MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

THE FIRST SECOND-GENERATION LADY BUFF TO PLAY BASKETBALL AT WTAMU.

story on page 13
I love it when stories just fall in my lap, and that is exactly what happened with this legacy-themed issue of The West Texan. The first story started as just a random phone call to my office in late September. I’m not even sure how Judy Tibbs found my number, but she wanted to tell me about her brother, Sgt. Keith Rowell, who attended WT in the early 60s, went off to the Vietnam War and was killed in action in 1968. After sharing some background information with me, Mrs. Tibbs told me the Rowell family and members of her brother’s platoon would be on campus in October for a special military marker dedication ceremony. She invited me to a reception for the Rowell family and the 101st Airborne on Oct. 21 at Cornette Library. It doesn’t take much for me to cry, but I never expected to be so touched by the stories shared by the men who fought side-by-side with Rowell more than 40 years ago. It was amazing to hear these men—voices choked with emotion—talk about the love they still feel for this man and the impact he has had on their lives. The dedication ceremony the following day was a beautiful testament to a man who died much too young. I enjoyed writing the story, and I thank the Rowell family for sharing it with me.

The second story tells a wonderful story about giving. I learned about it through a letter sent to the University’s Office of Institutional Advancement in October. The letter came with a check and explained how the money dated back to more than 90 years ago. I was intrigued and went to St. Benedict Monastery in Canyon to visit with Sister Mary G. Hawkins. She told me about her mother, Fredda Griffin Hawkins, and how the $12 she had saved since 1916 ended up as a gift to WT. It was a delightful story that had to be shared and proves that it is never too late to give.

Two other stories in this issue also fell in my lap, thanks to contributions from Dr. J. Dirk Nelson, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and Dameon Myres, assistant athletic director/media relations. We hope to include guest contributions in future issues and welcome any submissions or suggestions.

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WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

faculty and staff
accomplishments

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

Four West Texas A&M employees were honored with some of the University's highest awards during the annual Faculty/Staff Convocation Aug. 23 at Mary Moody Northen Recital Hall.

The Clarence E. Thompson Staff Excellence Award, the University’s highest staff honor, was presented to Matt Maples, associate director of student activities. Staff Excellence Awards went to Kathe Walker, administrative director of the Attebury Honors Program, and Mary Adams, custodial foreman with custodial services. Dr. Harry Hueston, associate professor of criminal justice, received the Magister Optimus award.

Four former faculty members have been granted the title of professor emeritus/emerita by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. They are Georgia Barrow, assistant professor emerita of nursing—24 years; Dr. Thomas Cannon, professor emeritus of psychology—24 years; Dr. Joseph Cox, professor emeritus of music—29 years; and Mary Davidson, assistant professor emerita of history—26.5 years.

Dr. Amy Andersen, associate professor of education, has been named the head of the Department of Education at WTAMU. Andersen has served as interim head of the department since February and started her duties at WTAMU. Andersen has served as interim head of the department since February and started her duties at WTAMU.

Dr. Bruce Brasington, professor of history, has been named a Regents Professor by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. The Regents Professor designation is one of the highest honors given by the A&M System Board of Regents to recognize and honor those who have provided exemplary service as faculty members not only to their university but also to the community, the State of Texas, and/or at the international level.

Dr. Arun Ghosh, associate professor of biology, received a Certificate of Honor and Appreciation as the Outstanding Speaker at the International Conference on Interdisciplinary Research and Development in June in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. J. Patrick O’Brien, University president, has been elected to serve as chair of the NCAA Division II Presidents Council and will begin his term after the association’s annual convention in January 2012. The Division II Presidents Council is comprised of chancellors and presidents from Division II member institutions and serves as a leadership structure and forum in Division II intercollegiate athletic matters. O’Brien was first named to the NCAA Division II Presidents Council in 2007 and has served as its vice chair.

Dr. James Rennier, dean of the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities at West Texas A&M University, has been named special assistant for academic projects and began the new position Sept. 1. Dr. Jessica Mallard, director of the Attebury Honors Program and professor of speech communication, is filling in Rennier’s vacated position as interim dean.

Dr. Heidi Taylor ’82, associate professor of nursing, has been appointed by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) to serve as co-chair of the CCNE Standards Committee for 2011-2012. The seven-member committee represents public and private nursing education programs from around the country and reviews the accreditation standards for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education programs. The committee also makes recommendations for revisions to the Board of Commissioners.

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Margaret Thatcher led Britain through some very difficult years—a war, a recession, social upheaval—and took more than her fair share of heat throughout her tenure. Yet, all who observed her (friends and foes) had to admit that Margaret Thatcher never melted once. How did she manage? Thatcher responded, “It is not so complicated—stay focused, be self-disciplined, have a desire to succeed, work hard and have a touch of iron about you.”

The West Texas A&M University Department of Nursing was established in 1972 and since that time has been preparing well-qualified baccalaureate nurses to serve our region. WT’s nursing department is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) until December 2019. In spite of a 97 percent pass rate within one year of program completion, the Board of Nursing placed our nursing program on Conditional Status in April 2011 due to a dip in the first-time NCLEX pass rates beginning in 2008. However, in response to the dip in pass rates, the program made a number of changes to help assure students are successful. These changes included, but were not limited to:

• An increase in admission requirements;
• Changing the program from six semesters in length to four;
• A requirement that students pass an exit examination prior to graduating;
• A tutoring program which is available to all students;
• A faculty mentoring program; and
• Assistance for students who may experience test anxiety.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences is pleased and proud to report that for 2011, WT nursing baccalaureate graduates achieved a 95.2 percent first-time pass rate on the NCLEX. On Oct. 27, based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the unanimous decision of the Texas Board of Nursing and with commendation to change the approval status of the West Texas A&M University baccalaureate degree nursing education program from Conditional to Full Approval. The students not only improved the first-time pass rate, but a NCLEX program report for April 2011 through September 2011 shows that the program ranked at the very top on the percentage of graduates passing when compared to the 90 programs in the state of Texas. At the national level, the WTAMU program was one of 51 baccalaureate nursing programs out of 658 to rank at the top of national passing percentages. When compared to all the 1,752 other nursing programs (BSN, Associate and Diploma) across the nation, WTAMU was one of 133 to earn a number one ranking. By showing the tenacity of Margaret Thatcher—remaining focused, being self-disciplined, having the desire to succeed, working hard and having a touch of iron—the faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Nursing responded magnificently to adversity. The results and ranking prove it!

The WT Department of Nursing has been and will remain committed to a future of producing high quality, caring nurses for the economically vital and expanding healthcare industry of our region. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences is and will remain in a never-ending pursuit of excellence.

“All misfortune is but a stepping stone to fortune.”

—Henry David Thoreau
WRITER’S ACADEMY 2012

Writing to Sell: The Facts about Fiction
June 18-22, WTAMU campus

Learn the ins and outs of writing from five published authors

• Jodi Thomas—“I’ve Completed My Manuscript, Now What?”
• Tim Lewis—“Tools of the Fiction Writer’s Trade”
• Alexandra Sokoloff—“Screenwriting Structure for Novelists”
• Sherry Garland—“Writing for Children and Young Adults”
• DeWanna Pace—in-depth personal critiques (additional charge)

Register before April 27, and the fee is only $450. Register between April 28 and May 18 and pay only $495. After May 18, the cost is $550.

For more information, call the Office of Continuing Education at 806-651-2037 or visit wtamu.edu/OCE.
HOMECOMING PARADE

HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME VS. ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY

HOMECOMING KING J.D. NEWMAN OF AMARILLO AND HOMECOMING QUEEN ERIN FEUERSTEIN OF SPRINGFIELD, COLO.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS DON LEE ’77 AND ANDY COLE ’71, UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER MARY KUHLMAN, WTAMU PRESIDENT DR. J. PATRICK O’BRIEN AND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DIRECTOR, BECKY STOGER.

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HOMECOMING KING J.D. NEWMAN OF AMARILLO AND HOMECOMING QUEEN ERIN FEUERSTEIN OF SPRINGFIELD, COLO.
When it came time for Casey Land, a basketball player at Canyon High School, to choose the college that she would attend, West Texas A&M University was the natural choice, right? Her mother, Angela Seay-Land, was a former Lady Buff player who played under legendary head coach Bob Schneider, so becoming a Lady Buff just had to be the initial choice for Land.

“No, WT was my last choice,” the younger Land said. “I was all about getting out of Canyon, Texas, and I really felt that if I could pass either of my parents on the street where I went to college, then I did not want to go to that school. I liked what WT had to offer, and it would have been the perfect school for me, if it wasn’t in Canyon.”

Land mulled around the decision for a while and chose not to sign early with a team in the fall of 2009. Instead, she waited to make her decision later that spring, but she still wasn’t convinced on where she wanted to go to school. She had choices though. Harding (Ark.), Arkansas-Little Rock and Lubbock Christian had all recruited her, along with WTAMU, but she still hadn’t made her choice.

“I remember just absolutely being against going to WT,” Land said. “The 2010 regional tournament was in Canyon that year, and WT was hosting so I went to watch the games and I thought to myself, this is a really great program. It would be really fun to be a part of this tradition and to play for Coach [Krista] Gerlich.”
Land committed to the Lady Buffs later that spring, becoming the first second-generation Lady Buff to play basketball at West Texas A&M.

“I told Casey when she was choosing colleges, that God would give her a peace about where to be,” the elder Land said. “I loved what WT had to offer her and it was exciting for her dad, Brad, and I to see her choose WT. To me, you just cannot get a better quality person to coach your daughter than Coach Gerlich. I wanted Casey to be around someone of great character, someone that was going to try and make her a better person because basketball is only going to be a minimal part of her life.”

Land’s mom played four seasons at WT, from 1984 through 1988, and she became one of WT’s most prolific point guards of all time. The former Lady Buff still holds the school record in career assists with 694 total assists. She also has three of the top-10 seasons in school history for assists in a season, with her best season coming in 1987-88 when she dished out 216 assists—the second most in the program’s record books.

Angela, now in her ninth year, works and coaches basketball at Canyon Junior High, where she also had the chance to coach Casey when she was coming up through the junior high ranks.

“It was fun to coach Casey,” Land said of her daughter. She was just as competitive as I was, so we both just wanted to win so bad that a conflict never really came about.”

Casey may disagree with her mom in that regard though, as she felt at times that she was getting disciplined more than the other players.

“I think a lot of times I was harder on her because I didn’t want any of the other players to think that I was giving her any special treatment,” Land said. “I most definitely had higher expectations for her.”

“I wouldn’t say that she was just always hard on me,” Casey said. “She just expected more, and I knew that. But there were times when I just wanted her to be my mom and not my coach.”

Both Angela and Casey must have made it work somehow, and Casey went on to be a great player at Canyon High School before joining the Lady Buffs. Since joining the WT women’s basketball team, Casey knows that it was the right decision for her. She now takes advantage of being in the same town that her parents live in, too. Something she was admittedly against.

“It is actually nice to have her around, especially after a really tough loss or a really hard practice,” Casey said. “She knows what it was like to play here, so it is nice to get the chance to go home and talk to someone that has been in the same position. She is there to encourage me and help me keep my head up.”

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With Dr. Leigh Browning, associate professor of mass communication
10:30–11:45 a.m. Wednesdays, March 28–April 18 Amarillo Center

Twitter, Facebook and other new media platforms have changed the face of communication today. Come explore how these new technologies continue to shape opinions and relationships and discover how you can use it in new and exciting ways.

Cost of the course is $50, and the deadline to register is March 16.

For more information, call the Office of Continuing Education at 806-651-2037 or visit wtamu.edu/OCE.

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Buffalo Habitat for Thunder X

wtamu.edu/HEROSMEN
He was full of dreams for the future and had only three more weeks of the unrelenting fatigue that came with fighting in the mountains, jungles and villages of Vietnam. He was heading home, away from the horrors of war, but Keith Rowell, known as “Sgt. Rock” by his unit, was determined to stay with his squad as they waited at a landing zone to be extracted after five days of fierce fighting.

Rowell, who had been wounded earlier and sent to the rear, made the decision to go back out and be with his men, and as the chopper approached, enemy fire broke out. Sgt. Keith Rowell was killed in action that day.

He is one of 23 WT students lost to the Vietnam War, and his name marks one of the many streets on campus named in their memory. He came to WT in 1961 after graduating from Mobeetie High School, and he was determined to return after the war and earn his degree. He never got that chance, but members of his family and eight men from his “band of brothers” of the 3/506th Infantry known as the Currahees, 101st Airborne gathered on the WTAMU campus in October to share stories and a few tears as part of a special grave marker ceremony that stretched from Canyon to Silverton in honor of Rowell.

“I am overwhelmed to be here,” John Matkin of San Diego, Calif., said. “I served with Keith and being here brings me closer to him. I can’t explain what bonds us, but we all loved him.”

The special ceremony and placement of the military marker at Rowell’s gravesite in Silverton was long overdue and probably wouldn’t have happened without that bond that exists between the men of the 3/506. It started as they trained and fought in the trenches of Vietnam when Rowell and his men were barely in their 20s, fighting an unpopular war. Now, 40 years later and a bit grayer, the men of the 3/506th are still connected by that bond, and each one still feels the loss of Rowell as much as on that horrible August day in 1968.

“Not only was he a tenacious bulldog on the battlefield, Keith also was a beautiful guy,” Mark “Doc” Jones of Daytona, Fla., said. “He was a cupcake, and we knew he cared about the men in his squad. There’s not a day I don’t think about him and my band of brothers.”

That bond is why unit members place flowers every Memorial Day on the gravesites of the men from the 3/506 Infantry who were killed in action between 1967-1971. This past May when fellow unit member Ray Mayfield of Lewisfield delivered flowers to Rowell’s grave, he realized that it didn’t have a veteran’s marker. His observation promoted a few phone calls and lead to the October ceremony.

“We are a second generation band of brother, and we are as tight today as we were then,” Ed Bassista of Branchburg, N.J., said. “Keith was an incredible squad leader and friend, and the community has gone above and beyond to honor our brother. We appreciate it from the bottom of our hearts.”

The October ceremony came complete with bagpipes, a fly over in the missing man formation and an escort by the Patriot Guard. The procession moved from the WTAMU campus to Happy to Tulia and finally to Silverton where Rowell’s long awaited military marker was unveiled. The stone is engraved with the crest of the 506 and the patch of the 101st along with Rowell’s name, rank and the unit he served as well as the listing of the awards the soldier received. Simple, but it lets people know that the young man with dreams for the future made the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

“The loyalty and love these guys still express to my brother after 43 years is amazing,” Judy Tibbs, Rowell’s sister, said. “We are so blessed. Their love for my brother is almost overwhelming.”

But maybe Rowell’s brother Gary said it best.

“He was a hero.”

Although Rowell’s time was cut short, he lives on through the memories of those who loved him along with several reminders on the WT campus. A short street just off Russell Long Boulevard bears the name “Keith Rowell” and provides access to the Alumni Association, residence halls and Cornette Library. That same name is listed on a plaque at the Virgil Henson Activities Center in memory of students lost to the Vietnam War—all lasting legacies of a man with big dreams.
“There was a fire in my belly even when I was a kid, I was always the first one to get up in the morning.” This says a man who has been referred to as a legend in agriculture and the father of the modern cattle feeding industry. Paul Engler, founder of Cactus Feeders, Inc., started his path to success early in life. “My whole background has been in agriculture, and it all started with one cow,” Engler said. “My father thought we should all know how to milk a cow, so he got one when I was about seven or eight. Then we began to bottle the milk and sell it for 10 cents a quart. We had a competitor that sold theirs for eight cents, but ours was cleaner. So from that, I got a little taste of business.”

As the family acquired more land, more cattle were added and became Engler’s responsibility. By the time he was 12, he was working part time at the local Cattle Sale Barn, and it was there that Engler got his first lesson in building business relationships. While his father was away on a business trip, Engler borrowed the money from the barn owner to buy 100 head of cattle for himself. He expected to be in trouble when his father got home, but instead was greeted with a surprise. “The nice part of the story is that instead of giving me a lickin’, he shook my hand and said, ‘I’m proud of you son.’ That was a monumental thing in my life. It’s things like that give you the will and incentive to keep going.”

After the death of his parents, Engler set out to work in the cattle trading and ranching industry. It was during these years when he worked for Emmett Brickley and later, Louis Dinklage, two men that Engler credits with helping him get his start. “Hopefully, you can look back on your life and see that you were fortunate enough to have a mentor or mentors. They play a very important role.”

Today, Engler can be found on the other side of mentorship at West Texas A&M University. As the new executive in Residence for the College of Business and the College of Agriculture, Science and Engineering, Engler will be bringing his business expertise to the classroom. “I’m very excited about it,” said Engler. “I enjoy very much working with young people. It has an almost refueling impact for me. Hopefully I’m bringing another dimension to these students from the real world.”

The relationship that students build by meeting someone with extensive industry experience makes a huge difference in their ability to grasp applied concepts,” said Dr. Neil Terry, dean of the College of Business and professor of economics at WT. “The chance for students to learn from an executive of the caliber of Mr. Paul Engler really exemplifies West Texas A&M University’s commitment to creating an integrated curriculum that prepares students to be leaders in business and society. Despite his tremendous success throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Engler has retained a down-to-earth quality that makes him an ideal mentor for our students, faculty and administrators.”

Engler will serve as a guest lecturer in various classes in both colleges, and will assist in seminar presentations. He also will help build the reputation of both the business and agribusiness programs, facilitate opportunities for students and faculty and help foster communication between the University and professionals in the field.

Engler says one thing that he would like to focus on with WT students is entrepreneurship. “Throughout history, the U.S. has always been number one when it comes to entrepreneurs, but we’re losing that ground and that concerns me. There are a lot of things that can be done, and I think Universities can play a big role in that.” Engler suggests that it is America’s lack of an adversarial climate in the last century that is to blame. “The first entrepreneurs in America came in the 1600s. They came over on leaky boats, not sure where they were going or if they would even make it. They were entrepreneurs because they were willing to take the risk.”

Many of the current WT students are potential entrepreneurs, and Engler plans to find them. “Of course, not everyone is going to have the ‘fire in their belly,’ but if students that possess the right qualities can be identified, then we can show them how to build a good business plan and how to go about it. I think we will be doing everyone a great service.”

Any WT student that encounters Engler will soon learn that they have an enthusiastic and potential mentor in their corner. “When the cattle feed yard industry business really started booming in Texas, I was among the first to establish a commercial feed yard in the Texas Panhandle. Some of our original staff that started with us went on to work with other companies or build their own feed yards. To see that you have played a part in another’s success, that’s a very satisfying thing.”

“The relationship that students build by meeting someone with extensive industry experience makes a huge difference in their ability to grasp applied concepts,”
For a few Buffs, deciding to attend West Texas A&M University is more than just picking the university of their choice, it's about family tradition. Current students Kalee Carey and Halie Harton each come from a long line of proud WT grads and will soon join them with WT degrees of their own.

Carey, a senior corporate communication major is an active SIFE (Students In Free enterprise) member and plans to graduate in December. Harton is a sophomore physical education major, an outside hitter for the Lady Buff volleyball team and will graduate in May of 2014.

Are you part of a family that has attended WT for generations? If so, we would love to hear your story. We are always on the lookout for Buffs with exciting and meaningful tales to tell about their time at WT.

If you are interested in sharing with us, please contact the WTAMU Alumni Association at alumni@wtamu.edu or 806-651-2311, and you can always find us on Facebook at facebook.com/wtamu or facebook.com/buffalum. We look forward to hearing from you!
To her children it was a treasure chest—a box filled with delightful trinkets and irresistible knickknacks. But to Fredda Griffin Hawkins ’16, that cedar chest was a place for special items like cherished jewelry and her beloved wedding dress. Each piece of memorabilia tucked away for safekeeping had a special story or history tied to it, but none more so than the tiny little square box nestled among the family treasures. The story of that little box started almost a century ago at West Texas State Normal School and was revealed in October of 2011 at West Texas A&M University.

In 1916, Griffin Hawkins was the winter-quarter president of her class at West Texas State Normal School, and she had collected money from each student to order pennants. But right after graduation and as her fellow classmates were leaving, Griffin Hawkins received notice that the pennants were unavailable. She hurriedly returned the money to all the students she could find, but unfortunately some had already left.

“She put the money, amounting to about $12, in a small box in her cedar chest, and there it stayed while her life went on with marriage and children,” her daughter, Sister Mary G. Hawkins of St. Benedict Monastery in Canyon, said.

And life did go on. Griffin Hawkins, who had earned a home economics degree, taught school for a while. She met her future husband, Willis Hawkins, while teaching, and they married in 1918. They had six children—Willis Jr., LoraMack, Augustus, Mary, Theron and Robert—and kept busy with a general store, a farm and all the usual family activities that come with a houseful of sons and daughters. And all the while, that little square box remained tucked away in the cedar chest—out of sight, but not out of mind.

More than 60 years later, in the late 1980s, Griffin Hawkins told her daughter that something was really bothering her.

“I wondered what big secret I was going to hear, but she told me about the money in the little square box. She said it was not hers, that it belonged to her classmates, and it truly bothered her that she was never able to give it back,” Sister Mary said.

Sister Mary assured her mother that she would donate the $12 plus interest to WT, and that she didn’t need to worry about it any more.

Griffin Hawkins died in 1990 at the age of 93, and Sister Mary remembered the promise she had made to her mother. She and her brother Willis Jr. were co-executors of their mother’s estate and worked hard to get everything settled. A land mix-up prevented a quick settlement, but the co-executors never forgot about the money in the little square box.

“When we were close to settling the estate, we tried to figure out the interest on that money over all these years,” Sister Mary said. “We had a lot of laughs over it, but my brothers and I decided rather than trying to divide the estate’s proceeds among the remaining heirs, we would donate the whole amount in our mother’s name.”

In October The WTAMU Foundation received a check from the co-executors of Fredda Griffin Hawkins estate in the amount of $3,500.

“All during the depression when cash was very short, she kept this money knowing it was not hers to spend,” Sister Mary said. “Now she can rest in peace.”

But the story doesn’t really end there. Fredda Griffin Hawkins surely never dreamed that she and the Class of 1916 would be helping WTAMU more than a century later fulfill its mission of educating students. It’s a story of honesty, determination and generosity, and Fredda Griffin Hawkins proved it’s never too late to give, even if the gift is small enough to fit in a little square box.

THE HAWKINS FAMILY

The Hawkins family has a long legacy with West Texas A&M University. The connection didn’t stop when Fredda Griffin Hawkins graduated in 1916. Each of her six children also attended WT. Her son Dr. Theron E. Hawkins earned his bachelor’s degree at WT and later served on the Board of Regents for West Texas State University.
WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

class notes

Send alumni news information, photos, story ideas and suggestions to rmcdonald@wtamu.edu.

’96,’23 West Texas A&M University inducted six members into the coveted WT Athletic Hall of Champions during Homecoming festivities in October. The new inductees are:

• Beau Brown ’96—men’s soccer;
• Nay Hale ’23—men’s basketball
• Mickey Matthews ’76—football
• Jim Reid ’68—men’s basketball
• Ed Harris’—administration

Mila Gibson ’66 has been appointed to the Texas Commission on the Arts by Gov. Rick Perry. Her term on the commission will expire in August 2015. Gibson is founder and former director of Amarillo Opera and a retired music professor at Amarillo College. She now resides in Sweetwater.

Sandra Chaney McMillen ’67, has been re-elected to a second three-year term as international second vice president/coll legiate advisor of Mu Phi Epsilon Professional Music Fraternity at the 2011 International Convention in August in Rochester, N.Y. She works with collegiate chapters worldwide and supervises all fraternity district directors. She previously served as district director for the North Texas District and is active in the Dallas alumni chapter. She and her husband Philip ’66, reside in Duncanville.

Dr. Michael L. Evans ’74, took over in January as the new dean for the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing in Lubbock. He comes to Lubbock from the Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes Jewish College in St. Louis, where he has served as professor and chief executive officer since 2006.

Doug McDonough ’76 was named Journalist of the Year by the West Texas Press Association in July. The honor follows on the heels of his induction into the Panhandle Press Hall of Fame in April. He has spent more than 40 years in the newspaper business and currently serves as managing editor for the Plainview Daily Herald.

Dr. Daniel Barnard ’80, has returned to Texas after 20 years to take a job as director of the Arts Center at the University of Texas—Brownsville.

Butch Henderson ’83, has been named the new head football coach at Wayland Baptist University. Football is returning to the university’s athletic program after more than 70 years, and Henderson will coach the first team during the 2012 season.

Dr. Michael Gilbert ’86, was recognized as a Texas Tech Distinguished Alumni Nov 4, marking his third honor from the University. He was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2004 and as a Texas Tech Outstanding Agriculturalist in 2005. He is president and general manager of Bayer Cotton Seed International.

Raymond Root ’87, has been recognized by Cambridge Who’s Who for his dedication, leadership and excellence in mental health care. Root, who lost both legs below the knee to peripheral artery disease, specializes in rehabilitation counseling for injured Iraq war veterans and speaks on rehabilitation at various medical centers.

Joe Wyatt ’87, took first place in the Vile Puns category of the 2011 Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest. The annual event, sponsored by the English department at San Jose State University, challenges writers to compose an opening sentence to bad novel. Wyatt, communications coordinator at Amarillo College, is no stranger to the contest. He won first place in the Adventure category in 2009 and earned a dishonorable mention in the Vile Puns category in 2007. His winning entry this year read, Detective Kodiak plucked a single hair from the bearkin rug and at once understood the ugly nature of the crime: it had been a furious act, a real honey, the sort of thing that could polarize a community, so he pedaled quietly out to back a crowd reporter waiting in the den.

Royce Robinson ’90, is the author of a book released in October titled The Dark, Ugly Side of IT. Robinson lives in Bryan and works as an IT systems administrator for Texas A&M University.

Dr. Lisa O’Brien ’93, is now seeing patients as a partner at Broomse Optical in Amarillo. She recently became the first optometrist in the Panhandle to attain the credential of Diplomate, American Board of Optometry.

Chad Schmidt ’98, started the fall semester as the new principal at Anderson Elementary School in the Spring Independent School District. He first joined the Anderson faculty as a fourth-grade teacher before moving into an instructional specialist position. He then served as the school’s assistant principal for six years before being named principal.

Kisauandra Harris ’00, a science teacher at Tascosa High School, has been selected as the 2011 Outstanding Texas High School Science Teacher of the Year by the Science Teachers Association of Texas. She has taught at Tascosa for the past 11 years.

Regina Blye ’01, executive director of the Texas State Independent Living Council, was appointed in August by President Barack Obama to the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Access Board.

Mercy Murgaïa ’01, was sworn in as Potter County commissioner for Precinct 2 on Nov. 22. She was appointed to the position by Potter County Judge Arthur Ware to replace the late Manny Perez. Precinct 2 covers east Amarillo.

Misty Hobbs ’02, ’06, placed seventh in alumni reining at the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) and was named the reserve national champion in alumni horsemanship for the second consecutive year. She competed at the national level by earning at least 28 points in both classes during the regular season. Hobbs was named reserve champion in both classes at the IHSA regionals in March and at the western semi-finals. She currently serves as the regional representative for IHSA alumni.

George Pacheco Jr. ’93, has been named the University Educator of the Year by the Texas Speech Communication Association. He was recognized during the association’s 2011 convention Oct. 15 in Irving. Pacheco is an assistant professor of communication at Angelo State University, where he teaches classes in public speaking, rhetoric of humor and nonverbal communication.

Luke Longhofer ’04, is the recipient of the James B. Gardner Commerce Street Capital Scholarship from the Southwest Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University’s Cox School of Business. The scholarship is given to second- and third-year students who represent the educational ideals of merit and leadership. Longhofer, who was valedictorian of this year’s graduating class at the SW Graduate School of Banking, is a loan review officer for First Financial Bankshares, Inc.

Steve Jackson ’05, who once played basketball for WTAMU and helped win a couple of Lone Star Conference titles, is now serving as head boys basketball coach at Tascosa High School which also happens to be his alma mater.

Anthony Holmes ’07, received a military award in September for his service on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He received the award from Adm. Michael Mullin, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Jackie Kingston ’08, has been named an evening anchor at KAMR NBC 4 in Amarillo. She joined the KAMR team in 2009 as the anchor for the station’s morning show and moved into the evening position in October.

Andrew Donnelly ’11, served as a technical apprentice with the Santa Fe Opera during the summer of 2011. He was one of 73 selected from more than 700 applicants.