thank Dr. Cole enough for establishing this scholarship, and I hope it can help many students in the future like it helped me."

"Some people have time. Some people have money," Cole said. "I've had so many friends I've tried to convince to give back to the University. The University helped get you where you are."

"There are so many options to donate to," he continued. "I just think that the University is a big one because it was so important in my life and so important in my career."



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WT STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MARKS 10 YEARS

BY BRAD NEWMAN

One West Texas A&M University program is celebrating a decade of equipping student leaders.

Created in 2012, the Dyke and Terry Rogers Leadership Education and Development Program, or Rogers LEAD WT, selects students with high leadership potential and trains them with both academic leadership theory and hands-on experience.

"Rogers LEAD WT really empowers students and gives them the confidence and skills they need to succeed," said **Missy Macon '00, '03**, program director. "Watching students step into their potential is so rewarding."

Since its establishment, more than 200 WT students have participated in the two-year program.

Area philanthropists **Dyke '70 and Terry '88 Rogers** started Rogers LEAD WT, endowing it with a \$1 million gift in 2014. Dyke Rogers was named a WT Distinguished Alumnus in 2019.

"We wanted to establish a program that might encourage people who maybe haven't seen their potential for leadership to reach their potential and make a difference in the communities they live," said Dyke Rogers.

As residents of Dalhart, Texas, with a population of 8,000, Dyke and Terry know firsthand the impact that someone with leadership abilities can make in small communities, Dyke said.

"Watching
students step
into their
potential is so
rewarding."

-Missy Macon,
program director

Up to 25 students are chosen for the prestigious program each year. The program is aimed at students who are willing and eager to learn and better themselves.

Each cohort participates in a weekly leadership class, led by Dr. Rick Haasl, faculty program director. Students are taught leadership theory, given assignments, and engage in classroom discussions throughout the course.

The program also includes a "real-life" component, Macon said.

"They get to apply all that they're learning in the classroom in real-life projects," she said. Students serve in the community in internships with nonprofit organizations, work together in teams on program projects, and each cohort concludes by preparing and presenting a

community leadership conference on campus.

The program trains students in professional skills like networking, resume writing, interviewing, and public speaking. It also aims to prepare students with values that will allow them to excel in any workforce setting.

"This program provides a holistic approach on how to be a contributing member of society," said Rogers LEAD WT alumnus **Miguel Soto '16, '18**. "It's such a good opportunity for students."



Soto, from Friona, is now the assistant director for orientation services at Texas Tech University.

"Because of my experience in the program, I know how to step into spaces with confidence, having the confidence and tools to present myself well," he said.

Keila Valdez '19 also participated in Rogers LEAD WT and now serves students at Denton High School as an adviser in the Division of Student Affairs at the University of North Texas.

"Now I can implement the lessons of leadership I learned to these high school students," Valdez said.

WT marked the 10-year anniversary of the program during its Homecoming celebration in October. Alumni of the program have graduated to become engineers, professors, teachers, coaches, and family leaders, Dyke Rogers said.

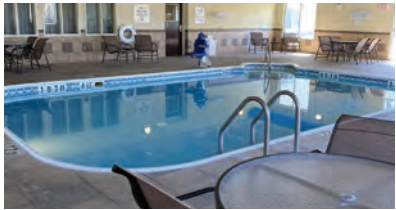
"People have had transformational experiences in the program, and it's so heartwarming to watch the progress they make."

Dyke Rogers said he is proud of how the program has matured and expanded in the past decade, and that he is grateful to be able to invest in a university that represents the Texas Panhandle so well.

"WT is now a first-choice institution," said Dyke Rogers, who currently has two grandchildren attending WT. "What's happening at the university now should inspire anyone from this region to consider, this is a place to be involved in."



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Proud WT alum
Gary Barnes '78

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What It Means to Be a

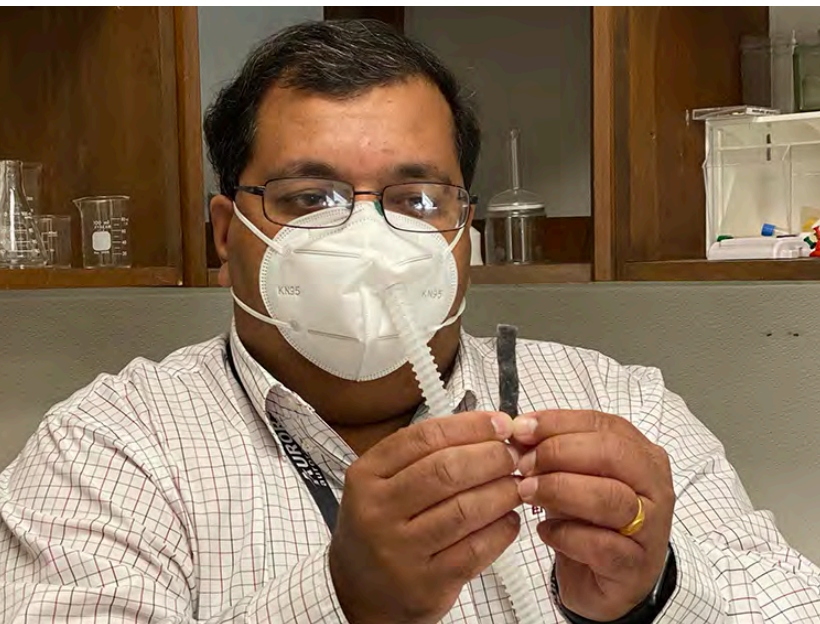
Regional Research University

By Chip Chandler

Every day, students, faculty and staff across West Texas A&M University are searching for solutions to problems facing not only the Panhandle community, but also those gripping similar regions around the world.

They're fulfilling the singular goal of the University's long-range plan, **WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World**, which is to cement WT as a Regional Research University.

But what, exactly, is a Regional Research University?



Among WT faculty members engaging in far-reaching research are, from top, Dr. Vinu Unnikrishnan, Dr. Tim Bowman, Dr. Bonnie Roos and Dr. Amy Von Lintel.



“Simply put, the overall purpose of a regional research university is to serve regional students and regional needs first, believing that if the institution can’t serve locally first, it will serve nowhere well,” WT President Walter V. Wendler said. “This focus does not limit a Regional Research University’s worldwide reach; instead, it reaffirms through transferability, that by focusing first on the region, the needs of similar regions across the nation and world will benefit from its attention, research and resolution of the challenges and opportunities that characterize the region.”

That’s precisely what the College of Engineering did when it developed Copper Clean. The Buffalo Technology Group—led by the College’s dean, **Dr. Emily Hunt**—developed a copper alloy that wipes out viruses and bacteria. It’s easy to see how that’s applicable not only to the Panhandle, but to people around the globe.

The fragility of the Ogallala Aquifer is similar to other water supplies around the world. When **Hannah Tripp ‘21**, who recently earned her master’s in environmental science, learned at WT how satellite imagery could be used to measure playa lakes on a weekly basis, rather than annually, she realized that other scientists could take that data and gain new insight into the lakes, which not only refuel aquifers but also sustain a number of species.

Dr. Naruki Hiranuma, associate professor of environmental sciences in WT’s Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, has a research team studying how particles in the air over the Arctic and elsewhere develop into clouds, ultimately helping shed light on precipitation formation and the climate of the future.

Dr. Vinu Unnikrishnan, an assistant professor of civil engineering, has been awarded several patents for silicone-based tissue that acts the same way as human tissue, which can help researchers develop shoe insoles for diabetic patients, personal protective equipment and wearable electronic devices, including prosthetics.



WT's Beef Carcass Research Center, established in 1992, provides an invaluable repository of data for pharmaceutical companies, feedlot research trials, university research trials, seedstock producers and other entities. And the Nance Ranch, donated to WT in 1971, provides a variety of unique resources and educational experiences on a working ranch, as will the recently gifted Gerdson Ranch.

But research isn't limited to hard sciences. Valuable work also is being done by University representatives in an array of fields.

Dr. Amy Von Lintel, a WT professor of art history and director of gender studies, and **Dr. Bonnie Roos**, professor of English and department head for English, Philosophy and Modern Languages, recently published "Three Women Artists: Expanding Abstract Expressionism in the American West," which argues that not only did women play a significant role in the development of the pivotal American art movement of abstract expressionism, but so did collectors in the Texas Panhandle.

Dr. Timothy Bowman, head of the Department of History, recently published "You Will Never Be One of Us: A Teacher, a Texas Town and the Rural Roots of Radical Conservatism," a balanced examination of how conservatism in the Panhandle in the 1970s was a precursor to political battles being waged today.

And it's not just faculty members and graduate students who are tackling worldwide problems.

McNair Scholars like **Aurora Garcia-Comer**, a senior biology major from Borger, are already making significant progress in areas of critical need. Garcia-Comer studied two types of epoxy resins, looking for viable substitutions for petroleum-based materials, which could help slow the depletion of petroleum and take advantage of renewable sources.

"Research provides new directions and solutions for current problems, increases attention and sensitivity toward complex issues, gives voice to our communities, removes barriers, creates new products and processes, and has the power to propel humanity forward," said **Dr. Angela Spaulding**, vice president for research and compliance and dean of the WT Graduate School.

Researchers Dr. Elise Wilbourn, left, and Dr. Naruki Hiranuma monitor data from equipment in Alaska for a study on measuring climate change.



Making a Difference

Research activity can be found all across WT. Here are some additional projects taking place:

Dr. Ming Xie and **Dr. Li Chen** won a FEMA grant to investigate refugees' needs and obstacles during emergencies. Xie is an assistant professor of emergency management administration in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice in the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences, and Chen is an associate professor of media communication in the Department of Communication in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities.

Dr. Minseok Yang and **Dr. Janet Hindman**, both of the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences, are researching how labor market issues impact student outcomes in rural schools.

Zeth Collom, an instructor and speech-language pathologist in the Department of Communication Disorders in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, is looking into vocal fatigue in public school teachers. He plans to develop a program to provide local school districts with preventative voice training.

For the Center for Learning Disabilities, **Dr. Michelle Simmons** is researching educational assessment of children with special needs, as well as special educator preparation program practices, among other topics.

In the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business, **Dr. Leslie Ramos Salazar**, the Abdullat Professor of Business, and **Dr. Jillian Yarbrough**, clinical assistant and the Virginia Engler Professor of Business, are currently examining the motivating factors of practicing workplace spirituality and the positive effects of workplace spirituality among employees and organizations in the Texas Panhandle.





Dec. 30	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 1	3 p.m.
Jan. 5	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	3 p.m.
Jan. 12	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	3 p.m.
Jan. 19	7 p.m.
Jan. 21	3 p.m.
Jan. 26	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	3 p.m.
Feb. 2	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	3 p.m.
Feb. 9	8:30 p.m. CT
Feb. 11	4 p.m. CT
Feb. 16	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 18	3 p.m.
Feb. 23	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 25	3 p.m.

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Odessa, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Dallas, Texas
Tyler, Texas
Lawton, Okla.
Wichita Falls, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Portales, N.M.
Silver City, N.M.
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Lubbock, Texas

2022-23 MEN'S BASKETBALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

2022-23 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Dec. 30	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 1	1 p.m.
Jan. 5	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 7	1 p.m.
Jan. 12	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 14	1 p.m.
Jan. 19	6 p.m.
Jan. 21	1 p.m.
Jan. 26	5:30 p.m.
Jan. 28	1 p.m.
Feb. 2	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 4	1 p.m.
Feb. 9	6:30 p.m. CT
Feb. 11	2 p.m. CT
Feb. 16	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 18	1 p.m.
Feb. 23	5:30 p.m.
Feb. 25	1 p.m.

Midwestern State
Cameron
Angelo State
UT Permian Basin
Western New Mexico
Eastern New Mexico
Texas Women's
UT Tyler
Cameron
Midwestern State
UT Permian Basin
Angelo State
Eastern New Mexico
Western New Mexico
St. Mary's
St. Edwards
Lubbock Christian
Lubbock Christian

Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
San Angelo, Texas
Odessa, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Denton, Texas
Tyler, Texas
Lawton, Okla.
Wichita Falls, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
Portales, N.M.
Silver City, N.M.
Canyon, Texas
Canyon, Texas
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Lubbock, Texas

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the WT College you graduated
from, and the quantity of stickers
you want to receive.





Hundreds of people returned to the West Texas A&M University campus this fall for this year's Homecoming festivities, themed "WT Through the Decades."

Emily Morgan, a senior social sciences major from Boys Ranch, was named queen, and Caleb Crum, a senior broadcast journalism major from Earth, was named king during halftime of WT Football's victorious Homecoming game against University of Texas-Permian Basin on Oct. 1 in Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium.

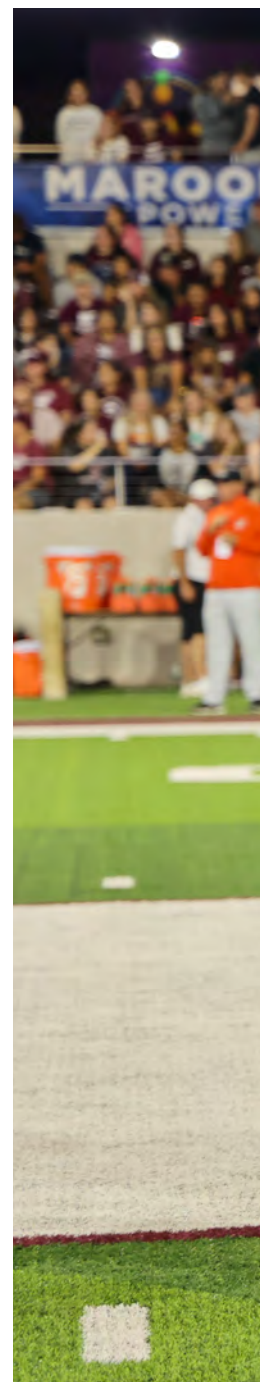
Morgan and Crum, both of whom represented Students Assisting in Good Endeavors, were the top vote-getters among a field of 20 nominees from across campus. SAGE is a faith-based community service organization. Its disco-themed float was both the judges' choice and the people's choice for best float at the Oct. 1 Homecoming Parade.

In a return to WT tradition, WT live mascot Thunder XIV and the Herdsmen thundered onto the field at Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium.

The Homecoming court also included Anna Estrada, a senior health sciences major from Borger; Elizabeth "Annie" Valicek, a junior agribusiness and economics major from Houston; Jax Brooks, Where the Learning Continues student from Amarillo; and Jacob "Jake" Cannon, a senior animal science major from Centerville.

Other Homecoming activities included The Phoenix, which celebrated WT's Distinguished Alumni (see story, page 16); Celebration of Color, which honored alumni of color; the "Don't Bring Me Down" Homecoming rock concert with the WT Symphony Orchestra and Amarillo all-star band Flashback!; the KWTS 50th-anniversary celebration; and more.

PHOTOS BY DARCY LIVELY











Pat White, Val White, Betty Solis, Col. Steven McCraw



TOP BUFFS

Phoenix event honored 2022 Distinguished Alums

BY BRAD NEWMAN

Dating back more than 40 years, West Texas A&M University's Distinguished Alumni Awards have highlighted 115 of the university's most accomplished, inspirational and admirable former students.

This year, four more alumni were selected to receive the university's highest alumni honor.

The 2022 recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Awards included **Col. Steven McCraw '79, '81** director of Texas Department of Public Safety; area philanthropists **Pat '82** and **Val '81 White** of Wellington; and longtime educator **Betty Solis '59, '78** of Amarillo.

The awards, selected by the WT Alumni Association, highlight former WT students who have made significant contributions after graduation.

"This year's Distinguished Alumni is an impressive and well-deserving group," said **Ronnie Hall '95, '00**, executive director of the WT Alumni Association. "They have dedicated their time and energy to help others and to have a positive impact in the lives of the people they serve."

The four 2022 inductees were honored during WT's annual Homecoming celebration, during the Phoenix Event. The evening included a banquet and program, followed by jazz and desserts.

"The Phoenix is an opportunity to highlight the work our Distinguished Alumni do to help better lives all across the nation," said **Brittney Lee '14**, assistant director of WT's alumni relations and university engagement. "The event also provides an opportunity for alumni and friends to stay connected and foster pride for WT."

McCraw, of El Paso, has a lifelong career in law enforcement, including more than 20 years as a special agent in the FBI, serving in Dallas, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Tucson, San Antonio and Washington, D.C.

After his retirement from the Bureau in 2004, McCraw became the Texas Homeland Security director before being appointed as DPS director by the Public Service Commission under former Texas Gov. Rick Perry. He still holds that position.

McCraw earned two degrees from WT at the outset of his career: a bachelor's degree in political science in 1979 and a master's degree in psychology and sociology in 1981.

McCraw said his education and life experiences at WT prepared him for his tenure in public safety.

"WT provided me with the educational framework, second to none, and I credit the faculty and student body for helping me succeed in life," he said.

At the Homecoming event, McCraw said he was "humbled and surprised" to see a fellow WT alum, **Anita Perry '74**, and her husband, former Gov. Rick Perry, in attendance in support of his award.

"I will forever be grateful for the tremendous honor of being selected as a distinguished alumni from West Texas A&M University," the director said.

Rick Perry, the former Governor of Texas and wife of alumna Anita Perry '74, was a surprise guest in honor of Col. Steven McCraw.



“WT provided me with the educational framework, second to none, and I credit the faculty and student body for helping me succeed in life.”

-Col. Steven McCraw

“The folks you find at WT you don’t find anywhere else. It’s a university that we love.”
-Pat White

[LEFT] Wellington nurse practitioner, Ryan Robertson '21, left, congratulates Distinguished Alumnus Pat White '82.

[RIGHT] Keith Brown '91, '19 welcomes Distinguished Alumna Val White '81.



Since 1996, Pat and Val White have reinvigorated their local community of Wellington through their Zephyr Foundation.

The couple, who met at WT and graduated from the university in the early 1980s, have provided gifts toward a host of community improvement projects, plus student scholarships and support for other area organizations.

“We are very proud and yet just humbled by the award,” Val White said. “We don’t give for the recognition; we are simply so happy to see when people are benefiting from projects we’ve been able to be a part of.”

The Whites, who farm and ranch near Wellington, founded the Zephyr Foundation as a way to enhance the community they love. The organization has helped fund projects including the Wellington Activity Center, a restoration of the Ritz Theatre, the

Wellington Aquatic Venue and various Wellington Independent School District and Collingsworth General Hospital projects.

“We’re honored to have the privilege of making an impact,” Pat said. “But we recognize that we don’t do this by ourselves. It’s most gratifying when we get to see others who join in and make the whole community thrive.”

The Whites attended WT’s Homecoming celebrations. “Every time we’re at WT, it brings back a lot of memories – and we’re still making them,” Pat White said.

The couple noted that much has changed about WT over the years. The expansion of campus facilities and academic offerings – notably in the Department of Agriculture – are impressive, they said.

“And yet the values are still the same,” Pat White said. “The folks you find at WT you don’t find anywhere else. It’s a university that we love.”



Betty Solis '59, '78, right, enters the Phoenix with friends Jerry and Judy Pybus.



“I have such a good feeling about the whole thing, and how WT just keeps going forward.”
-Betty Solis

Betty Solis spent more than 40 years as an elementary school educator – a lifetime of loving and teaching children in central Amarillo.

Solis, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, moved to the United States in 1954 and graduated from WT in 1959. She began her career as a first-grade teacher at Dwight Morrow Elementary School in Amarillo, the first bilingual teacher in the Amarillo Independent School District.

“I had really good professors; we were taught that the children we worked with were our responsibility. We were taught to make sure they learned all they could, to prepare them for later on in life,” Solis said. “Now, so many of my students have done so well in their lives, and they check back in with me.”

Solis earned a master’s of education degree from in 1978 and spent 21 years as a principal, retiring in 2001 from a long tenure as principal at Glenwood Elementary School

Solis’s commitment to teaching, as well as her longtime volunteer work in the community, are among the reasons she was nominated and chosen for WT’s Distinguished Alumni Award.

“It is so humbling to receive this award,” she said. “My contribution was simply to teach little children and have three of my own.”

Solis was honored at the Phoenix event at Homecoming on Sept. 29, and in October she also attended a campus tour for alumni who had graduated more than 50 years ago.

“Oh me, I could not believe it,” she said. “We saw all the new buildings, and how beautiful. It’s just amazing.”

Now, Solis said, seven people from her family have graduated from WT, including three of her grandchildren. Solis and her late husband, John, also were avid supporters of WT basketball.

“I have such a good feeling about the whole thing, and how WT just keeps going forward.”

WT’s Distinguished Alumni Awards are given annually; the general public is welcome to nominate a candidate for the honor.

“The honorees represent the best of WT,” Hall said. “Year after year, outstanding alumni are honored with this award and that speaks volumes to the quality education of WT.”

For more information about WT’s Distinguished Alumni Awards, or to submit a nomination, visit buffalum.com/alumni-awards or call 806-651-2311.

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:

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on Nov. 10 approved two major infrastructure projects at West Texas A&M University.

During the regents' Nov. 10 meeting, approval was given for the \$44.9 million Geneva Schaeffer Education Building renovation and the \$8.9 million Bain Athletic Center expansion project, part of a plan for more than \$328 million in capital projects across the system.

The Education Building, the second-oldest building on WT's campus, will be reimagined as a space that will put WT on the leading edge of innovation in distance learning.

Revitalization of the **Geneva Schaeffer Education Building**—named in February for the 1955 alumna and matriarch of the Schaeffer family—will allow for additional video studios, production studios for online courses and support spaces.

The building also will be the new home of the WT Graduate School.

The University is in the process of selecting an architect firm and construction company for the ambitious project.

Along with Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo 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.

The Athletic Center facility, the vision of longtime WT supporters **Ray and Barbara '60 Bain**, is in Phase III of construction. When complete, the facility will house sports performance, sports medicine, football offices, academic success programs, team meeting rooms and the Hall of Champions.

Completion of the center will allow for a centralized location for coaches, staff and student workers in WT Athletics, who are currently occupying offices in eight different buildings across campus. When complete, the Bain Athletic Center will be located west of the Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium and the WT track and soccer facility.

In addition, the funding approved for the Geneva Schaeffer Education Building project will include almost \$10 million for health and safety upgrades across campus.

OTHER CURRENT CAMPUS PROJECTS:

- Baseball and softball score board modifications
- Old Main roofing project
- Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum Elevator #5 and #6 modification upgrades
- First United Bank Center roofing project
- Classroom Center cooling tower replacement
- Jones Hall Fire Door Modifications



WT meat judging team earns international acclaim

University continues to enhance agricultural programs

BY BRAD NEWMAN

West Texas A&M University's reputation as a leading educator for the agricultural industry continues to expand - even internationally.

The university's renowned meat judging team traveled to Australia in July, taking the top award at the Intercollegiate Meat Judging Conference. And recent gifts pledged to the Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences have secured two faculty chairs, bolstering the Department of Agricultural Science's academic offerings.

"We are located in the heart of this industry, with so many companies in agriculture surrounding us," said Dr. Loni Lucherk, Gordon W. Davis Endowed Chair in Meat Judging and the meat judging team coach. "It makes sense for WT to produce the best students to the leaders in the meat industry, to make sure this industry is sustainable."

WT's meat judging team competes in eight contests each year in the U.S. The invitation to compete in Wagga Wagga, Australia, however, was an added and prestigious opportunity, Lucherk said, as only one team from the United States is selected to attend.

WT's team, with nine students and a graduate student who serves as co-coach, was named overall champion team at the event, which hosted more than 100 students. WT's closest competitor, the University of Queensland, was 49 points behind.

Five of WT's student competitors won individual awards. Cole Petit, a junior animal science major from Seymour, scored six individual awards, including overall runner-up at the event.

The two-day contest included evaluating and grading beef, pork, and lamb carcasses and wholesale cuts. Competitors analyzed and ranked various meats and also wrote reasons explaining their choices. One particular challenge for WT's team: The Australian competition used metric measurements instead of the standard U.S. measurements.

"There was quite a bit of extra studying and learning," Lucherk said. "But these students wanted to represent the U.S. and WT well, which they did."

Students from WT also attended a week-long conference prior to the competition, visited Australian meat processing plants and feedlots, and toured some of Australia's most famous sights. For some students, the trip was their first opportunity to travel internationally.

"What we have available to us at WT is amazing," said Caleb Baker, a senior animal science major from Snyder, Colorado, who was runner-up in placings at the competition. "It's a small university, but with large opportunities."

Participating on WT's meat judging team not only trains students for potential careers in the agriculture industry, though, Lucherk said. They also provide skills for any life endeavor. Only about 30 percent of students who participate on WT's meat judging team enter the meat industry after graduation, she said. Team members represent a variety of disciplines, not only agriculture.

"Regardless of their future plans, being on the team teaches skills of teamwork, communication, hard work, and sacrifice," Lucherk said. "All of those are important in today's world."

Shannon Anderson, a junior agriculture education major from Seguin, placed third in beef judging at the Australian competition. She plans to be an agriculture teacher.

WT's meat judging team poses in front of the iconic Sydney Opera House on their Australian trip.



"It builds character; it takes discipline and dedication; you grow yourself as a leader."

Shannon Anderson
junior agriculture education major

"There are so many lessons you learn in meat judging," Anderson said. "It builds character; it takes discipline and dedication; you grow yourself as a leader."

Lucherk, who accompanied the team to Australia, joined the faculty at WT in early 2020. Her endowed chair was funded by Dr. Gordon W. Davis, a Lubbock businessman and former educator, who pledged \$3.5 million in 2021. Dr. Davis's pledge also funds another chair, along with a \$1.25 million gift pledged by Caviness Beef Packers. Dr. Ty Lawrence is the Caviness Davis Distinguished Chair in Meat Science.

The two new endowed chairs continue WT's commitment to excellence in its Department of Agricultural Sciences. WT currently offers eight undergraduate degree programs in the department, four graduate degree programs, and

also boasts state-of-the-art agricultural research centers.

"Our goal is to recruit the best students to WT to represent our program at the highest level," Lucherk said. "We are excited to bring more students to the Panhandle and for them to experience everything else this university offers."

"It's a great place to be."



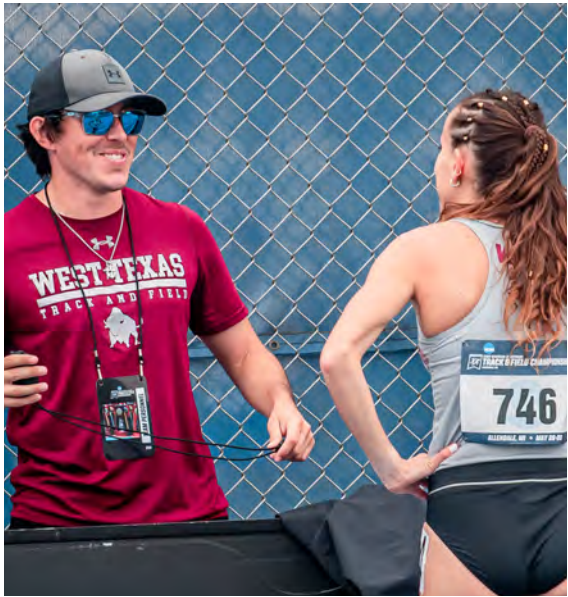
ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FALL

FOR WT ATHLETICS

BY BRENT SEALS

The rich history of West Texas A&M University Athletics continued this fall as five different programs qualified for the NCAA Division II postseason. The Buffs and Lady Buffs accounted for 42 All-Lone Star Conference selections along with 10 Academic All-LSC honorees.

Members of Buff Nation were treated to a surprise to open up the 2022 football season as the WT Agriculture and Athletics departments teamed up to renew an old tradition on Sept. 3. The Buffs were led on the field for the first time in the history of Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium by Thunder XIV, one of just two live buffalo mascots in the country.



On the gridiron, 12 different Buffs were honored for their performance on the field as **Noah Bogardus** was named to the All-LSC First Team while **Adam Alcorta**, **Shakell Brown** and **Christopher Thomas** earned Second Team accolades. Eight Buffs found themselves on the Honorable Mention list while three were recognized for their efforts in the classroom.

Nick Gerber finished his career at West Texas A&M ranked fifth on the all-time passing list with 7,504 yards, while fellow senior **Chris Thomas** ended his career in Maroon & White with 329 total tackles to rank fourth in program history.

Buffalo Soccer qualified for the program's eighth NCAA Tournament under head coach **Butch Lauffer**, finishing the season with an overall record of 6-4-9 to mark the 29th consecutive non-losing season for the Buffs. **Kenny Brown**, the LSC Forward of the Year, and **Giancarlo Saldana** were named All-Region performers for their efforts on the pitch.

Chad Webb and the Lady Buffs made a run to the second round of the NCAA Tournament with an overall record of 14-4-4, topping LSC rival St. Mary's in the opening round of the Regional Championships in Dallas. **Asha James**, **Maria-Frances Serrant**, **Emily Avila** and **Reagan Heelan** picked up All-Region accolades for the Lady Buffs.

First year head cross country coach **Zach Daniel** was named the LSC Coach of the Year after leading the Buffs to their 10th consecutive LSC team title, joining former LSC member Abilene Christian University as the only programs in league history to win double-digit crowns.

WT had another dominating performance at the LSC Championships, placing six runners in the Top 15 to win by 62 points as **Harry Louradour** became the sixth Buff in program history to win the LSC individual crown. **Innocent Murwanashyaka**, **Butare Rugenerwa**, **Noah Bundrock**, **Louis Moreau** and **Gustavo Posada** also earned All-Conference accolades.



Christopher Thomas finished his career in Maroon & White ranked fourth on WT's all-time tackles list with 329.

Men's Soccer made the program's eighth appearance in the NCAA Division II Tournament under legendary head coach Butch Lauffer.

Men's Cross Country continued their dominance of the Lone Star Conference as they claimed the program's 10th consecutive league championship.

WT's Florance Uwajeneza became the first runner in West Texas A&M history to win three straight LSC Titles.

Lady Buff Volleyball's Torrey Miller was named the 2022 LSC Offensive Player of the Year, leading the Lady Buffs to their second straight NCAA Division II Elite Eight.

Maria-Frances Serrant of Lady Buff Soccer was named the LSC Forward of the Year, Newcomer of the Year and Player of the Year as WT advanced to the Second Round of the NCAA Tournament.



On the women's side, the Lady Buffs placed four runners in the Top 15 to finish second at the Lone Star Conference Championships, totaling 44 points just 11 behind team champion Dallas Baptist. **Florance Uwajeneza** became the first runner in WT history to win three straight LSC Titles while **Eleonora Curtabbi**, **Raquel Chavez** and **Betty Bajika** also received All-LSC honors.

Lady Buff Volleyball is back where they belong atop of the Lone Star Conference after securing the program's 20th regular season LSC Championship with a perfect 16-0 mark in league action to mark the 17th unbeaten conference schedule in school history.

Kendra Potts is in her fourth season at the helm of Lady Buff Volleyball with an overall record of 86-20. Potts led her alma mater to the program's 14th NCAA Elite Eight Appearance in 2021 after capturing the South Central Regional title to become the sixth head coach in program history to guide WT to the Elite Eight.

WT houses one of the best home environments in the country across all of NCAA volleyball. Built in 1951, the WTAMU Fieldhouse, best known as "The Box," is home to 20 Lone Star Conference Championships, 14 regional titles and three NCAA Division II National Championships. At The Box, the Lady Buffs are 520-83 since 1980 for an incredible winning percentage of 86.2 percent.

The Lady Buffs qualified for the program's 29th NCAA Tournament appearance after securing the Lone Star Conference's automatic bid as the league's tournament champion. WT has won an incredible 14 Regional Championships, producing a 52-25 overall record during the tournament.

Torrey Miller and **Taytum Stow** earned All-Region honors for the Lady Buffs. Miller, a junior from Brownwood, was name the Lone Star Conference Offensive Player of the Year while Stow, a freshman from Hereford, was tabbed the league's Defensive Player of the Year.

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“I’M LOYAL”

TOM MUSSER HONORED FOR LONG-TERM WT GIVING.

By Chip Chandler

Those who know **Thomas Musser ‘80** know he’s faithful, passionate and persistent. Add generous and modest to that list, too.

Musser recently was honored for his 42-year history of consecutive giving, one of the longest streaks of yearly donations in the history of West Texas A&M University.

“There have been people who have given more than me,” Musser said. “I’m not much. But I’m loyal.”

Boy, is he.

Musser joined the Alumni Association before he even graduated with his bachelor of science degree in geology. He’s been a member of the Buffalo Club since 1980, as well, and he’s held season tickets to WT Football since then, too. He’s a WT Volleyball season-ticket holder also, but only since 1987—though, he’s proud to note, he purchased the first two volleyball season tickets ever sold to the public.

Beyond those memberships, Musser is a regular donor to the WTAMU Foundation, including to several scholarship funds.

“I don’t want to estimate what I’ve given,” Musser averred. “It’s nowhere near what a lot of people have done; there are many who have done more than I have. I give what I can.”

Alumni like Musser are an example to the whole WT community, said President Walter V. Wendler.

“Tom’s long-standing dedication and faithful updates on his fellow alumni are invaluable to the University,” Wendler said.

Musser credits his philanthropic nature to Weldon Trice, who was WT’s Dean of Men when Musser was a student and gave Musser his class ring.

“As I was one helped, I now help,” Musser quoted Trice. “As I was once given to, I now give.”

That was the impetus for Musser and some of his classmates to start a scholarship fund for students in residence halls, as well as for Musser joining the Alumni Association.

Musser moved to Lubbock after graduating, though he’s still a regular visitor to campus. In the Hub City, he entered the oil and gas industry; for the last few years, he mostly has focused on historical research into energy resources.

Similarly, he has devoted countless hours to researching WT’s history, providing on request—or just as often, without prompting—scores of lists: alumni who died in military service; historic campus buildings, facilities, monuments and memorials; WT Football conference championships; WT Football players drafted into the pros; the names of the first women intercollegiate athletes; and much, much more.

“I enjoy history,” Musser said. “My dad was a pilot and when I was a child, we lived in northern Virginia. Every weekend that he was home, we went to a historical location—the Smithsonian, Gettysburg, Mount Vernon. History’s always been enjoyable to me.

“As far as WT history’s concerned, it goes back to Mr. Trice,” Musser continued. “He always said that as we build toward the future, we should always remember our heritage, those who built our WT. When I was a student and a young alumnus, he would take me around and introduce me to his mentors and the respected elders of WT like Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Cornette, Ruth Cross, Mitchell Jones.”

Their stories were more than just interesting, he said.

“They’re our heritage. We enjoy the fruits of their labors,” he said. “Those of us who want to help have plenty of examples to look up to.

Is Musser a good example himself?

“That’s not for me to say,” he said. “But I hope I am.”



DESIGN YOUR LIFE

West Texas A&M University alumni can make direct impacts on students' lives through a new mentorship initiative.

The "Design Your Life" program was launched in fall 2020 in a collaborative effort between the Alumni Association and the Office for Career and Professional Development.

"This is a great opportunity for our future workforce to see what real-world experience looks like and gain valuable insight as they begin to determine the paths they will take post-college, or maybe even what path to take within their time in college," said Abby Betts '17 '19, senior career development coordinator.

Interested students apply to the program, hoping to be connected with Buff alumni who are working professionals.

"The Design Your Life program is crafted to assist students in developing their character, exploring their career options, improving their academic and professional skills, and examining their social responsibilities," said Ronnie Hall, Alumni Association executive director. "The college years can be an especially formative time in these students' lives, and identifying the intersection between their personal and professional interests will help them as they plan out their career path and make plans for their future."

Mentors will encourage and support students in their quest for academic and professional success. Expectations for mentors include the willingness to assist mentees in formulating plans, goals and strategies for professional and personal development; serving as a role model; demonstrating how to acquire successful networking skills; helping the mentee identify appropriate professional resources; and meeting regularly with their mentee.

"The goal is for the students to come away with a better understanding of their field of interest and the skills needed to be successful in that field, as well as a strong relationship and connection with someone within it," Betts said.

To sign up, contact Betts at abetts@wtamu.edu or Hall at rhall@wtamu.edu. Deadline is May 1.



Choo Oo, left, a senior nursing major from Amarillo, has been mentored by Yadira Rohrer '13, '15 in WT Alumni Association's "Design Your Life" program.

Sacred 17th-century music by a Baroque composer is now accessible to the world, thanks to the research of **Dr. Kimberly Hieb**, associate professor of music in WT's School of Music in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities. She published two volumes of scores by Andreas Hofer, a church composer who worked in Salzburg, Austria, in the 1600s. This is the first modern musical edition of these compositions, which survive today only in centuries' old partbooks—individual books of music for each instrument or voice, rather than being transcribed into one combined score, per modern tradition—in Salzburg and the picturesque Bavarian town Ottobeuren, Germany. Hieb, whose research was funded in part by a WTAMU Foundation faculty development grant, has traveled to Austria and Germany for several years to transcribe Hofer's music from the original sources. The books are available from publisher A-R Editions or on Amazon. WT's Cornette Library has physical copies as well as access to PDFs via Recent Research in Music Online. Hieb recently was named the new host for High Plains Public Radio's "Classical Music Amarillo," which broadcasts at noon Sundays, with an encore broadcast at 7 p.m. Thursdays.

A communication professor who leads life-changing, service-oriented trips to Africa and a staff member responsible for wrangling an operating budget with hundreds of accounts were celebrated during the Aug. 17 convocation ceremonies. **Dr. Enyonam Osei-Hwere**, associate professor of media communication, was named 2022-23 Magister Optimus, the highest honor for a WT faculty member, and **Shelly McCune '97**, the University's budget director, was given the Clarence E. Thompson Staff Excellence Award, the University's highest staff honor.

Michelle Vinyard has been named director of WT's Extended Studies program. The academic program offers degree-credit and non-credit courses for furthering careers, skills and knowledge. It also encompasses WT camps and kids programs, and Where the Learning Continues, a college experience program for students with intellectual disabilities. Vinyard succeeds Andrea Porter, who is pursuing a doctoral degree at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Becky Eschmann, a faculty member with the Veterinary Education, Research, & Outreach partnership between Texas A&M University's School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and West Texas A&M University's Paul Engler College of Agriculture & Natural Sciences, recently earned the prestigious American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine Diplomate certification. Only 10 percent of veterinarians currently hold board certification in at least one specialty.

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Five distinguished former WT faculty members recently were awarded emeritus status by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents: **Dr. Deborah A. Davenport '83**, who retired in 2019 as a professor of nursing; **Dr. Ted A. DuBois**, who retired in 2016 as a professor of music; **Dr. Karyn Friske**, who retired in 2021 as a professor of accounting; **Dr. Harry R. Hueston**, who retired in 2021 as a professor of criminal justice; and **Dr. Darlene A. Pulliam**, who retired in 2021 as a professor of accounting.

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Lauren Gaston '18, '21, a 4 1/2-year WT veteran, was named Employee of the Year at WT's All-Staff Service Awards held on June 14. Gaston earned the honor amid a field of 12 other employees of the month. Gaston's fellow employees of the month included **Chance Haugen '11**, then-director of JBK Student Center; **Amanda Rogers '05 '21**, Admissions; **Stanley Pena**, Office of Vice President for Business and Finance; **Jennifer Denham '14**, Office of Teacher Preparation; **Chris Morgan '17**, Business Office; **Mickie Scantling**, Purchasing; **Alyssa Mince '21**, Print Shop; **Andrea Porter '13**, director of Extended Studies; **LuAnne Rickwartz '79**, director of Student Medical Services; **Andy Kraus**, Information Technology; **Meri Lyn Odell '98**, University Police Department; and **Mary Rausch**, Cornette Library. The luncheon also recognized employees who have worked at WT for significant numbers of years and staff members who retired in 2022: **Linda Elliott**, **Tommy Sweat**, **Connie Fordham**, **Barbara Palmer**, **Debra Carter**, **Marian Giesecke** and **Betty Stocker**.

Smashing Records

WT shattered fundraising records in fiscal year 2022, the first year of its historic One West comprehensive campaign. More than \$73 million was raised in major and annual gifts between Sept. 1, 2021, and Aug. 31 of this year. That's nearly \$60 million more than the amount raised in fiscal year 2021, the previous record-setting year.

Most Affordable in U.S.

WT offers the most affordable online RN-to-BSN program in the country, according to independent analyst TopRNtoBSN.com, which ranked WT at No. 1 on its 2022 list of most affordable online programs, up from No. 6 in 2021. WT also offers one of the most affordable online degree programs in the country, according to a new analysis from a national education resource. WT ranks No. 24 out of more than 50 colleges ranked in EDsmart's list of most affordable colleges. The University ranks No. 3 among all schools in Texas, according to the list.

Foundational Leaders

Six prominent regional leaders have joined the West Texas A&M University Foundation board of directors: **Dr. Andy Cole '71**, **Lance Jones '85**, **Luke Longhofer '04**, **Chris Lyons '04**, **Larry Oldham '75** and **Velrick Wilson '84**.

Digging to a Victory

WT's soil judging team placed second and qualified for nationals for the first time at a recent competition. **Alex Kuehler**, a senior plant, soil and environmental science major from Groom, and **Cade Bednarz**, a senior plant, soil and environmental science major from Lubbock, placed sixth and seventh, respectively. The full squad also placed fourth in the team competition. The team next will compete at the national soil judging competition in April in Woodward, Oklahoma.

Family of the Year

Gruver small-business owners **Francisco** and **Sara Trejo** were named the WT Family of the Year during Family Weekend celebrations Oct. 22. The Trejos were nominated by son Jose, a sophomore business management major. In his nomination letter, **Jose Trejo** described his parents as "a prime example of a loving couple sacrificing their entire life back in Mexico to give their children a taste of the American dream." "From living in poverty in the high mountains of deep Mexico to business owners, these middle school sweethearts have given my two siblings and I a better life," their son wrote. The couple co-owns and operates the Gruver Café; Francisco Trejo also works at Gruver Farm Supply.

A Permanent Frost

A statue of poet Robert Frost, depicted penning "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," recently was installed in the east courtyard of Cornette Library near the heart of the Canyon campus. It was dedicated in honor of former WT President James P. and Mary Elizabeth Cornette on Oct. 20.

Intern of the Year

Renee Padilla, a junior animal science major from Hereford, was honored Nov. 3 as the University's Intern of the Year. Padilla worked from May through August as an intern at the Cargill Protein facility in Friona, where he was asked to find a better way to cut hanger steaks during the processing of cattle for food. He pioneered a small innovation that could have a multimillion-dollar impact in the beef processing industry. As Intern of the Year, Padilla received a \$1,000 scholarship provided by Phillips 66 and was submitted for the national Cooperative Education & Internship Association Academic Intern of the Year award.

WT professors lead liver research

Two WT agricultural science professors were the lead editors for a new review of research into liver abscesses in cattle for a major national veterinary medicine publication. Dr. Ty Lawrence, WT's Caviness Davis Distinguished Chair in Meat Science and professor of animal science, and Dr. John Richeson, WT's Paul Engler Professor of Beef Cattle Feedlot Management and associate professor of animal science, headed up the November edition of "Veterinary Clinics of North America: Food Animal Practice," which offers readers expert, state-of-the-art reviews on a single topic three times a year. "Liver abscesses are a challenge that's very prevalent in cattle, and there has never been a focus on liver abnormalities in the publication," Richeson said. "It was an honor to be asked, and I was happy to ask Ty to work with me because he is such an expert in this field."

JAMS Quartet going to New York

The JAMS Quartet, a WT student string ensemble, will make its Carnegie Hall debut in the spring. The quartet recently won the collegiate strings category of the American Protégé International Competition of Romantic Music and will perform May 27 at the Weill Recital Hall in the legendary concert house in New York City. Members include Josenir Cerqueira Jr., first violinist and graduate student in instrumental performance from Criciúma, Brazil; Sydney Buckner, second violinist and senior animal science/pre-vet major from Amarillo; Jasmin Caldera, viola player and sophomore health science/pre-dental major from Amarillo; and Anna Ng, cello player and freshman biology major from Amarillo.

'60s

Carolyn Price Miller '60, '62, a former Alumni Association Board President, started a Socks for Soldiers nonprofit organization. Socks for Soldiers has sent more than 56,000 care packs to people in the military. She is currently living in Amarillo.

Louie '68 and Janice '68 Spinks are retired and living in Ransom Canyon. Louie coached for 30 years and was a principal for 10 years. Janice was a speech pathologist for 40 years in the school system. They are still attending football games and Homecoming at WT.

'70s

Kaci '76 and Kendra Jones '77 are retired and live in Amarillo. Kaci was a shareholder with Brown Graham for 43 years and Kendra was an RN in Tulia before she retired to be a stay-at-home mom. Both love showing their Buff Pride by attending WT Sports and WT Theatre events.

Myra Millard Bennett '78 learned as a young child that she was totally deaf in one ear and partially deaf in the other ear. While attending WT, Myra played Volleyball in 1974, 1975 and 1977, and was a member of Kappa Delta Sorority. During her professional career, Myra has founded and run several business operations and is the founder and COO of The Tire Tag.

'80s



Dr. Darryl Flusche '85, superintendent of Canyon Independent School District, was named the 2022 Region 16

Superintendent of the Year. He was chosen for his strong leadership skills, dedication to providing educational quality in their school districts and commitment to public involvement in education.

class

WHERE THE BUFFS



Debbie Lehnick Talley '80 of Deer Park is the owner of Educational Enterprises Recording Company. Founded in 1976, EERC is the sole source provider of

All-State choral music rehearsal/audition recording for the states of Texas and New Mexico. Debbie's vocal music coaching is credited with 68 students being selected to the Texas All-State Choir. Debbie's husband, **Barry Talley '80**, is a Distinguished Alumni of WT's Music Department.

Tana Dewey Miller '85 is the senior colleague student consultant for Ellucian. Tana spent 40 years on the WT campus serving in the Admissions Office and Registrar Office; her most recent position was the assistant vice president for the Student Enrollment, Engagement and Success Division.

'90s

J.R. Compton '90, an exceptional player for the Buffs in the 1980s, is currently the football coach at Floydada Collegiate ISD.

J.R. is an inductee into the WT Hall of Champions, and his son, Jarrod, is a running back on the Buffs football team.



notes

BUFFALO ROAM

Erin Viernann '98 is the senior vice president of commercial lending at First United Bank in Canyon. Erin has more than 24 years of experience in the banking industry. Viernann and her husband of 19 years, Jeremy, have four sons.



Trent Tyson '99 has been with Plains Land Bank for 11 years. He began as a loan officer and is now leading the Amarillo retail team.



He recently was accepted into the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program which consists of 455 hours of training over two years, including domestic and international study trips.

'00s

Jeff Davis '07, '16 is superintendent at Dinosaur Valley State Park, where dinosaur tracks were rediscovered in August. Prior to his current position, Jeff was the assistant superintendent and the park interpreter at Palo Duro Canyon.



Dr. Lyndsay Eiben '08, '10 is the associate director of bands and adjunct professor of flute at the University of Texas

Permian Basin. During her time at WT, Lyndsay was associate principal flute for the Amarillo Symphony and Amarillo Opera, and performed with the Amarillo Little Theatre. While at Odessa Permian, Lyndsay's students earned admission into the 6A TMEA All-State Bands and earned superior ratings. Lyndsay is the principal flutist of the West Texas Symphony and West Texas Winds.

'10s

Trevor Johnson '11, '20 is coaching basketball at Randall High School and was selected Texas Association of Basketball Coaches 5A Boys Assistant Coach of the Year. Trevor received his master of education leadership from WT. Trevor and his wife live in Claude with their two kids.

Tomeko Brown '15 children's book "An Instrument for Florenda" was named one of the best products/services for families by The Mom's Choice Awards. Copies of "An Instrument for Florenda" will be donated to schools, libraries, hospitals and nonprofit organizations.

Ryan Lovell '20 has received the Texas Speech Communication Association Teacher of the Year Award.

This award is presented to educators who have made significant and ongoing contributions to the field and have contributed to the profession both in and out of state. Ryan is the Tascosa High School speech and debate teacher.



Meeting the Need for Teachers

One2Teach, announced Sept. 12 by WT and Amarillo College officials, will significantly reduce the time and costs for high school students who want to become teachers. This new collaborative effort addresses the significant challenges of recruiting teachers and of student debt, according to Dr. Beth Garcia, assistant dean of graduate programs and professional certifications in WT's Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences. High school students with a passion for teaching but are concerned about the cost and time of pursuing that degree now have a pathway to their own classroom that will begin even before they earn their high school diploma. Participating school districts at the launch of the One2Teach program are Amarillo Independent School District, Canyon ISD, Dumas ISD and Hereford ISD. Students completing One2Teach will receive priority placement and guaranteed interviews at their home district. Students in the program can save as much as 36 percent of the cost of their college degree and reduce the time it takes between high school graduation and teacher certification by as much as 25 percent. In the program, students will be guided through 30 semester credit hours of dual-credit coursework during their junior and senior years in high school. Students will then complete core course requirements and introductory education courses in one year at AC, followed by two full years of training and teacher preparation at WT.

Assisting Small Businesses

America's Small Business Development Center at WTAMU was named Center of the Year by the Northwest Texas SBDC Region this fall. The center was recognized for its efforts in 2021 to focus on assisting small businesses across the Texas Panhandle recover from the pandemic, as well as for working alongside a larger-than-usual number of entrepreneurs starting new businesses as a result of the pandemic. The center is a department of the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business, now celebrating its 35th year consulting with entrepreneurs and small business owners in the region who want to start or grow businesses that lead to a more diverse and healthy economy.

Anna Deveare Smith to speak

Actress, playwright and educator Anna Deveare Smith will headline WT's Distinguished Lecture Series annual spring event. Smith will speak at 7 p.m. April 4 in Legacy Hall in the Jack B. Kelley Student Center on the WT campus in Canyon. The lecture is free and open to the public. The Department of Art, Theatre and Dance will co-host this event, and Smith will instruct a masterclass for WT theatre students. Smith's visit also will be co-sponsored by WT's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Smith—whose one-woman shows include "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992" and "Fires in the Mirror"—also has appeared on TV hits "Black-ish," "The West Wing," "For the People" and "Inventing Anna."

ONCE A BUFF *Always a Buff*

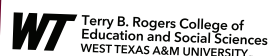
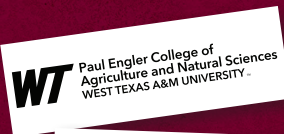
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