

Austin College

MAGAZINE | 2026 ISSUE



President Steven P. O'Day

Shared
Legacy

Finish
Strong

Outside the
Classroom



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Windsor Mall in the evening

PHOTO BY KENDALL KATUSAK '22

Austin College Magazine

© 2026 Issue / Volume 65

PUBLISHED BY
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Institutional Marketing & Communications

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◀ **COVER IMAGE:**
President Steven P. O'Day portrait by
Edward Martinez, 2021, oil on canvas.
On display on the second floor of
Abell Library Center.



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“Serving as the President of Austin College has been the honor and privilege of a lifetime. Over these last nine years, I have been humbled by the depth of love that so many have for Austin College.”

Dear Friends,

It is bittersweet to write my last President’s Letter for *Austin College Magazine*. I want to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude for my time here and for all the support you have given me. Serving as the President of Austin College has been the honor and privilege of a lifetime. Over these last nine years, I have been humbled by the depth of love that so many have for Austin College. My appreciation for the value of servant leadership, patience, persistence, good humor, empathy, and the commitment to collaboration has deepened beyond description. This has been the toughest, greatest job in the world. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

Though this is my last year at Austin College, things are certainly not slowing down. It has been another year of incredible support and achievements. I am proud to leave the College in such good standing and with plenty of momentum to bolster our next President, Dr. Rebecca Cantor, as she leads the College into the next chapter. I have the utmost confidence in her ability to continue building on Austin College’s extraordinary tradition of excellence.

This year, the college approved a new B.S. in Engineering, which is sure to attract new students, and we have announced plans to construct a new facility to house that program. As part of the Campus Renewal Initiative, we have refreshed Zauk Circle to serve as an ever-more-beautiful gateway to campus. These campus enhancements also extend into some key student spaces. In 2026, Austin College

will celebrate 150 years since the campus was moved from Huntsville to Sherman. I’d like to think that in that 150-year history, the campus has never been more inviting.

This issue of *Austin College Magazine* also includes stories of many things that make Austin College unique. These include alumni who have embraced unexpected paths, long-standing connections with the arts in our Texoma community, stories of students supporting each other and exploring applied learning opportunities that have taken them unexpected places (from the Denison Dam to the State Capitol and all the way across the Pacific), and even a story that includes some Girl Scouts roasting marshmallows on campus. I am honored that this issue also includes a feature story that highlights my and Cece’s time on campus.

I have joked that I will be “graduating” with the Class of 2026. Like those seniors, I am excited about the next phase of my life but am sure that I will miss this place that Cece and I have called home these last nine years. That depth of love for Austin College is now something that we share, and like those graduates, I will always hold Austin College and ‘RooNation close to my heart.

With deepest gratitude,

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

The 'Roo Connection

'Roos are characterized by qualities that make them engaged citizens and mindful individuals. Here are a few photos from 2025 that highlight 'Roos connected by compassion, dedication, community, exploration, fellowship, and leadership.

CONNECTED BY COMPASSION



Service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega honored the nearly 3,000 lives lost on 9/11 by writing the victims' names in chalk on Windsor Mall as a memorial walk.



CONNECTED BY DEDICATION

The thrill of competition motivates the fierce to chase greatness.



Student-athletes give their all to their sports and their studies.

149 student-athletes earned all-conference academic honors last year.



CONNECTED BY COMMUNITY

The soles of those called to lead carry them in the familiar steps of a service-driven life.



Students served the community during the annual Great Day of Service on November 8, 2025, volunteering at Eisenhower State Park (top), Sherman Animal Shelter (above left), and Grand Central Station (above right).



We all celebrate when the match brings rivals together in friendship.

Mascots from Sherman ISD, Tom Bean ISD, Denison ISD, and Bells ISD joined Rowdy 'Roo in a friendly relay during halftime at an AC football game last fall.



CONNECTED BY EXPLORATION

Challenging the boundaries of our imagination, we step boldly into new discoveries.

A Homecoming art exhibit (top) by Mars Woodhill '76, *Elements on Earth and Beyond II*, immersed viewers in a kaleidoscope of color, texture, and material.



Homecoming guests used “Rose”—the campus telescope named after the Yellow Rose of Texas—to skim the night sky during the Star Party in Adams Observatory (above right). Other fun happenings in the IDEA Center included “Liquid Nitrogen Happy Hour,” with chemistry faculty and students making instant ice cream (left).





Vibrant spirits glow in the familiar rays of joy and friendship.

Students welcomed spring with a colorful display at Holi 2025, hosted by the Indian Cultural Association (ICA).



Kangapalooza is the annual spring festival that includes a concert, lawn games (like the hoola hoop contest seen here), and other fun activities for students.

CONNECTED BY FELLOWSHIP

The preservation of our traditions unites a multitude of pioneers.



Members of Austin College Greek organizations, spring 2025.



2025 Posey Leadership Award recipient, atmospheric scientist Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, touched upon topics of leadership in climate action and solutions of hope and equality during her presentation on April 8.



CONNECTED BY LEADERSHIP

A new generation is challenged to act on their convictions and lead a stronger world.



Former Dallas Mavericks CEO Cynt Marshall (above), who received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at Commencement in May 2025, delivered an inspiring address to graduates.



SHARED LEGACY

Celebrating 150 years in Texoma

By Laura J. Veach

Amid a flurry of growth and development in the Texoma area's population, industry, and infrastructure, in 2026, Austin College celebrates 150 years* of calling the region home. Following a devastating yellow fever epidemic in Huntsville, Texas, the College moved operations to Sherman in 1876—the year the telephone was invented and the United States celebrated its centennial. Since then, local industries have varied as widely as the areas of study at Austin College and the region itself has continually transformed, but the symbiotic relationship between college and community endures.

The following pages present a timeline of major industrial and educational events in Texoma and significant changes to the Austin College campus.

*Not to be confused with the 2024 commemoration of 175 years since Austin College was founded in 1849.





1845: Texas annexed into the Union

1846: Sherman, Texas, founded • Population: about 400

1849: Austin College founded in Huntsville, Texas



First schoolhouse—a log cabin with a dirt floor—built in Sherman

1858: Sherman, Texas, incorporated

Butterfield Overland Mail Line establishes a stagecoach mail station in Sherman



1861: Outbreak of the Civil War causes Austin College to pause college-level classes and temporarily function as a preparatory school

1867: Huntsville, Texas, experiences a yellow fever epidemic, killing 10% of the population

1870: First official census in Sherman • Population: 1,439

1872: Denison, Texas, founded

First locomotive arrives in Denison on Christmas Eve



1873: Denison, Texas, incorporated • Population: about 3,000

First free public school in Texas established in Denison

North Texas Female College established in Sherman

1870s: Sherman is one of several fast-growing cities to be nicknamed “The Athens of Texas” due to its educational boom

1873-1877: Two million buffalo hides processed and sold by Metz Brothers Leather Goods in Sherman

1876: Austin College moves to Sherman, Texas



Washington Iron Works—now the oldest industrial establishment in Sherman—opens, mostly manufacturing wagon wheels

1877: Sherman Female Institute established in Sherman

1879: Austin College resumes college-level courses

1880: Sherman population: 6,093 • Denison population: 3,975

1882: Sam Houston Bell moved to Sherman from original Austin College building in Huntsville

1883: Sherman ISD established

1885: Thompson House (now Temple Center) built



1887: Austin College adopts a military program

Travis Street is the first street in Sherman illuminated with electric lights

1893: Pioneer Cotton Seed Oil Mill operates at peak capacity of over 400 tons of cottonseed daily

1894: Carr-Burdette College established in Sherman



1896: The Great Sherman Storm of 1896

1897: Austin College military program ceased

1900: Sherman population: 10,243 • Denison population: 11,807

1901: Sherman Female Institute closes for the final time under its then-current name of Mary Nash College

1907: Coca-Cola Sherman Bottling Co. opens

1907-1908: Lockett Hall built



1911: YMCA Building completed

Katy Depot built in Denison to support the burgeoning local railroad industry





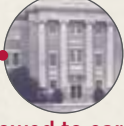








1913: Old Main burns to the ground

First Denison High School built

Mrs. Tucker's Foods, a shortening, margarine, and salad oil company, opens in Sherman





- 1914: Thompson Hall built** 
- Wilson N. Jones Hospital (now AHS Sherman Medical Center) built 
- 1915: Sherman Hall built** 
- 1916:** Three women are allowed to earn summer course credits and Mary Bell Jones of Sherman is enrolled as a “special student” for the fall term
- 1918:** Women are fully welcomed as students beginning with the fall term
- 1919:** 12 live oak trees planted between Baker and Dean Halls to memorialize the 12 Austin College students who lost their lives in WWI
- 1920:** Sherman population: 15,031 • Denison population: 17,065
- 1924:** Kappa Fountain built
- 1925:** Caruth Administration Building construction begins
- Sherman Little Theater assembled
- 1929:** Carr-Burdette College closes
- 1930s:** Austin College survives the Great Depression by taking alternative means of tuition payment—in some cases, produce and livestock
- 1935:** North Texas Female College closes for the final time under its then-current name of Kidd-Key College and Conservatory 
- 1938:** Construction of Denison Dam and Lake Texoma is authorized 
- 1940:** Sherman population: 17,156 • Denison population: 15,581
- 1941:** Perrin Field opens 
- 1943:** WWII: Campus avails itself as a training facility for the Texas Home Guard, Naval Reserve, and the 77th Flight Army Air Training Corps
- 1944:** Construction of Denison Dam and Lake Texoma completed
- 1947:** Caruth Administration Building construction completed 
- 1949:** Coffin Hall built
- 1950:** Sherman Little Theater incorporates as the Sherman Community Players
- 1951:** Adams Center built 
- Student Union Building built 
- 1952:** Mrs. Tucker’s Foods merges with Anderson Clayton & Co.
- 1955-1975:** Students hold peaceful protests against the Vietnam War. A roll of students called to serve was not kept due to the conflict’s unpopularity
- 1957:** Clyce Hall and Baker Hall built
- College Street closed to traffic from Grand Avenue to the Student Union Building (now the College Green)
- IBM opens the Sherman Card Plant
- Last passenger train departs Katy Depot
- 1958:** Wynne Chapel built 
- 1960:** Hopkins Center built
- Sherman population: 24,988 • Denison population: 22,748
- 1961:** Pierre Shamba from The Congo becomes the first Black student admitted to Austin College
- Johnson & Johnson opens a surgical dressings plant in Sherman
- 1962:** Craig Hall built 
- 1963:** Caruth Residence Hall built
- 1964:** YMCA Building razed

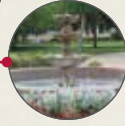


1965: Moody Center built



Dean Hall built

Kappa Fountain moved and rebuilt



Texas Instruments opens Sherman facility

1966: Sherman Symphony Orchestra founded

1968: First JanTerm courses held

Sherman becomes a key distribution center for Dr Pepper and 7-Up

1970: Sher-Den Mall opens



1972: Ida Green Communication Center opens



1973: Inaugural season of women's athletics

1974: Windsor Mall created by closing off remaining section of College Street running through campus

1976: Fisher Controls (later bought by Emerson) opens Sherman manufacturing facility

1979: Folgers Coffee opens Sherman facility

1980: Quest sculpture installed in the new Zauk Circle



Wortham Center completed

Sherman population: 30,413 • Denison population: 23,884

1981: Douglass Distributing formed

Grand Avenue Overpass opens

1983: Lake Campus dedicated

1986: Abell Library built



Solstice Calendar installed

Midway Mall in Sherman opens



1987: Anderson Clayton & Co., formerly Mrs. Tucker's Foods, is purchased by The Kraft Company

1998: Coffin Hall razed

1999: Jordan Family Language House completed



2000: Apple Stadium built

Wright Campus Center completed



Sherman population: 35,082 • Denison population: 22,773

2001: Mason Complex created

Student Union Building razed



2002: Jackson Technology Center completed

2004: Luckett Hall razed

Sherman Town Center completed

2007: Clyde L. Hall Graduation Court created



2013: IDEA Center opens for classes



2020s: Texoma earns the nickname "the Silicon Prairie" due to local investments in high-tech industry

2020: Sherman population: 45,136 • Denison population: 25,792

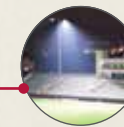
2023: Austin College Health Campus in Denison dedicated



2024: Austin College Physician Assistant Program welcomes first students

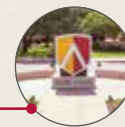
Austin College *Bachelor of Science in Engineering* program developed in cooperation with local industry

First evening home game played under new stadium lights in Apple Stadium



Sherman population: 50,229 • Denison population: 26,446

2025: Quest relocated near Abell Library; Austin College shield placed in Zauk Circle



Community Connections

By Tori Walters



Sherman Symphony Orchestra at Kidd-Key Auditorium

Austin College has called Sherman home for 150 years—and over that time, the relationship between the College and the Texoma community has remained deeply intertwined. One of the hallmarks of an Austin College education is participation in community life, which includes some of Sherman’s most enduring arts institutions, such as the Sherman Community Players (SCP) and Sherman Symphony Orchestra (SSO). The relationships between these institutions and the College have been fostered and sustained by faculty, staff, alumni, and students alike.

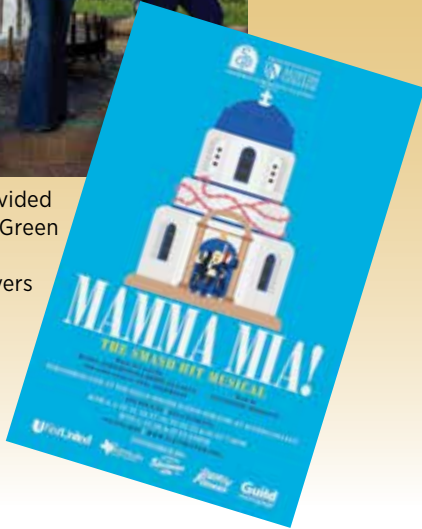
The Sherman Community Players have brought quality theatrical productions to audiences across the North Texas and Southern Oklahoma regions since the 1920’s, when it was known as the Sherman Little Theater. Today, the SCP is led by Artistic Director **Darrah Dunn** ’89. “The first time I was in a

show here, I was a student at AC,” he recalled. “I did a children’s theater production—*Revenge of the Space Pandas*. It was Andy Williams, technical director of the Theatre Department at AC, who got me involved with SCP. As a student, I simply performed for them, but once I graduated, my desire to support SCP went further.” (**Andy Williams** ’74, long-time technical director of Ida Green Theatre, was the entry point for many students, staff, and faculty who got involved with SCP.)

After working with Sherman Community Players in various roles for 30 years, Dunn became the artistic director in 2022. “SCP is a solid part of the cultural tapestry here, and Sherman has always had fine arts and culture and education as part of its appeal,” he said, also noting SCP’s long-standing presence, having opened its 77th consecutive season under the SCP name in fall 2025. “We aim to represent the entire community,” Dunn



COURTESY PHOTO
The College provided the stage in Ida Green for the Sherman Community Players to perform their rendition of *Mamma Mia!* during the pandemic.



COURTESY PHOTO
Cecil Isaac (above, center) was the conductor of the Sherman Symphony Orchestra for 26 years before passing the baton to Daniel Dominick in 1992. Dominick is pictured here coaching an aspiring young conductor.



continued. “We are a safe space—we invite anyone to come and audition for any and all parts in our productions.”

Community support has been vital for SCP—and none have answered the call quite like Austin College. During the pandemic, the College provided the stage in Ida Green for the Sherman Community Players to perform their rendition of *Mamma Mia!*, ensuring that the arts were uplifted during dark times, allowing for a much-needed moment of levity. In addition to countless Austin College students, over the years familiar faces among faculty and staff have provided hands-on support both behind the scenes and on-stage, including Professor of Political Science **Dr. Nathan Bigelow**, Professor of Classics and Dean of Humanities **Dr. Bob Cape**, Emeritus Professor of Music **Dr. Ricky Duhaime**, Associate Professor of Theatre **Dr. Kirk Everist**, Associate Professor of Music **Dr. John McGinn**, Advocacy Program Coach **Ed Richardson '95**, Director of Counseling Services **Teresa Moore**, Counselor **Dr. Jimmy Wilkins**, and many others.

“Sherman has supported the fine arts, and Austin College—being such a solid presence—had a lot to do with that because they were educated

people, pursuing higher education, pursuing fine things, fine art,” Dunn said. “AC’s presence absolutely contributed to the fact that we have the Sherman Symphony Orchestra and Sherman Community Players—those things thrive more easily in an educated city, like Sherman.”

Another institution whose roots are intertwined with Austin College is the Sherman Symphony Orchestra (SSO). The SSO was originally the Sherman Civic Orchestra, its origins dating back to fall 1966 (it would become the Sherman Symphony Orchestra after its 7th season, in 1973).

The Sherman Musical Arts (a non-profit organization that has since dissolved) asked **Cecil Isaac**, an Austin College Music Department faculty member, if he would be interested in organizing a community orchestra. “I put some notices in the newspaper, ‘Musicians, we’re forming an orchestra!’ And our first meeting was in September [1966] at Craig Hall,” said Isaac in a 2020 interview with Austin College Adjunct Instructor in Music **Leslie Whelan**. “The stars were aligned for us to begin to think about having an orchestra. From the beginning, it was a joint effort with Austin College.” After a handful of Tuesday night practices, the orchestra’s first concert was held in Wynne Chapel



Austin College Adjunct Instructor in Music Leslie Whelan (left) serves as the SSO's Managing Director and helps coordinate the Austin College Summer Music Camp.

The popular, family-friendly *Christmas Pops!* (below) is an annual SSO performance and participatory celebration held on the Austin College campus in Sid Richardson Center.



on a Sunday afternoon that December.

Isaac led the Sherman Symphony Orchestra as its conductor for 26 years before passing the baton in 1992 to **Daniel Dominick**—who has been the SSO's only other conductor. From that first concert in Wynne Chapel, they have grown to a thriving arts organization; they now perform eight annual concerts, including classical and *Christmas Pops!* performances in Kidd-Key Auditorium and Austin College's Sid Richardson Center respectively. In 2026, the orchestra celebrates its 60th anniversary.

The collaboration between the SSO and Austin College continues to this day. Faculty from the Austin College Music Department actively participate in the orchestra, and Austin College students majoring in music can earn ensemble credit by performing with the Sherman Symphony Orchestra. (Other ensembles include Austin College Wind Symphony, 'Roo Band, Austin College Jazz Ensemble, and more.) Auditions are typically held during the first week of the fall term at Austin College.

The Sherman Symphony Orchestra also prioritizes educational outreach at the K-12 level. Since its inception in 2002, their education program has expanded to include 32 schools and more than 3,200 students. Whelan serves as the

SSO's Managing Director and also helps coordinate the Austin College Summer Music Camp (featured in the 2025 *Austin College Magazine*).

The Children's Education Concert serves as the centerpiece for the SSO's educational outreach efforts. Held annually, it welcomes over 2,000 fifth-graders to a free, one-hour concert introducing students to concertgoing, orchestral music, instrument families, and individual instruments. These engaging performances feature works ranging from Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 to the *Star Wars* theme, demonstrating how music can express artistic ideas. The event is narrated by "Professor Music," portrayed by a familiar face—Darrah Dunn!

These institutions, whose programs and histories are interwoven with Austin College, have benefited from a mutually enriching relationship with the College. It is thanks to higher education institutions like Austin College that Sherman was once known as the "Athens of Texas." Sherman's rich history of culture and the arts has been cultivated and nourished by the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Austin College. As Austin College celebrates 150 years in Texoma this year, it is truly a celebration of gratitude and connection. ■

FINISH STRONG

*The Legacy of President Steven P. O'Day
The 16th President of Austin College*

By Laura J. Veach



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMBERT



AUSTIN COLLEGE PHOTOS

In 2017, Austin College welcomed Steven and Cece O’Day as the College’s 16th President and First Lady. Their time at Austin College has been constructive, literally and figuratively. One of President O’Day’s first priorities was launching the public phase of a comprehensive fundraising campaign, POWER Austin College, and indeed he started strong. By November 2019, the College had reached 89% of the ambitious \$125 million campaign goal. O’Day outlined his vision behind POWER Austin College at the time, saying, “In this campaign, we are working to raise the funds needed to continue the transformational experience today and into the future. We need to support and enhance the scholarships, programs, and facilities involved in educating the whole student—mind, body, and spirit. These experiences are, after all, the essence of an Austin College education.”

The campaign’s success and generous gifts since have allowed nearly every corner of the College to be rejuvenated, from reimagined academic offerings crafted to address contemporary

industrial and humanitarian needs, to vast landscaping and facilities revitalization, to the addition of talented faculty and staff. Competitive cheer and men’s and women’s water polo teams have been added, creating new co-curricular opportunities for student-athletes. O’Day’s vision and leadership have positioned Austin College as one of the strongest liberal arts institutions in the country, now backed by a \$250+ million endowment and investment portfolio—a record high and more than 150% growth over the last nine years.

While not entirely unscathed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the College was minimally affected as O’Day and his leadership team steered through without any delay in students’ progress toward graduation or the loss of any faculty or staff positions. At a time when not *losing* ground was *gaining* ground, he moved forward by focusing efforts on creating renewal plans to be implemented once the crisis had passed. “We persevered in times of austerity, natural disaster,



AUSTIN COLLEGE PHOTOS

and pandemic—challenges that proved too much for some institutions, but not Austin College,” said O’Day. “I take great pride in the strength we displayed during those tough times, our vision for the future, and our ability to nimbly bring that vision to fruition within our means.”

“Hand in hand with the development of new academic programs, I am also quite proud of our efforts to implement the needed development and renewal of our physical surroundings on campus and the new Austin College Health Campus,” O’Day continued. “We have touched practically every space on campus—from academic to social space, from athletic to performance space, from residential to outdoor space. Everything we’ve done these past nine years has been to enhance the overall student experience.”

In 2024, the largest cohort of new students in the College’s history arrived, in contrast to a national downward trend in enrollment, as well as the largest cohort of new faculty in recent history. O’Day attributes that growth to years of strategic

visioning and persistence. “We have developed contemporary, sometimes new, and relevant academic and co-curricular programs. We continue to address the needs of today’s student and the global community while remaining true to our mission as a liberal arts college,” he said.

O’Day is quick to point out that he didn’t achieve any of these accomplishments alone. In addition to re-envisioning the campus and curriculum, he has also led the continuing evolution of the faculty and staff. After all, the people are, in his estimation, what truly make this place special. “I hope to be remembered for the acquisition, development, and mentorship of new and existing leaders within our college community and for empowering them to pursue excellence in their own jobs,” he reflects. “Their development and extraordinary work have made this college even stronger.”

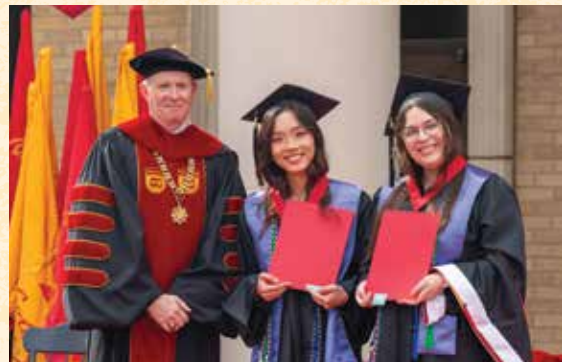
Fast forward to February 14, 2025, when Austin College Board of Trustees Chairman Scott Austin announced the President’s planned retirement in

the summer of 2026. “My inauguration speech was entitled ‘What’s Next,’” said President O’Day in his announcement to the campus. “In that speech, I pledged that the College would get the best I had to offer every single day. I am proud to have lived up to that pledge. At every turn, we asked what’s next and then tried to make it happen. That was true on day one and it will be on day 3,285—nine years later.” Since that declaration, President O’Day has continued to give his best, completing several additional projects including the renewal of Zauk Circle and the announcement of a new academic building on campus, which will be the Harris Engineering Center.

Each semester, O’Day sends an email to students during finals week, encouraging them to “finish strong”—advice he has taken to heart in his last few months as President.

“I hope that my legacy at Austin College will include a few words: ‘leadership’ during challenging times, ‘vision’ for the renewal and continued relevance of all aspects of the College, and ‘achievement’ for bringing ideas to reality. The constantly shifting landscape of higher education requires all of those to address the needs of today’s student and today’s world. I hope my legacy will be that we, all of us, not only stabilized the College during my time here but truly advanced it and positioned it for success in the years to come.”

The O’Days will be remembered fondly and dearly missed on Grand Avenue when they return to their home state of Pennsylvania to be near family, fix up their 186-year-old farmhouse, and pursue other fulfilling interests. A 2018 *Austin College Magazine* article introducing the O’Days to ‘RooNation included a question-and-answer segment. When asked if the President’s Home at Wood House would include any pets, Steven’s response was, “None yet, but we are planning on a puppy in 2018.” Nine years later, the O’Day household remains pet-free, making this, perhaps, the only goal he hasn’t accomplished during his tenure as President of Austin College. Maybe in retirement, they’ll finally be able to get that puppy. ■



AUSTIN COLLEGE PHOTOS

The Legacy of President Steven P. O'Day

Academic Offerings

Under O'Day's leadership, academic and co-curricular programs have been enhanced to support current and future needs. The College has also begun offering bachelor of science degree options in select majors to maximize graduates' opportunities for employment. These programs have been added or expanded since 2018:

- Business Analytics
- Business Finance
- Creative Writing
- Data Analytics
- Education Major
- Engineering
- Health Care Administration
- International Relations
- Kinesiology:
Exercise Science and Sports Management
- Master of Medical Science –
Physician Assistant
- Neuroscience
- Philosophy, Politics, and Economics
- Public Health
- Social Justice & Community Engagement





Facility and Grounds Improvements

The O'Day years have brought strategic investments in the revitalization and renewal of the 150-year old campus, with several major additions and renovations that have re-envisioned nearly every corner of the College property:

- Wynne Chapel renovation
- Hoxie Thompson Auditorium renovation
- Ida Green Communication Center renovation, including renovation of Nation Theatre and creation of new Nation Learning Commons
- North Flats – construction of new student residence complex
- Reconstruction and enhancements to Jordan Family Courts at the Russell Tennis Center
- Hughey Gymnasium renovation and enhancements
- Hannah Natatorium renovation
- Austin College Health Campus build out
- Apple Stadium renovation and enhancements including new artificial turf field and addition of stadium lights and exercise track
- College Park on Grand – construction of new employee housing village
- Campus Renewal Landscaping Initiative
- Residence Hall Modernization Project, including the Bryan Apartment Complex



Other Initiatives

- Creation of a dedicated Institutional Marketing & Communications division
- Reimagining of student support services into the Center for Student Success and Access Services (CSSAS)
- Relaunch of career services office into Center for Career & Professional Development
- Increase in the number of tenure track faculty positions



PHOTO BY STEVEN P. ODAY



AUSTIN COLLEGE PHOTOS

Zauk Circle: A Revitalized Gateway to Austin College

By Tori Walters



The story of Zauk Circle begins with the legacy of Margaret Binkley Zauk Collins, tireless volunteer and benefactor of the College who dedicated much of her life to its growth and success. Though she earned her degree elsewhere, she attended Austin College in 1936 and always said AC was “her” school. Over the years, she and her husband, Bill Collins, made numerous gifts to the College, including the endowment of several scholarships and the creation of the Zauk Circle Garden at the campus entrance near Wortham.

They also contributed the sculpture *Quest*, by Japanese artist Masaru Takiguchi, which was placed in the center of the circle in 1980.

This gateway to the Austin College campus has recently undergone a remarkable transformation, with the revitalization of Zauk Circle—the focal point of which is now the large, illuminated Austin College shield, proudly displayed in the center. Surrounded by vibrant landscaping and an ADA-accessible walkway, the shield offers an eye-catching focal point that instantly signals to its

admirers that they are in the heart of 'RooNation. The transformation also includes new plantings and the replacement of old hedges along Grand Avenue with low fences, providing a more open and inviting view of the campus, made possible by a new generation of philanthropy. This newly enhanced entrance warmly welcomes visitors, offering a blend of aesthetic beauty and meaningful symbolism that reflects the College's deep roots and bright future.

Another striking feature of the newly renovated area is the inclusion of crimson and gold banners that decorate the solar-powered streetlights along Grand Avenue. These banners serve as an outward declaration that visitors are entering the vibrant and proud community of Austin College.

For returning students and alumni, Zauk Circle has long been a beloved landmark, and the new enhancements ensure that the space continues to embody a warm and welcoming spirit—though they might wonder where its previous tenant, the *Quest* sculpture, has gone. The iconic work of art can now be found north of Abell Library, preserving a piece of Austin College's history and giving viewers better access to the sculpture.

With the revitalization of Zauk Circle now complete, every visitor to the campus is greeted with a vibrant and inviting view that is sure to leave a lasting impression. ■



Quest, created by Japanese artist Masaru Takiguchi, was a gift from the Collins family. Inspired by Rodin's *The Thinker*, it represents the interconnectedness of various academic disciplines at Austin College.

Campus Enhancements for Student Life

By Joshua Sylvé



In partnership with Aramark, the Pouch Club was remodeled in summer 2025, offering a more welcoming gathering place for students. The AC community celebrated the grand reopening of the Pouch Club on October 13, 2025.



Those who have visited the Austin College campus recently (or enjoyed the beautiful campus photos in the pages of this magazine) have likely noted the many enhancements and renewal work that have taken place over the past several years to refresh the buildings and grounds.

From the moment visitors enter the newly renovated Zauk Circle from Grand Avenue, the physical surroundings reveal what kind of place Austin College is: welcoming, vibrant, and focused.

As beautiful as these campus enhancements are, 'Roos know it's what is on the inside that truly matters—especially for the students who spend four years living and learning here.

Campus renewal efforts over the last year haven't ended at the buildings' perimeters. Interior student spaces have been renovated and reimagined as well; from the essentials, like updated restrooms in some residence halls and new appliances in the Bryan Apartments, to strategic efforts to create or enhance the so-called "third spaces"—places outside the

residence halls where students congregate and find community.

According to Dean of Students **Michael Deen**, "These 'third spaces'—what I think of as the spaces on campus that make individual students feel safe and at home beyond the security of their dorms or the familiarity of their classrooms—become vital to personal development. Students are making decisions with their eyes and ears, thinking this is going to be my place for four years, so it does matter."

With the majority of students living on campus, spaces in which they can experience the serenity that home provides are appreciated. In 2024, in response to surveys completed by current students and recent graduates, the College developed Commuter and Neurodivergent Student Lounges on



With the support of generous donors, some areas in Moody Center were converted to commuter and neurodivergent student lounges.

campus, located in the Moody Center. Within these spaces, students can temporarily escape the stresses of their daily routine—from catching a moment of rest between classes to having a space to calm their senses. The environment provided by the lounges encourages relaxation and tranquility and addresses practical needs like a fridge and microwave for student use.

The largest “third space” on campus is the Robert J. and Mary Wright Campus Center, also known as the WCC. A hub for students, faculty, and staff alike, typical wear and tear in this high-traffic space accumulates quickly. During summer 2025, updates were made throughout the WCC. These include new furniture in the Dining Hall and Living Room, as well as a full remodel of the Pouch Club, completed in collaboration with campus dining partner Aramark.

The Pouch Club, traditionally a gathering space for quick snacks and meet-ups, has benefited tremendously from the partnership with Aramark. Expanded open hours in the Dining Hall had resulted in fewer students eating meals in the Pouch Club, and Aramark and the College recognized that it was time to reimagine how the space is used. The new layout features a study nook, equipped with desk pods and a retractable wall to dampen sound. A centralized gaming area includes pool, ping pong, and foosball tables. A bank of TVs is available for livestreaming sporting events or hosting video game competitions. In the center, a flexible space accommodates dining and events. “Even the

kitchen equipment in the Pouch Club was redone,” said Deen. The Pouch Club reopened on October 13, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, remarks from President O’Day and Aramark representatives, and a celebration including food, party gifts, and a live performance from the AC Cheer team.

Changes took place even closer to home for resident students. Over the last year, the restrooms in Dean and Caruth Residence Halls underwent modernization in response to input from student focus groups. According to Deen, “We found that today’s students are more modest. They’re not as comfortable as students were maybe 30 years ago, and they want more privacy.” The new restrooms feature completely private toilet and shower cubicles, replacing the old stalls. Renovations in Dean and Caruth were completed in summer 2025, and the College plans to continue the renovations to additional residence halls in the coming years.

The spaces that Austin College students call home for four years are more than rooms; they are places in which lasting friendships are built and cherished memories are created. As new spaces are developed and existing spaces are renewed, the College is making room for more unforgettable moments. ■



The Wright Campus Center Living Room, equipped with new furniture, offers a comfortable meeting place for students to enjoy.

And ...

By Tori Walters

Of all the decisions made during the college experience, the area of study on which to focus is often the most significant. When multiple academic interests arise, there is no “either/or” with Austin College students, only “and.” The focus on not being *too* focused often leads Austin College graduates down unique career paths that draw on their unique intersection of interests. For others, it leads to avocational or recreational pursuits that may be *pretty different* from their day jobs.

The “and” may not get more different than Director of Technology and Burning Man Artist **Chris Struble '12**. When graduation approached for Struble, who double-majored in computer science and art, Professor of Art **Mark Monroe '81** gave him one final assignment: to attend the Burning Man festival that August. “[Burning Man] was quite instrumental to changing my mind at that point in time about what was possible,” Struble said of his first Burning Man. “I had no experience of adults that were just kids. That adults were people you could collaborate or work on ideas with.” Just as Monroe suspected it would, Burning Man proved to be a creative outlet that Chris needed to balance his work in technology.

Now the Director of Technology at Imperial Dade, an industrial packaging company, he’s become a regular Burning Man attendee and artist. This year made his fifteenth year attending Burning Man, but his first to lead a major art installation at the festival—an interactive 30-foot industrial-strength sculpture of a tether ball, inspired by the feeling of child-like wonder he experienced at his very first “burn.”

“I got an honoraria grant from Burning Man to build a sculpture,” said Struble. “When I got the grant, I called Mark and said, ‘We need to do this together.’” Struble and Monroe worked together with a team that included Austin College alumni **Horace Hobbs '11** and **Genevieve Walker '10** on the design, creation, and construction of the sculpture, titled *When We Were Young*. The sculpture was built partly in the Caroline Ross Ceramic and Sculpture Building at Austin College over the summer, and successfully transported and installed at Burning Man in August 2025.

Why Burning Man? Professor Monroe explained that he knew that “Chris had this great career ahead of him and would be brilliant at that, but I also knew that Chris was always showing up in the studio with these big, wild ideas and I felt like he would need to keep an artistic outlet in his life—and I just knew he would really love the creative aspects of Burning Man.”



Chris Struble double-majored in computer science and art at Austin College. He is now the Director of Technology at Imperial Dade. His art interest offers balance to his work in technology.

As a creative outlet, Chris, along with Mark Monroe and others, constructed a 30-foot interactive sculpture with a tetherball titled *When We Were Young*. The sculpture was part of the Burning Man festival in August 2025.



COURTESY PHOTOS

“Pay attention to the edges of your interests and the areas where they overlap. Those overlapping areas are gold mines where creativity can be unleashed in a sustained way and brought into balance.”
— Chris Struble '12



MADISON TAYLOR '22



Madison Taylor majored in biology and minored in art at Austin College, and later completed an M.S. in Biomedical Visualization at the University of Illinois Chicago.



“If you stay curious, stay adaptable, and keep building on the things that genuinely excite you, you’ll be able to build a career that’s both meaningful and uniquely your own.”
— Madison Taylor '22



COURTESY PHOTOS

Madison joined the 3D Anatomy team as a 3D Medical Artist at Arthrex, a medical equipment company.



Monroe had been part of an Art Car camp (a group of artists with drivable artwork) for years, and when he first introduced Chris to that crew, he had no idea where it would lead: namely, a 30-foot-tall tetherball.



While **Madison Taylor '22** pursued her studies in the sciences, taking pre-med courses and majoring in biology, she also fed her artistic side by minoring in art with no idea where it might lead. “What truly set my liberal arts background apart was the freedom to design my own interdisciplinary path,” said Taylor. “Once I became interested in blending science with art, my professors encouraged me to pursue an independent study where I experimented with digital sculpting using 3D modeling software, learned 3D printing, and even arranged an internship with a prosthetist at Scottish Rite Hospital. By my junior year, I knew I wanted a career that blended both passions.”

Taylor found that blend in the Biomedical Visualization program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. “It has a strong emphasis on technology, particularly 3D modeling and animation,” said Taylor. Beyond anatomical understanding, medical artists also have to be storytellers. Knowing how people learn—what reduces cognitive load, how to sequence information, what to emphasize, what to remove—is essential. This blend of scientific accuracy, clarity, and narrative thinking are key parts of being trained as a medical illustrator. “It felt like the perfect intersection of my classical training in illustration and my growing interest in sculpture and 3D work. It was the first time I saw a career that allowed me to use all parts of myself—scientist, artist, and storyteller.”



Jackie Hatfield '05 also found a path that allowed her studies in both art and science to be put to use in her career as Display Technology Specialist at Fortec US. “Display technology

translates into bridging engineering precision with human experience—how a product *feels* to the user,” she explained. “I approach technical challenges like design challenges: there’s structure, but also intuition. I think the liberal arts mindset helps me balance logic with imagination, so I can move easily between the analytical side of performance specs and the creative side of visual design.”

Hatfield also found her path in the “and” spaces between two disciplines. “My liberal arts education trained me to connect dots between disciplines rather than stay in silos,” said Hatfield. “They [art and physics] ask the same fundamental question, ‘Why does the world look and behave the way it does?’” She found that physics answers that query through laws and structure, while art explores it through perception and emotion. “Studying both fields gave me a kind of dual vision: one analytical and one intuitive. In my physics work, I learned to observe and test ideas methodically; in the studio, I learned to stay open to what happens when control gives way to discovery. Each discipline made the other richer.” For Hatfield, the intersection between disciplines is where real innovation happens.

Struble, Taylor, and Hatfield prove that “and” doesn’t have to end when you choose your major, even if it feels like a big “or” at the time. The spirit of discovery is embedded at Austin College, and whether it is forging new career paths, finding careers where they can use their broad knowledge, or making room for both to live enriched and interesting lives, these alumni simply prove that to be true. ■



Jackie Hatfield found a path that allowed her studies in both art and science to be put to use in her career as Display Technology Specialist at Fortec US.

“When you’re fluent in more than one way of thinking, you become the person who sees the solutions others miss. Trust that your interests are connected, even if the path doesn’t look linear.”

— Jackie Hatfield '05

And ...

Connecting With the World Around Me

By Jasmine Galdamez '26



In Front of the Sydney Opera House, 2024



Singapore Hindu Temple, 2024

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JASMINE GALDAMEZ '26

Finding my footing at Austin College as a first-year student was a bit of a challenge. I was now five hours from home with no familiar faces around me and a whole new life to build outside my home in Lubbock. I remember wondering when things would feel normal to me, when I would feel at home.

When I saw the Mock Trial table at the Opportunities Fair, I knew I had found my first step. I immediately jumped into attorney and witness work, fueled by my passion for law and performance. Through the program, I was able to meet the people who would eventually become a second family to me, spending countless hours and nights with them in the courtroom and traveling to multiple states for tournaments. I had found something to sink myself into and people to rely on, setting me on a firm foundation as I pushed into my sophomore year.



Mock Trial Trip, New Hampshire, 2022

As I transitioned from being a clueless first-year to a more confident sophomore the following fall, my roommate briefly told me about another program they had heard about. The Political Science Department had just received a large gift from an alumnus to engage students with independent research abroad in Australia, Singapore, and South Korea, allowing students free reign in choosing their topic of study—the Asia-Pacific Scholars Program. By the time my roommate told me about it, the application deadline was only a week away. I hurriedly put together an application and sent it in with a day to spare. By the end of the semester, I was shocked and overjoyed to receive the email congratulating me and eight other applicants for being accepted into the program.

By the spring term, I was reading and writing down my research about the effects of structural violence on criminal

recidivism among ethnic minorities in both Australia and Singapore. I had written a number of research papers for my other classes at AC, but nothing of this magnitude. By the time we were ready to leave for our field research abroad, I had already collected nearly thirty different sources for just my literature review. While I had laid a solid foundation for my research, it wasn't until after traveling to Sydney, Darwin, Singapore, Seoul, and Busan that I was able to fully realize the direction of my work. The museums, landmarks, and people I met at every place we stopped were all critical to me fully understanding the context on which my research relied. Had I not been able to travel to all of these different locations, I would have missed so many nuances that just weren't present in academic articles and papers.

Mock Trial and the Asia-Pacific Scholars Program have been integral to my academic and personal development while at Austin College. Through these programs, I have learned how to advocate for myself, how to push myself academically and, most importantly, how to make connections with the world around me. Both have been invaluable experiences in my life, and I am so grateful to have had them while representing 'RooNation. ■



Samsui Women Statue, Singapore 2024

Singapore Street Art, 2024



Traditional Korean Hanbok, Seoul 2024

North (Left, Red Flag) and South Korean (Right, White Flag) Border, 2024

S'More Experiences for Girl Scouts



By Laura J. Veach

PHOTOS BY KENDALL KATUSAK '22

When former CEO of Girl Scouts of America Sylvia Acevedo was presented with the Austin College Posey Leadership Award in 2023, the spark of collaboration was lit between Girl Scouts Northeast Texas (GSNTX), their STEM Center, and Austin College. In summer 2025, that spark ignited in the form of a summer Girl Scout camp hosted on the Austin College campus with classes taught by Austin College faculty.

Dr. Renee Countryman, Professor of Psychology and Dean of Social Sciences, championed the idea of bringing Girl Scouts to campus for a summer camp and was the faculty lead for building the camp curriculum. Countryman was a Girl Scout herself, and considers the outside-of-classroom education she received through the organization to be some of her most transformative experiences. “I got to geek out and explore things that truly interested me,” she said.

The inaugural camp was called *Green & Serene: Wellness Adventure for a Better Place*—a perfect fit for Austin College’s environmentally conscious campus and respected health programs. Eight faculty designed mini-courses in their fields of expertise geared toward the 8th to 12th grade girls. Courses included creative writing, chemistry, field biology, neuroscience focused on how environment affects the brain, and economics. Students from the Austin College Physician Assistant Program even taught a class that included interaction with virtual-reality patients. Modeled on the college experience, each scout got to sign up for the classes of most interest to them, much like enrolling in a semester of college. In addition to the classroom work, the camp included daily wellness programming, such as yoga, journaling, and other self-care activities. And of course, they had a campfire and made s’mores.

The 42 attendees and their seven counselors from GSNTX stayed in Caruth Hall and had meals in the dining hall, providing them the full experience of living on a college campus. To further the campers’ thoughts on continuing their education after high school, faculty gave sessions on college planning—majors/minors, choosing a school, financial aid—and a parent session took place on the last day to answer parents’ questions about college planning, as well.

Participant and parent feedback from the camp was overwhelmingly positive. The Scouts raved about topics they hadn’t had an opportunity to explore before this camp, and neurodivergent attendees told of added benefits of feeling they could express themselves freely in the welcoming setting of Austin College. GSNTX worked with grocery chain H-E-B to sponsor registration fees for up to 20 participants who may not have been able to attend otherwise.

The flame that was lit to bring the camp to fruition wasn’t extinguished when campers headed home. Countryman says organizers from both Austin College and GSNTX plan to offer the camp again, and would like to expand future camps to a full week and incorporate additional faculty and mini-courses. ■



Attendees were able to choose from a variety of mini-courses during camp:

- *Chemistry 110*: Chemicals & the Environment with Dr. John Richardson
- *Creative Writing 111*: Witnessing Environmental Change with Dr. Lisha Storey
- *Neuroscience 112*: Brains & the Environment with Dr. Renee Countryman
- *Art & Media 120*: Ecological Narratives with Brianna Burnett & Dr. Brett Boessen
- *Economics 121*: Understanding Obesity Economic Causes, Consequences, and Interventions with Dr. Mohsan Khudri
- *Biology 122*: Animal Behavior in the Environment with Dr. Steve Goldsmith
- *Creative Writing 131*: Creative Writing for Connection with Dr. Meg Brandl
- *Health 132*: The Health Professions with Dr. Diana Noller
- *Psychology 133*: Gender, Health, and Culture with Dr. Renee Countryman





Outside the Classroom

By Tori Walters

Across every discipline at Austin College, faculty are finding creative ways to immerse students in hands-on environments that deepen understanding and spark curiosity. Whether that means debating bills under the Capitol dome, digging up fossils, or collaborating with local nonprofits, these experiences show students that education is not just something you study—it's something you do.

Few field experiences feel as immediate and eye-opening as the trip Associate Professor of Public Health **Dr. Mathias Akuoko** offers students in his Leadership & Policy Legislation course. Taught every two years to coincide with the Texas legislative session, the class travels to the State Capitol in Austin to watch delegates debate bills in real time. “We talk about health policies and

how they affect this group or affect that group [in class]. But then I wanted the students to have the experience to know that they can also contribute to making laws,” said Akuoko.

Akuoko believes the visit offers students something a textbook never could. “I mean, the law-making process seemed too far away from them,” he said. “They didn’t know that they had a part to play. So, it was very great experiential learning for them, and also for contact purposes, because part of it is also developing their careers.” By witnessing lawmakers negotiate policy on the House and Senate floors, students come to understand the complexities, challenges, and human dimensions of lawmaking. They return to campus with a deeper awareness of how policy is shaped and the role they might play in influencing it.



COURTESY PHOTOS

As part of his Leadership & Policy Legislation course, Associate Professor of Public Health Dr. Mathias Akuoko offers students the opportunity to travel to the State Capitol in Austin to watch delegates negotiate policy.

Miles from any marble floors, another kind of hands-on education unfolds under the guidance of Associate Professor of Biology **Dr. Thomas Stidham**. Stidham's Paleobiology and Fossil Record students quite literally dug into their work last summer, searching in sediment for marine fossils near the Denison Dam. These excursions fundamentally shift how students understand science. "I'm hoping to impart the fun and wonder of discovery in science, biodiversity, and nature that has driven me through much of my life and led to my career in education and research," Stidham explained.

Many of Stidham's classes venture to locations across Grayson County, including Sneed Prairie, Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, and the Denison Dam Spillway. His goal is to immerse students in the practice of field biology. "When I take them out, I have several outcomes in mind," Stidham said. "One is them gaining experience as field scientists, being able to use binoculars, identify species, and learn other practical skills biologists utilize." Field work brings biology to life. "Reading text and looking at data can give students outlines," he added, "but much of biology is outside. Biology becomes less abstract and more of a reality for them."



Field work brings biology to life for students at area sites in Grayson County such as Sneed Prairie, Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, and the Denison Dam Spillway.



Students gain experience in field biology at Sneed Prairie with Dr. Stidham (above) and at Hagerman Wildlife Refuge (right).



COURTESY PHOTOS



Stidham and students examine fossils at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas (above). A student proudly shows an ammonite found near the Denison Dam (right).

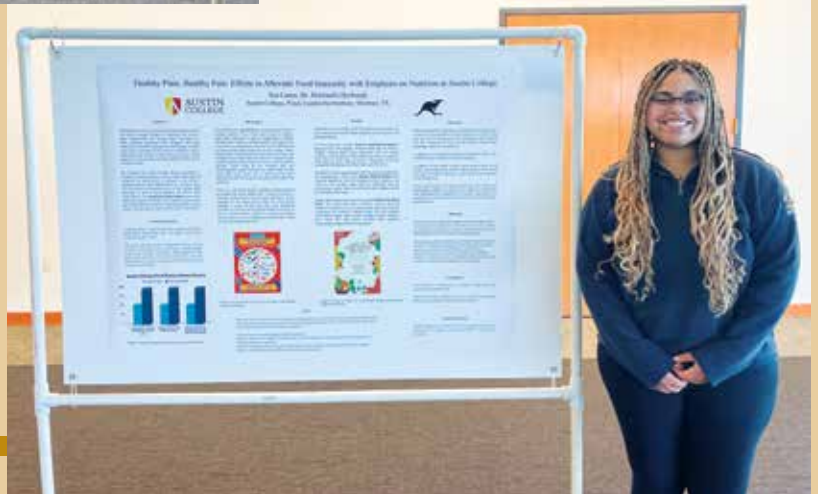




COURTESY PHOTOS



Students address real-world needs of a local organization in the Community Leadership course taught by Associate Professor of Business Administration Dr. Martinella Dryburgh. Tatum Torres '25 is pictured above with her presentation offering a strategic plan for the Sherman Symphony Orchestra education program. Nia Carter '25 is shown with her presentation highlighting efforts to alleviate food insecurity with emphasis on nutrition at Austin College.



Back on campus and throughout the Texoma community, Associate Professor of Business Administration **Dr. Martinella Dryburgh** is helping students connect coursework with real-world needs through service-learning in her Community Leadership course. At the start of each semester, students choose from local organizations (scouted by Dryburgh), selecting the group that best fits their interests and strengths. “This model helps students connect classroom learning with meaningful, real-world impact,” said Dryburgh. Her students have contributed to organizations such as the Texoma Community Foundation, the Sherman Symphony Orchestra, the Sherman Boys and Girls Club, and regional aging and juvenile services programs.

The results are transformative. One standout effort involved **Tristan Dick '23**, who helped

Texoma Council of Governments’ Aging Services plan an Elder Justice conference, teaching community members how to protect seniors from scams and exploitation. “These projects strengthen communication, critical thinking, relationship-building, and problem-solving skills,” said Dryburgh, “while also helping students see how they can create positive change.”

These are just a few of the applied learning projects that take students from the classroom into many immersive settings, but the same philosophy drives them all: learning becomes most powerful when students can immediately connect it to real experiences outside the classroom. It is this shared commitment to hands-on inquiry that not only enriches every classroom, but also prepares students to navigate an ever-changing world with confidence, curiosity, and purpose. ■



Full Circle

Alumni serve as preceptors, mentoring Austin College Master of Medical Science-Physician Assistant students.

By Laura J. Veach

Years after their own time at Austin College, 30 alumni are exemplifying the tenet of servant leadership by hosting and mentoring Master of Medical Science-Physician Assistant (MMS-PA) students for their clinical rotations.

While the state-of-the-art, interactive simulation tools employed during the program's first year are remarkable learning aids, there is no substitute for applying skills and concepts to actual patients. The second year of the MMS-PA program requires students to complete 40 weeks of supervised clinical experience in a variety of medical specialties in order to build student confidence and career readiness. To fulfill these hands-on clinical rotation requirements, the program connected with medical professionals across the region to serve as preceptors, the technical term for those who supervise clinical experiences. The program also tapped into the vast pool of talented Austin College

alumni who are medical professionals working in the region, inviting them to host and mentor the PA students to round out the preceptor roster.

Amanda Wilder Lark '98, DMSc, MAPS, PA-C, who has over 20 years of experience as a physician assistant in emergency medicine, dermatology, and wound care, is one of those alumni. "I chose to serve as a preceptor because others once provided the same guidance and opportunity for me," she says. "It is a meaningful way to give back to my alma mater and support the development of the next generation of healthcare providers." **Dr. Aaron Cernero '95**, owner and Lead Surgeon at Cernero Surgery and Aesthetics and another preceptor, explains that these partnerships are mutually beneficial. "I believe we should never stop learning. Technology in the healthcare sector will continue to change and improve. One of the best ways for me to stay current is interacting with bright and

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Austin College Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Austin College. Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students. Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class.

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-austin-college/>

inquisitive future practitioners,” he said. **Dr. Karen Edwards-Key '09, OBGYN**, agreed, saying, “The PA program has assembled a stellar class, and the high caliber of students has been remarkably consistent for every group I’ve hosted. Because that caliber is so high, they each ask great questions, which in turn has assured that I’m providing the highest quality of care possible to my patients.”

Reflecting on their own Austin College experiences, the preceptors are confident that physician assistants produced by the MMS-PA program will enter practice with not only the technical skills to provide excellent healthcare, but also the special set of skills developed through a footing in the liberal arts. **Dr. Megan Metcalf '05, OBGYN**, said, “Austin College provided me a liberal arts education foundational to my identity as a physician. My time as a student at Austin College fostered communication skills, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and self-reflection. The College provided a basis for lifelong learning and interdisciplinary teamwork—both crucial in clinical medicine. The breadth of education and experience at Austin College translates to patients feeling heard, understood, and respected in their unique context.”

When the first cohort of MMS-PA students graduate in May and transition into practicing professionals in a healthcare climate in desperate need of their services, they will do so with an elevated level of regard for their patients, demonstrated and nurtured by fellow 'Roos. ■



COURTESY PHOTOS

As a preceptor for the Austin College Physician Assistant program, Dr. Karen Edwards-Key '09, OBGYN shares her expertise with students as they fulfill their clinical rotations.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Amanda Wilder Lark '98, DMSc, MAPS, PA-C serves as preceptor at a dermatology clinic.

Beyond the Boards

Michelle Filander Takes on New Role as Athletic Director

By Joshua Sylvé

PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS HUNNERT



Austin College
ATHLETICS

“Now that I have transitioned fully into this administrative position, I am enjoying interacting and building relationships with the athletes from all of our programs. There is great consistency in their drive and love of their sport; it is exciting to be around them every day, and they make it easy to not only cheer for them, but to work hard for them.”

— Michelle Filander
Austin College Athletic Director

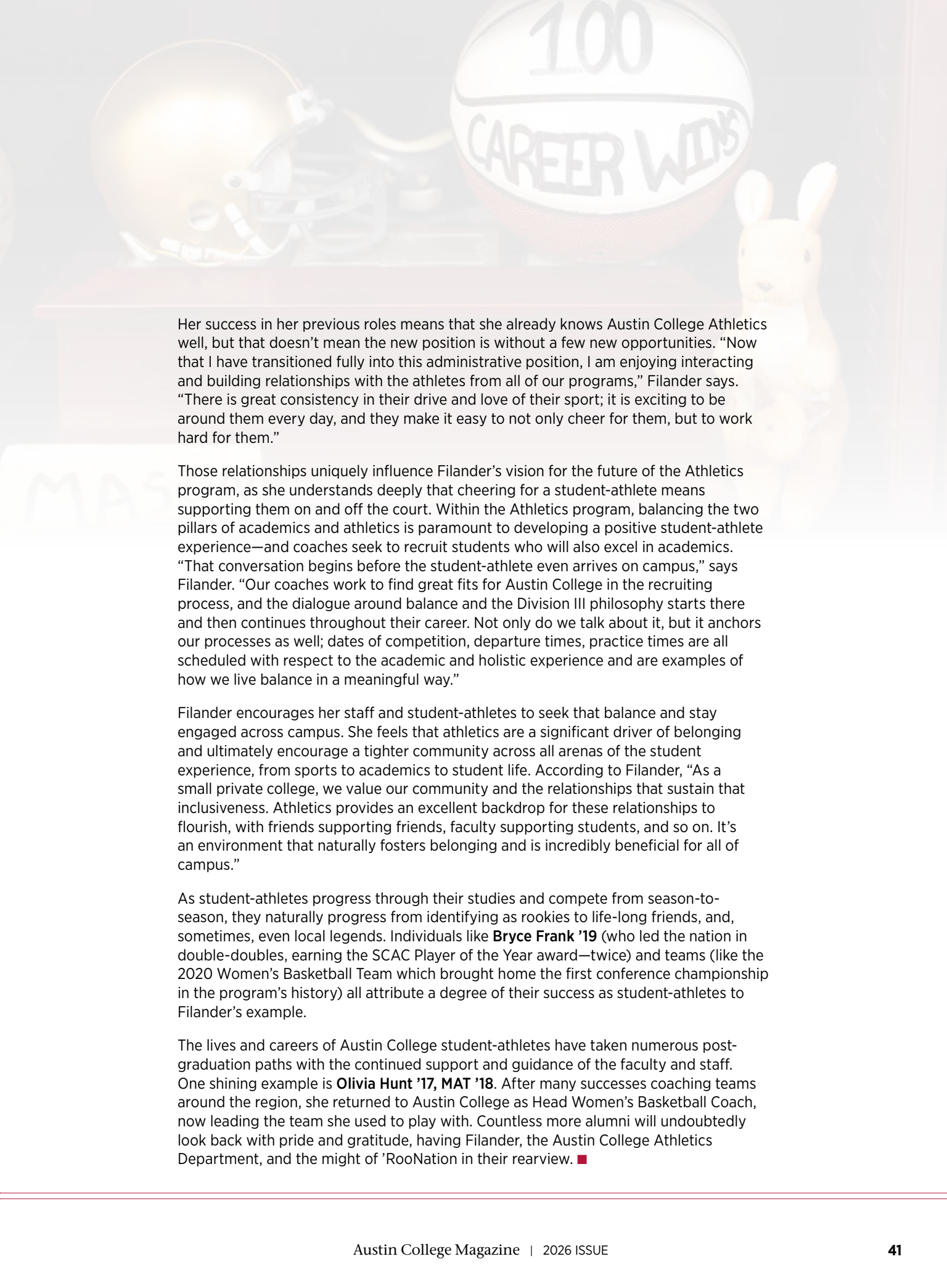
ROOS

Approaching the Austin College campus along Grand Avenue, a bright wave of alternating crimson and gold street pole banners guides visitors to the Wortham Center where they are welcomed for the first time. Nearing campus from the west along Brockett Street, guests are greeted by a massive banner hung across Jerry E. Apple Stadium, boldly announcing that they have entered the “Home of the ‘Roos.” These two perspectives of Austin College eventually intersect, bringing together those who are experiencing Austin College for the first time with those who’ve built the legacies that students dream of sharing.

Sitting at that intersection of a new beginning and legacy is Athletic Director **Michelle Filander**, who took the helm in July 2025 upon the retirement of long-time Athletic Director **David Norman ’83, MA ’84**.



Filander is already a legend at Austin College, having served as Head Women’s Basketball Coach and Assistant Athletic Director from 2010 to 2025. She led teams that brought home several championships as Head Women’s Basketball Coach, and in her role as Assistant Athletic Director and Senior Woman’s Administrator, she shaped the inner workings of Austin College Athletics. “As I managed the role of Assistant Athletic Director, I was able to get to know some of our student-athletes, but as the Head Women’s Basketball Coach, I was still very focused on my team,” says Filander. That’s where the new beginning comes in.



Her success in her previous roles means that she already knows Austin College Athletics well, but that doesn't mean the new position is without a few new opportunities. "Now that I have transitioned fully into this administrative position, I am enjoying interacting and building relationships with the athletes from all of our programs," Filander says. "There is great consistency in their drive and love of their sport; it is exciting to be around them every day, and they make it easy to not only cheer for them, but to work hard for them."

Those relationships uniquely influence Filander's vision for the future of the Athletics program, as she understands deeply that cheering for a student-athlete means supporting them on and off the court. Within the Athletics program, balancing the two pillars of academics and athletics is paramount to developing a positive student-athlete experience—and coaches seek to recruit students who will also excel in academics. "That conversation begins before the student-athlete even arrives on campus," says Filander. "Our coaches work to find great fits for Austin College in the recruiting process, and the dialogue around balance and the Division III philosophy starts there and then continues throughout their career. Not only do we talk about it, but it anchors our processes as well; dates of competition, departure times, practice times are all scheduled with respect to the academic and holistic experience and are examples of how we live balance in a meaningful way."

Filander encourages her staff and student-athletes to seek that balance and stay engaged across campus. She feels that athletics are a significant driver of belonging and ultimately encourage a tighter community across all arenas of the student experience, from sports to academics to student life. According to Filander, "As a small private college, we value our community and the relationships that sustain that inclusiveness. Athletics provides an excellent backdrop for these relationships to flourish, with friends supporting friends, faculty supporting students, and so on. It's an environment that naturally fosters belonging and is incredibly beneficial for all of campus."

As student-athletes progress through their studies and compete from season-to-season, they naturally progress from identifying as rookies to life-long friends, and, sometimes, even local legends. Individuals like **Bryce Frank '19** (who led the nation in double-doubles, earning the SCAC Player of the Year award—twice) and teams (like the 2020 Women's Basketball Team which brought home the first conference championship in the program's history) all attribute a degree of their success as student-athletes to Filander's example.

The lives and careers of Austin College student-athletes have taken numerous post-graduation paths with the continued support and guidance of the faculty and staff. One shining example is **Olivia Hunt '17, MAT '18**. After many successes coaching teams around the region, she returned to Austin College as Head Women's Basketball Coach, now leading the team she used to play with. Countless more alumni will undoubtedly look back with pride and gratitude, having Filander, the Austin College Athletics Department, and the might of 'RooNation in their rearview. ■

GO 'ROOS GO

A Family of Friends

By Joshua Sylvé

Those who grew up with siblings know what it means to share—old clothes, secret routes to school, scary stories. Having someone who understands us, who walks a path similar to our own, means we have a sidekick during all of our victories and a cheerleader when things don't go as expected.

As we grow up, friendships are formed outside of the family, and that circle of support expands. At Austin College, Director of Athletics **Michelle Filander** appreciates the impact that fellow athletes have on each other's success and motivation, and has developed a system where off-season athletes support the teams currently in competition. She casually refers to them as "brother and sister" sports, a nod to the bonds that gave many of us our first friends and fans.

Because the 15 varsity sports compete at different times throughout the year, this means that often entire teams turn up to support the athletes in sports beyond their own. Most teams have a sister or brother team which they will support during their off season. This year, the football team will support the women's basketball team, while the baseball team cheers on the volleyball team, and others will pair up as the year unfolds. One memorable example of the brother-sister sports phenomenon was a game when the Men's Water Polo team—in their swimsuits—attended a volleyball game. "On our campus, our athletes garner support from the relationships they build outside of their teams," says Filander, and students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members fill the stands



GO 'ROOS GO

at home games. However, having entire teams of fellow student-athletes turn out to support each other adds a special layer of motivation. According to Filander, “There is a snowball effect when our student-athletes experience success.”

“It makes you smile a bit more during the game,” says **Grace Moothart '26**, senior shooting guard for the Austin College Women’s Basketball team. “The main point is to build a community. We may not all be the biggest fans of every sport, but we are all representing the same thing; we all overwhelmingly believe in each other.”

Now in its second year of practice, an extra incentive has been added to help teams track how often they’ve shown up—with posters, banners, and fellow classmates—to get rowdy and root for their fellow student-athletes. A point toward the prized 'Roo Cup is earned for every game attended by the majority of a partner team. “This helps us see just how much support we have among each other and motivates us to not only attend each other’s competitions, but to bring our classmates and friends who are not student-athletes. Through our support we have cultivated so many friendships,” says Moothart.

At Homecoming Weekend each year, alumni reflect on the people, groups, and opportunities that helped make them stronger individuals—the friends, faculty, coaches, and mentors who were in their corner. For the Austin College student-athlete, those memories include fellow athletes and champions who worked together to nurture a community of support. ■



PHOTO BY KEVIN KATUSAK '22

Convergence of Creativity

Art Department Faculty Design Mural for TI

By Tori Walters



A mixed media mural, titled *Integrated*, was installed in the lobby of the new Texas Instruments building in Sherman. The art was designed by Austin College faculty artists, Brianna Burnett '02 and Mark Monroe '81 (pictured below).

There's been a lot of buzz about the investment Texas Instruments (TI) is making in Texoma and the opportunities that might bring to the community. One unexpected opportunity to connect Austin College and TI came in the form of an installation in the

new TI building in Sherman by two faculty members in the Art Department.

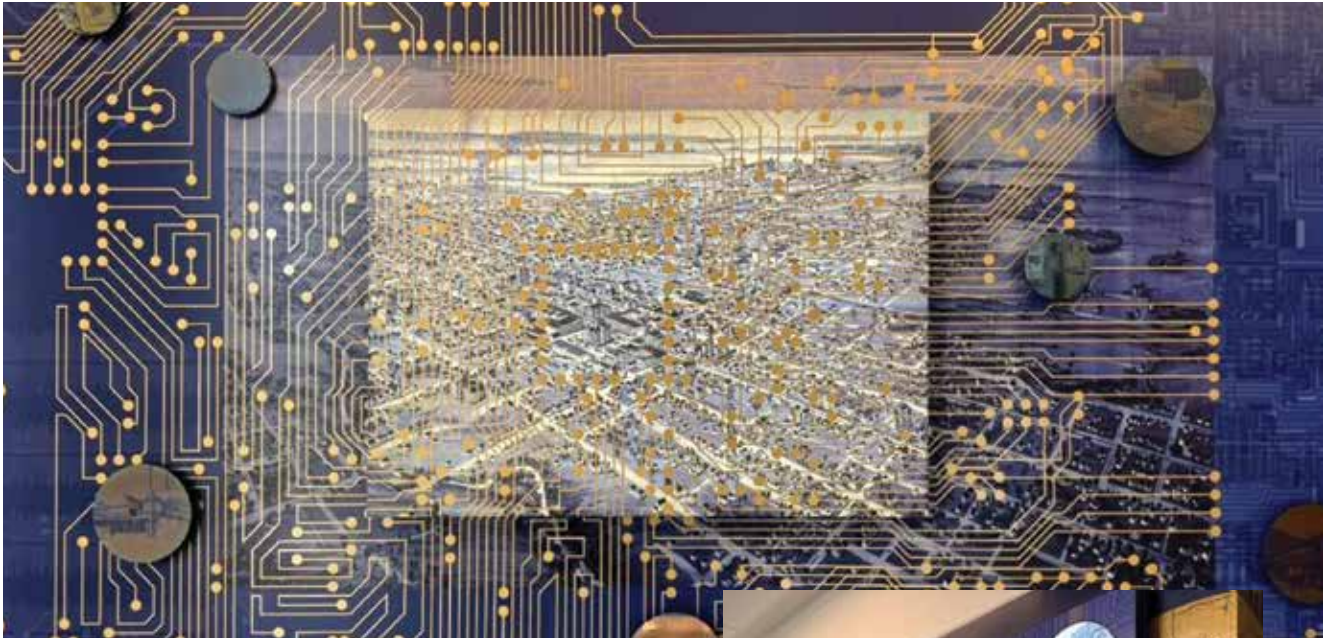
When TI put out a call for artists to design a piece for their new Sherman facility, Assistant Professor of Art **Brianna Burnett '02** and Professor of Art and Art Department Chair **Mark Monroe '81**, known collectively as Alliterations, answered the call and were selected for their conceptually rich and visually

compelling piece titled *Integrated*. Monroe, a sculptor, and Burnett, a photographer and digital media artist, had already begun collaborating on work that blended their specialties under the Alliterations moniker. *Integrated* is a mixed-media mural that combines historical photographs,

text, and maps with sculptural elements made of anodized aluminum, lights, and semiconductor wafers, to explore the intersections of history, technology, and place. The layered design reflects the evolution of Sherman itself—its growth, innovation, and enduring sense of community.

“What we really tried to [...] focus on is our long, rich legacy here in Sherman, Texas,” said TI Factory Manager Mike Haggerty. “Our ongoing investment and involvement, not just in this region, but in our local community, in the arts, in education, and really focus on the historical impact that innovation and technology have had in Sherman. They [Burnett and Monroe] brought a really dynamic piece that tied nicely together the history here in Sherman, Texas, with our technology and innovation that we've driven in this area, as well as looking into the future from a technology perspective.” He continued, “It's interesting that they were able to incorporate silicon wafers that we actually manufactured.” Burnett and Monroe were inspired by the modern materials and archival cyanotype images of circuits that TI manufactured in their early days, which inspired the color scheme for the piece.





Integrated combines historical imagery with semiconductor components to explore the intersections of history, technology, and place.

By blending archival imagery with abstracted semiconductor graphics and cityscape motifs, Burnett and Monroe created a piece that highlights the unseen connections between place and progress. Historical photographs and industrial records serve as anchors mapping the city's past, while the semiconductor components symbolize the innovation driving its future.

"The rhythmic structures of the present visually parallel the repetitions of history—city grids, industrial expansion, and human innovation," Burnett explained. The work ultimately invites viewers to see their surroundings as layered histories, where past and future are continually in conversation.

At its core, *Integrated* is more than a mural. It's a conversation between industry and artistry, past and present, and community and creativity. Through this installation, Burnett and Monroe remind viewers that even in the most technical spaces, art continues to reveal the human story layered beneath.

"We wanted a piece that would be timeless," said Haggerty. "A piece that would become a landmark in this building, a piece that the team here would be proud of, and ultimately a piece that would sow hope into the future of innovations yet to come." ■



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLITERATIONS

Austin College Adds New *Bachelor of Science in Engineering* Program

By Laura J. Veach

On April 17, 2025, Austin College held a press conference announcing the addition of its new *Bachelor of Science in Engineering* program. After several years of offering a pre-professional track, students can now graduate fully prepared for engineering internships, full-time jobs, and graduate school.

The program currently allows students to focus on either mechanical or electrical engineering, or to follow a general engineering curriculum, with plans for additional specializations to be added as dictated by industry demand. The program goes beyond technical skills, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and effective communication—hallmarks of a liberal arts education and key qualities for success in the ever-evolving field of engineering.



At the press conference, **President Steven P. O'Day** elaborated on why the College has chosen to add an engineering program at this point in its history. “In light of Texoma’s extraordinary growth and the needs that will come with it, the Austin College faculty reflected on what Austin College could offer to meet this moment in the story of our region,” said O’Day. “I hope that this announcement today of a new *Bachelor of Science in Engineering* program is a reminder that Austin College has a major role to play in the development of our region.”

Dr. Rahul Renu, Founding Director of the Engineering Program and Associate Professor of Engineering, followed O’Day to share some of the program’s highlights. “The Austin College Engineering Program will deliver a world-class engineering education to students through a hands-on, project-based curriculum,” said Renu. “Our partnerships with companies and organizations such as Huitt-Zollars, SEDCO, GlobalWafers, and the Texas Society of Professional Engineers, just to name a few, will provide students with transformative opportunities beyond the classroom.”

An Engineering Advisory Council comprised of representatives from these and other partner entities has been assembled to provide industry perspective to the program’s organizers, faculty, and students. Advisory Council members will be hosting internships, serving as guest speakers and mentors, and potentially employing graduates.

Pictured above at the press conference for the engineering program announcement (L to R): **Brent Omdahl** (Executive Vice President for Government Affairs at GlobalWafers Co., Ltd.), **Heidi Rushing '04** (Vice President for Marketing and Communications at Austin College), **President Steven O'Day**, **Dr. Rahul Renu** (Founding Director of Engineering Program, Associate Professor of Engineering), **Clay Barnett** (Sherman City Council member and Vice President of engineering firm Huitt-Zollars - Sherman office), **Kent Sharp** (SEDCO President/CEO), **Shawn Teamann** (Sherman Mayor), **Dr. Beth Gill** (Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Faculty)

In the spring term of their senior year, students will enroll in a 14-week Capstone Design course. In alignment with the program’s real-world, hands-on emphasis, they will work with an industry partner to complete a specific project—typically a challenge the partner has had to suspend for any number of reasons. With faculty mentorship, a dedicated student team will work to find a solution within the scope of project specifications and industry standards.

The first engineering degrees are slated to be conferred with the Class of 2029, and interest among applicants has been significant. The program will be eligible for ABET accreditation upon completion by the first students, and once received, will apply retroactively to all interim graduates.

Far from contrasting with the traditional liberal arts education, the Austin College *Bachelor of Science in Engineering* program is poised to be a true representation of what is possible when the creative blends with the technical to the benefit of local industry and the greater community.

COMING SOON: HARRIS ENGINEERING CENTER



Construction of a new facility for the College’s recently launched engineering program has been announced by President Steven O’Day. The project is made possible by a transformational gift of \$5.5 million from **Mary Ann ’70 and James R. Harris ’67** of Fort Worth, Texas.

The facility, which will be known as the Harris Engineering Center, will be a state-of-the-art home for engineering at Austin College. Designed by Corgan Architects in Dallas, the building will have an open, airy, modern aesthetic, and will house six labs, two classrooms, faculty offices, and advanced manufacturing capabilities. The approximately 8,000 square foot space will include collaborative classrooms, individual workspaces, room for specialized equipment, and some unfinished space to allow future expansion for an additional engineering concentration. The new facility should be completed in 2029—right when enrollment projections predict it will outgrow the current space within the IDEA Center.

In his announcement, President O’Day said, “This beautiful, permanent home for Austin College engineering signals the program’s strength and exceptional promise, positioning it for both immediate and long-term success. The Harris’ significant leadership in supporting this endeavor is a testament to the exceptional promise of the program to advance the institution forward at this time of unprecedented regional opportunity. Additionally, as Austin College alumni, the Harris’ recognized the value in rooting the program within the College’s broad and rigorous liberal arts curriculum, ensuring that students develop leadership, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking skills alongside a robust technical education.”

Jim and Mary Ann Harris have been faithful supporters of the College for years through contributions including the Mary Ann and James R. Harris Endowed JanTerm Scholarship and the Biology Level of the IDEA Center. ■



Recognizing 20 Years

Annual Inspiration

By Laura J. Veach

Since 2006, the annual award now known as the Austin College Posey Leadership Award has honored an outstanding individual who has demonstrated the principles of servant leadership by:

- taking a courageous stand on a public policy issue that advances a humanitarian or educational purpose; or
- serving the youth of a state, nation, or international community to improve the quality of health, education, or community services; or
- creating opportunities for young people that help them enhance their educational experience and move to a new level of service to society.

The vision to recognize these leaders is rooted in the Posey Leadership Institute at Austin College, created in 1995. In 2003, the Institute was named in honor of Lee and Sally Posey of Dallas, Texas, in gratitude for their generous endowment gift and contributions of time, talents, and resources in mentoring and supporting countless young people. The couple later endowed the Austin College Leadership Award, as well, and when Lee Posey died in 2008, the Posey name was added to the award in memory of his legacy of leadership.

In 2021, the Posey Leadership Award was reenvisioned and relaunched as the Austin College Posey Leader-In-Residence Series to enable deeper student engagement with the award recipient. In addition to a keynote address and award presentation in the spring, the Posey Leader-In-Residence meets virtually with students and faculty throughout the academic year to explore multiple topics and build connections.

The inaugural Austin College Posey Leadership Award was presented to Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach For America, in 2006. Twenty years later, the list of luminaries who have received the Award and the \$100,000 prize it carries is a who's who of impressive names and important causes. While they represent many different fields, the recipients have in common that they are global citizens who have applied their leadership talents to make a positive impact on society. Interacting with these inspiring individuals can influence Austin College students to strive to do the same. ■

Austin College Posey Leadership Award History (2006-Present)



2006

Wendy Kopp
Founder of Teach For America



2007

Dr. Paul Farmer
Harvard professor, medical anthropologist, physician, and medical activist (d. 2022)



2008

Geoffrey Canada
President and CEO of Harlem Children's Zone



2009

Greg Mortenson
Quest for peace through education in *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools*



2010

Muhammad Yunus
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and founder of Grameen Bank



2011

Zainab Salbi
Founder of Women for Women International



2012

Marian Wright Edelman
Founder of Children's Defense Fund



2013

Salman Khan
Founder of Khan Academy



2014

Nathan Wolfe
Virologist and author of *The Viral Storm*



2015

Shigeru Ban
Humanitarian architect



2016

Nicholas Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn
Journalists and humanitarians



2017

Vikram Patel
Psychiatrist working to create access to public mental health services



2018

Barbara Pierce Bush
Global activist - Global Health Corps



2019

María Teresa Kumar
Founding president and CEO of Voto Latino



2020 & 2021

No awardees due to COVID-19 Pandemic



2022

Dr. Alfred Quiñones-Hinojosa
Renowned neurosurgeon and founder of Mission:Brain Foundation



2023

Sylvia Acevedo
Aerospace engineer, tech executive, education advocate, & former CEO of Girl Scouts of America



2024

Rick Lowe
Artist and activist, co-founder of Houston's Project Row Houses



2025

Dr. Katharine Hayhoe
Chief Scientist at the Nature Conservancy, atmospheric scientist and best-selling author



2026

Jeffrey Rosen
CEO Emeritus of the National Constitution Center



Austin College alumni and friends celebrated Homecoming at The Post in downtown Sherman on October 18, 2025.



At a McKinney High School end-of-year celebration, **Sarah Beatty Snyder '04** gathered some of the other Austin College alumni who work at the school to honor the retirement of **Mike Bruck '84, MA '86** and **Cathy Sanders Hockaday '85**.

Pictured (L to R): **Sarah Beatty Snyder '04; Lucy Melgar Moon '96, MAT '97; Mike Bruck '84, MA '86; Cathy Sanders Hockaday '85; Cindy Nead Erhart '91, MAT '92; Robert Jones '19, MAT '20.**



In early April 2025, **Lucy Clark '63, Madeleine Baker '63, Cay McCorkle Noble '63, Mary Pope Coslett '63, and Fredericka Richter DeBerry '62**, five friends who met on the second floor of Clyce Hall's south wing in 1959, met up for one last hurrah! The group's annual visits started in 2000, and have continued with up to nine people attending. The friends of 66 years are Fredericka—known then as Schotsie Richter—the sophomore who taught the group how to do the North Texas Push using her closet door as a partner; Madeleine; Lucy—known as Lu; Cay; and Mary. Two who were sorely missed were **Ann Sullivan Rarden '63** and **Jane Langston Larkin '63**. The ladies celebrated friendships solidified in those early years, no doubt by the fact that they had to be in the dorm at 10 p.m. every night except Fridays and Saturdays. "The hours after curfew were when we would sit in someone's room and talk until the wee hours, and then study!" says Lucy. "Austin College's Clyce Hall dorm life was a highlight of our female social lives, for which we are grateful today!"

Photo taken at Brenham's Antique Rose Emporium on May 7, 2025. (L to R): Madeleine, Cay, Lucy, Mary, Fredericka.

- Page 55 **ALUMNI BOOKSHELF**
- Page 58 **'ROO LEGACIES**
- Page 60 **'ROO-MATES**
Weddings
- Page 61 **JOEYS**
Additions to the 'Roo Family
- Page 62 **IN MEMORIAM**

'ROONOTES

1958

Michael Murray '58 has been working with The Leadership Academy for Poland, based in Warsaw, Poland, for the past eight years. During the six-month program, Michael guides 40 people through the problem-solving process he has used in a professional capacity since the 1970s. Participants create groups of five to seven people (known as "Nests") and hold monthly meetings to resolve a stated issue. He meets with Nests via Zoom as they work through the problem using the prescribed process. In May 2025, Michael traveled to Warsaw to conduct two workshops: A Marriage Enrichment Experience for 20 couples, and one titled "How to Deal With People With Whom I Have Difficulty."

1965

Bob Essin '65 married Dara Anderson in 2005. Dara was the "professor" for Coach Slats McCord's 1978 and 1979 JanTerm courses at Cheley Camps in Estes Park, Colorado, in the subjects of downhill skiing, cross country skiing, snow caves and camping, map and compass, ice fishing, first aid, and fun. These days, Bob has substituted golf for basketball and sells real estate in Vail, Colorado.

John Landolt '65, his wife Melinda, and their (mostly)

beagle named Buddy moved to a senior living community in northern Virginia in December 2024. "We still enjoy fairly good health and thought it would be good to make this transition before it might be forced upon us," says John, who retired from the faculty of Shepherd College in West Virginia in 2009 after 38 years of service.

1966

Mickey Bonesio '66 and **Gary Parker '67** competed on July 4, 2025, with the Vocal Majority (VM) Chorus at the Barbershop Harmony Society's international chorus contest in Denver, Colorado, winning the VM's 14th championship on the 50th anniversary of its first gathering in 1975. It was Mickey's 13th and Gary's 8th championship with the chorus.

Larry Huelbig '66 and his wife, Carol Trout, are traveling extensively this year. They recently returned from Quebec City, Canada. Later this year, they will be traveling to Las Vegas, Nevada, and Galveston, Texas. Their permanent residence of many years is in Houston, Texas.

1968

William R. Allensworth '68 has been named a Distinguished Alumnus by

Texas Tech University School of Law. In conjunction with this honor, Allensworth, the construction law firm he founded in 1995, established the William R. Allensworth '74 Endowed Scholarship to support Texas Tech Law students pursuing careers in construction law. William was instrumental in establishing the State Bar of Texas's Construction Law Section, for which he received the Bar's Pioneer Award in 2016.



Edmund Gibson '68 retired from the Navy at the rank of Captain after 26 years of service. He has served as an ASA sailing instructor for 32 years, and Commodore of his sailing club for four years. He is the owner of a Catalina 30 located at Lake Grapevine. He has commanded or skippered a sailing flotilla annually since 2017 in the Pacific Northwest, Lake Michigan, Chesapeake Bay, Caribbean, Newport, Rhode Island, and in summer 2025, Croatia. Edmund has been very happily married to his wife, Karann, since 2021.

1974

Ann Wearden Raidt '74 has had a 41-year career in public education and has been providing private family counseling services for 20 years. She recalls the pride she felt being congratulated for her degree from Austin College during interviews, and has encouraged her Plano ISD juniors and seniors to visit Austin College to understand all the opportunities offered.

1975

Charles Curtis '75 was recently inducted into the Hall of Fame of the G. Brint Ryan College of Business at the University of North Texas. This recognizes his 19 years of service to the



College through leadership of department and college boards, student mentoring and career counseling, guest participation in classes and class projects, and financial support.

Angela Tipps Freeman '75 and her husband, Gary, are celebrating their 49-year marriage anniversary this year. For the past 15 years, they have owned and operated a home care business for the elderly.

A LETTER FROM BRENT BARRY '88



Thank you from Stout Creek Farm, our regenerative farm/ranch, owned and operated by AC grads!

By a lot of grace, hard work, luck, laughs, frustration, love, and tons of 'Roo help, our little farm, started in 2018, has grown to 960 acres with five houses. The pastures are full of regeneratively raised cows, goats, sheep, pigs, horses, guard dogs, guard donkeys, broiler chickens, layer chickens, and turkeys alongside a two and a half acre no-toxic-chemicals vegetable garden. We feed three farmers markets, one grocery store, one restaurant, one food pantry, a (sort of) farm store, and our whole team of employees.

We have had so many AC folks purchase food, volunteer, support, share about, and work on our farm. Thank you so very, very much!

We are all in this together in creating good food, a good earth, and a good life (of course the most "good life way" that John D., Ken Street, Lisa Brown, John Williams, and City Limits taught us about)!

Gratefully,
Brent Barry '88
Susan Cox '91
Hannah Barry '20
Ben Cox, father of Susan Cox '91
& Patrick Cox '94

1975 (continued)

They love to travel and recently returned from a three-week trip to Italy, which they enjoyed with their daughter, son-in-law, and grandson, who is a recent Texas A&M graduate. They are expecting a second grandchild in January 2026.

The family business of **Ken Wright '75**, Wright Brothers Sheet Metal and Roofing, is celebrating 93 years in business this year. The company was started by his grandfather in Texarkana, Texas, in 1932, and Ken joined after his graduation in 1975. Ken loves being in charge of custom sheet metal fabrication and hasn't retired. He and his wife, Linda, have been married for 48 years and have three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. In his spare time, Ken enjoys shooting sports, hunting ducks and doves and shooting skeet most every weekend.

1976

Charles Hollingsworth '76 retired in 2018 after 38 years in the appraisal business. He moved back to Grayson County and now resides in Van Alstyne, Texas, where he works one day a week as one of the Monday Morning Men at First Baptist Church. He still attends Austin College's first home game and homecoming football games, where he cooks and serves food at the Outback.

1978

Sallie Sampsell Watson '78 retired after 8 1/2 years as the General Presbyter for

Mission Presbytery, working with about 120 Presbyterian congregations in the southern fifth of Texas. Her retirement was temporarily delayed, as she was invited to serve the Presbyterian Church (USA) as Associate Director for Mid Council Relations for a one-year term. Sallie says, "It's turned



out to be a great fit, and one more challenge before I return to enjoying retirement next March!" She works with and for the Rev. Jihyun Oh, who delivered the 2025 Baccalaureate sermon and received an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Austin College.

1984

Terri King Lins '84 has



been elected to the Board of Directors for YWCA Utah. As someone who is committed to advancing equity and supporting women and families in her community, she will have the opportunity to further contribute to the important work the YWCA does across the state of Utah. In her professional role as Chief Credit Officer at TAB Bank, she has seen firsthand the power of financial inclusion and leadership in shaping stronger communities. Terri is grateful for the foundation that her Austin College education provided and looks forward to giving back through this new opportunity.

1986



Janet Broadhead Imhoff '86, MA '87 has relocated to Denver, Colorado, this summer to live near her daughter and embark upon a new chapter and a new adventure.

Dr. Brent T. Williams '86 was awarded the Spencer D. Albright III Professorship in Rehabilitation by the University of Arkansas College of Education and Health Professions in November 2024. He has been an associate professor in the University of Arkansas-Lafayette Department of Counseling, Leadership, and Research Methods since July 2002. The purpose of the Albright Professorship is to advance



the study and practice of disability services that enable people

with disabilities to enter and maintain productive roles in society. The professorship recognizes Brent for the work he has done and will continue to do to advance disability services in Arkansas. Also in 2024, Brent received the College of Education and Health Professions Superior Service Award. In 2025, Brent received a Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award from the Arkansas

Alumni Association. He is a passionate and steadfast advocate for people with disabilities, using his research to drive change and develop programs that help people with disabilities who face barriers in education, employment, and independent living.

1987

Arro Smith '87 retired from the City of San Marcos Public Library after 33 years. Aside from working at City Limits while at Austin College, it is essentially the only job he'd ever had!



For the last few years, he has taught one graduate class each semester at The University of Texas School of Information. He is also active in the Austin community and helps run three nonprofit organizations, and in his retirement has taken a part-time position as the morning receptionist for the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Arro says of his post-retirement career, "I spend my mornings with super-nice students and super-smart theologians, and then I have afternoons free for my service work."

1991

Mark Dibble '91 was appointed to the position of library director at the Blumberg Library at Texas Lutheran University on January 1, 2025.

'ROOS RECOGNIZED AS COMMUNITY LEADERS



Austin College was well-represented at the **Texas City Management Association's (TCMA)** annual conference Friday, June 20, 2025.

David Morgan '96 was recognized as TCMA's 2025 City Administrator of the Year. David currently serves as City Manager of Georgetown, Texas, and recently completed service on the TCMA Executive Board of Directors.

Stephen Cottingham '09 was recognized as one of two 2025-2026 recipients of TCMA's prestigious Clarence E. Ridley Scholarship. Stephen is completing his master's degree in public administration from the University of North Texas, and is an economic development analyst for the City of Plano, Texas.

Also pictured is **Daniel Johnson '77**. Dan recently completed a 45-year career in public management—including the last 10 years as City Manager of Richardson, Texas—and was recognized in 2002 by TCMA as a "Distinguished Member"—one of only ten in the 99-year history of TCMA, as well as TCMA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Pictured (L to R): Dan Johnson '77, Stephen Cottingham '09, David Morgan '96

1992

Len McClane Brown '92 has completed more than



two years of training and passed a series of exams, earning the

title of Certified Mentor Coach through Mentor Coach, LLC. She loves connecting with coaches and clients worldwide and looks forward to showing them how to use their strengths to achieve their desired goals. Len lives in Waco with her husband Boyce. They have two young adult daughters.

1993

Cake, an AI company co-founded by **Skyler Thomas '93**, has raised a \$13 million seed round led by Gradient Ventures—Google's AI fund—and has been featured by TechCrunch.

1994

Adam Reed '94 graduated from the Texas Tech Rawls School of Business, earning an MBA in August 2024. He is the CEO of Adam B. Reed & Associates.

1996

Darren McDowell '96 has been named to the 2025 edition of Texas Super Lawyers, which recognizes the top 5% of attorneys in the state each year. Candidates are evaluated on 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement. Darren is a multi-year Super Lawyer honoree for his work in personal injury products for plaintiffs. Earlier in 2025, he was also named as one of *D Magazine's* Best Lawyers in Dallas and was included in *The Best Lawyers in America*.

2000

Craig Moore '00 was appointed as a Criminal Magistrate Judge for Travis County, Texas, in December 2024.

2001

Sharon Larson '01, DO, MS, FACOS, FACS has been elected to the Board of Governors for the American College of



Osteopathic Surgeons and has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Women in Transplant and Mechanical Circulatory Support organization. Sharon is a cardiothoracic surgeon in Memphis, Tennessee, who practices adult cardiac surgery and specializes in heart transplantation and mechanical circulatory support. She is a member of the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and the American Osteopathic Association.

Osteopathic Surgeons and has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Women in Transplant and Mechanical Circulatory Support organization. Sharon is a cardiothoracic surgeon in Memphis, Tennessee, who practices adult cardiac surgery and specializes in heart transplantation and mechanical circulatory support. She is a member of the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and the American Osteopathic Association.

2004

Lauren Vincent Slovisky '04 was recently honored with a National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) Award of Excellence in the Marketing Material category for her work on the Partners in Education – Rise marketing brochure at Katy Independent School District, where she serves as Coordinator of Partners in Education. The award is the highest recognition in its category and celebrates outstanding achievement in education communications.

2005



Ana Guzmán '05 (right) and her colleague, Lauren, recently contributed to the spring 2025 Colorado Association for Play Therapy Conference as presenters. Ana is dedicated to advancing

understanding among her professional peers and the community regarding the effects of trauma and the implementation of trauma-informed care practices, a crucial topic they addressed during their Colorado visit.

2010

Following the merger of Locke Lord and Troutman Pepper, to Troutman Pepper Locke LLP, **Brandon Montminy '10** was selected to the 2025-2026 class of the combined firm's Client Development & Executive Leadership Program.

2011

Natalie Taylor Sanders '11 earned her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Writing Studies from University of Texas at El Paso in 2022. After graduating, she and her husband, Craig Sanders, relocated to western Pennsylvania for her current position as Assistant Professor of English Composition at University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg. In February 2023, she and Craig welcomed their daughter, Cassidy.



2023

Gisselle Melendez '23 has been working in the renewable industry with Elgin Power Solutions for two years. The company has built substations and BESS yards for well-known customers. 



CLASSROOM TO CLINIC

In June 2025, **Ganesh Maniam '17** completed his year as Chief Resident and graduated from the dermatology residency program at Mayo

Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota—the #1 medical facility in the world. In July 2025, he began his dermatopathology fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in his hometown of Houston, Texas.



10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE TEDx Austin College

In recognition of the 10th year of TEDx Austin College, past speakers returned on October 4, 2025, to share new information, perspectives, and experiences that they have acquired since they last appeared on the Austin College stage.



Mackenzie Bolen, Ph.D. '21
**Machines Learning Medicine:
Artificial or Intelligent?**



Laura J. Lawson '10
**Why Artists
Should Go To Space**



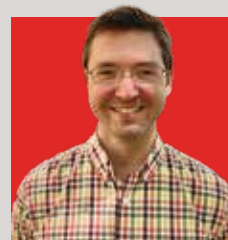
Ann Crews Melton '03
**How To Solve
Our Accountability Crisis**



Casie Rivas, J.D. '03
**How to Lose Without Being a Loser:
Reimagining Life's Disappointments**



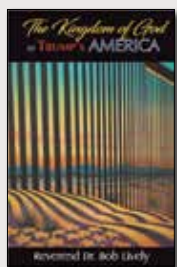
Aly Tharp '12
**What Grows
in a Food Forest?**



David Whelan, Ph.D.
**What Fills
Space**

See all 2025 TEDx Austin College talks: www.austincollege.edu/tedx

ALUMNI BOOKSHELF



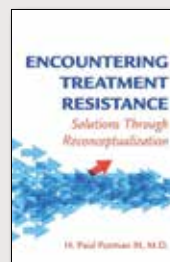
Class of 1968
❖ **Bob Lively's** book, *The Kingdom of God in Trump's America*, views Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as the constitution of the Kingdom

of God and also as a path to a holy life in these difficult times when our country is so divided, and when our national conversation is too often hate-filled. It is published by Treaty Oak Publishers of Austin, Texas.



Class of 1976
❖ **Sally Maslansky's** memoir, *A Brilliant Adaptation: How Dissociative Disorder and the Power of the Therapeutic Bond Saved Me*, about her therapeutic journey

with Daniel J. Siegel, MD has been acquired by New Harbinger Publishers for a January 2026 release.



Class of 1978
❖ **H. Paul Putman's** third book, *Encountering Treatment Resistance: Solutions through Reconceptualization*, has been published by American Psychiatric Association Publishing,

Inc. The book suggests means by which practitioners can reduce the likelihood of treatment resistance and failure.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI & VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Four Distinguished Alumni and a First Decade Awardee were honored for exemplary careers and service during Homecoming 2025. A sixth alumna and an Austin College faculty member were honored for service to the alumni community.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Carmen Tafolla '72



Dr. Carmen Tafolla has worked in the fields of Mexican American studies and bilingual bicultural education for over 35 years. She has published more than 40 books and was named Poet Laureate of Texas in 2015. In 2018, she was the first Latina to be elected President of the Texas Institute of Letters. Carmen has received countless accolades for her work. Austin College bestowed upon Carmen a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Humane Letters.

Larry Driver '76



Dr. Larry Driver's areas of clinical practice and expertise are cancer pain management and palliative care. He has been Chair of MD Anderson Cancer Center's Clinical Ethics Committee since 2001, served on a multitude of subcommittees, and a faculty member for MD Anderson Cancer Center's Division of Anesthesiology since 1999. His publications include over 100 research reports, articles, commentaries, and even poetry. Larry often lectures at medical schools throughout the United States.

Tom Vick '77



Tom Vick is a partner in the law firm of Vick Carney Law in Weatherford, Texas, and has been practicing family law since 1981. He has received several family law awards throughout his long career. He has chaired the Texas Bar Foundation Board of Trustees and served on the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors. Tom has also served his community as mayor of Weatherford, Texas—home of the fighting Weatherford Kangaroos.

Melissa Cunningham Woodall '86



Melissa Cunningham Woodall has worked in the field of economic and community development for over 35 years. She has worked in communities of all sizes, creating thousands of new jobs and bringing in billions of dollars in new private investments. Melissa has also served on several local and regional committees and boards, and is a past president of Texas Downtown Association. She has been very active in Rotary International and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

FIRST DECADE AWARD

Jeremy Swisher '17



Dr. Jeremy Swisher is currently a Health Sciences Assistant Clinical Professor for the UCLA Department of Orthopaedic Surgery's Division of Sports Medicine. He has worked with UCLA Athletics and professional teams including the Los Angeles Lakers, Dodgers, and Sparks. Jeremy, along with fellow Class of 2017 members Cody Myers and Josh Dickerman, co-founded The Extra Step Foundation, which partners with Children's Health Dallas to provide direct support to patients and their families facing financial hardship.

HEYWOOD C. CLEMONS VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

Jana Harrison '89



Dr. Jana Harrison has been actively engaged in service to Austin College for many years. She is a member of the Alumni Board and frequently serves as hostess for alumni gatherings in the Dallas area. Jana serves as president of the Alpha Delta Chi Alumni Association, which she also founded. She has a heart for philanthropy, offering matching donations during North Texas Giving Day, Austin College Giving Day, and various other fundraising initiatives.

CINDY CURTIS BEAN SERVICE TO ALUMNI AWARD

Peter Schulze



Dr. Peter Schulze joined the Austin College faculty in 1995 and currently serves as Professor of Biology and Environmental Science. He has been a stalwart supporter of students and longtime alumni, and he continues to be supportive in connecting recent graduates with jobs in the environmental sciences. Peter also sees great value in recognizing the work and milestones of his past students, particularly the Alpha Delta Chis and their relationship with the Sneed Prairie project.

Continuing Their Family Traditions

Making Austin College a family tradition comes in many forms; whether following the footsteps of siblings, parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, or other family connections. These legacy students carry on their family connection to 'RooNation. At opening of school, we invited new students to share their legacy connections and be photographed with their fellow 'Roo family members.

PHOTOS BY KENDALL KATUSAK '22



K'Lee Bumpus '29 (left) with father **J'Lee Bumpus '01**



Eva Carnes '29 (left) with mother **Heather Iglesias Carnes '96, MAT '97**



Lilly Cupit '29 (right) with mother **Kim McCoig Cupit '98**



Thomas Garza '29 (left) with godmother **Anne King '07**



John Beckett Hubbard '29 (right) with mother **Ashlea Helms Mattoon '95**. Not pictured, grandparents **John Helms '73** and **Theresa Lanfear Helms '75**



Avary Kupradit '29 (left) with sister **Ashlynn Kupradit '25**



Lilian Lohman '29 with photo of family legacies: **Melissa Harper Lohman '01**, mother **Chris Harper '99**, uncle **Dan Harper '02**, uncle **Brock Harper '01**, uncle **Drew Harper '10**, uncle **Meghan Harper '10**, aunt **Anne Caliga Harper '75**, grandmother **Brian Harper '74**, grandfather



Estefany Ruiz '29 (left) with sister **Kayla Ruiz '22**



Abby Sadler '29 (left) with sister **Rachel Sadler '27** and father **Clint Sadler '02, MAT '03**



Malachi Savage '29 (left) with parent **Ann Tate '90**



Aaron Smith '29 (left) with aunt **Amanda Smith Hays '07**



Sophia Smith '29 (center) with parents **Matthew Smith '98** and **Natalya Smith '00**

Athletes returned to campus in July 2025 for the annual Legends event to celebrate some of the greats of 'Roo sports. Highlights of the event on July 26 were the Athletic Hall of Honor inductions and the presentation of the Coach Joe Spencer Award for Meritorious Service and Lifetime Achievement in Coaching.



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMMERT

The Legends honorees (L to R) are Anthony Patrick, Marc Parrish, Bryce Frank, President O'Day, Barry Holcomb, Jon Stein, Walker Fenci, and Brian McKamy.

Athletic Hall of Honor Inductees

- Walker Fenci '90 – Football
- Bryce Frank '19 – Basketball
- Barry Holcomb '92 – Swimming
- Carl Iwasaki* (Honorary) – Baseball Coach
- Marc Parrish '92 – Tennis
- Anthony "Stick" Patrick '87 – Football
- Jon Stein '00, MAT '01 – Tennis
- 1976 Softball Team

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

- Brian McKamy '78, MA '79

**Posthumously*



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMMERT

1976 Softball Team

Legends attendees (L to R) are Melanie Bishop '77, Ann Muirhead '78, Pamela Shaw Staley '76, Susan Smith '76, Cathy Theall Russell '77, Patti Harvey Randolph '76, MA '77, and Brenda Steenbergen Miller '75.



1976 Softball Team, from the 1976 *Austin College Chromoscope* Yearbook (L to R)
Front Row: Sherri Smith, Patti Harvey Randolph '76, MA '77, Jeani Boone Stoddard '77, Amy Nungesser Williams '77, Susan Taylor Chiusano '78
Second Row: Kelly Stringfellow Mercy '78, Melanie Bishop '77, Susan Stevens Scott '76, Susan Smith '76, Pamela Smith Davis '77
Third Row: Brenda Steenbergen Miller '75, Grad Assistant Mary Holt '78, Jane Pearce '79, Ann Muirhead '78, Coach Brandon Battles '78
Not Pictured: Jane Nelka Neal '77, Cathy Theall Russell '77, Ellen Lieberman '79, Pamela Shaw Staley '76

'Roo Legacies Continued



Camille Theilen '29 (right) with grandfather **Frank Theilen '78**



Taylor Vick '29 (left) with sister **Kailey Vick '27**



Joseph Webster '27 with photo of grandparents **Ned Benson '65 and Mary Benson '66**

1989

Nikhil Kagal '89 married Kristeen Grmela on Saturday, December 21, 2024, at the Chapel at Chestnut Square in McKinney, Texas. Nikhil is a client success manager for Press Ganey, and Kristeen is a physician's assistant who received degrees from Texas State University and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

2003

Leigh-Ann Riley '03 and Robby Carney were married April 4, 2025, in Grayson County, Texas.

2016

Hannah Poenisch '16 and **Brooks Ward '16** were married September 20, 2025, in Fort Worth, Texas, at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. It was a very small ceremony with family in attendance. They will have a big celebration in Mexico with many Austin College alumni in June 2026. Hannah and Brooks reside in Dallas, Texas, with their two dogs.

2018

Ben Moran '18 and **Lindsey Patterson '21** were married May 25, 2025, in Bryan, Texas. 'Roos in the bridal party included Kylie Menocal Brooks '18, Shane Brooks '18, Cooper Gross '18, Eric Summerlin '18, and RJ Melton '18, MAT '19. There were many additional 'Roos in attendance, including Jacob Morgan '17; Kate Willis Oxenreiter '17; Daniel Oxenreiter '18; Madison Weimer '22; Tory Heruska '20; Julia Fields '22; Jordan Carrouth '22; Emma Rooney '21; Casey Davis '16; Branden

Hunt '17, MAT '18; Olivia Hunt '17, MAT '18; Weston Russell '18, MAT '19; and Morgan Anderson Melton '19, MAT '20. The bride and groom live in Frisco, Texas, where Ben is a teacher and football coach at Independence High School and Lindsey is an emergency room nurse.

2022

Brooke Le '22 and **Max Wade '23** were married February 28, 2025, in the Bella Donna Chapel at Adriatica in McKinney, Texas. Joining them in celebration were Kyle Brown '22; Tait Fox '22; Robert Griffin '21; Brett Skinner '22; Sam Skinner '22, MAT '23; Lexi Wong '22; Maddie Taylor '22; Presley Woods '22; Will Koelzer '22; Tanner O'Dwyer '22; Alex Rodriguez '22; Cade Griffith '23; Zach Griffith '23; Maddie Jacks '23; James Mirt '23; Dylan Laventure '23; Lauren Olivier '23; Aubrey Pasky '23; Kylee Noble '24; Alyssa Ross '24; Cory McGrath '24; Andrew Galt '25; Ryan Laventure '26; Jack Stack '26; Aidan Wade '26; Head Water Polo Coach Mark Lawrence, and former coaches Jeff Passwater and Austin Ringheim.



Kristeen Grmela and Nikhil Kagal '89



Brooks Ward '16 and Hannah Poenisch '16



Leigh-Ann Riley '03 and Robby Carney



Lindsey Patterson '21 and Ben Moran '18



Brooke Le '22 and Max Wade '23

2005

Evangeline Marie was born to **Allison Harris Graves '05** and **Todd Graves '99** on August 13, 2024.

2008

Austin Trantham '08 and **Stephanie Trantham** welcomed their son **Joshua David Trantham** on February 20, 2025. He joins big sister Lilliana "Lilly" Grace.

2013

Elena Handoyo was born to **Anthony Handoyo '13** and **Julia Smith Handoyo '14** on July 20, 2024. She joins big sister Evelyn at home.

2017

Alex Lux MacDonald '17 and **Emily MacDonald '18** welcomed their son **Henry Austin (Go 'Roos!) MacDonald** on July 9, 2025.



*Evangeline Marie
(Graves '05)*



*Joshua David
(Trantham '08)*



*Henry Austin
(MacDonald '17)*



*Elena
(Handoyo '13)*

ALUMNI

- 1945 Mary Clyde Bailey Seitz December 11, 2025
- 1947 Virginia Sturdivant Woods June 7, 2025
- 1949 Margaret Silha Ritzer April 16, 2025
- 1951 Billie Dobson Edwards March 25, 2025
- 1951 Jim Farquhar December 2, 2025
- 1951 Don C. Millender June 3, 2025
- 1951 Mary Ann Crews Nash March 17, 2025
- 1952 Robin D. Moffat August 27, 2025
- 1953 Ruben Armendáriz Sr. November 27, 2025
- 1954 Margaret Purcell Bierschwale June 9, 2024
- 1954 Marian Webster Dawson February 25, 2025
- 1955 Patricia M. Green Munz August 8, 2025
- 1955 Martha E. Bartlett Pepper November 11, 2025
- 1955 Elizabeth “Libby” King Tilley February 7, 2025
- 1955 Charles W. Winfield November 17, 2025
- 1956 Mary Ellen Bradley Bullock June 5, 2025
- 1957 Shirley James Campbell October 3, 2025
- 1957 James E. McKinney June 8, 2025
- 1957 Lois Werner Watson September 14, 2025
- 1958 William Walton Bondurant III. February 16, 2025
- 1958 Lindy Mack Cannon January 10, 2025
- 1958 Carolyn Howard Crockett June 25, 2025
- 1958 Nancy Cunningham Satterfield November 9, 2025
- 1959 Nancy A. Mitchell Scott December 7, 2024
- 1960 Judy L. Price Ward February 8, 2025
- 1961 William W. Dyal December 8, 2025
- 1961 Glen R. Kirk October 29, 2025
- 1961 Joseph T. Seibold March 18, 2025
- 1961 Sue Thompson December 1, 2025
- 1962 Robert H. Gates November 26, 2025
- 1962 Marilyn J. Kretsinger June 24, 2025
- 1963 Phillips A. Hanson June 10, 2025
- 1964 Guy W. “Walt” Bayless June 24, 2025
- 1964 Sharon Broome Easton August 27, 2025
- 1964 John R. Evans January 21, 2025
- 1964 William E. “Eddie” Marion January 1, 2025
- 1964 Nona Mewhinney Pipes February 22, 2025
- 1965 Gary G. John June 21, 2025
- 1965 Craig G. MacFarland April 19, 2025
- 1965 James A. McLeod September 21, 2025
- 1965 Samuel R. Miller March 1, 2025
- 1965 David Thompson February 11, 2025
- 1965 Carolyn Harris Vestal August 21, 2025
- 1965 Nancy J. Boyd Woodruff May 23, 2025
- 1966 Richard B. Hill Jr. September 21, 2025

- 1966 Billy “Jack” Huebsch December 3, 2025
- 1966 James A. McCullough April 6, 2025
- 1966 Elizabeth A. Bradshaw Williams April 16, 2025
- 1967 Robert L. Chappell Jr. May 2, 2025
- 1967 John R. Jameson Sr. April 9, 2025
- 1967 Richard B. Johnson May 16, 2025
- 1967 Marcus Roy Pritchett December 9, 2025
- 1967 Thomas B. Sehon November 5, 2025
- 1967 Martha E. Hindman Walker January 26, 2025
- 1968 Gary W. Everhart March 12, 2025
- 1968 Paul W. “Bill” Frey March 21, 2025
- 1969 John Kent Boynton June 8, 2025
- 1969 James W. McKenzie January 17, 2025
- 1970 Nadene Whisnant Dean September 29, 2025
- 1971 Maude M. Sawyer July 16, 2025
- 1972 Sharon S. Drane August 9, 2025
- 1972 Bonnie K. Scoma Hayes February 10, 2025
- 1973 Chester W. Ball September 14, 2025
- 1973 Rick Casey September 30, 2025
- 1973 Steven M. Dowd November 1, 2025
- 1973 Christopher J. Goertzen July 31, 2025
- 1973 David G. Parsons May 6, 2025
- 1974 Carol Guynn Huber January 27, 2025
- 1976 Billy Core December 18, 2025
- 1976 Larry A. Morriss January 8, 2025
- 1977 Fred Pilkilton Jr. April 25, 2025
- 1978 Richard A. Jackson March 10, 2025
- 1979 Ann E. Brown August 7, 2025
- 1979 Patricia F. Jung Williams January 18, 2025
- 1980 Sylvia K. Bloodworth December 1, 2025
- 1980 Carla Carlson Keister February 22, 2025
- 1981 Lori B. Hajek Stonecipher May 23, 2025
- 1982 Tuyen V. Tran January 31, 2025
- 1983 David Lynn Carrell July 28, 2025
- 1983 Marcia L. Mellott June 17, 2025
- 1983 Norman Yoshio Horn May 18, 2025
- 1986 Ricardo “Jojo” Javier Jr. November 6, 2025
- 1991 Susan Britt Nichols December 1, 2025
- 1994 John C. “Clint” Shepherd January 22, 2025
- 1995 Cary R. Gillespie Wilson August 12, 2025
- 1997 Lee S. Fulton August 13, 2025
- 2001 Philip C. Newton November 20, 2025
- 2002 Michael A. Bardgett August 14, 2025
- 2003 Sara L. Pope Shepard November 4, 2025
- 2008 Peter G. Gainey August 14, 2025

Friends We Will Miss



Rev. Dr. John Evans '64 died on January 21, 2025. He lived his life in service to God, and fulfilled various leadership roles at Austin College, the Synod of the Sun, the Texas Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. John’s legacy will remain one of mentorship, generosity, and faithful service to his Church community.

Edwin “Burt” Jordan Jr. passed away September 28, 2024. Burt was an avid reader and tennis player, and worked in commercial and residential real estate for over 60 years, following in the footsteps of his father, Ed Jordan, and grandfather, Leo Corrigan. Austin College is one of several organizations the Jordan Family has generously supported.

Billy Core '76 died on December 18, 2025. An avid supporter of 'Roo Athletics, Billy was known to many alumni as the pitmaster in the Outback.

Judy Wheaton died January 8, 2025. Judy joined Austin College in 1995 and held several positions during her term of service, retiring in 2011 as Director of Institutional Research.



Mary Wright, wife of late Senior Trustee Robert J. Wright and mother of current Senior Trustee Michael Wright, died September 5, 2025. Mary lived a fascinating life, including milestones such as taking flying lessons in a bi-plane, becoming a successful fashion model in Miami, and employing her love of art to found a company dedicated to transforming medical facilities from cold, clinical settings to warm, welcoming environments. The Wrights were ardent supporters of Austin College, and are the benefactors for whom the Robert J. and Mary Wright Campus Center is named.

Austin College Board of Trustees



Senior Trustee **Ira Thomas Anderson Jr. '58** died January 27, 2025. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1974 until 1982 and remained a Senior Trustee until his passing.

Ira attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, before arriving at Austin College. He went on to attend law school at The University of Texas at Austin, and was admitted to the Texas Bar in December 1962. He practiced law in the Trust Department of First City National Bank of Houston for several years before establishing a private wills and estates law practice.

Ira had a lifelong love of classical music and played the French horn in youth orchestras. He financially supported and regularly attended performances of the Houston Symphony and Rice University Orchestras for decades. Ira was also an avid player and spectator of tennis, traveling to Wimbledon, the French Open, and the US Open with his family.



Senior Trustee **Harry E. Bartel** died September 23, 2025. Harry served on the Austin College Board of Trustees from 1994 to 2006, during which time he chaired the Academic Affairs and Strategic Planning Committees. He was elected to Senior Trustee status in 2006 and continued to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees often, accompanied by his wife, Scottie, who passed away in 2023.

Harry graduated from Dartmouth College in 1964 and attended law school at Boston University before moving to Dallas, where he earned a J.D. and LLM in International Law and Taxation from SMU in 1967. He joined the law firm of Cantey Hanger in Fort Worth, where he practiced tax and estate law for 59 years.

A commitment to community service led Harry to serve in leadership positions with dozens of nonprofit, community, and Presbyterian organizations. He and Scottie were also deeply involved in the classical music community of Fort Worth and enjoyed traveling with their family.

Austin College Faculty



Dr. Peggy Redshaw passed away on July 19, 2025. Peggy served as a Professor of Biology at Austin College from 1979 until her retirement in 2014, at which time she was named Professor Emerita of Biology. Known for her interdisciplinary work bridging biology, folklore, and regional history, she received numerous awards for her teaching, writing, and community involvement during 35 years on the faculty at Austin College.



Dr. John Elmer White III, longtime member of the Austin College community and Emeritus Professor of Education, passed away peacefully on July 4, 2025. John's life was dedicated to educating and mentoring others, and his legacy of care and encouragement has left a lasting impact on students, colleagues, and friends.



Rev. Dr. Henry Bucher Jr. died September 18, 2025. He joined Austin College in 1985, serving as Chaplain and Associate Professor of Humanities until his retirement in 2004.

Henry was born in 1936 to Presbyterian missionary parents in South China. A few years later, his family evacuated to the Philippines to escape the escalation of World War II, but were interned there along with all other Allied citizens for nine months until their rescue by U.S. and Filipino forces. The family repatriated to the United States for a short time before returning to the island province of Hainan, China, where his father assisted with post-war relief efforts and his mother worked as a schoolteacher. In 1948, they returned to the U.S., where Henry finished school.

He went on to study at Davidson College, the American University of Beirut, University College of Ghana, and the Sorbonne in France. He earned a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Formal institutions were just a fraction of Henry's education, however—he worked, studied, and hitchhiked across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and beyond.

Henry's impactful childhood experiences molded him into an empathetic individual with a unique perspective. He spent years in West Africa, especially Gabon, where he directed Operation Crossroads Africa. He was active in the efforts to register Black voters in the Deep South during the Civil Rights Movement and other social justice causes. When he joined Austin College, he led life-changing JanTerm excursions around the world to places like Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Senegal, Mali, Timbuktu, Cuba, Haiti, and El Salvador, inspiring generations of students to truly view themselves as global citizens—much like himself.

Henry was the recipient of several awards during his tenure at Austin College, including the Faculty Community Service Award and the Excellence in Teaching Award. He was named Chaplain Emeritus and Associate Professor Emeritus of Humanities upon his retirement.

A Message from the First Lady of Austin College

Cece O'Day

Dear Austin College,

Steven is getting asked a lot lately about what he's most proud of. Doubtless, there's a response to that question elsewhere in this magazine. What I'm most proud of is *us*—the Austin College community—and that last word is really important. *Community*. We are a community, and we embrace all of the facets of all of our students.

Our students are widely varying. We have students that make it look easy. They are doing amazing work and important research right now as Austin College students. We also have students who are going to need a lot of support (in a variety of ways) to make it through, but they will, and their Austin College degree will change the trajectory of their lives and their families' lives.

Within these differing students are interesting juxtapositions. We can all identify these seemingly unexpected connections in people we know and within ourselves, but it isn't an accident that we see this a lot within the Austin College community. It's part of the wonder of a liberal arts college. We are curious, interested, and interesting people.

Also featured elsewhere in this issue is the alumna who melded her interests in art and biology into a career in medical illustration. She was also a member of the AC water polo team. There are other water polo players here who have spent their summers at the dig at Huqoq. There's the football player who interned at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Another student, president of her sorority, asked us to attend her senior art show. What were her plans after graduation? Dental school. The list goes on and on. Maybe this coming together of seemingly unexpected connections isn't quite so unusual after all, at least not at Austin College. This is what I'm so proud of.

At a time when it often feels like the world is telling people what they should be like, we say it's OK to be you, all the different parts of you. Be your own best self. We at Austin College can embrace

the scientist/artist, the opera-singing doctor, the economist in the weight room.

I have felt this personally with the different sides of me. Both are part of being a teacher and a coach. There's the "Cece, she's so sweet. She's so nice," and there's the "Cece—she's the Queen of Suck it Up." I have appreciated that all the facets of me have been valued as first lady of Austin College, and I hope that this will continue for the family of the next president.

For now, I am so proud of all of you. I am proud to have been part of this *community*, with all the richness that word carries. Now it is time for this swimmer/teacher/coach and her soccer player/lawyer/college president husband to try to live sustainably (can we create our own food forest?) while we live out some episodes of *This Old House* in our 1840 farmhouse—and get a puppy. Maybe two.

Love,
Cece



PHOTO BY ELECTRA SOFFMAN '22



PHOTO COURTESY OF CECE O'DAY



PHOTO BY LISA FOSTER



COURTESY PHOTO



PHOTO BY NICHOLAS HUMBERT



Today's support elevates tomorrow's success

The journey of every Austin College student is impacted by the service, sacrifice, and generous support of generations past, and those contributions ripple into the success of each new class. Growth starts here, and your generosity helps students achieve their full potential, imagine new futures, and reshape the world for the better. Connect your legacy to the students of today and make a lasting difference in the lives and careers of Austin College's next generation of leaders, innovators, and changemakers. *Make a gift today!*



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The Austin College Commons