This transcript was exported on Oct 25, 2023 - view latest version <u>here</u>.

Myka	Bail	ley:
------	------	------

What's up, podcast world? Welcome to season two of I Am WT. This is Myka Bailey.

Thomas Rodriguez:

And I'm Thomas Rodriguez.

Myka Bailey:

And we're here in the podcast studio with a very special guest. Well, actually, two, Cindy and Gary Barnes, and I'm just going to start off by asking each of y'all to tell a little bit about yourself.

Gary Barnes:

I grew up in Plainview. My first experience with WT was a very good friend in junior high, whose father happened to be president of the Alumni Association at WT, who got his degree in communications many years ago, but as the president of the Alumni Association, he came to the football games. So the friend invited me to ride with him to the football games. So in junior high, and probably a little bit before that, we came to WT to watch the football game. That was my first introduction to WT. Later, in high school, I played in the band, and Dr. Gary Garner would come to Plainview and do clinics, so I had that exposure also from the music side of that.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I'm curious, I've got to ask, what instrument did you play? I'm also a music person, so ...

Gary Barnes:

Oh, is that right? Yeah. Bass clarinet.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Bass clarinet, a woodwind.

Myka Bailey:

Woo-woo. I was a clarinet.

Gary Barnes:

There you go. Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I play the French horn. I still play the French horn in the marching band.

Gary Barnes:

Oh, that's great. Yeah. In fact, I was in the marching band for three years at WT, even though I was not a music major.

Thomas Rodriguez:

It's very cool. I wonder, can you tell us what year it was?

This transcript was exported on Oct 25, 2023 - view latest version here.

Gary Barnes:

Yes, 1974. I came here as a freshman, and played in the band '74 through '77.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Okay. Well, we have another guest to introduce. So Cindy Barnes, tell us about yourself.

Cindy Barnes:

I'm Cindy, and I also came to WT many years ago, and been a Buffalo, a proud Buffalo, still am, but I grew up in Big Spring, Texas, and our youth group and our church would come out to Ceta Canyon Church Group. So that's how we saw the university, because part of that is we went to the museum here, and then they would bring us lunch, and we ate on the campus under the shade of the trees, so I experienced West Texas State University at that time. I have a sister who's a year older, and she decided to come here, so when it was my time to make a decision, I stayed at a community college for a year in Big Spring, Howard College, but then, I transferred and came in 1975. I didn't intend to stay here very long. I was trying to get credits to get into pharmacy school.

The other thing was is they had a women's softball fastpitch team, and I really, really wanted to play softball. So that was the cinching decision, is I got to play softball when I got here. From there, got involved in women's athletics. I had a student job, working for the lady that started women's athletics here, and that was Allene Stovall. Her office, for us, was in the women's locker room at the ...

Not the JBK, the activity center, and so I was in the towel room of the women's locker room there in the activity center. Women's athletics blossomed during that time. Had an opportunity to stay as a graduate assistant when I graduated, and so I did, and worked with women's athletics in hopes of doing athletic training, and on to physical therapy. The world changed a little, and from athletics, I got involved in student affairs and was able to become a hall director. When they switched that from the older women, I was the hall director for several years at Cousins Hall, and we started programming for our RAs in the Residence halls, and so then, worked in programming and activities in the Residence Halls doing that, and moved right on to being in charge of Residential Living, and did that for several years.

Before I met this guy, named Gary Barnes, we were both employees here, and we met on a student trip the first time. We went with a group of students to Europe during spring break. They didn't quite make the trip, so four or five of us, as employees, had to pay a \$25 penalty, but we got to go, and of course, we had to pay our own way, but it made the trip make, and then we got to go to Europe. Well, we were a little bit older than the students, so we kind of paired off and had a wonderful time, and I met this wonderful guy named Gary Barnes, so ...

Myka Bailey:

The rest is history, right?

Cindy Barnes:

Yes, the rest is history. The rest is history.

Myka Bailey:

So you mentioned that you were an RA, and I also do that at Jarrett Hall, and I adore it. It's one of the best jobs that I've had on campus.

Cindy Barnes:

Well, Residential Living got into my blood. I had lived as a transfer student in Stafford Hall, the first group of women to be in part of Stafford. We didn't have an RA in the beginning because they didn't plan on having that many students that semester, and that's why they had to have the overflow of us in Stafford, but I loved the opportunity, although I wasn't an RA, I was a hall director, but I was very much involved with Hall Council and those things. It was a wonderful place.

Thomas Rodriguez:

So let's talk a little bit about the Alumni Award. Gary, I know you won the Distinguished Alumni Award. What does that mean to you?

Gary Barnes:

Well, what an honor, and what a humbling experience this has been to have been nominated by a friend and a peer, and then to have been selected by your peers to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award is a very high honor for me, a very humbling experience. I've enjoyed the opportunity to promote WT in every aspect that I've been able to do, and really appreciate the committee and the award, and the recommendation and letters of support that I received to get that award.

Myka Bailey:

So did you get to learn about who nominated you?

Gary Barnes:

Yes, I did, later in the process, when President Wendler called and said that I'd receive the award, then shortly after that, they released information on who nominated me for the award. Very good friend of ours, Kay Hagar, who is also a WT alumni, was an employee for many years at the university, a very dear friend of us. She gathered letters of support from many of my peers at WT, but across the state, because I've had the opportunity to work in three different institutions of higher education in Texas. She gathered the support, and she made the nomination, and wow, what a humbling experience that was.

Myka Bailey:

Right, and so you keep mentioning the word, humbling, and that just, it makes me smile because normally, whenever someone is awarded something like this, they may normally be like, "Oh, yes, I'm all high and mighty," and you're over here accepting it with such a ... Oh, what's the word I'm looking for?

Thomas Rodriguez:

Humility.

Myka Bailey:

Yes, it's ... I love it. I love to see it.

Gary Barnes:

Well, thank you very much, and truly, the things that were accomplished here at WT while I was here, it wasn't just me. It was a huge team effort from the president to the provost, to student services, but all

the people that came together to be able to accomplish so much in the period of time when I was here, so it was very much a team effort, and I feel very fortunate to be surrounded by such quality people.

Thomas Rodriguez:

It's very nice. So Cindy, you were involved with women's athletics. We already talked about it. Tell us about your experience with Title IX.

Cindy Barnes:

We just had the 50th anniversary for Title IX, and WT did some pretty special things. I was involved in Title IX in the beginning. I came in '75. I think the legislation was in the 70's, so I know it was. So we were involved with fighting hard just to have an existence of women's athletics, and Allene Stovall became a long-term friend and mentor, so I've stayed in touch with her all of those 50 years later, but she and some of the faculty at that time really felt like young ladies should have the opportunity to compete.

They really put their jobs on the line because the big fight was they didn't want the men's athletics programs to have to support us, and they didn't want to lose money from those programs, and so the NCAA didn't wish to acknowledge nor support women's athletics, so they had to find a way to make things happen, so they started with zero dollars. Those coaches made not a penny, and then had to fight even for course relief. So that's kind of the foundation at WT. At one point, the president called in Allene Stovall and said, "Cease and desist. You don't have to be employed here," and she said, "How can you fire me for something that I don't even get paid for? This is volunteer work at the university."

So I was a part of that because I was a student secretary in the towel room of the locker room, you know? The fight was there. Women's athletics did all kinds of things. They started making drinks that were in aluminum cans, and that was a big thing, and they were recycling, and that was the beginning of that, so the team would go out and recycle the cans to have money. They sold their blood.

At that time, it was big to pay for platelets and blood, and students did that fairly often, but we would do it and put the money back into the athletic fund so we would have a way to compete. Likewise, we took our own cars. Often though, Allene Stovall and some, her folks certainly, they donated their cars, but they donated money and filled our cars and so forth. So that was the foundation. I would say it was 70 ...

The late 70's is probably what I should say. Can't tell you the exact. You know, I'm getting older. But at that point in time, the NCAA had ... They were having to address the fact that Title IX had occurred, and yet, most higher education institutions were still fighting it because they didn't want to lose this money out of their men's programs.

When they realized that schools like us, we were part of a class action suit, filed to say, "You have to comply with Title IX," because education kept attempting to find an exemption to that. So that's exactly what happened. A group was involved, and I was one of those students with the effort, and we filed a suit against West Texas A&M, except it was West Texas State University, and got involved. Our suit was rolled into, many years later, into a nationwide Title IX challenge as to whether education had to acknowledge it, and they said, "Yes, of course, you do," and then NCAA, kind of overnight, said, "We're taking over women's athletics. At least we'll have control of them."

So that's how WT ... We were on the ground level of fighting that for the opportunity to compete.

Myka Bailey:

Such a cool experience to be able to say you were a part of all of that.

This transcript was exported on Oct 25, 2023 - view latest version here.

Cindy Barnes:

It really is, and this was the 50th anniversary, so it was very fun to have the folks in the media here at WT interview some of the folks. In fact, one of the folks had a chance to speak before Congress about Title IX, one of our athletes, that was a volleyball player, a prior volleyball player from the 70's. So it was pretty neat for WT to even have that presence.

Thomas Rodriguez:

That is really cool. So why do you choose to still support WT Athletics?

Cindy Barnes:

Well, I think it's our responsibility. WT was extremely good to these two first-generation college students. It was an opportunity, but it was also a privilege to be here, and I never saw it any differently, so therefore, it changed my life, and I want to share that with others. I just think that's our obligation, to share that with others.

Gary Barnes:

Well, I think that one of the things that we really have a passion about, certainly with student athletes, but with other students is to provide some scholarship funding for that. There's nothing more important for a student to have some financial aid to go to college. It's not inexpensive, but there's also a recognition if a student gets scholarship funds that they're worthy. It's a pretty cool thing to be able for a student to say, "I have scholarships at WT for this academic area, or for this band program, or the music program, or communications, or accounting," whatever that is. So we have a real passion to give back what we can and we've started a scholarship fund, couple of those, and we hope that we can do more in the future, but we just think it makes such an impact to a student to be able to have some financial assistance in the way of a scholarship.

Thomas Rodriguez:

That's something we get to be proud of as well, 'cause we get scholarships for doing this podcast, so ...

Gary Barnes:
Oh, that's great.
Thomas Rodriguez:
Yeah.
Gary Barnes:
Yeah. Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

It's very cool.

Myka Bailey:

I was actually going to say thank you for people like y'all because that's how I get to go to school because I need the help.

This transcript was exported on Oct 25, 2023 - view latest version here.

Gary Barnes:

Yeah. No, absolutely.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Scholarships are important. Everyone needs to apply just whatever scholarships you can apply for. So I want to give you guys both an opportunity to answer this question. How did your education from WT contribute to your success?

Gary Barnes:

Well, I would not be where I was without WT. I was a first-generation college student in my family. WT was my first choice, but it was my only choice because of the association I had with it in football programs and in the band program, but I came to WT. I knew I wanted to do business, but was far more reaching than just learning accounting in business, the skill set that I got by sitting through English, and communications, and then you had business communication if you were a business major. So those skills that I got by attending WT, I've used those throughout my entire life professionally and personally.

So yes, you come to WT, you come to college, you get a degree, but you have so much more that you get than just the degree by the interaction that you have with your other courses, your other students, in conversations that you have with your faculty and with your colleagues. So without WT, I certainly would be back on the farm.

Thomas Rodriguez:

And what about you?

Cindy Barnes:

I came to WT to get the prerequisites for pharmacy. I'd worked in a pharmacy through high school in my first year in the community college, and so my goal was to get that, and in fact, I did get that, but during that time, I decided, "Maybe this is not really what I want to do." So I stayed at WT and finished a degree in education. I will say I use those skills in many, many ways, but opportunity was one, to stay and be a graduate assistant and help with all of athletics and do athletic training, but I became clear in that, two things, when I student taught, and then through the process of coaching, as a graduate assistant, a little, I knew clearly that was not the path for this person, but the skills that I got from being in an education major. I've applied in student affairs and continued to work at WT.

I never intended to stay at WT. I wanted to work here for a period, return some of what I felt like I had gotten. I will forever be grateful for it because it helped define me. I grew up, and you guys may be experiencing that as well. I grew up at WT, and identified who I wanted to be in so many ways, but the door kept opening with opportunity. I've told you I worked with athletics, and then in Residential Living.

I left for a number of years and came back. Had an opportunity to come back, and was hired into admissions. Worked for Lila Vars, who's also a long-term, wonderful person that helped define WT, but helped define who I am. There's lots of mentors in education, but I then had the opportunity to be a part of starting the Advising Center, and all the way from designing what's there in the Advising Center to providing guidance and counseling. So I use those skills over and over again, hopefully to impact young people, just as you, help you stay in school when you hit a roadblock or even just a speed bump.

The Advising Center was designed with all of those offices being together, which were all over this campus. The Student Success Center is what I should have said, and Advising Center was a part of that, but it was designed to help students finish their goal, because often, a little speed bump can throw you

off and right out the door. To work with students, have a goal and a direction, and help them accomplish that. Can you think of anything much better than to work with young people and help them become who they want to be? It's awesome.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Very nice, very cool. We're going to take a quick break, and we'll be right back with more of the I Am WT Podcast.

Gary Barnes:

Donors to West Texas A&M University give more than their material support. They devote time, expertise, and commitment. WT would not be what it is today without individuals dedicated to our forward progress.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Welcome back to the I Am WT Podcast. We are here with Gary and Cindy Barnes. Before the break, you mentioned working at other institutions. So what makes WT unique?

Gary Barnes:

There are a lot of things that make WT different and unique from the other institutions I've worked with. One is the culture that the students bring to WT. I think there's no doubt the geographic location factors into that. It's a conservative area of the state of Texas, but they come to the university with a value system of hard work, respect, dedication, conversation, friendship. They come with a different skill set than some other students at very large institutions.

The other thing that I really have enjoyed about WT is the size. I know some people say it's really small, but it's a great regional university. Serves a tremendous part of the state of Texas here in the Panhandle, but it's also easy to make a change. I kind of use the analogy, if you have a big ship in the ocean, and you're trying to change course, it takes a long time and a lot of runway to change the rudder to make a few degrees difference, but at WT, if we see something's not working, or if we have a new idea or a new innovation, we can decide, "This is a path we want to try," and the next day, we're working toward that. So the nimbleness, the flexibility, the willingness of the administration of the students to look at different ideas, different opportunities, different needs that the students have, and make those changes fairly quickly, that's very refreshing to me.

When you go to an institution like Texas A&M University, which is wonderful, one of the premier institutions in the country, things move slowly. If you want to do change, if you want to do a new degree program simply because of their size and structure, it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort to implement those changes. That's not bad. It's just nature of the beast when you have that large institution. So WT is nimble, is what I would say, and that's very refreshing because you can make some changes, you can impact the students very quickly, and it's just very refreshing to be part of those opportunities that you can do new and innovative things.

Myka Bailey:

Right, so you're getting to say that there's more opportunities at WT, and you kind of get to be part of more because of the smaller university?

Gary Barnes:

Absolutely. I also think that the students really benefit from the size of WT, just like the podcast today that we're doing. I'm not sure many other institutions provide that same level of hands-on work that you are getting exposed to, at least not as a freshman or a sophomore. Maybe when they're a junior or a senior, they get moved into some of those more glamorous parts of the education, but at WT, you can begin hands-on processes day one, and I think that is so important for the students, but talk about a skill set that the students have far and beyond their competition from other institutions, it's just pretty incredible.

Myka Bailey:

Yeah, you're so right. Actually, my freshman year, I came into a media introduction class, and we got to work with heavy equipment. I mean, I was calling up my parents like, "Guys, this is crazy. This stuff is so expensive and they're letting me touch it," so ...

Gary Barnes:

That's right. Yeah, I remember when, at WT, we got the first portable cameras that you rest on your shoulders, and you ran around campus doing that. Our students got to do that when they were freshmen, unlike any of the other bigger institutions.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah, my very first semester, I took basic video, and they were already having us work with cameras. Like we got to do a mock news interview and everything, and it was super cool to get that experience, and that was my first semester here, which I thought was amazing.

Gary Barnes:

Yeah. Again, I think that's the culture of WT. I think our faculty and staff and administration understand why we're here. We're here to educate the students, and that's not just a degree, but education is pretty broad and encompassing, and you leave with a skill set that's probably second to none.

Myka Bailey:

So from my understanding, you all are both alum, and I just want to ask why you think it's important for alumni and friends to give back to WT financially, volunteer work, so on and so forth.

Gary Barnes:

I think as a student, I benefited from alumni, from their financial support with regards to scholarships, but also alumni from WT are very open to encouraging students, whether it's through work opportunities that they might have, and they specifically would seek out WT students. We had the opportunities to do those things. Someone engaged with us, a faculty mentor, a scholarship, and those close connections with alumni, with regards to work opportunities, or being in the classroom and saying, "Let me tell you about my real-world experience." So you got some knowledge transfer from those alumni that I benefited from. I just think it's a responsibility that all alumni have to do what they can to help the next generation improve their skill set.

Cindy Barnes:

I think it's our obligation, as human beings, to volunteer and support each other, and you take that to more specifically, "So what is your skill set or where is your passion?" We should never take for granted

that an education is being afforded to us, whether we receive a scholarship or we don't. I mean, I could say to you, "I never received a scholarship at WT, therefore I'm not giving." I don't think that's where we live. I am so proud to be a part of providing opportunity for others.

I think if we had that positive experience, we should share it. I was afforded a great opportunity with a group of people to show appreciation for the sacrifices that Allene Stovall had made in her life and career, 'cause it really became her career to provide opportunities for all students, 'cause she taught. I was on a student organization, so as a part of that organization, I was on a committee that started a scholarship for Allene. It has over \$100,000 in it today, and it generates interest for student scholarships. So I could see how that works.

That's monetarily, but certainly, volunteering your time is equally important to help students out in our communities, wherever we live. Know of the great opportunity for an education at WT is second to none. I don't apologize ever that my degree says West Texas State University.

Myka Bailey:

Right. You get to do the hands-on with volunteer work. Then, that also gives us the opportunity to see you. So no, we don't take it for granted, just being able to see your face, and that's why I was so excited about the podcast, is because I get to sit face-to-face with people who are giving me the opportunities that I have right now, and I guess, kind of get to say thank you in a way.

Cindy Barnes:

And the reality is that you pay it forward.

Myka Bailey:

Yeah.

Cindy Barnes:

If you're a giver, you pay it forward, and I advocate we should all be givers in our own way. Find your passion and stay with it.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I'm sure you both have plenty of advice you could give some of our current students. So if you want, now's the time to let them know what you think they need to know.

Cindy Barnes:

Well, as an academic advisor, we always said the most important thing you could do is get up and go to class, number one, and the other is engage. Don't sit back, but get involved. Engage in the experience, and you'll be amazed at the opportunities that come to you, and I really believe in the other education. I mean, I came from the student affairs side. I believe the students that get involved are the most successful students.

Maybe not the highest GPA students. I'm not saying that they couldn't be, but the reality, when you get your degree, once you have that degree, it doesn't always matter that you had a four-point. What matters is what you got from the experience.

Thomas Rodriguez:

As someone who has kind of lived that experience that you said about engaging in stuff like that, I totally get it, 'cause I got involved with the radio program my second semester, and then I really loved it and I kept doing it, and now I have a special show with the radio station, and I work in their equipment lab and all that kind of stuff. So I 100% agree, getting engaged is the number one most important thing, I think.

Myka Bailey:

Absolutely. Gary, do you have any advice that you would like to give the students?

Gary Barnes:

Well, I do think the engagement is the key, and look for wide opportunities to become engaged, not just so focused on your major, but look at other opportunities that you can engage besides just that, because you'll meet new people that you haven't met before that are in other academic areas. Let me just share a little bit about that. So I lived in Jarrett Hall.

Myka Bailey:

Yay.

Gary Barnes:

In fact, there are a group of us that have started a reunion, so every year, there's about six or eight of us that lived in the suite. Not necessarily all roommates, but we lived in the suite, so we gather once a year in Ruidoso, New Mexico for a little reunion, but in Jarrett Hall, I became part of Hall Council. I was the treasurer. I'm the business person, the accounting degree, so I was the treasurer for Hall Council. I also joined two fraternities.

One was a professional business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi, the other one was the band fraternity, Kappa Kappa Psi. Very different groups. I also was on the radio for a semester, 91.1.

Thomas Rodriguez:

That's us.

Gary Barnes:

That's it, for a semester, only because I had a suite mate that that was his major and said, "You should do this. You can do this one hour a week, one hour a day." I can't remember now what it was, but 91.1, so I did that for a semester. So you really get engaged, you really have an opportunity to learn from others, and you do different things than what you might do if you're just so tunnel vision on one thing. So engagement, get out, explore it all.

Myka Bailey:

Right, and then your employers probably look at that as well, and it's like, "Oh. Wow, you're well-rounded."

Gary Barnes:

No doubt. It makes a huge impact. In fact, many employers will say, "We can teach you how to do our business. Let me see what you did as a college student. What did you engage in?"

"Did you have volunteer activities? Did you support social activities? Did you become part of different organizations or groups?" That's critical. Yes, you need a degree, and that tells you you have the discipline and the ability to complete a task from A to B, and so you have that degree, and you have some skill sets with that, but the soft skills that they talk about, critically important in the business world.

Thomas Rodriguez:

You both have a ton of involvement with WT, so surely, you guys have a favorite memory here at WT.

Gary Barnes:

Some of the memories, again, are particularly with the students. I remember in the, probably early 80's, we had an unprecedented snowstorm, and this was right before Thanksgiving. There was a person living in Cousins Hall, I think, a student. They called school off 'cause it was so big, and of course, everyone went outside and played in the snow and all that kind of stuff, but it was amazing that that student's parents said, "You're coming home for Thanksgiving," and dad drove up with a John Deere tractor, picked her up, and I think they lived in Hereford, and took her back home. But you know, that's kind of WT spirit.

Cindy Barnes:

It's West Texas spirit.

Gary Barnes:

Yeah. Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I'm sure you have a favorite as well.

Cindy Barnes:

If I had to pick a favorite memory, it would center around traveling with women's athletics and the opportunity, again, to compete. I don't know that I have a specific memory, but I can tell you, the opportunity it afforded me was I really hadn't traveled much. In fact, there were folks on our teams then, that hadn't traveled at all, and their trip to travel was to college. So lots of memories as our eyes were opened to many different things, but we had the opportunity ... Again, I wasn't in the very beginning at women's athletics.

They had been fighting the fight for probably seven or eight years when I came to play softball here. So a favorite memory during that point in time was we got to fly to a tournament. We were actually at the state tournament and competing in Beaumont, and I don't know if y'all know how far Beaumont is from Canyon, Texas, but we'd driven in a van down to Beaumont and played. There was four teams left, and it started raining, and it rained, and it rained, and eventually, they canceled the state tournament, and we all drove home. The next weekend, we were to go back.

Well, we'd missed a lot of class to ride, and we weren't in vans, we were in cars. The next weekend, we went back, and we would have missed a lot of class again. That happens today now, but that memory was we got to fly to Houston. So that was my first flight. It was an unbelievable experience and it scared the tar out of me.

I mean, I had apprehension to even get on a plane, but for most of us would not experience that. So opportunity, again, I obviously still remember that. I can still remember the person next to me, leaving an imprint on that pilot who was just going to the place they needed to go to fly the next flight. I was scared to death because we hit bumps, and if you've never been on a plane and gotten to turbulence, that's what we had, so ...

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah. I have to fly home whenever I go home now, so I totally get it. That was my first flight, and I was doing it on my own, and I was like, "I don't know if I'm ready for this."

Cindy Barnes:

Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

But, yeah. So I think now is the time we have to ask you both the big question. What does WT mean to you?

Cindy Barnes:

You go first.

Gary Barnes:

Well, I think WT, no doubt, has changed my life. I would not have the opportunities, I would not have experienced the things, I would not have done the things had I not gone to WT, and that's on a personal level. The people that I have met professionally across the state, across the nation have been involved at the national level in some of the business organizations, so I think professionally, have such an appreciation for the things I were afforded with my education at WT, but on a personal level, we've been very, very blessed, and would not have had those opportunities and not have had the life experiences that I've had that shaped everything that I've done since then had it not been for WT.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Very nice.

Cindy Barnes:

WT for me is everything. That makes me sound like an old person, but it is everything. It was my life as a 19-year-old, and I worked here. We raised our family in Canyon, but WT was everything. It opened my eyes and it gave me the opportunity to become whoever I wanted to be, and it defined how I would move forward with my life. So WT was everything, I think is the best answer.

Myka Bailey:

Right. That's sweet. I love hearing that. It's good.

Thomas Rodriguez:

This transcript was exported on Oct 25, 2023 - view latest version here.

Well, thank you both for joining us today on the I Am WT Podcast. You both have been fantastic guests. We're very grateful for you to have come in. You can access the rest of our podcast episodes at www.wtamu/podcasts. Thank you all for listening to the I Am WT Podcast. We'll see you all again soon.