

Austin College

MAGAZINE | 2022 ISSUE



Planet
Hunters

Arts Prevail in
Pandemic Times

How to Not Get
Lost in the Woods



More than 250 Class of 2021 graduates proudly received diplomas in May 2021—and shared the Commencement stage with many Class of 2020 alumni. The 2020 ceremony had been postponed a full year due to COVID restrictions, though graduates received their diplomas in May 2020. Not everyone could return to campus, but those who did were excited to walk across the stage and join in the festivities.

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COURTESY OF FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Cary S. Wacker

EDITOR
Vickie S. Kirby

STAFF WRITER
Leigh-Ellen Romm

MAGAZINE DESIGNER/ART DIRECTOR
Melanie Fountaine

PHOTOGRAPHY STAFF
Nicholas Hummert
Vickie S. Kirby
Christopher Maniet
Cary S. Wacker
Electra Coffman '22
Molly Corso '23
Randall Jones '22
Jacob Moreno '22

Steven P. O'Day
President

Elizabeth Gill
Vice President for Academic Affairs
& Dean of the Faculty

Baylee Locker Kowert '05
Vice President for Institutional Enrollment

Carlos Lassiter
Vice President for Student Affairs
& Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer

Gillian Grissom Locke '07
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Lynn Z. Womble
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer



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▲ **ON THE COVER:**
Austin College's Adams
Observatory, atop the IDEA
Center, invites today's
explorers to search the stars.



◀ **ON THE BACK COVER:**
Magnificent Climb
by Mary Wright
2018, Acrylic on Canvas

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“And now we welcome the new year.
Full of things that have never been.”
— Rainer Maria Rilke

Dear 'RooNation,

I like quotes. I like how a single sentence or two captures the essence of something, makes you see something in an entirely new way, or simply inspires. I am writing this letter as the new year begins, and the quote above appeared on my daily calendar. I was struck by it because not only does it speak to the promise of a new year, but it also seems to capture the spirit of this issue of *Austin College Magazine*, where we celebrate the adventures of a year. All across 'RooNation, on campus, in Los Angeles, and even extending into space, members of the Austin College community are doing new things, breaking new ground, inspiring!

I am constantly amazed at what our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are accomplishing. In the pages ahead, you're going to see and read about some of those things. The women's water polo team scored a first by winning the Collegiate Water Polo Association Division III championship. First-generation students are forging new paths for themselves and their futures with the help of dedicated people and programs at the College and the financial support of generous donors.

Our students are collaborating with NASA, using the largest research telescope in North Texas to discover new exoplanets. Student musicians and vocalists, most of whom aren't even music majors, joined with other community members to perform

the breathtakingly beautiful *Gloria in D Major*, RV 589, by Antonio Vivaldi. Cody McCasland '24 is pushing his limits as a swimmer, not because he will become a professional athlete, but because the life lessons he learns in the pool shape the person that he is and will help him achieve his goals as a medical professional.

There is inspiration throughout 'RooNation—an entire community embarking on voyages of discovery inspired by their experiences right here at Austin College. All of the examples in the pages that follow display the magic of an Austin College education. Our students and alumni are not defined just by their majors and minors. They are so much more. They are communicators, servant leaders, team members, and collaborators. They are adaptable, creative, and empathetic problem solvers. They are fascinating people with varied interests. Simply put, they are inspiring, just like a good quote.

What will inspire us next? Read on!

Sincerely,

STEVEN P. O'DAY, J.D., L.H.D.
President
Austin College



... worth a thousand words

CURATED AND DESIGNED BY CARY S. WACKER

Fire. Ice. (...and everything in between.)

The year 2021 was another one that defied description in a tidy bundle of words.

Nevertheless, it was good to be back in action in ways we missed before. We've collected our memories in a few favorite pictures that speak volumes about our annual "trip around the sun."

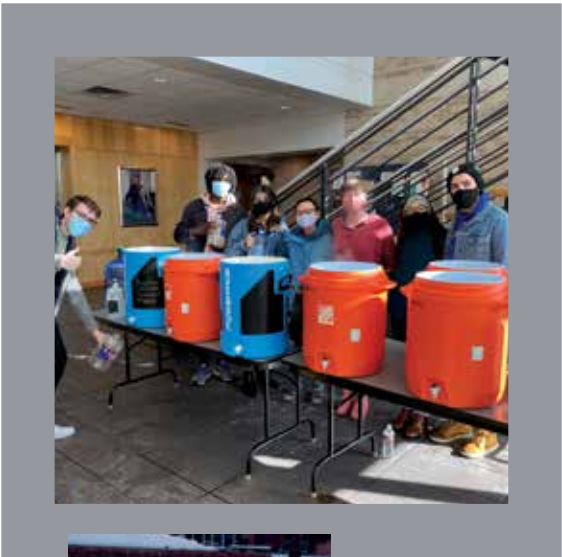
PHOTOS: ELECTRA COFFMAN '22, MOLLY CORSO '23, RANDALL JONES '22, SYED KAMAL, CHRISTOPHER MANIET, JACOB MORENO '22, CARY S. WACKER, ALPHA PHI OMEGA





Perfect weather for a controlled burn
at Sneed Prairie, JanTerm 2021





Braving the extreme wintry weather, February 2021





Planting,
playing,
serving,
and
sending
'Roos
into the
world.







October Homecoming featured the team reunion of '81 Football National Champs and dedication of the Oscar and Anna Laura Page Meditation Garden.





This is us—
celebrating
culture and
traditions
from 'Roo
Boo to
Lessons &
Carols. We're
grateful for
a year with
'Roo family.



A full-page background image showing a person's silhouette standing on a dark horizon, looking up at a vibrant, colorful view of the Milky Way galaxy in a starry night sky. The galaxy's core is a bright, glowing yellow and orange, transitioning into pink and purple hues as it stretches across the dark, star-filled sky.

PLANET HUNTERS

Student Researchers Collaborate with NASA

By Leigh-Ellen Romm



The final frontier is enjoying a renaissance as NASA announces a return to the Moon, and privatized space exploration has expanded rocketry and space travel to the public market. Making headlines and making way for research, tourism, internet services, and much more ... space is the place.

While SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Boeing are paying and paving the way for innovative access to space, physicists continue the ancient scholarly work of studying the stars. Here at Austin College, a small group of undergraduates has worked on the NASA-based Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) project since 2018 to identify exoplanets orbiting the nearest stars outside the solar system. Austin College is a member of the TESS consortium of scientists, universities, and observatories and has contributed significantly to the project.

The satellite, TESS, was launched by NASA and Massachusetts Institute of Technology on April 18, 2018, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. TESS orbits Earth every 13.7 days. In the first two years, the satellite surveyed 85% of the night sky, first cataloging images of the Southern Hemisphere, then the Northern Hemisphere. Now in the extended-mission phase, the satellite continues in its highly elliptical orbit that is as close as 67,000 miles and as far out as 232,000 miles. TESS can capture wide-shot photographs of the brightest stars but cannot register high-resolution details. That is where Austin College comes in.

PHOTOS & IMAGES PROVIDED BY DAVID BAKER



▲ The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite was launched by NASA and MIT on April 18, 2018, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. That satellite, which measures 12 feet by 4 feet by 5 feet and weighs 798 pounds, currently surveys the Northern Hemisphere sky in search of transiting exoplanets orbiting stars.

Brett Skinner '22 and Rose, the 24-inch research telescope in Adams Observatory at Austin College. ►



Dr. David Baker, Physics Professor and Director of Adams Observatory, explained, “TESS monitors 200,000 stars. These stars are relatively near Earth, and they have been chosen because they might be good targets for having planetary systems. If the TESS satellite sees something unusual with a particular star, other observatories around the world will monitor that star more closely ... we’re one of those observatories.”

TESS, meet Rose—Austin College’s 24-inch research telescope nicknamed after the “Yellow Rose of Texas.” Housed in the College’s Adams Observatory, painted bright yellow, and weighing 3,000 pounds, this state-of-the-art telescope was installed in the IDEA Center in 2013. Since then, it has opened a window to the universe for students, researchers, faculty, and community members. Rose, which was funded by a generous grant from the John and Patricia Adams Foundation of Bedford, Texas, was tested and qualified to partner with NASA and MIT on this project.

“Years ago, when we were trying to raise money for Adams Observatory, I said, ‘If we do this right, we have the possibility of helping discover new planets.’ We have delivered on that promise,” Baker said.

One way scientists discover new exoplanets is by observing transits. A transit happens when an object passes in front of a star. The object, or potential planet, blocks, and therefore dims, some of the star’s light.

While closely observing the target star that TESS has identified, Rose’s instrumentation uses photometry to measure the amount of light coming from the target star and from other nearby stars. Baker explains, “We produce what is called a light curve; a plot of star brightness versus time. These measurements are very difficult and require extreme precision. We are trying to detect a small signal and an even smaller amount of ‘noise.’”

“Ultimately, we’re looking for a small dip in brightness from the target. If every nearby star’s light curve also shows the dip, then maybe a cloud passed in front of the telescope to block out light from all the stars. That’s why we also look carefully at the nearby ‘comparison’ stars. When there is no dip associated with the comparison stars, perhaps something interesting is happening on the target star,” he said.

“Something interesting” would be one or more exoplanets orbiting the target star. Adams

Observatory is limited to detecting planets the size of Neptune or larger because Earth's atmosphere washes out any light variation from a transiting planet smaller than that, Baker explained. Neptune is 30,599 miles wide, four times wider than Earth.

Planet hunting is a relatively new endeavor. The first exoplanet was discovered just 30 years ago in 1992. According to NASA, today more than 4,500 exoplanets have been discovered and confirmed. The relatively young field of exoplanet science has grown up and led to further investigation and discoveries regarding the planets' makeup, surfaces, sizes, orbits, atmospheres, and more.

With the Improving Undergraduate Science Education (IUSE) grant from the National Science Foundation, Baker has chosen five students to participate in the TESS project research. They are among the youngest scientists in the world to study, question, corroborate, and present replicable data in this hunt for exoplanets.

The grant provides a stipend for summer researchers and provides opportunity to students who might not otherwise be able to afford the time away from regular summer work.

The first summer researchers, **Miles Schnaible '20, Brett Skinner '22, and Tanner O'Dwyer '22**, were expecting to be shoulder to shoulder in Adams Observatory pouring over TESS images and generating data. But, COVID protocols during summer 2020 required a socially distanced setup.

Very distanced, in fact, as the students searched for planets from their bedrooms at home.

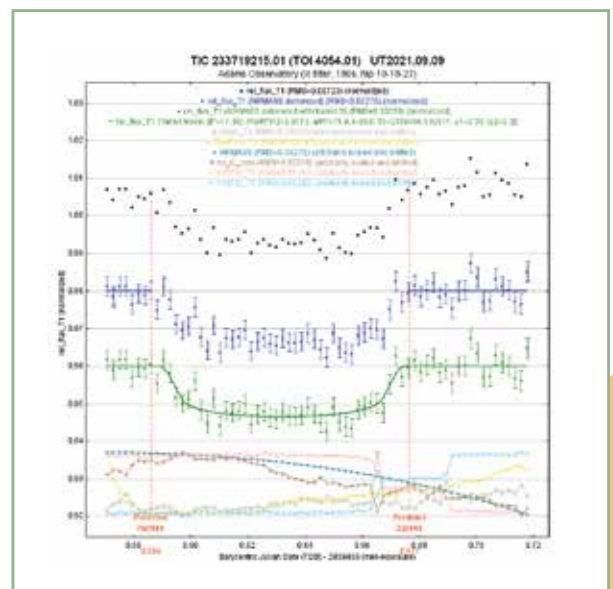
Baker worked on campus to upload the data, which the students downloaded daily to identical computer systems at home. Then they 'Zoomed.' Five days a week, they met online from 4 p.m. to midnight to analyze the data and compare their observations. "Because our analysis is done on computer, it was almost as good as if we were all together," Baker said.

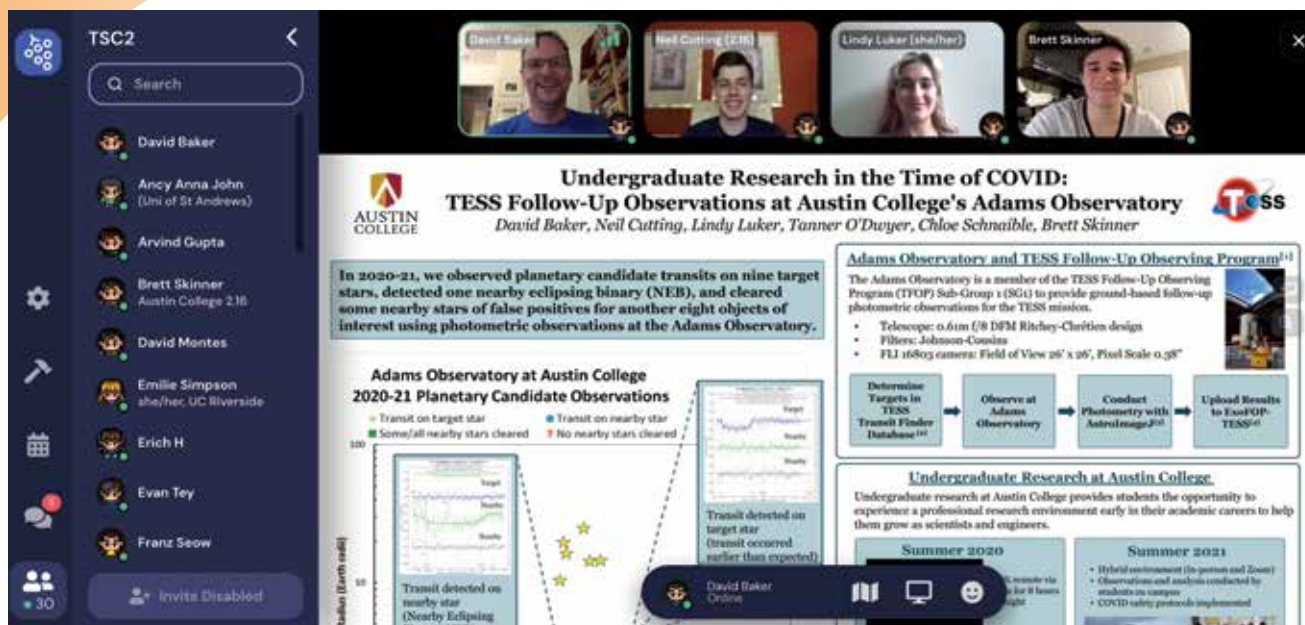
Skinner, completing majors in Engineering Physics and Mathematics with a minor in Accounting, described his home research setup. "I'm sitting in my bedroom with my little, itty-bitty childhood desk from middle school with a wooden chair that barely fits. ... My mom is shouting, 'dinner's ready' or 'take out the trash;' my brother's friends are coming over, people coming in and out. I'm trying to focus with all the shenanigans all around me."

He says his motivation to stay focused and committed was driven not only by the research assignment but also the teamwork aspect. Since they had not been together on campus since March 2020, the connection was special. "Around 3 p.m. every day I would start thinking about the work, and that I get to see my friends and my roommate O'Dwyer, and my professor. Even though it was not in person, that face-to-face interaction was good. I was excited for it, even at home," he said.

Data analysis showing a "dip" in the light, which may indicate a transiting exoplanet near a target star. Austin College students join with scientists around the world to analyze the data; more than 4,500 exoplanets have been discovered and confirmed. ▶

Artist's concept of hot giant planet passing close to its host star. ▼





▲ The students and Dr. Baker attended the virtual TESS Science Conference II where they presented their research to leading scientists in the field.

◀ Their in-person experience on campus did come with some lighthearted moments, such as photo ops on the rooftop of the IDEA Center. While they learned so much from the research, they also gained friends along the way.



Schnaible, who completed majors in Physics and Theatre, had a similar experience. “We were working afternoons and evenings and stayed on video chats most of the day to keep up communication and teamwork,” Schnaible

said. “I have fond memories of seeing everyone’s cats on camera, messing with Zoom backgrounds, and otherwise making the most of our situation. All that to say, we could never have done it without the hard work of Dr. Baker, who was managing the heavy lifting at the observatory all by himself.”

Having worked on earlier research projects with Baker, Schnaible was a valuable leader for the other students. “I spent many semesters and summers working with the telescope, focused on exoplanets and the CCD cameras we used for imaging. I remember what it was like to be new to this research though and struggle to get it all. I showed

the students I was working with the same patience I needed when learning this new, challenging material. I offered a different perspective than Dr. Baker in some areas. These skills have helped me practically everywhere I go,” Schnaible said.

As research returned to campus in summer 2021, Skinner returned, but now in the leadership role with a new team of students including **Lindy Luker '23**, who is working on majors in both Engineering Physics and Computer Science, and **Neil Cutting '23**, completing an Engineering Physics major with a minor in Mathematics. Skinner worked to bring a sense of comfort and “family” to the group. “They didn’t know me before, but now we’re spending so much time together,” he said. “I aimed to create a comfortable environment inside and outside the workplace. We are with each other all day and so close intellectually, so by creating this comfortable environment it’s easier to work critically without stepping on toes.”

Although not hindered as much by COVID, the 2021 team encountered weather conditions that prohibited visibility. On those occasions, they



▲ Inside Adams Observatory, students study images sent from the camera on Rose, the telescope, and they analyze data at computers. This work was accomplished remotely during the summer of 2020 due to COVID precautions, but students returned to the IDEA Center for summer 2021.

met from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. to do analysis, study research papers, and practice presentations.

Luker said, “On an observation night, we got there at 8 p.m. and did not leave until 4 a.m.—because the donut shop opens at 4:30. As a team, we were all genuinely friends with each other.” While searching for planets, students found a community to share meals, sunsets, and donut runs before sunrise.

In August, Skinner, Luker, and Cutting attended the virtual TESS Science Conference II, where they presented their research for the hundreds of scientists in attendance. “We were some of the only undergraduates in attendance in the entire conference,” Skinner said. “This billion-dollar operation and here we are—21 and 22 years old—in this giant pool of geniuses. Dr. Baker said he was really proud of us because we were able to stand with these scientists and understand what was going on. They were discussing what has changed since the TESS launch in 2018 and where the mission is going from here. They’re using TESS data for all kinds of other research as well, not just stars and exoplanets, but galaxies and black holes!”

Undergrads Publish ‘Big Science’ Discoveries

“Nationwide, only a small fraction of undergraduates makes significant contributions to be published in their field of study. Then, to have a paper associated with ‘Big Science’ like NASA’s TESS mission is even more impressive. Yet, perhaps the greatest reward comes in the special moments when students humbly share with their family and friends, ‘I helped discover a new planet today!’”

—Dr. David Baker

David Baker, Tanner O’Dwyer, Miles Schnaible, and Brett Skinner are among 119 contributors to a paper published in *Astronomical Journal* about five new hot giant planets orbiting bright stars. In another article for the publication, Baker and Eva Natinsky ’19, Emma Page ’20, Miles Schnaible ’20, and Tom Yuan ’19 were included with authors writing about a hot Saturn orbiting an oscillating late subgiant. Other papers authored by students are currently under review for publication.

Baker emphasizes to the researchers that all their work must meet a standard of excellence. Skinner summed it up this way, “Since our data are submitted for NASA and all these science teams around the world, there has to be a certain quality standard. Are our results replicable, useful, and produced ethically? The standard of excellence is something we reflect on our own work and ask, ‘Is this something I’m proud of?’”

“Even as an undergraduate, to actually physically use this telescope has been a blessing,” Skinner continued. “This kind of access is something I could have never imagined. This is where I want to be—I’d make this choice again, 10 out of 10 times!” ■

ARTIST IS INSPIRED BY PLANET RESEARCH



Digital art
by Lindy Luker

As a summer researcher on the NASA TESS (Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite) project, **Lindy Luker '23** has spent hours analyzing data to assist in the identification of planets in neighboring solar systems. She applies the same intensity to her artistic process.

"I like to do art—in my own time," she said. "Right now, I'm doing a high-effort art piece with 15 pieces of toned paper. I'm going to fill out every single one with a colored pencil drawing ... four are complete, two are in process." The way Lindy describes the texture and tone of the paper, it's clear she is completely inspired just by its existence.

After working over the summer and meeting and talking with scientists from all over the world, Lindy says she was excited about art. "So, then I made this art piece. Digital is not my forte, but I thought it would be the best choice for the planet piece. And, then I almost fell right back into the art I traditionally have made."

Lindy says her time in Adams Observatory has helped her grow as an artist. "Over the summer, I had to have a really strong work ethic to be able to go all day," she said. "That has changed how I make art. I feel like I can work longer and be more prolific."

Prolific, yes, and also patient. Moving through the inevitable failures that come with scientific research has helped Lindy move through her art process instead of giving up.

"When I'm in the middle of a piece, I think I've become a little more comfortable to go ahead and make a change. Before, I would usually not do that," she said. "If I see it going into a failure path, instead of letting it just crash-land, I can make the change," she said.

Lindy is completing a major in Physics with a minor in Computer Science. She is Vice President of the Society of Physics Students, a member of the Improv Troupe and of the Computer Science and Robotics organization, and she is deeply committed to 15 pencil drawings on perfect, toned paper. ■



KELSO WORKING IN THE LATEST VERSION OF SPACE TRAVEL

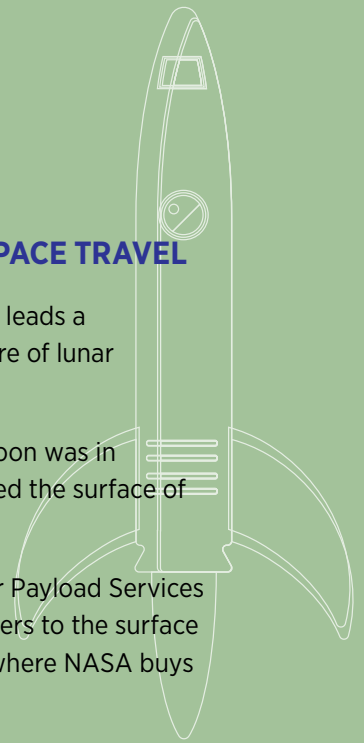
As a former NASA shuttle flight director, **Rob Kelso '77** now leads a commercial space company and is optimistic about the future of lunar landings:

“The last time the United States visited the surface of the Moon was in December 1972. Only the Chinese space program has reached the surface of the Moon in recent years after close to 45 years of no lunar landing missions.

But that is all changing in 2022! In 2019, NASA created the Commercial Lunar Payload Services Program (CLPS) whereby commercial companies will send robotic lunar landers to the surface of the Moon, carrying NASA science instruments. It is like FedEx in space ... where NASA buys a ride instead of developing its own lunar lander.

I am now Program Director of one of these commercial space companies: ORBITBEyond, designing lunar landers for Moon missions. The first two of these commercial missions for NASA will come this very year ... with two different CLPS companies attempting to land on the Moon for NASA. So, we are in a historic and exciting time in spaceflight and a new era in lunar exploration beginning this year! Stay tuned!”

Rob spoke at the 2017 Austin College TEDx Conference where he presented his talk, “Paving the Way to Planetary Settlement.”

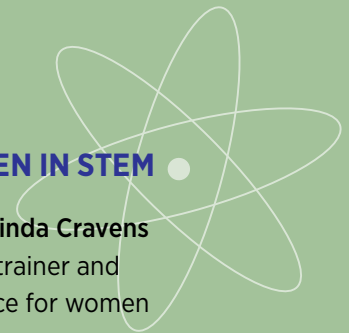


THOMAS ENCOURAGES WOMEN IN STEM

As a trailblazer for women in STEM, **Linda Cravens Thomas '83**, retired NASA astronaut trainer and flight controller, shared her best advice for women entering those fields today:

“Being around other high achievers raises the bar for all and develops self-confidence. My top advice is to believe in yourself; you probably have a stronger background than your peers. You may find you are held to a higher standard than others. No worries; your own personal standard is likely even higher.”

Linda has been recognized for her work on the Hubble Space Telescope repair missions, and she was named an Austin College Distinguished Alumna in 2010.



Austin College Can Feel Like Home – For Everyone

By Vickie S. Kirby



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMBERT

Carlos Lassiter says he has found a place he can call home. Austin College's new Vice President for Student Affairs and Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer arrived on campus shortly before Fall Term 2021 began, and soon, he was involved in much more than arranging an office and orienting his staff; he was "settling in."

Starting out as an ambitious new professional in higher education, Carlos had a big goal: become a college president by age 35. He set off quickly in the realm of Student Affairs and was on an upward trajectory. He earned a master's degree in Higher Education Administration from the University of Mississippi and went to work, holding positions at The University of Chicago, Vanderbilt University, and Tulane University.

As he neared age 40, he made peace with the fact that his goal of a presidency would not be defined by a time period but rather through executive leadership development and

recommendation of an opportunity based on fit and experience. At 39 years of age, he became Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, where he also served as Title IX Coordinator. A few years later, he became Assistant Vice President of Student Engagement at American University in Washington, D.C., with its 8,000 undergraduate and 4,000 graduate students.

Ambition still serves as a catalyst for his work ethic, but it no longer serves as a factor in determination of future position attainment.

At Austin College, he is feeling warmth and acceptance as a new member of the community. He has found that he and Austin College are a good match. He has the experience and the skill set needed by the College, and the College provides a great opportunity for him to continue excellent stewardship in Student Affairs while receiving additional executive leadership growth. "I have

felt so welcome here and enjoy being part of this community every day.”

If anything, as a new leader in Student Affairs he didn’t see as much of students in the fall term as he would have liked; engaging with students is the best part of his job, he says. He looks forward to creating engagement opportunities with students this spring. He has an open door policy, and accessibility and visibility are important leadership traits for him as the chief student affairs officer. His vision for students includes a commitment to strive for personal and academic integrity, to treat others with dignity and respect, and to become involved in creating a community that is inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

As the College’s first Inclusion and Diversity Officer, Carlos understands that inclusion is essential for a college campus. “Austin College does a great job recruiting a diverse student population,” he said. “Diversity here is top tier, better than most colleges and universities nationally. I was shocked by the amazing diversity numbers at Austin College during my interview process and became excited about the opportunity to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment on campus.”

Though Carlos is the first employee assigned inclusion and diversity planning as central to his job duties, efforts have been made over several years to demonstrate Austin College’s commitment

to inclusion and diversity in its community.

Carlos began his work in the fall by examining the past and assessing the present before looking to the future. Much work is to be done, and he plans to be very intentional about each step as he works with the President’s Committee on Inclusion and Diversity to restructure, identify resources and strategic imperatives, and garner support from within the community. During the spring semester, he hopes to begin Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainings for the campus community while sharing a strategic vision for the future of inclusion and diversity at Austin College.

“Everyone is a stakeholder when it involves inclusion and diversity on campus,” Carlos said. “It is a community effort. It’s not a ‘Carlos and His Magic Wand Show.’ It has to be a College effort. I’m not here to change who people are. I am here to work with our diverse community in identifying our shared values while affirming who we are as an institution. It is my hope that as an institution we approach our work through an equity lens and celebrate the multiple identities of our campus members by creating a stronger sense of belongingness for all.” ■

Carlos is always close to the action, living across Grand Avenue in Windsor House, speaking on campus, and posing with a few of the students on the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. A job in Texas has many perks—like nearby NFL and NBA teams. Better, his two sisters and their families live in Frisco and downtown Dallas. For the first time in 20 years of his career, he lives close enough to be part of their lives. His mother lives in Mississippi, and she and other family were finally able to stay with Carlos during the holidays.



The Joy of Giving While We're Living



By Vickie S. Kirby

■ THE BEGINNING

When **Larry Sykes** graduated from high school in Fort Worth in 1962, friends from his Presbyterian church were already attending Austin College; it seemed a good idea that he would, too. The next year, **Becky Russell** enrolled at Austin College at her Dallas Presbyterian church's urging and her parents' instruction.

Each became involved in all that Austin College social and academic life offered in those days.

Larry played sports and joined Phi Sigma Alpha fraternity. Becky was president of Kappa Gamma Chi and a Phi Sig Sweetheart. One day, Becky noticed a handsome young man playing basketball and decided that he was the one for her. Larry says the feeling was mutual, and the couple dated through Larry's last two years of college. He went to the Marine Reserves and had gotten out by Becky's graduation. The Austin College graduates—Larry '66 and Becky '67—married in October 1967.



Both Larry and Becky are not only donors but they also have spent many hours giving of their lives. A few years ago they were honored through the Each Moment Matters program, which recognizes individuals in North Texas making an extraordinary difference in the lives of others.



■ BUSY YEARS

The next years were full ones. Larry first worked at a bank, then moved into Dallas commercial real estate, working as a broker, manager, owner, and developer in industrial real estate for 35 years. Becky taught high school French and Government in Fort Worth, then at Highland Park in Dallas—until pregnancy meant she was no longer eligible to teach. So, she “retired” and raised a family, becoming involved in community volunteer activities. Later, in 1989, she found that her volunteer abilities translated into job skills in the nonprofit sector.

As a volunteer, she helped found the Dallas Women’s Foundation, chairing its first board in 1985. After employment at KERA and SMU, she took a paying job as CEO of the Dallas Women’s Foundation—where she remained for the next 12 years. That job included lots of fundraising for the foundation that makes grants to advance economic security, education, and leadership for women and girls. Now called Texas Women’s Foundation, it is one of the largest women’s funds in the world, making grants of \$5 million to \$10 million each year.

Along with working and raising two sons, Becky and Larry joined First Presbyterian Church of Dallas, which shaped their lives profoundly. The church ministers to homeless and at-risk individuals, and one ministry, The Stewpot, found in Larry a dedicated advocate. Years before cell phones were widely available, Larry recognized the difficulties a person would face regularly by not having a phone number to be reached by doctors, employers, etc. He brought the program “Community Voice Mail” to The Stewpot, raising start-up dollars for it. “People saw the need immediately and understood how important it was,” he says. He later chaired the Community Voice Mail national board. The last five years of Larry’s career were spent as a director of this program at The Stewpot. “Those were the best years,” he said, “It’s never too late to find a calling.”

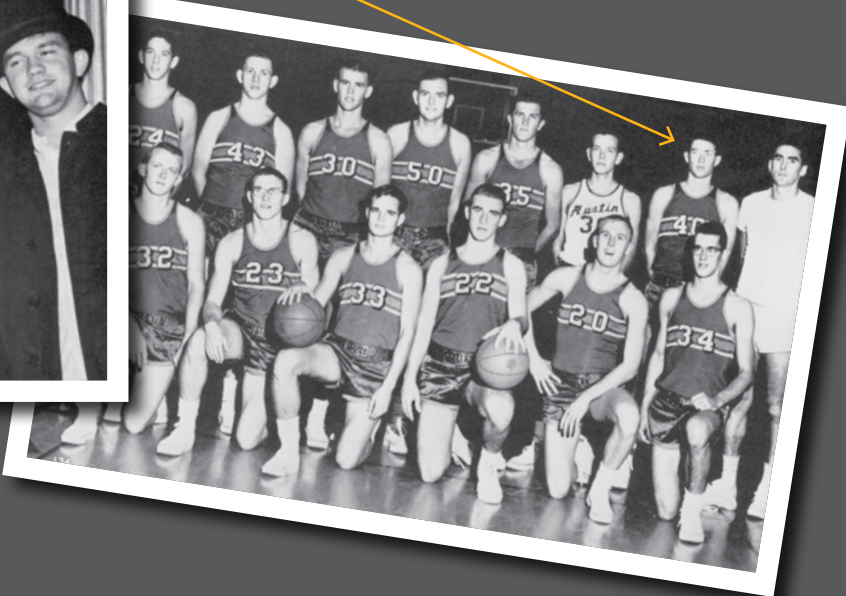
Larry and Becky have reached a new life stage—retirement—and moved in late September 2021 from their longtime home in Dallas to a new location: Reno, Nevada. (No worries. They still have a small spot in Dallas.) One of their sons and his family lives in Reno; that location also puts them much closer to their other son’s family in Oregon.



Becky



Larry



Austin College Memories

Becky Russell and Larry Sykes had the kind of college years people picture college to be like. They went to classes with interesting professors; Larry played basketball and was a member of Phi Sigma Alpha fraternity, for which Becky was selected a Sweetheart; Becky was a member of Kappa Gamma Chi sorority and active in other campus organizations. She and a classmate spent the spring semester of their junior year at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. Larry also had time abroad as a student—serving as a Winant Volunteer in Great Britain.

Photos from Chromascopes 1963 to 1967

Of course, it also puts them in beautiful country. Larry loves fly fishing and said he can walk from his house to the beautiful Truckee River in five minutes—in waders.

They have five grandchildren, ages 3 to 12 years, and they are ready for a lot of grandparenting. They surely will find ways to be of service and become involved in their new community, too. They won't be idle long.

■ AN ENDURING DEVOTION

One of the couple's abiding interests from the 1960s until today is Austin College. They've both served on the College's Alumni Board. They have both been named as Distinguished Alumni of the College. Becky currently serves on the College's Board of Trustees and is completing her last year of full-time service. "It's gratifying, important work," she said. In those roles, Becky particularly has learned much about the financial workings of the College. She's been surprised to learn about the challenges faced by all small liberal arts colleges.

"The middle class has shrunk," Becky said, "and even if someone is middle class, who can afford \$50,000/year to send one student to college? And we know that \$50,000 doesn't really cover the entire cost of education."

Becky also has learned that Austin College gives substantial scholarships and grants so that no student actually pays \$50,000 to attend—but where do those scholarship and grant dollars come from every year, she asks. "Someone has to make the gifts that make those scholarships possible," she said.

Becky and Larry agree that the realities of today's students are nothing like when they and their fellow classmates were in school, and they feel many alumni may not be aware of the complexities of the economics and the realities of current students' lives. Becky elaborated, "I know there are some students who, if their car breaks down over the summer, can't return to college. It's not even a matter of if mom or dad loses a job. Just having to get a car fixed could end their education. More than 25% of today's Austin College freshmen are first-generation students. More than 50% are from minority groups. Those statistics alone do not mean that they have financial struggles, but put a lot of those things together, and many times, we are looking at talented students with deep financial need."



"Austin College has enhanced our lives so much, and giving back has brought us great joy."

— Becky Russell Sykes '67

■ RESPONDING TO A NEED

What to do? Like many alumni, Becky and Larry have made gifts to Austin College—for scholarships, toward building needs, for special programs, on behalf of faculty. Now that they've retired, they naturally are thinking about their estate plans and who will benefit upon their deaths. They have set up an estate gift so that the balance of an IRA would go to Austin College once both of them have died.

However, Larry and Becky have also seen the needs of Austin College in recent years—and recognized that all small liberal arts colleges are having the same financial stresses. "We thought that since the school is going to get that money anyway, maybe it is needed more today than it might be needed later," Becky said. "We decided to accelerate that gift in a sort of 'Giving While We're Living' campaign. We were able to challenge other alumni to match our donation to create sponsored scholarships with part of those dollars. It is thrilling to give something that challenges others to give. The Annual Fund is the lifeblood of the College, and planned/estate gifts are the lifeblood of the future of the College. Austin College has enhanced our lives so much, and giving back has brought us great joy." ■



By Vickie S. Kirby

They're Somethin' in the Water

During its very first season as a varsity program in spring 2019, Austin College's women's water polo team finished as conference runner-up and according to their coach, gained an amazing statistic: **the first team in NCAA history to qualify for a conference championship game as a first-year program. That includes both genders, all sports, and all Divisions (I, II, and III).** What a start!

As the 2020 season got underway, the 'Roos were 4-0 in conference with a goal differential

of 44 goals, including a win over the defending conference champions. Then COVID hit, and the 2020 season faded away.

Things were looking good in spring 2021 as the team made history by entering the national Top 25 rankings, which includes all NCAA Division I programs. They were tied for No. 25 in the nation.

At the 2021 Collegiate Water Polo Association Division III Championships in April, Austin College took the top win to claim a season the team had dominated. **Madison Taylor '22** was



Austin College's Women's Water Polo team arrived on the scene in 2019 with a big splash and big goals. In 2021, the Collegiate Water Polo Association conference championship belonged to Austin College, along with Player of the Tournament and Coach of the Tournament honors—plus the No. 1 ranking in National Polls. “This program has been built on a foundation of character, work ethic, and leadership—in and out of the pool,” said Coach Mark Lawrence. “The team's success is a credit to the athletes and their desire to chase their goals.”



Handfuls of bling.

At right, Mark Lawrence, Collegiate Water Polo Association Division III Conference Coach of the Year, sits in the newly renovated Hannah Natatorium Locker Rooms, as do team standouts on the facing page.

Left to right on page 24, those women are Lexi Wong, Sophie Oliver, Brooke Le, Valery Piachonkina, and Madison Taylor. The generosity of several alumni and friends funded the renovation of the locker rooms and the entryway into the natatorium.



named Player of the Tournament, and Head Coach **Mark Lawrence** received Coach of the Tournament accolades.

Not long after, Coach Lawrence was named CWPA Division III Coach of the Year, and 'Roo **Sophie Oliver '23** was named CWPA Division III Player of the Year. Teammates **Lexi Wong**, **Madison Taylor**, and **Valery Piachonkina**, all '22, joined Oliver as First Team All-CWPA honorees. **Brooke Le '22** was named Second Team All-Conference.



Oliver, who led the CWPA in scoring, was shortly recognized as a First Team All-America selection and later, Austin College's Gene Day Most Outstanding Female Athlete of the Year at the year-end Athletic Awards Convocation.

The women are found, too, on academic honor lists. Sixteen 'Roos—more than half the team—were named All-Academic by the Association of Collegiate Water Polo Coaches. ... They are something in the classroom, too. ■



HOW MANY LAPS MAKE A CHAMPION?

PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMMERT

By Cody McCasland '24

I was born in 2001, six weeks early and with a plethora of birth defects. My parents were told that I would not live through the night, but I survived. I was already defying the odds! As I grew, I was able to roll around and pull myself with my arms but my parents knew something wasn't right. By the time I was 12 months old, my parents had learned that I was missing my shin bones and knees. The doctors gave my parents two choices: live in a wheelchair for the rest of my life or have my legs amputated with the chance that I could use prosthetics.

My parents chose to have my legs amputated at 15 months old. By 18 months old I received my first pair of prosthetics, and after just two days of learning in my prosthetics, I was up and walking, holding the prosthetist's finger.

From that day forward, my "disability" has never held me back.

When I went to kindergarten, I couldn't run like the other kids. I told my parents, who said, let's see if it's possible. They didn't know what could be

done and went to an orthopedic surgeon to ask. Challenge Athletes and Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children got me running legs. They thought I was the youngest to get them. It took three or four months to learn to run. Now, they are fitting 3-year-old kids with running legs. It's amazing.

I have loved swimming since a very young age. My mom had me learn how to swim before I even learned how to walk! In 2004, I watched my first Olympic Games on TV with my parents, and I told my mom, "I want to do that." My mom then started reaching out to different contacts, including the Challenged Athletes Foundation and U.S. Paralympic Swimming for guidance on how to get me into sports while having a "disability."

At 5 years old, I joined my first club swim team, Texas River Sharks, where my love for swimming grew. After many years of training and hard work, I attended my first international swim meet in Toronto, Canada, in 2012. It was an amazing experience. After going to this meet, I kept working very hard toward the upcoming Rio 2016

Paralympic Games. I had the honor of competing at trials in Rio, but sadly, because of my young age and where I was in my swimming development, I was not chosen for the team.

I was selected for my first international team for the 2018 International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation Games in Athlone, Ireland. While in Ireland, I won three silver medals for the U.S. in the 100-meter backstroke, 100-meter breaststroke, and 400-meter freestyle. This was an amazing experience and one of my proudest moments. Being on the podium with the national anthem playing was so surreal, and the feeling of the hard work paying off was indescribable. But I knew this was only the beginning for me.

I kept up with my training: swimming six days a week, about 3 miles of practice, and weight training daily. Even through COVID, I continued my training by swimming in my backyard pool and going on bike rides. Do you know how hard it is to swim 3 miles in a backyard swimming pool? But I can't complain, because many other athletes did not have the luxury of a pool in their backyard.

After having a very successful first season at Austin College, I continued my training in Hannah Natatorium, swimming five days a week, 3 to 4 miles each practice, in preparation for the 2021 Paralympic Team Trials. After the College pool

closed for renovations in April, I transferred to remote classes so I could finish my preparations for the trials. Sadly, just weeks before the trials, I got the devastating news that I was ineligible for the Paralympic Team because I had not been reclassified since changes in the classification system in 2016. I still attended the trials in summer 2021 in Minneapolis, gaining invaluable experience, cheering on my fellow athletes, and getting to compete on the world stage. (I was able to participate in preliminary rounds even though misclassified, but not the finals.)

Now, I'm in the midst of another year of competition at Austin College and with U.S. Paralympic Swimming teams. I've got some world competitions, too. I'm looking out and see a big goal of the Paris Paralympics in 2024. That's also the year I'll graduate from Austin College. I'm completing a major in Biology and minors in Leadership and Public Health. I plan to go to medical school and become a Pediatric Anesthesiologist.

Big wins for Austin College Swimming. Acceptance to Medical School. College Graduation. Medals in Paris Paralympics. Lots of big goals for 2024. ... I won't stop trying. ■

I have loved swimming since a very young age. My mom had me learn how to swim before I even learned how to walk! In 2004, I watched my first Olympic Games on TV with my parents, and I told my mom, "I want to do that."

— Cody McCasland '24

Major: Biology

Minors: Leadership & Public Health



PHOTO BY ELECTRA COFFMAN '22



An **UP** and Coming Sport

By Vickie S. Kirby

STUNT, the sport, is the fastest growing female sport in the country. It's in line for recommendation as an NCAA "emerging sport," and competition will only grow in coming seasons. Austin College is ready.

In July, **Alyssa Freeman** arrived on campus as Austin College's Head Cheer and STUNT Coach to begin to recruit a STUNT team that would be ready to compete in the Spring Term 2023 season. STUNT is an all-female sport, and a team requires a minimum of 16 members. Though Freeman also coaches the cheerleaders and expects to see a new level of achievement in their work, cheer will not become a competition team. She expects there will be crossover between the teams, with cheer team members participating in STUNT.

Centenary College of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference will also begin STUNT competition in spring 2023. Several Division II Texas schools already compete, including Dallas Baptist University, The University of Texas at Tyler, St. Mary's University, and Texas Woman's University. Several Oklahoma schools have teams.

Coach Freeman says she has some young women in practice now who could compete next spring, several of whom are first-years. They haven't had prior experience in STUNT as a sport, yet many have some of the necessary skills. STUNT teams perform routines based on skills of tumbling, jumps, tosses, pyramids, group stunts, and team routines.

In STUNT, all teams perform the same routine in a four-quarter competition. Those routines are provided early in the season by the USA Cheer and STUNT organization. Freeman said a lot of memorizing of routines must happen before competition when the teams then show the skills they can execute. When the time comes to take on an opponent, two teams face off in head-to-head competition.

"Not everyone has to be great at everything," Freeman said. "You may have someone on the team who is just okay at tumbling but who has killer jumps. I love to empower women who feel they don't have enough skills, to take what they have and build on that. What I really want to see is the work ethic. Bring the work and energy to create a successful practice. I'm excited to see where this goes." ■

Gloria in Excelsis Deo



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMBERT

Arts Prevail in Pandemic Times

By Leigh-Ellen Romm

Gloria



The Austin College A Cappella Choir and Chamber Orchestra arrange themselves at safe distances to perform and record *Gloria*.

It has been nearly two years since COVID-19 made its indelible mark on the world's timeline. Among other things, the prospect of welcoming an audience to a concert or special event was replaced by concern for the health and safety of all. As the months passed with delays and cancellations, creative people did what they do best—create anyway.

Austin College concerts, plays, exhibits, tours, and even a couple of marathon improvisation sessions moved to the virtual world of livestream, Facebook, and Zoom. The shift included an investment in technology and equipment, and a learning curve. It was a compromise, yet stories needed to be told in the way that only the arts can tell them.

Among the performances produced for the screen is the live recording of Vivaldi's *Gloria in D Major*, RV 589, by the Austin College A Cappella

Choir and Austin College Chamber Orchestra under the direction of **Dr. Ricky Duhaime**, the Mildred S. Mosher Professor in Music. Originally intended to be performed for the April 2020 dedication of the newly renovated Clifford J. Grum Sanctuary and Sallie Majors Chapel in Wynne Chapel, the production became a testament to collaboration, creativity, and the importance of the arts in difficult times.

The formal dedication service was to include messages of gratitude and blessing from alumni and guest speakers woven between excerpts of *Gloria in D Major*, RV 589. The classical music piece by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), a favorite composer of **President Steven P. O'Day** and **First Lady Cece**, was written around 1716 in Venice and soars with uplifting music and lyrics of joy and faith.

After Spring Break that year, the dedication service was first delayed then canceled as all

students remained remote through the end of the spring term. Although the music had been selected and arranged by Duhaime, student soloists chosen by audition, and rehearsals for both the A Cappella Choir and Chamber Orchestra had begun, the project was set aside, but not forgotten.

Dr. Wayne Crannell, Associate Professor of Music and Director of the A Cappella Choir, said, “The pandemic would just not go away. At first, we continued rehearsals with no plan for performance. When it became clear there was no way to safely be in the same room singing, even rehearsals had to stop.”

Duhaime said, “Too much time, energy, and effort had already been put in. We thought, ‘We know the students want to do it—so, if nothing else, we will do it as a virtual concert since live concerts are off the table.’ So, it was late fall (2020) when the whole production started to take shape again.”

Crannell and Duhaime agree that it could have been as simple as setting up one camera, a couple of microphones, pressing record, and calling it good. However, the commitment to excellence took hold across campus with “buy in” from several constituents.

With the passage of time, a few student musicians graduated, and others arrived. Some were able to return to perform as alumni, and all were ready to put in the work no matter how challenging the conditions.

Dr. Ricky Duhaime directs the musicians.



Austin Rue '23 and Dr. Wayne Crannell

“It was more than just the passage of time; we needed a new edition of the piece,” Duhaime said. “I had to write some things for the orchestra, and there were new students to plan for.”

The choir moved rehearsals to Wynne Chapel where the new chairs were set 8 feet apart for social distancing. “We were learning and getting it done,” Crannell said. “It’s not difficult music, but it is long. That became our main project for Spring Term 2021 because we couldn’t go on tour.”

On April 11, 2021, one year after the original canceled dedication, members of the choir and chamber orchestra, four camera operators, a sound technician, and the conductor arranged themselves in Grum Sanctuary. Renovations to the sanctuary, which included the addition of movable seating, made it possible to encircle Duhaime as he conducted the large group seated at safe distances.

No other facility on campus or in the nearby community could provide the space, rich acoustics, and beautiful backdrop for the setting of *Gloria*. The choir included Crannell, alumna soloist **Emily Campbell '20**, music faculty soloist **Sylvia Rivers**, and 35 students; the orchestra was made up of 12 current students, alumnus **Rizwan Jagani '15** and former 'Roo **Jacob Martin**, music faculty **Cathy Richardson**, two guest musicians from the community, and former Austin College First Lady **Anna Laura Page** on organ.

Everyone was tested for COVID in advance of the recording days; the orchestra members who could be masked were; and vocalists were given



Members of the Chamber Orchestra

Gloria



Soloists Emily Campbell '20 and Sylvia Rivers,
Adjunct Music Instructor

the option to wear a mask. Crannell said that even after months of working together on the music, he had not seen some students' faces unmasked until the dress rehearsal.

"There was a wide-eyed response once we were together," he said. "It does sound good!"

"We did the recording in one take and did not stop and start with the exception of a break between movements," said Duhaime. "There's no cut and paste, such as pulling the best 'take' and splicing together a perfect performance. This is the closest representation of a live performance we could get. We can hear everything that's good, and yes, we can hear everything we would like another chance at," he conceded.

Crannell continued, "There was no trickery. In professional productions, there's a great deal of finessing to make something sound perfect. Although we worked to balance the sound, we did not fake the sound. **Nick Hummert** was the hero in all of this."

Hummert, Associate Director of Digital Design Production, worked with **Ayaz Ali**, Associate Director of Process Management, and students **Evan Preston '24** and **Andrew Thomas '22** to

operate four cameras from eight angles to record the unique setup of the choir and orchestra "in the round."

Hummert regularly works with video to produce promotional and informative pieces for the College. The scope of this project was a growth opportunity for him as he planned the shots, worked with Cadence Studios of Sherman to mic the room, and ultimately edited more than 162 gigabytes of footage—while coaching students Preston and Thomas through valuable hands-on experience.

"I feel like this project is the level of quality that you would see on PBS," said Crannell. "It was a well-conceived plan from the outset. This is an honest, true representation of what we do here with what we've got. Except for a couple of community members, everything else is local. Everything is Austin College."

The live-recorded performance titled "Celebrating Austin College Talents & Gifts" debuted on the Austin College YouTube channel in September 2021 and was highlighted at Homecoming on October 23, with an opportunity to view, listen, and hear from panelists in Grum



Members of the A Cappella Choir

Sanctuary. It can be enjoyed today as far away as the World Wide Web will allow.

This broad accessibility of performances such as *Gloria* makes a good case for streaming and broadcasting all concerts.

Crannell said, “I think it’s easy to say, ‘Let’s just stream everything! We bought lots of equipment, so we better use it!’ The problem with that is we also have a responsibility to give live performances. If we stream everything, we’re giving audiences an excuse ... a chance ... to sit at home and watch everything remotely.”

“That fundamentally changes everything for our students,” he said. “The experience of live people sitting in front of them is a critical piece of what we do when we educate our musicians.” Both

Duhaime and Crannell expressed that the audience has its own role in every performance—to be present, engaged, and responsive. Performers often say the audience provides their motivation.

The motivation to follow through on learning and performing *Gloria*, RV 589, came from other sources: first to honor the faithful and generous support of Mary K. Grum and the Clifford J. Grum Foundation that made the sanctuary renovations possible, and second—to prevail.

Duhaime recalls a comment from Austin College Chaplain **Dr. John Williams ’84** after the Homecoming presentation and panel discussion, saying, “What I really like best out of all of this ... the pandemic did not win.” ■

Celebrating Austin College Talents & Gifts

Hear the Austin College live recording of
Vivaldi’s *Gloria in D Major*, RV 589 on YouTube




HOW TO NOT GET LOST IN THE WOODS


*Austin College Launches
First-Generation Programming*

By Leigh-Ellen Romm





Adventure stories often include a trip through the woods. For some travelers, the path is cut and worn by those who have gone before. For others, it's a little less obvious. Austin College students, like sojourners on an adventure, have set out to complete their college degrees. For some, that destination will be a first not only for themselves but also for their families.



1 of 4
Austin College
students is
First Gen

Among Austin College students, about one of every four qualifies as a first-generation student. A first-generation student is one whose parents or guardians have not completed a bachelor's degree, or whose parent may have earned a bachelor's degree in just the past two or three years. These students have been accepted on their academic merit, character, and desire to learn; and with generous financial packages and gift aid, many first-generation students are able to attend Austin College. But, while access to college is one thing, success can be quite another.

Director of Student Success and Transitions **Traci Howard Moore**, along with **Dr. Danielle Franks**, Assistant Professor of Psychology, have developed a dedicated program to help First Gens navigate the expectations, relationships, and other twists and turns of attending Austin College.

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING

In a summer 2021 workshop with faculty, staff, and students, Moore and Franks set out to prepare the best map possible for First Gens. Many on the team also identified as first-generation

students and brought along their knowledge. "In our group we discussed issues we personally experienced and created interventions based on what we wish we would have known," said Franks.

Key topics that can now be accessed on the First Gen webpage of the College website include navigating financial aid, finding campus resources, a map of the Sherman area, and short profiles with advice from a few faculty, staff, and alumni who completed degrees as first-generation students. There is even a glossary that covers terms from academic honors to withdrawal.

TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS

To help these students find one another, Moore and Franks host a monthly First Gen Lunch and Learn Series. "Anyone is welcome, and we cover our topic and share ideas no matter who is here—be it one or dozens," Moore said. The topics have included making a study schedule, choosing roommates and housing, exploring careers, and more.



Dr. Eric Gobel-Lynch

*Assistant Director of the
Academic Skills Center*

What advice do you have for current first-generation students?

Embrace your vulnerability. For me, this meant introducing myself to my professors after class in the first week, saying “yes” to trying new activities, and putting myself out there to make friends. It also meant leaning into the different expectations of college. I remember getting feedback on a research paper draft my first semester that required me to completely alter my approach. I was disheartened by how “badly” I had done, but realized that if I wanted to be successful, I would have to learn what success looked like, and how to achieve it.

PORTRAIT PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS HUMMERT

Franks continued, “We thought the Lunch and Learn format would be a good way to address some of the content not readily apparent to our First Gens, like financial aid and campus resources. We also discuss some of the intrapersonal and interpersonal struggles first-generation students tend to have, like experiencing imposter syndrome, communicating with parents who don’t understand college life, finding community, and balancing college demands and expectations from family.”

“These sessions can provide a safe space for students to work through some of these issues with fellow First Gens and faculty and staff members,” she said.

CHECK IN WITH THE GUIDE

Moore has made it her life’s work to help students strategically address their weak points and capitalize on their strengths. A first-generation student herself, she shares three pieces of advice with ‘Roos:

“**One**, asking for help does not make you less worthy or incapable of meeting the challenges of college. We all need help on our journey at some point,” she says. “**Two**, do not be afraid to cultivate additional opportunities for support on campus. There are so many people here who are ready and willing to help. And, **three**, surround yourself with people who ‘see’ you, who believe in you, and who motivate you.”

She regularly meets with students from all areas of campus and helps make needed connections for academic assistance, medical or counseling help, or recommendations for co-curricular activities.

In its first year, the First Gen initiative has proven to be valuable. “In all of our First Gen programming, the overarching goals are to demystify the college experience and communicate that First Gens belong and are embraced within the Austin College community,” Franks said. With information to light the way, these first-generation students, who are trailblazers for themselves and their families, will cut their own clear path for the future. ■

Dr. Renee Countryman

*Associate Professor of Psychology
Neuroscience Program Director*

*The Richardson Chair for the Center of Research,
Experience, and Transformative Education*

What does being a first-generation student mean to you?

It means that I worked hard to change the story of my family tree. It also means that I didn't know what I was doing most of the time. I am so lucky to have fallen in love with teaching so that I can help other students find their way as they navigate through college.



Several of Austin College's first-generation students joined Traci Howard Moore for an end-of-semester celebration on December 1 in Johnson Gallery in Wright Campus Center. First-generation programming continues for Spring Term 2022 with sessions about self-advocacy and career exploration.

Juanita Enriquez '25

Intended Majors: Environmental Studies and Music

How has the First Gen programming helped you?

I have gained so much knowledge at the lunch talks about things they don't tell you in high school. The lunches remind me I'm not alone. I and many other students came from families who didn't have the same opportunities or applied pressure as other students. I have been working so hard in college, and I realized I can do it, especially with all the resources Austin College provides, such as the writing center and tutoring.



Healing in the Arts

By
Vickie S. Kirby



“We say every day that we deal in modalities that have nothing to do with medicine but everything to do with the healing process,” said **Ashley Jones ’12**. “Our Art Therapists, Music Therapists, Music Practitioners, and Artists-in-Residence strive to enhance the healing experience for each individual patient we encounter. Over the last five years, our Arts in Medicine program has offered patients, visitors, and staff powerful, evidence-based tools that care for the whole person. We’ve touched thousands of lives—helping heal the body, mind, and spirit in a way possible only through the arts.”

Ashley is the Arts in Medicine Program Supervisor at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas. She works closely with **Susan Sewell Sayles ’78**, Arts in Medicine Program Manager; **Juliana Lobrecht Crownover ’98**, Artist-in-Residence; and volunteer **Al Hockaday Jr. ’77**, aka Santa, a cancer survivor who donates his time for Christmas parties for the oncology patients. Art Therapist

Jodi Nail McKee ’97 had been part of the Baylor team but recently left to begin a similar program elsewhere. The ‘Roos don’t make up the whole Arts In Medicine team, but finding so many ‘Roos working together was a fun experience for the alumni group.

“Art has the power to transform people,” Ashley said. “Through the combination of talk therapy and art making, I am able to aid people when they are in their darkest moments and help them see the light.”

Juliana’s role is a bit different than Susan’s and Ashley’s, but when she learned of the program, she wanted to be a part. She is not a therapist, simply an artist. “I paint to share my joy!” she said. “Most of the time I set up in the mezzanine of the Sammons Cancer building and do a painting start to finish. As I am doing so, I am delighted and honored to visit with patients, caregivers, and staff. We share stories inspired by my subject or the process of making art. I have the best job in the world!” ■



Alumni incorporating art into healing are shown clockwise from top left: Susan Sewell Sayles; Santa (Al Hockaday) and his Great Dane reindeer plus Susan, Jodi Nail McKee, and Ashley Jones; Artist-in-Residence Juliana Lobrecht Crownover is shown in three shots as she paints and prepares her materials; Ashley Jones setting up a public space; and Ashley with Santa Al Hockaday. The work at the top of page 38 was produced by a patient at the hospital.





From Ida Green to the LA Scene

Swann Excels as Hollywood Producer

By Leigh-Ellen Romm

William Swann '04, Head of Entertainment at Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH USA), works in Los Angeles as a creator and executive producer in the highly competitive field of television/film. He has projects debuting on networks and streamers such as Hulu and Netflix. As an Austin College former “theatre kid,” William says he went from Ida Green to LA using the skills emphasized in a liberal arts education.

“I constantly play mediator and creatively make all sides happy,” he said, “which means a lot of honest and thought-provoking communication, clear guidelines, clear benefits of what I think a show or content experience will procure. I really attribute that skill—empathy—to theatre.”

His former theatre professor Kathleen Campbell is constantly in his head. “She helped me find my creative voice, harness the power of

empathy, and when I finally got her blessing in terms of being an actor/director, that was very instrumental for me—in terms of confidence.”

BBH Entertainment specializes in the intersection of technology, advertising, and entertainment. Swann’s work to create and develop shows, then secure financing is a complicated matter in complicated times. One financing solution is to create a path for brands to finance and executive produce online TV shows like Hulu’s 2021 photography competition series *Exposure*. The six-episode series, created and executive produced by Swann, featured photographers using the Samsung Galaxy S21 5G phone to complete challenging assignments. It was produced by BBH Entertainment, Samsung, Hulu, and Westbrook Media, a Will Smith production company.

“As a creative producer, you can imagine working with a bunch of people with opinions

trying to make a television show,” he said. “And, a television show is basically a startup business that begins as a blueprint, revs up, exhibits, and then it just disappears, like magic.” Swann’s career timeline involves a few lucky breaks and a couple of miracles, but mostly hard work and a willingness to take risks. “I’ve been very lucky,” he said. “I packed up a U-Haul and drove to LA. I didn’t know anyone, and I did not have a job, but I came here thinking, ‘I’m going to be an actor.’”

Working first for The Walt Disney Company in DVD publicity, back when DVDs were big, Swann learned by asking questions. In his mind, he was an actor and had nothing to lose by being inquisitive and asking why he was doing certain tasks. With that same drive, he worked in corporate communications at Disney and then transitioned to the TV/film world for the Weinstein Company on shows and movies such as *Project Runway*, *Inglorious Basterds*, *The Artist*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *Spy Kids 4*, *The King’s Speech*, and more.

In over six years with Weinstein, William worked on many high-profile projects and with A-list talent, honing his creative and producing skills. He has built and sold his own business (Brandio), which taught brands how to develop, create, and sell their own TV/film projects; lived and worked in London while Creative Director for Coca-Cola; and he certainly is not done with career development. Even though acting is no longer the career plan, he uses it every day.

“As an actor, you’re always a bit nervous to go up on stage, but then, you just kind of click in. I do that in every meeting,” he said. “Early in my career, I had to pretend I was supposed to be there. I’ve been in some really big rooms, and I don’t think I would have been successful had Kathleen Campbell not taught me how to be an actor.” As a Communications major at Austin College, William was cast in plays (*Company*, *Corpus Christie*, *Arcadia*, *The Cosmic Egg*) and directed *Eastern Standard* by Richard Greenberg. He recalls **Andy Williams** ’74, former Tech Director for the theatre, who was

influential in his personal development and confidence. “Andy managed all things tech, kept our theatre running. He was always in the wings and was one of the most influential people for me at AC. He told me to just be myself. He was like this guiding counselor, if you will, and he was always so accepting and positive.” Will recalls faculty members **Dr. Dub Narramore** ’62 in

Theatre and **Dr. Shellene Kelley** in Computer Science by the genuine and accepting impression they left on him.

While in a class on gay literature taught by Professor of English **Dr. Roger Platizky**, William recognized another world of empathy in smart, constructive conversations about LGBTQ experiences. “It was 2000—very early in those days for such conversations—and I don’t think I would have gotten that anywhere else,” he said. He also attributes

his success to **Kristy Peet** ’02, who has been a best friend since his freshman year. “I found so many lifelong friendships at AC, including many bonds while being a member of Lambda Chi and Alpha Psi Omega.”

Liberal arts education emphasizes empathy, inquisitiveness, and critical thinking. William says that any good executive needs those to get through the legal negotiations and high emotional partnerships involved in television production.

“I lean on my liberal arts education every day to be successful, and in my mind—I’m always acting,” he said. ■

Since the interview—William has left BBH Entertainment and has entered the exciting world of Web 3.0 and cryptocurrency on the brand side at Coinbase. He spearheads entertainment and culture, overseeing content, talent, and entertainment partnerships.



William is pictured (left) with Director Wally Pfister on the set of Hulu’s *Exposure*; (above) at The Academy Awards.

William is a Cannes Lion (gold) and Tribeca Film Festival winner (best series) and is on the board of NewFilmmakers Los Angeles. He is an avid tennis player, board gamer, hiker, and he loves to travel.



Peggy McCoy Faulk '56, Gail Schmid Smith '55, Pat Broyles Gohlke '56, Carolyn Smith Chapman '57, Irene Ortega Bullard '56, and Virginia Brown Bonar '57, as pictured left to right, think fondly of the days between 1952 and 1955 when they were roommates and suitemates at Austin College. After graduation and some 38 years of busy living, they reunited and gathered every six months at one another's homes, from West Texas to Mississippi. Sometimes husbands joined them, sometimes not. Occasionally one of the women missed a meeting, but the group always had a good visit. The last few years, the women have found the driving too much for them so have established a letter they pass along, one to another, to remain connected. The bonds of friendship won't be broken!



Nancy Scott '59 and Richard Johnson '67 met up last year at First Presbyterian Church in Kerrville, Texas, each wearing one of their favorite Austin College T-shirts.

- Page 53 **'ROO LEGACIES**
- Page 56 **ALUMNI BOOKSHELF**
- Page 58 **'ROO-MATES**
Recent Weddings
- Page 60 **JOEYS**
Additions to the 'Roo Family



Recent 'Roo grads gathered for a photo at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in May 2021, just as they began their medical school journey. Left to right are **Erin Adams '20, Richard Zhu '21, Jason Chen '20, Shreya Uppala '20, Matthew Li '21, and Saif Haque '21.**

'ROONOTES

1958

Robert Lehr retired from his career as Professor at the Southern Illinois School of Medicine several years ago but continues to teach Anatomy and Physiology online for the Community College of Vermont.

Marcus Payne, now retired, was inducted into the Insurance America Hall of Fame in November 2020. Shortly after leaving the U.S. Marine Corps as a young



man, he started a 58-year career in insurance, beginning

at Unigard Insurance Group. After 25 years there, culminating in a role as Senior Vice President of Field Operations, Payne joined Crump Insurance Services, where he was President, COO, and Executive Consultant. He joined All Risks in 2003 as Managing Director and helped establish All Risks University, the firm's training program for new recruits. He was awarded the Charles McAlear Industry Award by NAPSLO in 1996 and was made a lifetime member of the organization.

1965

Paul Pearce, retired sports executive, was recently interviewed about his role in

establishing the first Women's Tennis Association professional tennis tournament more than 50 years ago in Houston, Texas. Pearce was Executive Director of the Houston Tennis Association when the tournament, billed then as the Virginia Slims Women's Tennis Tour, and its players defied the ruling bodies of international and national tennis because of extremely lower prize money for women than men. Grand Slam champion Billie Jean King and eight other women signed \$1 contracts with Gladys Heldman of *World Tennis* magazine at the Houston Racquet Club. That began a revolution that resulted in higher compensation for women in all sports—and perhaps expanded women's rights beyond the sports world.



Paul took part in a virtual reunion with the nine women in September 2020 on the 50th anniversary of the historic event. Today, Pearce lives in Lake Barrington, Illinois. The photo shows the \$1 payment the players received for their contracts.

1967

Jim Jarratt was sworn in as the Mayor of Granbury,



Texas, in July 2021 following a special election. He had served on the city's

Capital Improvement Advisory Committee, the Municipal Utility Advisory Board, and the county's Library Advisory Board. Now retired professionally, during his career he had worked for Johnson & Johnson, Frito-Lay, Citibank, and Equifax, and retired in 2009 from UnitedHealth Group as Vice President of Operations.

1971

David Baker was inducted into the Garland Sports Hall of Fame in 2021 for his career contributions as an athletic



trainer. He served as Athletic Trainer at Garland High School from 1973

to 1987, then moved to Centennial High, where he remained until 1996. When Rowlett High School opened in 1996, he developed the athletic training program for the school. After seven years at Rowlett, he retired, but missed the work and

returned to the training program at Garland High School in 2009.

1972

Barbara Parker retired after 19 years as Director of Programs for Piedmont Arts, an accredited museum and arts center in Martinsville, Virginia. She is now Director of the For Alison Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization established in memory of her daughter Alison. The foundation provides arts opportunities for young people in southern Virginia. A passionate advocate for the arts, Barbara was appointed in 2019 by Governor Ralph Northam to the Virginia Commission for the Arts as a commissioner for Area II.

1976

Joe Cox released a new album of 14 original piano

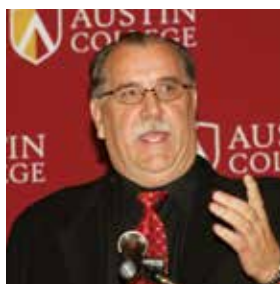


solos, *Dreams & Sketches*, in 2020 on Spotify and other streaming

services. He describes the collection as cinematic, ambient, minimalist, and crossover classical—something for calm reflection. A composer and pianist for more than 30 years, he also transcribes, arranges, and notates the songs of many top artists for

1976 (continued)

publisher Hal Leonard. "I spent hours in the practice rooms at Craig Hall, working on Beethoven, Chopin, and Grieg for Dr. Armstrong, and four years I sang in and toured with the A Cappella Choir under Bruce Lunkley. I also loved playing timpani or French horn with the Sherman Symphony Orchestra." Joe and his wife, Ruth Tenison Hogg Cox '75, have been together 44 years, living in Dallas before moving to Los Alamos, New Mexico, in 1991.



Larry Tidwell (MA '77) is one of eight new members of the Class of 2022 Texas High School Basketball Hall of Fame, selected by the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches (TABC). The members will be inducted in May 2022 at the annual TABC clinic in San Antonio. TABC leaders describe Tidwell as "a fierce advocate for girls basketball." He earned eight district championships and nine playoff appearances with his girls high school teams and then enjoyed a successful college coaching experience at the D-1 level. His college stops include Lamar University, The University of Texas–Rio Grande Valley, Baylor, TCU, Texas Tech, and Kansas. He joined Dallas Christian College as Head Women's Basketball Coach in 2020.

1977



Claude Webb (MA '79) always has a story to share and can gather a group of alumni pretty quickly. That could be in hopes of keeping certain events from their own years out of the stories. He also loves music. A group of Austin College graduates have purchased several 100-year-old buildings on the square in historic Westminister, northeast of McKinney in Collin County, and opened a live music venue they describe as the "Luckenbach of North Texas." Owners and operators **Claude Webb** and **Michael Bardgett '03** named the spot THE GAR HOLE after Webb's Luckett Hall room. The Gar Hole has a bar and grill, smokes its own BBQ, and features Texas music on indoor and outdoor stages.

1978

H. Paul Putman III, M.D. was a guest in May 2021 on the American Psychiatric Association Publishing's Books podcast as a "voice behind the most prominent psychiatric scholarship in the field today." He is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the APA and member of other distinguished professional organizations. Board Certified in General Psychiatry, he received his M.D. at UTMB–Galveston and completed his internship and residency in General

Psychiatry at the Medical University of South Carolina, where he was Chief Resident. He has been a practicing psychiatrist for over 30 years, published in peer reviewed journals, and served as a supervisor for the Austin Graduate Medical Education/UT Medical Branch Residency Program in Psychiatry. He currently chairs the Committee for Continuing Medical Education of the ACP and writes and lectures full time.

Stephen Schlacks, Texas board-certified personal injury attorney, celebrates 35 years as a Baylor Law School graduate and 25 years as founder of his civil trial law practice in The Woodlands, Texas. He received the 2020 "AV Preeminent" rating from the Martindale-Hubbell Texas Bar and Judiciary Edition. The AV preeminent rating is given to the attorneys who rank at the highest level of professional excellence for legal expertise, communication skills, and ethical standards



in peer review ratings. Stephen also received the 2020 Texas Bar Foundation Badge of Honor and is Life Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. Only 1/3 of 1% of all Texas attorneys are accepted, by invitation only, into the Foundation.

1979

J. Lee Whittington, professor of Management at The University of Texas at Dallas, was named the 2021 King Fellow, who, according to the announcement, "is a

professor whose life and work have made a significant contribution to the excellence of education at UTD and who exemplifies the best qualities of a teacher, colleague, and scholar at the university." His provost announced, "When this



professor enters the classroom, the students can

immediately feel the increase in energy and enthusiasm." The professor is also a successful researcher, and he has written numerous books, articles, and essays. He also was recognized for service to the university, as well as his work in executive coaching and leadership development.

1983

Bill Leonard joined PlainsCapital and its Private Bank as Wealth Strategist, developing customized financial plans and investment strategies for clients. In announcing the hire, the bank's Chief Operating Officer praised Bill's decades of wealth management experience and proven record with his clients. Bill joined PlainsCapital from another large national bank where he



was Senior Vice President and Senior Trust and Fiduciary Specialist. He has

more than 33 years of financial services experience in Texas. He has held numerous leadership positions on the North Texas Estate Planning Council and the Texas Bankers Association Advisory Board.

1984

Rodney Moore, Co-Managing Partner of the Dallas Office of the international law firm of Weil, Gotshal & Manges, and a Partner in the Firm's Private Equity practice, has been included in the The Best Lawyers in America 2022. He was noted particularly in the area of Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law. He has been consistently included on the list for many years. Recognition by Best Lawyers is based entirely on a peer-review survey in which attorneys cast votes on the legal abilities of other lawyers in their practice areas. Moore also spends significant time in the firm's Houston office.

Jeffrey D. Rhodes was inducted to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Board of Trustees, representing the Southwestern District. After Austin College, he graduated from Baylor College of Dentistry in 1988 and completed specialty training in pediatric dentistry in 1990, including

fellowships at Scottish Rite Hospital for Children and Children's Medical Center of Dallas. While at Baylor College of Dentistry, he published research in growth and development of young children's faces. His special interests lie in the growth and development of children's smiles. He now teaches pediatric dental residents at Jordan Valley Community Center in Springfield, Missouri.

1985



Kirsten Brandt James is Executive Director of Project Transformation of North Texas, where she leads change through mission and service. Before joining that team, she had more than 25 years of nonprofit management and fundraising experience, including service as the Chief Development Officer of 29

Acres, where she raised funds to support a living community for adults with autism in Denton County, and as Executive Director of Alley's House, helping teen mothers complete their educations. She previously spent 22 years as the Executive Director of Junior Players, where she oversaw exponential growth for the arts education agency as it served thousands of youth throughout North Texas.

1987

Robert Cresanti was named Managing Director and Government Relations Lead for Accenture in North America and head of the company's Government Relations Network. He will report to Accenture's General Counsel and is based in Washington, D.C. Robert has nearly 30 years of experience in the public and private sectors, including roles in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. He joined Accenture from the International Franchise Association (IFA), comprised of more than 1,400 brands that include

many iconic restaurants and hotels. He began his career on Capitol Hill, where he became an expert in banking and tax issues over his nine-year tenure. In 2006, he was confirmed as Under Secretary for Technology and Chief Privacy Officer at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Webster Crocker retired in fall 2021 after 32 years as Director of Theatricks Children's Theatre, a division of



Sherman Community Players. Over his career, he developed the children's theatre programming to include regular seasons of plays and musicals, workshops, and Project Theatre, a traveling troupe that took plays into area schools. Webster and his wife, **Nikki Gowen Crocker '89 (MAT '90)**, worked side by side to make the theatre a positive experience for families and people of all ages. Post-retirement, Webster is collaborating with

OH, WHAT HEIGHTS THEY'LL HIT

Mark Fleischer '91 was promoted to Executive Producer of Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera (CLO) in summer 2021 and leads Western Pennsylvania's largest producer of musical theatre and performing arts education programs. He joined CLO as Associate Artistic Director in 2014 and now leads the 75-year-old musical theatre program. In the new role, he is responsible for all creative items: selecting the shows, hiring the artists, and coordinating the path to opening night. Day to day, he works closely with the marketing and fundraising team to secure financial resources, interacts with the Board of Directors to plot strategy for the future, and oversees a full-time staff of 32, plus many additional seasonal, artistic, and adjunct education personnel. CLO had to close 252 scheduled performances during the COVID shutdown. For a comeback, they went big, partnering with the Pittsburgh Steelers to produce two musicals in Heinz Field in summer 2021.



1987 (continued)

regional nonprofits to bring more children's theatre to new audiences.

Karon Washburn Rowden was promoted in January 2021 from Staff Attorney at Texas A&M Family and Veterans Advocacy Clinic to the position of Interim Director and Lecturer. She has worked with the legal clinic, training new students in the practice of law. In addition to teaching in the law clinic, she has taught marital property and is a frequent local continuing legal education presenter on topics related to domestic violence and family law, special immigrant juvenile status and family law, and veterans and family law. The clinic is a service of Texas A&M University School of Law.

1988

Byron Christie, M.D., has been fighting COVID-19 since its beginnings in the U.S. He is Associate Chief Medical Officer of Integrations for Radiology Partners and once the pandemic hit, Dr. Christie and RP radiologists traveled across the U.S. to provide care in hard-hit regions. He



contracted COVID-19 himself while treating patients in Florida and upon

recovery, he increased his fight against the virus and intensified his work to educate medical students. He received one of eight Imaging Wire Awards for 2020 "honoring this year's most outstanding contributions to radiology." The Imaging Wire is a

medical imaging industry news outlet. Dr. Christie is based in El Segundo, California.

1989

Seemee Ali leads the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture as President of the nonprofit organization. She took the position in fall 2020, having been closely involved with the work of the Institute since the 1990s. She taught on the Rome campuses of the University of Dallas and John Cabot University, and back in the United States, at Morgan State University, Villanova University, and



Carthage College. She also returned frequently to lecture at the Institute. She and

her husband, Michael McShane, came to Dallas from Carthage College in Wisconsin where they are recognized as Professors Emeriti for their work in the liberal arts.



Nick Kagal is Vice President of Marketing and Business Development for SpinSci, a communication development team in Dallas working for a healthcare technology solutions provider. He says it is his personal goal to improve the healthcare of communities by improving access to efficient quality healthcare services.

1990



Todd Estes was named Best of Texoma for Best Estate Planning/Probate Attorney in 2020. He is the founding attorney of The Law Office of M. Todd Estes P.C. in Sherman and is licensed in Texas and Oklahoma. He has practiced for more than 27 years in estate planning, probate, guardianship, and corporate law and business organizations. Todd is also the Music Minister at Faith Church of Sherman. His family is continuing the Austin College tradition through his daughter, Emily '20, and his son, Nick '24.

1992

Dallas Cothrum completed his two-year term as President of the Highland Park Education Foundation in September 2021. The organization annually provides more than \$3 million in benefits to teachers, staff, and students of Highland Park ISD. Dallas serves as the CEO of Masterplan, which is celebrating its 40-year anniversary and has offices in Dallas, Frisco, Austin, and Houston. He also serves on the boards of directors of City Hospital at White Rock Lake and the McWhiney Foundation.

Aric C. Gillen, board-certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist, is serving as part of the OB/GYN hospitalist team at OB Hospitalist Group in

Greenville, Texas. The group has partnered with Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital to launch a full-time OB Emergency Department. Dr. Gillen earned his medical degree in 2007 from St. George's University School of Medicine and completed his obstetrics and gynecology residency in Michigan at Providence Hospital and Medical Centers from 2007 to 2011.

Joel Lesh became General Manager and Vice President for Atkins Kroll Saipan in February 2021. He was named AK Aftersales Director in December 2017. He has over 25 years of automotive dealership management experience. He previously was the National



Aftersales Director for Kenmore Ltd. in Papua, New Guinea.

J. Michael Price II was named to the 2021 *D Magazine* Best Lawyer list



and has been included for 16 years as a Texas Super Lawyer.

For 15 years, he has had dual board certification as a criminal defense lawyer by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and by the National Board of Trial Advocacy—one of only five Dallas attorneys so certified. He and his wife, Krissa, have lived in Frisco for 17 years and have two sons, Trey, 17, and Brenden, 13. Michael recently opened a law office in Plano.

1993

Kristen Forrester Streater has been promoted to Dean of Academic Affairs at the Plano campus of Collin College. The division includes most of the academic transfer disciplines offered at Plano. She had previously served more than two years as an Associate Dean over the History, Government, and Psychology departments at the campus.

1994

Joy Eckelkamp joined the law firm of Rapp and Krock in Houston, Texas, as Senior Counsel in 2021. She is a Certified Elder Law Attorney with the National Elder Law Foundation and has 21 years of experience in Estate Planning, Elder Law, Probate, Guardianship, Trust Administration, and Special Needs and Public Benefits Planning and Administration, and more. Prior to joining Rapp & Krock, she was a Trust Officer at Bank of Texas.

1995



Dennis Womack was named the Coppell ISD Chief Operations Officer during summer 2021. He had 25 years of education experience, including 22 years in administration in McKinney ISD and Lovejoy ISD. Most recently, he served as Assistant Superintendent for Operations in Lovejoy ISD.

1999

Ishaq Kundawala joined the faculty at Mercer University's George School of Law in Macon, Georgia, as a tenured Professor in Bankruptcy Law in May 2021, teaching courses including Contracts and Bankruptcy. He previously taught at Nova Southeastern University's Shepard Broad College of Law for 13 years. There, he created a consumer

bankruptcy externship program in which students represented consumer debtors in bankruptcy proceedings on a pro bono



basis. He plans to launch a similar program at Mercer. He began his career in private practice in Dallas, Texas, with the international firm of Baker Botts LLP, and is licensed to practice law in both Texas and Georgia.

Eric Montgomery is Executive Vice President of Technology with the on-demand gamification platform Trivie. He oversees the SaaS-based software development, integration, and strategy, as well as various other technologies. Before taking the position,



he had most recently been Vice President of Information Technology for Susan G. Komen, where

he managed software and technology teams at companies including Intuit, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Raytheon.

2000

Abby K. Wood was appointed in 2021 to a four-year term on the Fair Political Practices Commission of California. She serves on the FPPC's Digital Transparency Task Force. From 2015 to 2017, she served on the Federal Bipartisan Campaign Finance Task Force. Dr. Wood also is an Associate Professor of Law, Political Science, and Public Policy at the University of Southern California's Gould School of Law. Before joining USC Gould, she clerked for the judge of the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She also has consulted on good governance projects in association with USAID, World Bank, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, and UNDP.



A VOTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMMUNITY

Geré Feltus '01 was elected to the McKinney (Texas) City Council District 3 in May 2021, the first African American woman elected to the council. She is a board-certified family physician and has been Medical Director of the Mesquite Employee Health Center and Supervising Physician for the Mesquite Community Health Center since 2011. She has partnered with local churches to develop programs that target the prevention of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, and mental health disorders. An active and enthusiastic citizen of McKinney, she has served on the boards of the McKinney Economic Development Corporation, the Children's Advocacy Center of Collin County, the Advisory Council to Chief of Police Greg Conley of McKinney, and the Collin College Law Enforcement Academy Advisory Board. She mentors middle and high school students through Citychurch McKinney and is an alumna of Leadership McKinney 2020. A resident of McKinney since 2011, Geré has two daughters, Ryleigh, 13, and Zoe, 11.



2001

Jill Gin Dinges is the new Primary Years Programme PYP Director at Lone Star Language Academy in Plano, Texas. LSLA is a K-5 charter



school that aims to provide students with an innovative inquiry-based

learning experience that fosters critical thinking skills, language acquisition, and intercultural competence. She had more than nine years of experience implementing the program in the classroom setting. She was a founding fourth grade teacher at the Imagine International Academy of North Texas, where she was twice named Teacher of the Year. After six years with Imagine, she helped implement the IB Primary Years Programme in Frisco ISD. She is now back with the Imagine Schools family in a new role.

2002

Amanda Lumley Walker-Pethick is in her third year as the Director of Student Support Services at Akiba Yavneh Academy of Dallas, a private Jewish day school. She and her staff have been able to begin a revolutionary program for inclusive special education services for any Jewish child with special needs. She said the program and services do not exist elsewhere in the country.

2003

Marcus Schulz is in his first year as Athletic Coordinator and Head Football Coach at Humble High School. He

previously served as Head Football Coach for Splendora



ISD and had been Athletic Director there since 2014.

Under his leadership, the Splendora football team advanced to Bi-District Champions for the first time in the school's 74-year history. Marcus' high school coaching experience in track and field, baseball, and football covers Gainesville ISD, Sanger ISD, Andrews ISD, and Hillsboro ISD.

2004



E.A. Hoppe became the City Manager of Kerrville, Texas, in July 2021, continuing a 16-year career of service to municipalities, and moving up from Kerrville's Deputy City Manager. While still completing his degree at Austin College, he began an internship with the City of Richardson, Texas, where he became interested in the duties of a City Manager. After the internship, he stayed on in 2005, working as a Management Analyst and eventually was named Assistant City Manager, then City Manager. He left Richardson in 2013 to become the City Manager for the City of Bulverde, where he worked before moving to Kerrville in 2016 as Deputy City Manager. E.A., his wife, Ashley, and their two sons are pleased to stay in the Hill Country area they call home.

2005

Vera Corbett Ahyya has written the picture book *KINDERgarten* about a kindergarten class working on a kindness pledge to be the kindest it can be. Ayihha, also known as The Tutu Teacher, said the book was inspired by her own kindergarten class. The book is expected to be published in summer 2022. Find The Tutu Teacher on social media.

Blake Garmon, M.D., a Primary Care Physician, has joined the Geisinger 65 Forward Health Center team in Shamokin Dam, Pennsylvania. He earned his medical degree from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Virginia Medical Center. He joins the 65 Forward team following work in primary care in central Virginia, where he also served as a Wound Care Physician and an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Virginia. He is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Jennifer Cary Vaughn graduated with her Ph.D. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University in December 2020. She taught Environmental Science at Collin College for a time and started a new position in fall 2021 as eighth grade Science teacher at St. John's Episcopal School in Dallas, Texas.

2006

John Bucy III was re-elected in November 2020 to the Texas House of

Representatives, a post he first won in 2018. A native Texan and small business owner, he serves District 136—western Williamson County—including Northwest Austin, Cedar Park, Leander, and the Brushy Creek area. He was honored by his peers as House Democratic Caucus Freshman of the Year in 2019 and by Hill Country News as Best Elected Official in 2019



and 2020. John is proud to serve on the board of the

Special Olympics of Texas and supports Big Bend Conservancy. His wife, Molly, is a public school teacher. The two have a daughter, Bradley Harper, and live in Northwest Austin.

2007

Austin Coachman wanted to be Assistant Principal at Lovejoy High School for years. The problem? His dad held that job. Finally, in 2021, Austin's dad retired, Austin interviewed, and the job



became his. An area reporter writing about Austin's move into

his dad's job elicited a response that Austin does indeed ask his dad questions about the job. "I don't think there's anything wrong with that," Austin said. "He's been my ally since I was one day old."

David Savage, M.D., completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of California San Diego in June 2021. He is

now a Hematology-Oncology Fellow at Scripps Health in La Jolla, California. David is also serving the next three years on the alumni boards for both The UT McGovern Medical School in Houston and Austin College.

2008

Jesse Booher recently joined DePelchin Children's Center as Senior Vice President and Chief Operations Officer. He had worked with DePelchin in his previous roles at the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services and the Department of Family and Protective Services. He's excited to work closely with fellow 'Roo Katie Senor Hannan '12 in her role as DePelchin's Operations Coordinator.



Rebecca Webb Buell was selected as a *Dallas Business Journal* 2021 Top 40 Under 40 honoree. The

recognition celebrates the up-and-comers who are

making an impact in their industry and in their communities. Rebecca is Chief Financial Officer of the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Her 10-year career in finance at the foundation has progressively developed with increasing responsibility, including the role of Vice President for Finance and Accounting, before taking the CFO position nearly four years ago.

Michael Cleveland, Senior Manager for Emerging Technology for BNSF Railway, was selected through an online poll in *Railway Age* as one of 10 of the most influential people in the North American railway industry—those individuals who are committed to service and whose mantra is making a difference. He joined the railway in 2010 as a Mechanical Management Trainee. In 2015, he moved to the System Locomotive Team, and now he leads the Battery Electrification and Energy Storage Initiative, which he established in 2018.



Kristin Shapiro received the 2020-2021 Outstanding Biology Teacher Award for

the State of Colorado, awarded by the National Association of Biology Teachers. She is in her second year at Florence Junior/Senior High School, teaching ninth grade Biology, Honors Biology, and AP Environmental Science, and is the Gifted and Talented Coordinator for grades 10 to 12. She also helps students and teachers prepare for the AP exam, teaches the AP course, and is a part-time coach and curriculum writer for the National Math and Science Initiative. Before she and her husband moved to Colorado, she taught for 11 years in Plano ISD.

2009

Jamie Hannan (MAT '10) joined the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management as the Innovation Research Analyst in January 2021.

He gained an interest in Emergency Management while working on his Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Houston, which he obtained in 2019. His wife, **Katie Senor Hannan '12**, is the Operations Coordinator for DePelchin Children's Center in Houston. Jamie and Katie have a daughter, Abigail.

Wes Johnston is Development Manager at Medcore Partners, a national real estate development and investment company that focuses exclusively on delivering customized facilities for physicians and healthcare service providers. Under Wes's leadership, the



firm has developed a surgery center at Highway 75 and E. Taylor in Sherman.

He said it was exciting to revisit his old stomping grounds from his college days and to provide a service for the community he came to know so well when he was at Austin College. The



SERVING TO HEAL THE HEALERS

James Covey '06 has spent the last 10 years serving with Wycliffe.org, based in Kenya, North Africa, and now Spain. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor and works with staff at his organization and others who live and work in difficult environments. Before COVID, much of his time was spent traveling to offer workshops, trauma debriefings, and individual counseling. Now, he leads a team of nine providing similar services, mostly virtually, to those working in the Eurasia region. He is pleased to be part of offering trauma healing training around the world through the Trauma Healing Institute. James is co-author of the teen curriculum *Life Hurts, Love Heals*, which a professional facilitator guides. The curriculum is available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Tamil, and Sinhala. James and his wife, Ellie, live in Malaga, Spain, where they strive to support Christian workers in places of high risk. Pictured, James and Ellie display some of their more playful skills on Mt. Etna in Sicily. To learn more, visit: <https://jamesandellie.com>



RUTHERFORD IS YOUNG LAWYER OF THE YEAR

Meggin Rutherford '06 was named the 2020-2021 McPherson Young Lawyer of the Year by the Colorado Bar Association. In 2010, she began The Rutherford Law Center, which focuses on out-of-court solutions for clients in the areas of family law, elder law, probate, and estate planning. The McPherson Award is given annually to an attorney under the age of 37 who shows "an outstanding record of professional success, community service achievements, and a strong commitment to civic participation and inspiring others, whether within the legal profession or elsewhere." Meggin is proud to keep divorcing families out of court through her efforts to help pass the Uniform Collaborative Law Act. She believes court is the worst place for family law cases due to the emotional harm and financial burden incurred. She also volunteers through her children's school, Jefferson Unitarian Church, and Girl Scouts in her Arvada, Colorado, home.

2009 (continued)

Ambulatory Surgery Center and clinical facility opened in 2021.



Nikunj Rana is CEO and President of Rana Facial Plastic Surgery in

the McKinney/Frisco area. He earned his M.D. in 2014 from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and completed a residency in otolaryngology and head and neck surgery at UTMB Galveston in 2019. He then completed a fellowship in Facial Plastic Surgery and premier image cosmetic and laser surgery at Emory School of Medicine in 2020.

Dhriti Pandya Stocks successfully defended her dissertation, "Beyond Tiebout: Towards a theory of philanthropic engagement in education in local communities," for her Ph.D. in Public Affairs in the Public and Nonprofit Management program at UT Dallas.



Dr. Stocks is Director of Corporate Relations at Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas.

Her research focused on the intersection of philanthropy and public education.

Miles Vaughn is Assistant Soccer Coach at the University of Maryland. He had been on staff for three seasons and spent last season as Interim Assistant/ Director of Soccer Operations. In his first season as an assistant, Vaughn helped the team reach the NCAA Tournament after an 0-3 start in the shortened spring season. Prior to his operations role at Maryland, Miles served as a coach and the Director of Operations for the Bethesda Soccer Club, a top youth club.

Jessica Lewis Wescott, CFO of Fuzzy's Taco Shop, has added Chief Operating Officer to her title. She began her wealth management and investments career as an Analyst and Marketing Manager for True North



Advisors. She then held several roles at ACT Wealth Management, culminating as Director of Client Relations. Jessica then worked through several finance-centered roles with Plano-based brand MOOYAH, ending her time with the franchise brand as Vice President of Development and Finance. She joined Fuzzy's Taco Shop in 2018 as Executive Vice President of Finance and has worked her way into the C-suite.

Samantha M. Junker Wommack was named a shareholder and Executive Vice President of Sisemore Law Firm, a family law firm in Fort Worth, Texas, in April 2021. She had



been a Senior Attorney there, having joined the firm as an intern in her final year

of law school at Texas Wesleyan University School of Law. While she always knew she wanted to become an attorney, she decided to specialize in family law during her early tenure at Sisemore.

2010

Kola Alade completed his Ph.D. in School Psychology from Texas Woman's University in August 2021. His dissertation examined cognitive flexibility in



pediatric traumatic brain injury patients in response to a

cognitive rehabilitation program over time. He will complete his post-doctoral fellowship at Cook Children's Denton Psychology Clinic, where he will mainly conduct neuropsychological evaluations.

2011

Sarah Gilbert Pickett graduated in spring 2021 with a Ph.D. in Musicology from Florida State University,

where she also completed a master's degree. A violinist, she has joined the Music faculty at Georgia Gwinnett College, in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Arathi Ramamurthi Rana is with U.S. Dermatology Partners in Sherman and Paris, Texas. A Texas A&M College of Medicine graduate, she completed her internship and dermatology residency at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston (UTMB-Galveston). In two consecutive years of residency, she was awarded training from the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery with national leaders in Cosmetic Dermatology. In her final year of residency,



she was selected as the Academic Chief Resident and awarded

The UTMB Dermatology Resident Research Award for study in Aesthetic Medicine. She and her husband, a facial plastic surgeon, live in North Texas with their German Shepherd.

2012

Katie Senor Hannan became the Operations Coordinator for DePelchin Children's Center in June 2021. Katie began working with DePelchin as a Clinical Case Manager after completing her Master of Social Work degree at the University of Houston in 2016. Katie and her husband, **Jamie Hannan '09 (MAT '10)**, who works for the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, have a daughter, Abigail, 4.

Ayvaunn Penn is the playwright and director behind *For Bo: A Play Inspired by the Murder of Botham Jean by Officer Amber Guyger*. This fictionalized story—inspired



by true events that took place in Dallas, Texas—was a

2020 and 2021 finalist for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. In October 2021, the virtual production of the play presented by The #ForBoInitiative, The Botham Jean Foundation, and Theatre TCU appeared in film festivals—Silicon Valley African Film Festival, Gary International Black Film Festival, and Lone Star Film Festival. Educational and arts institutions can participate in the #ForBoInitiative by visiting TheForBoInitiative.com.

2013

Caitlin Graves received an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership in spring 2021 from Abilene Christian University. She successfully defended her dissertation "Faculty of Color Viewpoints Regarding Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Climate at Texas Community Colleges." She works at Tarrant County College and lives in Fort Worth, Texas. She wrote that the job might change with the new degree, but she expects the city to remain the same.

2014

Emily Stanton completed her master's degree in Archaeology at Cornell University in 2017. Inspired



by her study abroad experience in Wales at Austin College, her thesis focused on the archaeology and anthropology of early medieval pilgrimage in North Wales; she also hiked 75 miles of the "North Wales Pilgrim's Way" and spent two weeks at the Nant Gwytheren Welsh Language Centre. Emily is writing her Ph.D. dissertation in Anthropology/Archaeology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. After spending a summer excavating an Iron Age hill fort in southwest Germany, she is focusing her research on gender and social dynamics in Iron Age Europe. She is also involved in an experimental archaeology project and serves as the Vice President for the Archaeological Institute of America-Milwaukee Society.

2016

Sara Krusekopf (MAT '17) has joined the faculty of New Canaan Country School in New Canaan, Connecticut, as Upper School Math Teacher, Advisor, and Coach. For the last five years, she taught Upper School Mathematics, including Algebra I and Honors Geometry, to students in grades nine through 12 at Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas, Texas. New Canaan Country School is a co-ed, independent day school for students in Pre-K (ages 3 and 4) through grade nine.

Lauren Wheeler Hutton began a new job in July 2021 as a Registered Nurse at Sanford Health's Family Birth Center in Fargo, North Dakota. She completed her Bachelor of Nursing degree in 2018 before moving to North Dakota. She initially provided postpartum care for moms and babies, and then moved to the labor and delivery side of things. She said she had always been passionate about taking care of people but taking care of moms and babies has been particularly exciting and satisfying, even in the difficult times that arise in pregnancies.

2017



Angela Huang, M.D., is completing her medicine residency at the University of Washington in Boise, loving the program and the gorgeous Pacific Northwest. Her next step is a neurology residency at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (Beth Israel/West) in New York.

Ganesh Maniam graduated in May 2021 from the MD/MBA program at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine & Texas Tech University Rawls College of Business. His residency match results were Internal Medicine preliminary year at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, for 2021-2022 and a Dermatology residency at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for 2022-2025.

2017 (continued)

Erica Williams, a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, is the "Strong" Program Coordinator for Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, California. She developed and leads a balanced program of physical education, skill development, health, and wellness designed to inspire healthy lifestyles and confidence. The position is funded through a grant from the Audacious Foundation. Erica joined Girls Inc. from HM Systems, where she provided direct and consultative services to students in pre-K through high school. Prior to this role, she worked as a primary educator for Before After School Enrichment in Oceanside, California, and was responsible for developing and implementing creative educational activities for students.

2018

Alexander Haj joined Communities Foundation of Texas as Community Philanthropy Associate in summer 2021 and supports

grant making, collaborative efforts, and capacity building for nonprofits in North Texas. He had served as Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement at Austin College since February 2019, working with engagement programs and volunteer opportunities for alumni. He also worked closely with the Students Today Alumni Tomorrow organization and supported the Alumni Board.

John Pass graduated from the University of North Texas in May 2020 with a master's degree in Economics and Decision Science. He is working as a Quantitative Modeling Officer at Bank OZK in Dallas.

2019

Nicole Richards has spent her time since graduation working at MD Anderson Cancer Center researching drugs to treat Alzheimer's disease and cancer. While there, she was able to file a patent with her research team for their series of compounds. She left MD Anderson due to illness but plans to attend graduate school in fall 2022 to study Geoarchaeology. 🦘

A COMMISSIONING AND A FIRST SALUTE



Joshua Boring '20 was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army in front of the Denton Courthouse on April 24, 2021. His first salute was done by his sister, Cadet Emily Boring who is a TCU ROTC nursing student. In August 2021, Joshua began studies at McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Josh completed a major in Neuroscience and a minor in Chemistry at Austin College.



THE DENTIST IS IN

Michelle Zhou '18 was awarded a highly competitive International College of Dentists and Washington University Dental Alumni Scholarship toward her tuition at UT Health Science Center San Antonio School of Dentistry (SOD). As an Austin College GO Fellow, she traveled to Mombasa, Kenya, to spend the summer interning at a dental hospital. That experience changed her life, and her global interests have only grown, thanks to the influence of her dental school mentor. In

2019, Michelle traveled to Ethiopia with a team of medical and dental faculty and students to provide preventative outreach in collaboration with local NGO Common River. She leads SOD dental and outreach organizations and volunteers at the San Antonio Refugee Health Clinic to provide holistic primary oral healthcare alongside students and faculty. "Austin College really changed my life. My experiences there shaped the person I am today, my philosophy as a student, and the way I practice."



Continuing Their Family Traditions

The Class of 2025 includes many students who have 'Roo family members. Several first-year students have siblings who've attended or who are still on campus. Making Austin College a family tradition also happens through following cousins, aunts, uncles, or grandparents to campus—whether the family members attended recently or years ago. Space isn't available to show or list all those students, but most of the students whose legacy connections are their parents are pictured below.



Tyra Bennett with dad **Tyson Bennett '92**



Twins **Oliver and Blume Cernero** with dad **Ryan Cernero '92**, mom **Carrie Morgan Cernero '91** not pictured



Alyssa Cox with mother **Alessandra Druilini Cox '90**, dad **Gordon Cox '90** not pictured



At left, sisters and future 'Roos, center **Noah Crownover** flanked by mom **Juliana (Lobrecht) '98** and dad **Matthew Crownover '99**; at right, grandfather **Doug Crownover '72**



Kailey Harshaw with parents **Erica Huggins Horston '98** and **John Harshaw '94**



John Newsom with dad **Thomas Newsom '91**; also brother of **Will Newsom '21**, grandson of **Don '64** and **Carol Newsom '62**



Tricia Pullin with stepmom **Shilpa Amin '93**



Asher Thompson with parents **Jennifer King** and **Christopher Thompson**, both '92; also grandson of **Allen '66** and **Diane Thompson '68**



Tatum Torres with dad **Eric Torres '98**



Twins **Aiden and Cailey Varnell** with parents **Jaci Adami Varnell '99** and **Lynn Varnell '97**

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MANIET

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS



The honorees, pictured left to right, are **Tom Hall**, **Melissa Thompson**, **Jenny King**, **Thomas Newsom**, **Hannah Alexander**, **Denise Fate**, and **Roger Luttrell**.

2021 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients:

- Denise Fate '76
- Tom Hall '78
- Jenny King '92
- Roger Luttrell '76 (MA '77)
- Thomas Newsom '91
- Melissa Thompson '84

2021 First Decade Award Recipient:

- Hannah Alexander '12

UNEXPECTED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN THE GULF COAST



Photos by Harris Co. Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

When **James Hannan '09 (MAT '10)** started a new job with the Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management in January 2021, he expected a hurricane or flood would be the first emergency to activate the team. His was a new position, and he had just started to understand his role when the team received its first activation. The gulf, however,

was not swirling. Instead, the coldest temperatures in more than 30 years were moving across Texas and into the Greater Houston area.

The team was alerted to expect a multi-day activation, and colleagues shared tips on what Jamie would need for 24-hour life in the office. His experiences as an ACTivator and church Youth Director gave him some insight on what would help with some parts of that packing for comfort. Good thing; he was at the office for five days and four nights, followed by another week of 12-hour days as his team moved from response to recovery.

Jamie's work doesn't take him into the street for rescues and responses. His team's work is

more behind the scenes: research that aids in planning and improvement, testing processes, tracking legislation, drafting and submitting presentation proposals—working with *other* groups that ensure people have resources, providing needed information for those boots-on-the-ground emergency team members.

While Jamie was at the office, his wife, **Katie Senor Hannan '12**, and their 3-year-old daughter, Abigail, were at home. Fortunately, their home is in the 10% of Texas that is not part of the ERCOT-regulated grid and was without power for only about 18 hours—and has a gas fireplace that kept them warm. Abigail enjoyed making her first snowman and “camping” in the living room while wondering why Daddy didn't come home.

A week later, President Joseph Biden and other officials visited the Harris County Emergency Operations Center for a briefing on the recovery and to thank the team. COVID distancing protocols and security standards meant a limited number of people were allowed in the room so Jamie didn't get very close to the president. Still, he was quite proud to see his colleagues recognized for what he can confirm *truly* was a harrowing emergency.



ALUMNI SPEAK AT 2021

TED^x AustinCollege

These alumni were among the six speakers for TEDxAustinCollege, offering “Ideas Worth Spreading” on September 25 in Sally and Jim Nation Theatre of Ida Green Communication Center.

PHOTOS BY RANDALL JONES '22

**Laura J. Lawson '10**

**Time and Space:
Arts' Most Valuable
Resources**

**Ann Crews Melton '03**

**Building Consensus
Across Differences**

**Ting Lan Sun '87**

**Bound Feet and
the American Dream:
A Lesson Through Perception,
Value, and Courage**

**Kelly Yarbrough '09**

**Tallgrass Prairie and
the Power
of “Perenniality”**

See all 2021 TEDxAustinCollege talks: www.austincollege.edu/tedx

HONORING OUR SPORTS LEGENDS

Athletes returned to campus in August 2021 for the annual Legends event and celebrated the legends of their sports. The awards event on August 7 was highlighted by the presentation of the Kedric Couch Alumni Coach of the Year honors, the Athletic Hall of Honor inductions, and the Coach Joe Spencer Award for Meritorious Service and Lifetime Achievement in Coaching.

**Legends
2021**

The Legends honorees, pictured left to right, are Ryan Nicholson, Stefanie Faith, Bart Tatum, Rebecca May, and Stephen Carpenter.

Athletic Hall of Honor Inductees:

- Stephen Carpenter '07 (soccer)
- Stefanie Faith '11 (softball)
- Danny Gilstrap '67, *Honorary/Posthumously* (football/track & field)
- Greg Larson '85 (football)
- Rebecca Harpham May '07 (volleyball)
- Ryan Nicholson '95 (football/baseball/track)

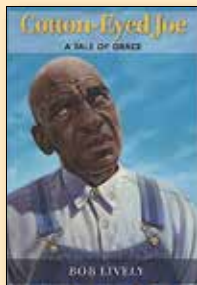
Kedric Couch Alumni Coaches of the Year:

- Shayna Clardy Brown '13 (girls basketball)
- Kyle May '07 (men's basketball)

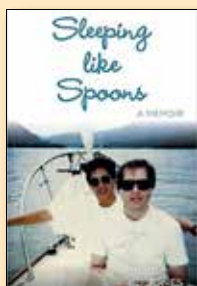
Coach Joe Spencer Award for Meritorious Service and Lifetime Achievement in Coaching:

- Bart Tatum '91 (MAT '92)

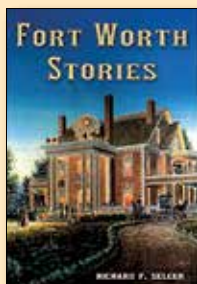
ALUMNI BOOKSHELF



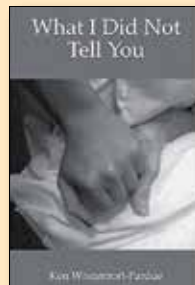
Bob Lively '68 has written his 13th book and his second novel, *Cotton-Eyed Joe*, which he describes as a “Black Lives Matter” book. The story is of white man Will Amos and his friend, a nearly blind Black man nicknamed ‘Cotton-Eyed Joe.’ When the Black man is falsely accused of murder, a racist-fueled guilty verdict and death penalty ruling follow. The Black community responds with a prayer vigil, which Will’s wife encourages him to join. Will, however, does not believe in the power of prayer ... will there be an answer to save them all?



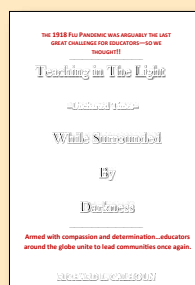
Ed Jones '69 has published *Sleeping Like Spoons*, a memoir about a gay couple in New York City who meet in January 1981. The book follows all of their shared life experiences, which abruptly end on March 5, 2002. Ed, in his early 30s, has recently moved to New York City from Dallas, Texas, in order to start a new career in the museum field. On a whim, he goes to a gay bar and meets Jose, also in his early 30s, who has recently traveled to the U.S. from the Philippines to pursue his career as a medical doctor. Their unique partnership survives all of the challenges that any couple would face. Their strong bond serves as a model for many other couples, both gay and straight. Jose’s sudden demise threatens the survival of Ed, but he is sustained by a network of family and friends over the many years to come.



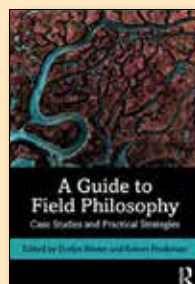
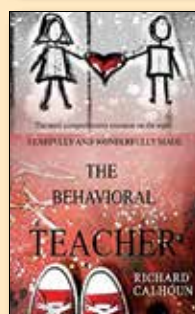
Richard Selcer '72 (MA '73) has written his 13th book, *Fort Worth Stories*, published through University of North Texas Press (2021). A Fort Worth native, he has written history for 40 years and has taught in high schools and colleges in the U.S. and overseas—which he says he owes to Dr. Virginia Love’s inspiration. His titles for UNT Press include Volumes 1 and 2 of *Written in Blood: The History of Fort Worth’s Fallen Lawmen*, *Fort Worth Characters*, and *A History of Fort Worth in Black & White: 165 Years of African American Life*. He is a member of the Tarrant County Historical Commission and conducts walking tours of downtown Fort Worth.



Ken Wheatcroft-Pardue '80 has published a collection of his poetry, *What I Did Not Tell You*, through Hungry Buzzard Press. A retired high school English and ESL teacher, he is also an essayist and short story writer who lives in Fort Worth, Texas. His work can be found online.



Richard Calhoun '85 has written *Teaching in The Light—Uncharted Times—While Surrounded by Darkness*, which was published in December 2020. It has been called “the premier self-help tool on the market to assist educators as they continue to lead during a devastating pandemic.” The author is known as an innovator in providing leadership skills to organizations. He has more than 30 years of experience in corporate America and the public education arena, where he has used a unique blend of skills and experience. He has written about his experiences in both *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* ...*The Behavioral Teacher* and *The Dynamic Principal* to motivate educational leaders and students.



Evelyn Brister '92 has edited a collection of essays, *A Guide to Field Philosophy: Case Studies and Practical Strategies*, published by Routledge in February 2020. The essays are examples of work in “public philosophy” that have to do with academic philosophers collaborating on projects with groups and policymakers outside of academia. The collaborations involve the World Bank, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the National Science Foundation, and numerous community groups and professional organizations. Evelyn is President of Public Philosophy Network and a Professor of Philosophy at Rochester Institute of Technology.



Marc Parrish '92 has written his second Austin College book, *The Stories of Austin College History*. The second book is a collection of historical tales connecting alumni, faculty, and administrators to the State of Texas, the nation, and the world. Marc, an International Studies major during his days in Sherman, is grateful to Professor Emeritus of Political Science Shelton Williams

for writing the foreword. *Roo Tales: The Stories of Austin College Athletics* was published in 2020. His third Austin College book will tell the tales of Athletics Hall of Honor inductees ("Legends") and Austin College's historic relationships with competitor schools on the athletic field ("Rivals"). The targeted release date of book three is Homecoming 2022.



Jim F. Alexander '97 has written the futuristic novel *I Am Sophia*, which one reviewer has called "a delightful and gripping, progressive Christian parable."

When a mysterious and charismatic woman insinuates herself into a fringe religious group, its dozen members wonder whether she is a lunatic, a con artist, or a messiah.

Sophia quickly upends the routines and expectations of the group—the last Christians in the inhabited solar system—while Peter, their struggling leader, becomes increasingly obsessed with her. Before long, Peter finds himself following Sophia on a perilous interplanetary adventure that may cost them their lives.



Jim is a Stanford-trained attorney and Writer-in-Residence at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in San Jose, California. Published by Wipf & Stock Publishers in 2021, the book is available in multiple formats worldwide.



Brian Taylor '99, using the pen name Taylor García, has written the novel, *Slip Soul* (Touchpoint Press, 2021), and the short story collection, *Functional Families* (Unsolicited Press, 2021). His novel tells of 60-something Osvaldo, who emigrates from Mexico to San Diego intending to find his first love, Joanne, a young writer he met when she toured his city over

30 years before. Circumstances work against him, and he ends up in an immigrant detention center. According to the author, Osvaldo shares his story with a young man "through a series of



flashbacks interspersed by chapters from a tattered original manuscript Joanne gave him the last time they met. *Slip Soul*—the story within the story—is a metaphysical journey of good versus evil, toxic masculinity versus femininity, and provides the historical backdrop for Osvaldo and Joanne's lifelong love separated by time and borders." In addition to his books, García has published

several short stories and essays and is a weekly columnist at the Good Men Project. He holds an M.F.A. in Writing from Pacific University in



Oregon. Originally from Santa Fé, New Mexico, he is a multigenerational Neomexicano and now lives in Southern California with his family.

Do You Have an Addition to the Bookshelf?

If you're a writer, send information on your new book to editor@austincollege.edu along with a high-resolution photo of the cover and the author when available.

Writers may also send a copy of the book, signed if you like, for the Austin College Community Collection, which is housed in Archives and Special Collections.

Send to: Austin College, Abell Library
900 N. Grand Ave., Suite 6L
Sherman, TX 75090

1969

John D. Moseley Jr. and **Alice Ruth Butler** were married in Malakoff, Texas, on April 12, 2021. The two have shared their lives for over 40 years, including in teaching careers at Dallas College North Lake Campus in Irving, Texas, where Alice had been Director of Theatre since 1977 and John had been teaching nearly all of those years. Now retired, the two are finally free of the college's nepotism rule that had hindered them—and they are happily married at last! They selected their wedding date quite deliberately, as 80 years earlier on April 12, 1941, in Austin, Texas, had been the wedding day of John's parents, John D. Moseley and Sara Bernice Honea (later to become President and first lady of Austin College, 1953-1978).

and **Cameron Allen '04**; Olivia, daughter of Monica Lind Martin; Claire and Riley, daughters of Holly Ramsey Blaydes and Patrick Blaydes, and ring bearer, nephew Elliott Williams. Allison is Vice President of Development at Mo-Ranch, and Todd is Senior Technical Architect at University of Texas at Austin. The couple lives in Austin.

2016

Carly Fagnant and **Joshua Chanin** were married at Austin College on November 22, 2020, in Clifford J. Grum Sanctuary of Wynne Chapel. College Chaplain **John Williams '84** was the officiant, and **Liberty Chanin '23** and **Parker Adams** made up the wedding party. **Scotty McCollum '15** and **Moises Duran** attended the reception.

the bridal party included maid of honor and sister of the bride **Jessica Barber '16 (MAT '17)**; bridesmaids **Presleigh Watson** and **Shannon McKelvie**; best man **Stephen Igbinosa**, and groomsmen **Andres Rivera** and **Kameron Hill '20**. Katie and Jeremy met at the ping pong table in Wright Campus Center so a ping pong tournament at the wedding seemed appropriate. After graduation, Katie earned her MBA and master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and now works in the corporate world as an Organizational Development Specialist. Jeremy attended Texas A&M College of Medicine, graduating a day before the wedding. The couple has moved to North Carolina, where Jeremy is a Resident Physician at Wake Forest University, specializing in Primary Care Sports Medicine. Katie is working remotely.

teacher in Merkel ISD. The wedding party included **Shane Brooks '18**, **Kylie Menocal Brooks '18**, **Eric Summerlin '19**, **Ben Moran '19**, and **Jenny Glosser '19 (MAT '20)**.

Yasmin Renteria and **John Davidson** were married September 4, 2021, at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas. John and Yasmin first met as Austin College freshmen in their C/I course "The Great War" with Dr. Hunt Tooley. The friendship developed further when they found they were both members of the Catholic Student Association. Though John transferred to The University of Texas at Dallas in the spring of his sophomore year, love had bloomed, and their relationship only grew. Yasmin and John made amazing friends at Austin College so as their love continued to grow, so did the friendships. Yasmin and **Amanda Bernal** were roommates for four years, and **Thomas Yuan** was John's roommate. Special friends from the Class of 2019 made up their wedding party, including **Michael Suresh**, **Richard Reyes**, **Thomas Yuan**, **Emma Thornburg**, and **Amanda Bernal**. **Imran Blackall '20** was an usher.

2005

Allison Harris and **Todd Graves '99** were married June 17, 2021, in the Manor House Garden at Mo-Ranch in Hunt, Texas. Dr. **Sarah Demarest Allen '03** officiated. The wedding party included only flower girls and a ring bearer; flower girls were **Lila**, daughter of **Sarah '03**

2017

Katie Barber and **Jeremy Swisher '16** were married May 23, 2021, after meeting in 2014 at Austin College. Many 'Roos were in attendance, notably, Katie's parents, **Bill '89** and **Sandy Richards Barber '90**, who also met at Austin College and recently celebrated 31 years of marriage. 'Roos in

2019

Morgan Anderson (MAT '20) and **RJ Melton '18 (MAT '19)** were married May 8, 2021, at the Rock Barn in Henrietta, Texas. They live in Abilene, Texas, where RJ is a football coach and Athletic Admissions Counselor at Hardin Simmons University, and Morgan is an elementary



SOMETHING EXTRA

Yasmin Renteria '19 found her husband, **John Davidson '19**, and dear friends at Austin College. "We all love each other very much," she said, "and are rooting for each other as we all pursue our endeavors—even though some of us are hundreds of miles apart."



Alice Butler and John D. Moseley Jr. '69



Allison Harris '05 and Todd Graves '99



Carly Fagnant and Joshua Chanin, both '16



Katie Barber '17 and Jeremy Swisher '16



RJ Melton '18 and Morgan Anderson '19



John Davidson and Yasmin Renteria, both '19

2004

Travis Redman and **Shauna Harkless Redman** welcomed their son, **Levi**, on November 19, 2020. Big sister **Leah**, 9, helped welcome him home.

2005

Stephanie Birch Robertson and **Jeff Robertson** welcomed **Gloria Charlotte** to the family on April 24, 2021, meeting **John Frederick**, 7, and **Madeleine Lorraine**, 6. The family built a home in **Leander, Texas**, in 2020, and **Jeff** and **Stephanie** both work in **Channel Sales** for **Dell Technologies**. **Stephanie** is proud to be an involved member of the **Kappa Gamma Chi Alumnae Network**.



Levi held by big sister Leah (Redman '04)



Gloria Charlotte (Robertson '05)

Learning Organizations at **Vanderbilt University**, with anticipated graduation in **May 2024**.

2009

Hillary Luckett Clark and **Edwin Clark** announce the birth of their son, **Conrad**, on January 4, 2021. Big brother, **Winston**, helped welcome him home.



Grace Kathryn (Ellington '06)



Conrad (Clark '09)

2006

Matt Ellington and his wife, **Meghan**, announce the birth of their daughter, **Grace Kathryn**, on January 11, 2021. Siblings **Jack**, 4, and **Brynn**, 6, helped welcome her home. **Matt** is an **Assistant Professor of Surgery and Perioperative Care** at **Dell Medical School** at **The University of Texas at Austin**.

2010

Michael O'Connor and **Victoria Briscoe O'Connor '13** welcomed their daughter, **Josephine**, into their family in **April 2021**.

Emily Webb Kelly (MAT '11) and **Dennis Kelly Jr. '06** are the parents of **Joseph "Joey" Richard Kelly**, born **March 27, 2021**. He joins the family at home in **Denison** with siblings **John Dennis**, 4, and **Claire Sawyer**, 2. **Emily** is a **stay-at-home mom** and the **valet coordinator** for **Sherman/Denison Just Between Friends**. **Dennis** is the **fourth and fifth grade Math and Science teacher** and **fifth grade Religion teacher** at **St. Paul Classical Catholic School** in **Richardson, Texas**.



Richard Henry with big sister Charlotte Louise (Weir '07)

2007

Katie Louise Turek Weir (MAT '08) and **Garrett Weir** announce the birth of their son, **Richard Henry**, on **April 20, 2020**. He is at home with his parents and his big sister, **Charlotte Louise**, who was born on **April 17, 2018**. The family lives in **Reno, Nevada**, where **Katie** is **principal** of **Glenn Duncan Elementary School** and **Garrett** is **General Counsel** of the **Public Utilities Commission of Nevada**. **Katie** has begun a **doctoral program** in **Leadership** and



Josephine (O'Connor '10)



Joseph "Joey" Richard (Kelly '10)



Declan Charles with big sister Emi (McNeill '10)



Amelia (Steinbrenner '11)



Miles (Miller '11)



Anita Elise (Rauschuber '12)



Yashas Ganesh (Hegde '13)



Jack Jr. (McCoy '13)



Calvin Ryan (Rose '13)

Christie Wright McNeill and **Lance McNeill** welcomed their son, **Declan Charles**, in July 2021. His big sister, **Emi**, is very excited to have him home with his family in Austin, Texas.

Shruti is a General Surgery Resident at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Emily Olvera McCoy and **Jack McCoy** welcomed their son, **Jack Jr.**, born April 5, 2021.

2011

Lisa Holloway and **Mathieu Laurin-Steinbrenner** announce the birth of their daughter, **Amelia Steinbrenner**, on June 28, 2021. They are crossing their fingers that she will become the fifth 'Roo in their families.

Lauren Hill Rose and **Jordan Rose '11** announce the birth of their son, **Calvin Ryan**, on October 21, 2020. The family lives in Dallas where Jordan is an Associate Broker/ Attorney at Risk Transfer Partners, and Lauren is the Director of Strategic Services for the City of Sachse.

Montine Garcia Miller and **Jarrold Miller** welcomed their second child, **Miles**, on May 18, 2021. The family lives in Maryland, and big sister, **Olivia**, helped welcome Miles home.

2014

Liann Harris Payne and **Jon Payne '12** announce the birth of their daughter, **Aubrey Eleanor**, on September 9, 2021. The family lives in Rowlett, where Jon is a Primary Care Physician.

2012

Casey Coplin Rauschuber and **John Rauschuber '11** welcomed their daughter, **Anita Elise**, on January 23, 2021. The family lives in Irving, Texas.

2013

Shruti Hegde and her husband, **Ganesh Hegde**, welcome the birth of their son, **Yashas Ganesh Hegde**, born in August 2021. The family lives in Dallas, and

2015

Taylor Crouch-Dodson and **Kelsey Crouch-Dodson** welcomed the birth of their son, **Rowan Edward Crouch-Dodson**, on June 4, 2021. Rowan is at home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Kelsey is a fundraising professional and Taylor is a Government Innovation Specialist and public policy professional at the City of Minneapolis.



Aubrey Eleanor (Payne '14)



Rowan Edward (Crouch-Dodson '15)

ALUMNI

| | | | | | |
|------|--|--------------------|------|--|--------------------|
| 1942 | Conway Taliaferro Wharton Jr. | July 16, 2021 | 1962 | Richard T. Hull. | March 15, 2021 |
| 1946 | Betty Covey Richards. | March 2, 2021 | 1962 | William H. Tolbert. | February 23, 2021 |
| 1947 | Ross Hester. | August 12, 2021 | 1963 | Howard Ruble Bethel Jr. | September 14, 2021 |
| 1947 | Mary Frances Robinson Shell. | July 26, 2021 | 1964 | Sarah Jane Cooper. | March 9, 2021 |
| 1947 | Mary "Sparky" Johnson Waldrop. | January 26, 2020 | 1964 | Dennis Dale Reed. | July 21, 2021 |
| 1948 | Charlotte Galey Bulloch. | August 26, 2021 | 1965 | Gwenda Greer McKee. | September 15, 2021 |
| 1948 | MaryLou Darter Lueb. | October 2, 2021 | 1965 | R. Todd Morriss. | November 27, 2021 |
| 1948 | Letha Rae Haraughty Seymour. | March 8, 2021 | 1965 | James Allen Rolfe. | February 26, 2021 |
| 1949 | Frances "Boody" Hare Fallon. | April 10, 2021 | 1966 | William B. Vandivort II. | June 14, 2021 |
| 1949 | Stanley B. Ward. | December 3, 2021 | 1967 | Howard Lee Powell. | January 4, 2021 |
| 1950 | John G. Phelan. | August 16, 2021 | 1968 | Dale Eichenberger. | October 18, 2021 |
| 1951 | Jennifer Reid Kemp. | May 25, 2021 | 1968 | Gordon F. Garlington. | July 9, 2021 |
| 1951 | Nancy Ruth Rountree Mackey. | April 26, 2021 | 1968 | David W. McElroy. | September 25, 2021 |
| 1952 | Patsy Ruth McClure Dittmore. | June 5, 2021 | 1968 | Thomas Richmond McKinney. | August 28, 2021 |
| 1952 | Jack Hicks. | March 1, 2021 | 1969 | Jensie Simms Madden. | September 24, 2021 |
| 1952 | Ann Biggerstaff Mason. | October 30, 2021 | 1970 | Larry Gene Roe. | July 1, 2021 |
| 1953 | James S. Hardy. | February 6, 2021 | 1972 | Eddie Brister. | February 7, 2021 |
| 1953 | Marilyn Slate McKnight. | September 28, 2021 | 1972 | John Deckert. | October 29, 2021 |
| 1954 | Meriam "Shari" Cannon. | August 10, 2021 | 1973 | Joseph Robert Garza. | July 27, 2021 |
| 1954 | Carol Jean Stephen Gies. | September 23, 2021 | 1973 | Tohnie Elizabeth Hynds. | September 2, 2021 |
| 1954 | Barbara Ruth Williams. | June 26, 2021 | 1974 | Rodney Robert Elkins. | September 30, 2021 |
| 1955 | David Arthur Laverty. | August 30, 2021 | 1974 | Roy Green. | May 10, 2021 |
| 1956 | Fred H. Babb. | December 24, 2021 | 1974 | Carol Stephens-Gies. | September 23, 2021 |
| 1956 | Patricia Broyles Gohlke. | August 26, 2021 | 1975 | Frederick Ross Crusemann Jr. | October 4, 2021 |
| 1958 | Mildred Johnston Jones. | December 1, 2021 | 1978 | Richard G. Ponsford. | January 29, 2021 |
| 1959 | Dorothy "Clorine" Sims Cardwell. | November 9, 2020 | 1979 | James Thomas. | February 18, 2021 |
| 1959 | Sandra Nan McMath Gauntt. | March 26, 2021 | 1980 | Robert Arthur Olson. | August 28, 2021 |
| 1959 | Lou Ann Hintz Horne. | May 18, 2021 | 1985 | Clifford Wayne Robbins. | July 10, 2021 |
| 1959 | Patricia Jo Wittman Rodgers. | September 28, 2021 | 1988 | William Raymond Kimball. | April 5, 2021 |
| 1959 | Alice "Mickey" Mildred Swenson. | August 7, 2021 | 1988 | Virginia "Ginny" Pate Pimberton Parr. | August 23, 2021 |
| 1960 | Joe Donald Marshall. | October 16, 2021 | 1988 | Joel Randall Russell. | August 16, 2021 |
| 1960 | Peggy Ann Shields. | February 1, 2021 | 1990 | Randall "Randy" Wayne Watson. | May 2, 2021 |
| 1961 | Donald William Clark Jr. | July 4, 2021 | 1992 | Jennifer Marie Payne. | December 12, 2021 |
| 1961 | Susan Voshen Edington. | January 12, 2021 | 1992 | Allen Wesley Snider. | August 27, 2021 |
| 1961 | John Thomas Goza. | March 22, 2021 | 1993 | Kathryn King Robertson. | September 5, 2021 |
| 1961 | Sara Elizabeth Wetzel Hughes. | February 17, 2021 | 1997 | David Woodrow Noll. | October 2, 2021 |
| 1961 | Saundra "Sandy" Copeland Winokur. | March 22, 2021 | 1998 | Joel Randall Russell. | August 16, 2021 |
| 1962 | Barbara Praeger Ervay. | February 5, 2021 | 2025 | Adriana Velazquez. | November 9, 2021 |
| 1962 | Carol Irene Kingelin Hilliard. | July 2, 2021 | | | |

Friends We Will Miss

Sarah Weddington, who received an honorary Doctor of Laws from Austin College in 1993, died December 26, 2021.

Peter Bogdanovich, Austin College 2004-2005 Chair of Excellence in International Leadership, died January 6, 2022.

Rosemary Mulder, retired staff member from the Education Department, June 1966 – December 1997, died May 7, 2021.

Ann Fuller, former faculty member and Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of the Faculty, died May 22, 2021.

Several faculty spouses who were active community members died in 2021:

Phyllis Armstrong (William Armstrong), December 30, 2020

Martha Jeanelle Gourley (Lloyd Gourley), April 28, 2021

Jean Lunkley (Bruce Lunkley), March 25, 2021

Ann Mason '52 (Bob Mason), October 30, 2021

Ann Williams (E. Don Williams), March 4, 2021



Austin College Faculty

Often, Austin College faculty members arrive on campus planning to stay only a few years—and retire from the College many years later. We celebrate the lives of these faculty members who did just that—and who now have died after making a tremendous mark upon the students, faculty, and history of Austin College. Find full obituaries on the College website.



Professor Emeritus of Music **Cecil Isaac** died May 30, 2021. Isaac arrived at Austin College and its Department of Music in September 1962, teaching a sequence of music history and music literature courses, as well as orchestra, ensembles, and brass instruments. In 1964, Isaac began to play music with some community and college musicians; soon Sherman Symphony Orchestra was born with him as Founding Director. Following a distinguished career of 30-plus years, he retired in 1996 and moved to Bellingham, Washington, where he remained throughout his life.



Professor Emeritus of English **Jack J. Jernigan** died February 7, 2021. He joined the Austin College faculty in 1967 and spent the next 22 years in dedicated service. He received the College's Homer P. Rainey Award for distinguished service and excellence in 1985. His service included stints as Chair of the English Department, Dean of Humanities, and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty. He retired August 31, 1989.



Professor Emeritus of Mathematics **Thomas Kimes** died February 4, 2021. He joined the faculty in 1962, and, though he planned to stay only a short time, he found so much going on at the College that was professionally exciting that there was never a time to leave until his retirement in 1992. In 1976, he was named to the J.N. Chadwick Chair of Mathematics and served as Chair of the Mathematics Department for a number of years. He also served as Director of the January Term program for several years. He led several JanTerm trips to England in study of Stonehenge and other archeological sites.



Professor Emeritus of Religion **Thomas Nuckols** died on February 21, 2021. He joined the Austin College faculty in 1965 and retired in 1998. During those 33 years, he taught a variety of Religious Studies courses, as well as his own academic specialty of Christian Social Ethics. His sabbatical studies included liberation theology; the role of the church in influencing public policy, particularly related to the arms race and Central America; and the phenomenology of religion with special focus on Buddhism. He also had research interests in biomedical ethics.



Professor Emeritus of Physics **Larry Robinson** died July 15, 2021. He joined the Austin College faculty in 1969 and spent more than 40 years teaching and interacting with students and colleagues. In that time, he taught nearly every physics class offered, considering it a challenge he was eager to take on. He particularly enjoyed setting up and developing labs and experiments and was quick to incorporate computers into his labs when they became available. He enjoyed teaching "Heritage: Models of Scientific Thought," and working with new materials, colleagues beyond the Sciences, and many more students than enrolled in his science courses.

Austin College Board of Trustees

These generous and faithful members of the College's Board of Trustees died during the past year. Find full obituaries, when available, on the College website.

Board of Trustees member **Thomas C. Welfelt** died June 8, 2021. He joined the board in 2012, serving as a member of the Audit, Financial Health, and Investment Committees. A 1974 graduate of the College, he was a member of Welfelt Properties, a Dallas-based company that holds oil and gas properties.

Senior Trustee **Raymond "Jerd" Gary** died on May 5, 2021. A petroleum entrepreneur and public servant, he was 87 at his death. His leadership extended beyond his business, Sooner Oil, to his years as the former mayor of Denison, Texas, and board chair of Texoma Medical Center, and in service to his church, city, and family. He served on Austin College's Board of Trustees from 1992 to 1995, active on the Business Affairs Committee, and remained on the senior board until his death. He was a supporter of the College's Annual Fund as well as several scholarship initiatives.

Senior Trustee **Ross Hester** died August 12, 2021. A dedicated 1947 graduate of Austin College, he was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 1984. In his obituary, his family wrote that Mr. Hester always wore an Austin College tie and pin and occasionally delighted his grandchildren by wearing his "Fear the 'Roo" T-shirt. Mr. Hester served on the Business Affairs Committee of the College's Board from 1987 to 1999, serving as vice chair of that committee for several years. He was a generous donor to College needs.

Former Austin College Board of Trustees member **Teresa Lozano Long** died March 21, 2021. She served on the board from 1999 to 2002, active on the Student Affairs Committee and the New Era Campaign Steering Committee. She and Joe were generous donors to the New Era Campaign, creating the Joe and Teresa Lozano Long Endowed Internship in Southwestern and Mexican Studies, the Joe R. and Teresa L. Long Endowed Presidential Scholarship, and the Joe R. and Teresa L. Long Sponsored Leadership Scholarship.

Gifted Students

By **Bob Lively '68**

When I arrived on the campus of Austin College in September of 1964, I immediately felt overwhelmed by the number of gifted students I encountered who were obviously far more talented academically than I could even imagine. My fellow freshmen consistently attempted to pull from me three shreds of information: my name, my hometown, and the number of hours I'd placed out of. The first two questions were easy, but the third gave me pause because I'd never considered placing out of anything. I was not that kind of student. No, I was merely a "B student," from a high school in one of Dallas' bluest collar neighborhoods.

I returned home that year with only acceptable grades. During that summer, I worked eight hours a day unloading crates of groceries from a boxcar where the temperature daily exceeded the 100-degree mark. I returned to Austin College for my sophomore year spiritually depleted but driving a cheap little car I'd managed to purchase with the money I earned in the boxcar.

During the first semester of my second year, I spent every evening in the library doing my best to overcome my deficits. Sometime in late October, I awoke even before the local roosters and shambled toward the Student Union Building (SUB) to down a quick breakfast before returning to Dean Hall. In that moment, I was too naïve to realize that I was depressed.

All I knew was that I was exhausted from my summer. As I exited the SUB, I instinctively shoved my hand into the front pocket of my jeans to discover my car keys summoning me. Because pain can drive impulse, I decided to drive to anywhere that might help me run away from myself.



I turned south even though I realized I could not return to Dallas because I would only worry my parents. Consequently, I headed toward my grandparents' farm in East Texas.

My grandparents extended their characteristic hospitality. No questions were asked until I helped my granddaddy with the milking. Once he was done, he turned to me to ask, "How is school?" When I told him I was thinking about quitting, he said, "Son, I wish I'd fallen heir to just a few of your opportunities."

And those few words saved me from depriving myself of the greatest gift I would ever be given—a quality liberal arts education from Austin College. ■

Bob Lively '68 served as an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church for more than 40 years before retiring in 2009. The author of 14 books, he has written more than 500 faith columns for the Austin American-Statesman. He has written occasionally for the alumni magazine of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, where he also is a graduate. His alma mater recognized the minister and writer with inclusion into the Distinguished Alumni of Austin College in 1985.

Be the Spark

At Austin College, gifts to the Annual Fund ignite opportunities for our students to succeed. From scholarship awards to classroom resources, support from 'Roo alumni and friends provides the spark for the creators, scholars, and leaders of tomorrow to reach their dreams.



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Art by Mary Wright
Acrylic on Canvas

Artist, philanthropist, and beloved friend of Austin College, Mary Wright of Dallas painted *Magnificent Climb* in 2018 and presented it to Austin College. Education, she says, is like such a climb, and students experience joys and hardships during the journey—but ultimately reach their goal. She and her late husband, Robert, have been of tremendous help to many Austin College students on their climbs through endowments for scholarships, internships, and more, as well as the initial naming gift toward the Robert J. and Mary Wright Campus Center.