



# Heritage

*The Magazine of Sam Houston State University*



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— WILL —  
RISE**

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MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

## ON THE COVER



Every day, SHSU faculty, students and alumni harness their talents to emerge as heroes in their service to others.

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# HEROES of SHSU

by Amy Barnett



**MY FAVORITE ACTOR** TO PLAY SUPERMAN, CHRISTOPHER REEVE, ONCE SAID, "I THINK A HERO IS AN ORDINARY INDIVIDUAL WHO FINDS STRENGTH TO PERSEVERE AND ENDURE IN SPITE OF OVERWHELMING OBSTACLES." HIS WORDS FILL ME WITH PRIDE, BECAUSE SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY IS A PLACE WHERE ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS ARE DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES EVERY SINGLE DAY.

WHEN I NEED A PICK-ME-UP, A BREAK FROM SOME OF THE MORE CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF RUNNING A UNIVERSITY, ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TAKE A QUICK WALK ACROSS CAMPUS AND I AM IMMEDIATELY INSPIRED. HERE AT SHSU, WE ARE LITERALLY SURROUNDED BY EVERYDAY HEROES. OUR FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS ARE TRULY LIVING UP TO OUR MOTTO, "THE MEASURE OF A LIFE IS ITS SERVICE," AND PROUDLY CARRYING ON THE LEGACY OF OUR NAMESAKE AND TEXAS'S GREATEST HERO, GENERAL SAM HOUSTON.

*Dana G. Hoyt* DANA G. HOYT, PRESIDENT

# SKY SOLDIER

## BEATS THE ODDS!

**T**RAVIS WATSON, CLASS OF '12 AND '14, IS AN ALL-AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY IF EVER THERE WAS ONE; BUT HE WILL BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU THAT EARNING THE ACCOLADES HAS NEVER BEEN AS EASY AS PLACING THE TROPHIES ON A SHELF. He credits his coaches on the Bearkat football team for showing him that when the going gets tough, you get tougher.

"That discipline shaped me and paid more dividends than I could have imagined," said Watson. One lesson in discipline came when his coaches suddenly changed his playing position from tackle to center, right after he missed an entire season because of a broken leg. "I thought 'what are you talking about? I have never played center in my life,'" said Watson. His coach didn't give him an option, so Watson rose to the occasion and took control of the line.

He and the 2011 Southland Conference championship team finished the season 14-1 and reached the FCS National Championship game. While at Sam, he was selected to three All-American honor squads and was named Southland Conference Football Student-Athlete of the Year in 2012. Early in his undergraduate studies he had taken Arabic courses and secured a State Department scholarship to study Middle Eastern culture one summer in Jordan.

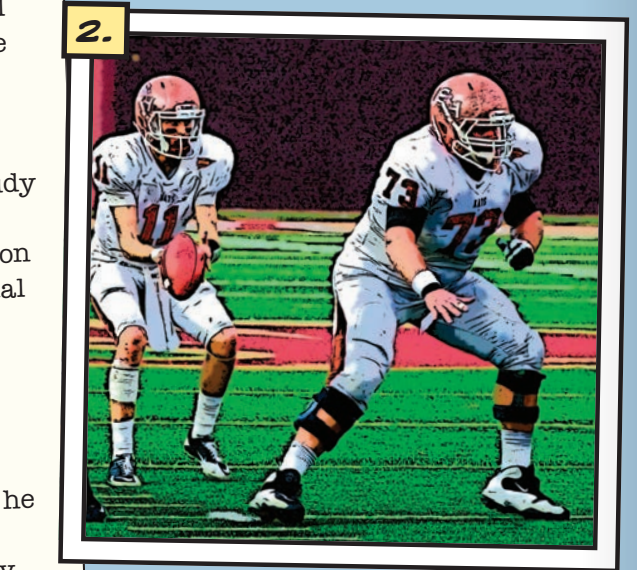
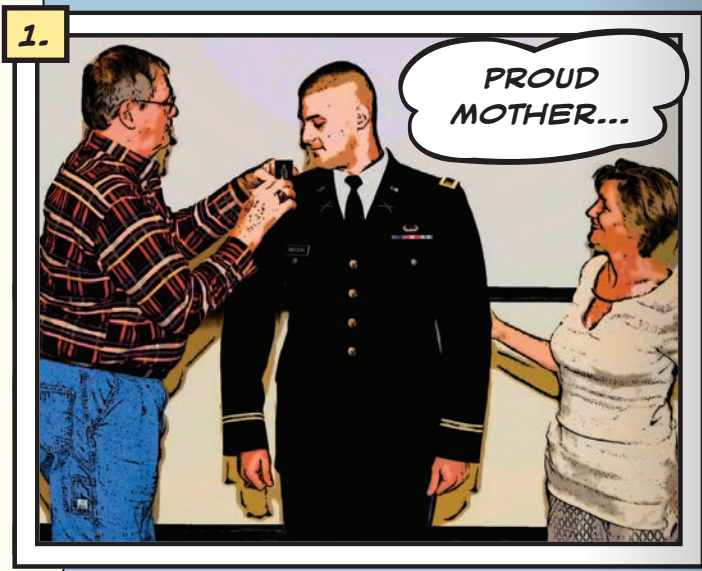
After graduating with a degree in political science, Watson went to infantry school and was able to train with a National Guard unit in Texas while getting a master's degree in homeland security studies.

He graduated and earned his commission in December 2014 and was soon on his way to Ft. Benning, Georgia. He could not have been happier.

"Everything had been great. Then I got knocked down," he said.

Watson was dropped from Ranger School on the first day when he was told his push-ups weren't up to the school's strict standards. But he did not give up.

In October 2015, after completing Airborne School, he was



1. WATSON WITH PARENTS AT HIS PINNING CEREMONY  
2. PROTECTING THE QUARTERBACK AS SHSU #73



### TRAVIS WATSON, ALL-AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY

given a second chance at becoming a Ranger.

He successfully made it through the first phase of training and at the end of the second, or "mountain," phase, which included 10 days of sleep and food deprivation and 40 pounds of weight loss, Watson was faced with another challenge. He remembers walking into the bathroom one morning, but he doesn't remember anything else.

"I passed out and cracked my head open. I had a subdural hematoma; my brain was bleeding and I was in ICU for a week," he said.

He woke up to learn he would recover from his injuries, but he had once again been dropped from Ranger school.

He admits it would have been easy for him to feel sorry for himself, but anyone who knows Watson knows that is never going to happen.

"You have to sit back and realize nothing is going to go as planned; life is not fair. The only way to get to where you want to go is to work your butt off and never quit. If people doubt you, shake it off and keep going," said Watson.

Watson now has recovered and will be in Italy for the next three years with the prestigious 173 Airborne Brigade Combat Team and his new bride, SHSU alumna Lauren Davis.

Watson is proud of becoming a "Sky Soldier" and is determined to complete Ranger School. He hopes to one day become a Green Beret.



3. COACH FITZ WITH WATSON AT HIS WEDDING  
4. DURING TRAINING  
5. AT MOUNT NEBO-MOSES MEMORIAL  
6. AT THE WAILING WALL IN JERUSALEM  
7. AT THE TEMPLE MOUNT IN JERUSALEM  
8. WATSON'S WIFE, LAUREN, WITH HIM AT HIS INFANTRY OFFICER BASIC COURSE GRADUATION.

DAVID MCTIER HELPS PEOPLE WHO NEED TO MAKE ART BECAUSE THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY

# ART WARRIOR

SHSU PROFESSOR OF THEATRE DAVID MCTIER HAS DIRECTED MORE THAN 70 PERFORMANCES THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER. SOME OF THESE ON-STAGE PRODUCTIONS HAVE MADE AUDIENCES LAUGH; OTHERS HAVE MADE THEM CRY. BUT HE HOPES HIS WORK HAS ALWAYS MADE PEOPLE THINK.

"As an artist, every class I teach and everything I direct, I want to be meaningful," McTier said. "There is a reason we are creating art. We are glad we are doing it; we are committed to doing it; it is our art."

His commitment runs deeper than the time and energy he devotes to his productions at SHSU. In 2012, the University of Pristina in Kosovo selected McTier as the Fulbright Scholar in the area of theatre.

"I applied knowing Kosovo was still considered a war zone at the time, knowing that the situation would be difficult. I don't speak Albanian and many of my students were refugees who had been driven out of Kosovo during the war," McTier said. "I chose Kosovo because I wanted to be in a situation where people needed to make art because they had something to say."

McTier learned a lot from that trip, as well as from many

other adventures he has taken throughout his life. In the last 10 years, he has been to 31 countries and in each has been able to find contradictions to stereotypes he believes Americans have developed based on what we are taught by the media.

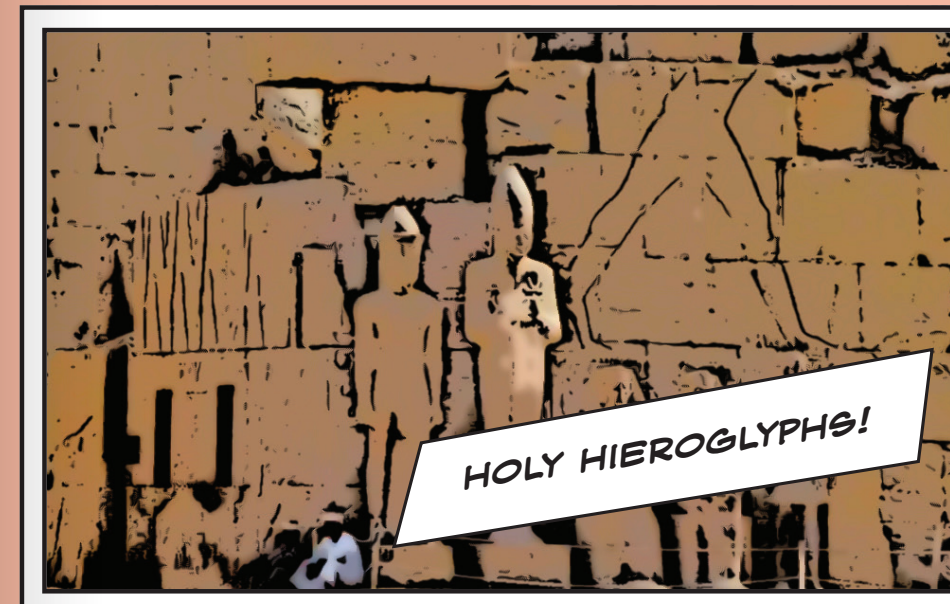
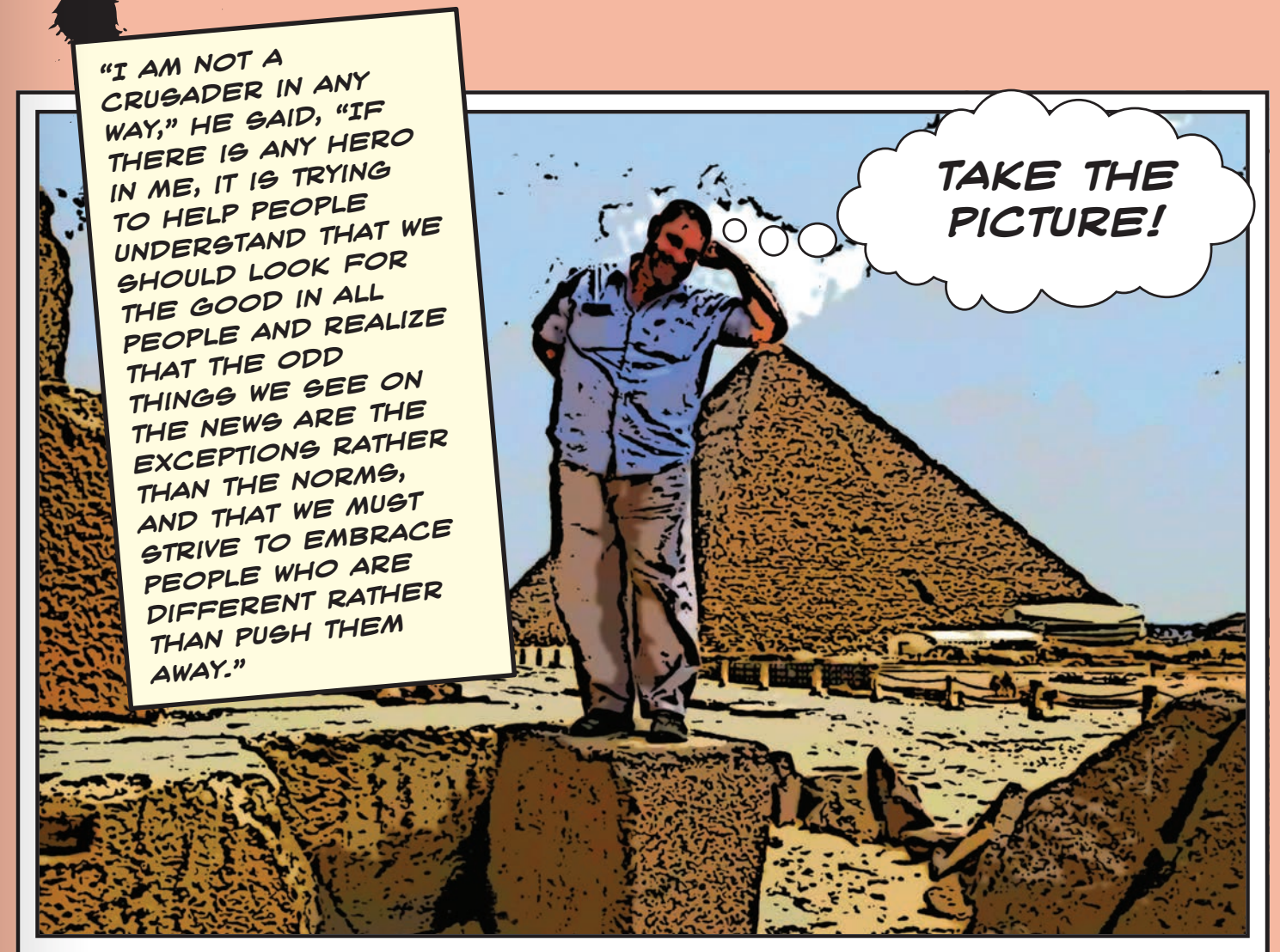
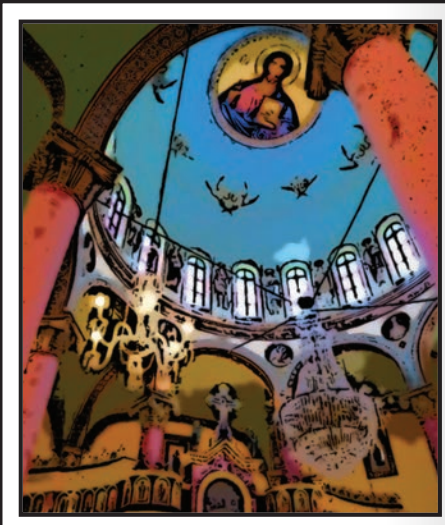
Last year he traveled to Egypt in May and to Russia in December. He had "incredible experiences" and found everyone he met to be "good people."

"Our tendencies are we want to make huge sweeping generalizations about the world and to divide the world into good or bad, but that doesn't work. When you travel and go different places you realize that people are people. Everyone I have ever met wants to lead happy, stable lives. They want their kids to be well tended, and it doesn't matter what religion you are or what your skin color is, we all want the same thing," McTier said.

McTier, who has been teaching at SHSU for 10 years, hopes he can have an impact on his students by simply providing the evidence he has collected on his travels to assure them that there is no reason to fear people because they don't look or sound the way we do.

McTier was recently notified that he had been selected as

a Fulbright Scholar to teach during the 2016-2017 academic year in Romania. His assignment will be at the National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest for the fall semester and Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj for the spring semester.



# DR. DNA

FROM CRIME SCENES TO MASS DISASTERS, SHE'S ON THE CASE.



**F**ORENSIC GENETICS PROFESSOR SHEREE HUGHES-STAMM DECIDED TO LEAVE AUSTRALIA NEARLY FOUR YEARS AGO TO COME TO SHSU BECAUSE SHE FELT IT WAS THE BEST PLACE FOR HER TO FURTHER HER RESEARCH INTERESTS, WHICH BRIDGE FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY AND DNA-BASED HUMAN IDENTIFICATION METHODS.

"I knew Sam Houston had a specialized research facility and that would give me the opportunity to do the kind of research that I love to do," said Hughes-Stamm.

Within her first few months on campus, SHSU was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Justice to study room-temperature preservation of decomposing human

remains. She, along with her colleagues and research students, tested skin and muscle samples and found that human samples could be stored at room temperature for up to three months without affecting the success of downstream DNA identification results. The research has application to crime scene samples as well as samples collected following mass disasters.

Next, they found that they could speed up the process by quickly purifying DNA that leaches out of the tissues into the solution, rather than having to break down the preserved tissue, which takes many hours.

The findings led to an additional NIJ grant that allows Hughes-Stamm and her doctoral student to study whether

they can remove chemicals altogether by using swabs and chemically treated cards to collect DNA samples directly from decomposing bodies.

A third NIJ grant will investigate the effectiveness of various methods for extracting DNA from skeletal remains for next-generation DNA sequencing technologies to identify missing persons. This newer technology, also called massively parallel sequencing, or MPS, can recover more information from badly degraded DNA samples when conventional genetic analyses for human identification fail. SHSU, in collaboration with the University of North Texas Health Science Center, is studying two different MPS platforms simultaneously to



compare their performance with such challenging samples.

"We know with the existing methods we use for DNA identification how tolerant the chemistries can be with the nasty compounds often found in these types of samples, but with these new platforms, we don't yet



## SPOTLIGHT

"THIS TECHNOLOGY HAS JUST TAKEN OFF ... MASSIVELY PARALLEL SEQUENCING HAS REVOLUTIONIZED THE WAY WE ARE STARTING TO LOOK AT DNA TYPING—FROM SIMPLE HUMAN IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES TO DETERMINING ANCESTRY, HAIR, EYE AND SKIN COLOR, TO PREDICTING THE SHAPE OF A SOMEONE'S FACE FROM A DNA SAMPLES. IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING OF AN EXCITING ADVENTURE REALLY."

know how well they will perform with very difficult and poor quality samples. What we are doing is putting both of the systems through tests to determine how well they perform with the different kinds of samples often encountered in missing persons cases," Hughes-Stamm said.

Current DNA identification methods require reference samples from close family members. With the potential for analyzing more markers simultaneously, the new method is believed to allow stronger identifications when close family members or large genetic family trees cannot be found.

"This technology has just taken off within the forensic

community. Massively parallel sequencing has really revolutionized the way we are starting to look at DNA typing—from simple human identification purposes to determining

ancestry, hair, eye and skin color, to predicting the shape of a someone's face from DNA samples. It's just the beginning of an exciting adventure really," said Hughes-Stamm.



FORMER CLASSMATES UNITE POWERS IN THE COURTROOM

# JUSTICE LEAGUE

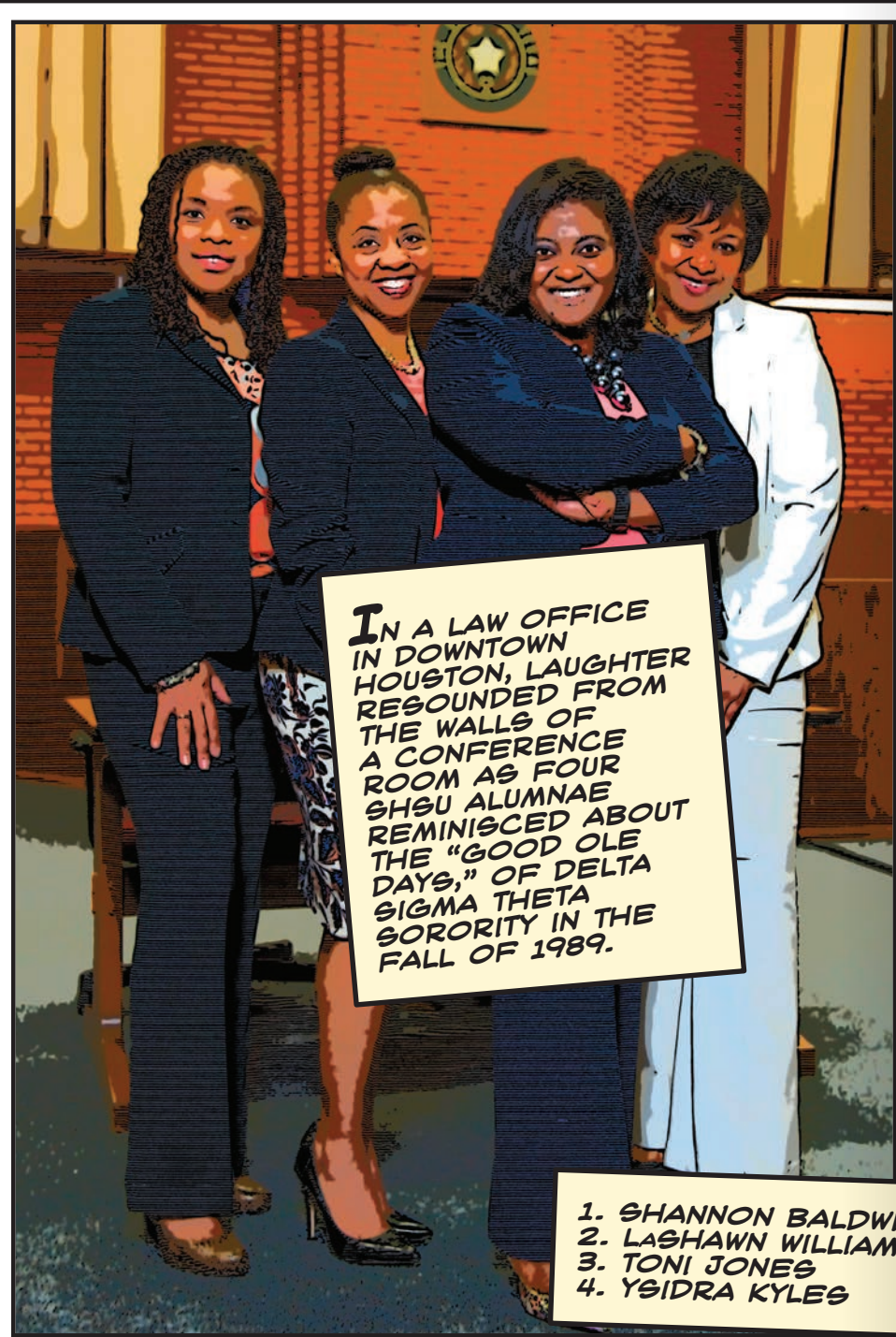
Toni Jones, Shannon Baldwin, Ysidra Kyles, and LaShawn Williams met while pledging Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in 1989. The four became instant friends, but they had no idea how strong their bond would become.

Each lady was studying law enforcement or criminal justice but never really talked about their future plans. You can imagine their surprise when Baldwin, Kyles and Williams all showed up for orientation at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Jones would attend just a few years later.

“To walk in and see faces, not just people you know, but people you had grown to love, that was an awesome feeling,” said Kyles.

After graduating, Kyles enjoyed a career with Harris County Probation while the others each became prosecutors before going into private practice. They kept in touch, asking each other for legal opinions from time to time. Years passed and their respect for each other grew immensely.

In 2015 they learned just how much they respected each other when Baldwin was appointed as a defense attorney in a very public case



1. SHANNON BALDWIN  
2. LASHAWN WILLIAMS  
3. TONI JONES  
4. YSIDRA KYLES



BROUGHT TOGETHER  
BY A PASSION  
FOR JUSTICE ...



that involved the death of a Harris County Sheriff's Deputy.

Baldwin asked her friends to put their careers on hold and help with the defense. They all agreed, which meant Kyles would have to leave her job with probation, since she was not allowed to work on a criminal case in Harris County while working there.

“We dreamed about working together in law school. We were finally getting the

opportunity,” said Kyles.

The following months were brutal as they prepared day and night for the trial. They all agree that it was also enlightening.

“What I saw was everybody has something special that they do better than anybody else,” said Baldwin.

“Shannon is the best criminal trial lawyer,” said Williams of Baldwin. “Everything she does is deliberate. Everything she

SPOTLIGHT

says, the way she moves her head or looks over her glasses, she is doing it on purpose.”

“It is always important when you are defending someone to know what the other side is going to do, and Toni has a prosecutor's brain. It is frustrating, but it is needed,” laughed Baldwin.

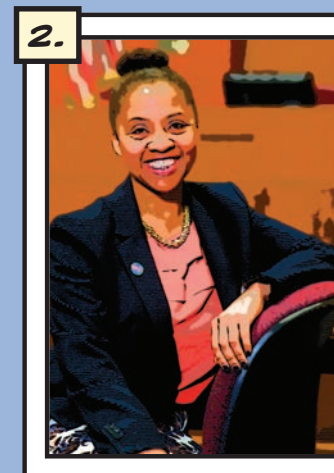
“LaShawn has a way of questioning the witness so they end up right where she wants them,” said Jones.

“And she is a research guru,” added Baldwin. “If you need a case, she can find one under a rock to help you.”

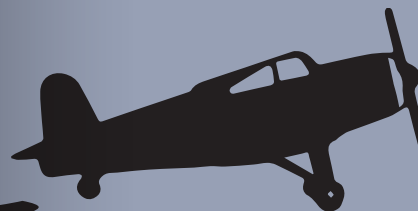
They all agree that Kyles is a human tape recorder.

“She commands the ability to remember the facts and keep things organized. It is phenomenal; she is never wrong,” said Williams.

The experience had a major impact on them all, and the ladies have decided to join forces permanently by establishing their own firm together after realizing what they have as a team is too good to separate.



SHSU SCHOLAR WORKS TO ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE



# GLOBAL CITIZEN



ALL YOU NEED IS ONE CONVERSATION WITH SHSU DOCTORAL STUDENT SLIMANE ABOULKACEM AND YOU WILL QUICKLY LEARN THE TWO THINGS MOST IMPORTANT TO HIM: FAMILY AND EDUCATION.

As a child growing up in Algeria, Aboukacem spoke Berber, the language indigenous to Northern Africa. He started learning Arabic when he began primary school and by 4th grade, he was learning French. When he wasn't studying, his mother made sure he was productive with his time; she enrolled him in Judo classes and signed him up for scout club. "She had my schedule

really packed and that taught me discipline and hard work," said Aboukacem. "I grew up doing many activities at once and now I can't do just one thing."

As an adult, the self-proclaimed multi-tasker is putting his skills to good use and driving his passion for education.

He came to SHSU in 2013 as part of the Fulbright Scholarship Program, which

places foreign graduate students in colleges across the world to take classes, teach and learn about that country's culture. Leaving his mother and siblings behind in Algeria was not easy, but he believed taking part in the prestigious scholarship program would not only provide a unique educational experience for him but could lead to other great opportunities for others.

He was right.

Along with a team of other Fulbright scholars, Aboukacem—who is now enrolled at SHSU as a doctoral student in the Department of Language, Literacy and Special Populations—submitted a proposal to the State Department and was awarded the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund to be used to enhance education in Algeria. Only 48 projects were selected among more than 800 submitted worldwide.

"What the program does is provide free training to middle, high, and even university teachers on English language pedagogy," he said.

Aboukacem's team organizes conferences at large venues and then invites teachers to a two-day event free of charge.

Aboukacem is happy with the results of the program so far and is already thinking of ways he can continue enhancing educational experiences around the world. His "dream job" is to one day work for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

"I would choose UNESCO because of the heritage and great work

AS A CHILD GROWING UP IN ALGERIA, ABOULKACEM SPOKE BERBER, THE LANGUAGE INDIGENOUS TO NORTHERN AFRICA.



they do. They are everywhere and they touch big populations. When you design a curriculum or launch a program and pass it through UNESCO, you know it is going to get to millions, not just thousands," he said.

Although he loves his home country and has grown fond of America, Aboukacem hopes his work will one day allow him to become a true global citizen.

"I want to be free to travel wherever I want to go and make sure I can spread education everywhere," he said. "That is my ultimate goal."



Slimane Aboukacem  
سليمان أبو الفاسم  
class 1411.01/03  
قسم ١٠٢/١٤١١

# HI-TECH FOR HEROES



MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE CENTER FOR THE INTREPID IN SAN ANTONIO ...

**I**MAGINE FOR A MOMENT NOT BEING ABLE TO BRUSH YOUR OWN TEETH, COMB YOUR HAIR OR FEED YOURSELF.

Associate professor of management Pamela Zelbst admits she never did until she and a group of colleagues and students made a trip to the Center for the Intrepid, a rehabilitation facility in San Antonio that treats veteran amputees and burn victims.

“We don’t have problems. When you look at these individuals, you know they have problems,” Zelbst said.

Zelbst and the others, including Honors College student Maureen Reynolds, knew they had to do something to help.

“Seeing all of the things the veterans have to go through to recover was very moving,”



Reynolds said. “I was able to realize more personally what a great need for adaptive devices there really is.”

The first thing they wanted to do was meet the needs of a female veteran who has no arms or legs.

“She simply wants to put on her own deodorant. When you think about that, it simply astounds you,” Zelbst said.

Zelbst, who runs the Center for Innovation and Technology at SHSU, knew the center’s state-of-the-art 3-D printer had the capability to print a device to help this veteran; she just wasn’t sure how to do it.

Graduate student Devon McCullough teamed up with Reynolds to start designing a product. McCullough was able to create a basic concept for the device but felt it was

## BRAINY BEARKATS TO THE RESCUE!



too large to provide the most benefits, so he called on fellow Bearkat Scott Golightly to help. The finance major surprised himself with how quickly he took to the design process, and a smaller device was completed.

“It changes you. This is one little product, and it had an intensely profound impact on somebody’s life,” Golightly said. Another reason to be excited—

they have a patent pending on their invention.

“It’s astounding,” said McCullough. “I never thought in my life I would have a patent.”

“I am very excited,” added Reynolds. “This whole experience has given me valuable insight into the world of 3-D printing, as well as contacts for future jobs.”

As for Golightly, the experience has led to a decision to pursue a degree in engineering after earning a finance degree.

“I love the idea of being a problem solver and working on tools that will help people,” he said.

The students are going to have another chance to help a veteran very soon when they create a “home kit” to meet the specific needs of a veteran as part of the Wounded Warrior project.





# Paul Ridings—Working Behind The Scenes

By Julia May



Americans love their sports teams. From T-ball to the Super Bowl, fans live from one sports season until the next, ready to absorb every detail about their favorite

athletic organization, whether the players are on the field or court, or not.

However, the information that is so critical to evaluating a player's or a program's

progress, or lack thereof, is made available by someone who will never suit up or make a play. These are the individuals who deliver "sports information."

The person at SHSU who oversees athletic public and media relations, publications, website content, statistics and historical records is Paul Ridings, associate athletic director for media services. He

serves as the primary contact for football, basketball, softball, tennis and volleyball and assists with all the other sports. He also directs publications for the university's 17 sports programs. He and his staff also enter those Bearkat scores and stats TV viewers see run across the bottom of the screen for ESPN's "Bottom Line."

Ridings joined the SHSU athletic staff as sports

"Our student-athletes have been good through the years. It's rewarding to see them grow both as players and as people. They've been good to stay in touch and come back for visits. We now even have the children of former athletes coming for their own recruitment visits. That's been fun."

information director in July 1989. He previously served as assistant athletic director at South Utah State, associate sports information director at SMU, public relations director for the Dallas Tornado soccer team, and sports information director at Trinity University.

On call 24 hours a day, Ridings is among the first to arrive at Bowers Stadium on game day and the last to leave. If an afternoon game is being televised, it's not unusual for him to arrive between 6-8 a.m. to help the television crew get settled and answer questions or handle issues that come up. During the 2015 season, all six of the Bearkat home regular-season games were televised, as well as the two playoff games, which were held at Bowers Stadium.

Even after he returns home following a game, he is still checking his story on the website for any



corrections or updates.

"I'm an early riser, so on Sunday mornings after a football or basketball game, I do as much as I can to get ready for Monday," he said. "Years of experience have taught me that Mondays are busy days at the office, so I try to get things done on Sunday so that I can hit the ground running on Monday."

The world these days expects instantaneous information and in many ways, technology has provided a quick way to disseminate the facts and figures that people want.

Ridings says he appreciates the advances, but a part of him longs for the days when expectations weren't quite so demanding, especially in terms of what it has cost.

"Back in the 'typewriter

days,' you'd type up your story after a game, run your copies off on the mimeograph machine, get in your car and drive downtown to deliver your story," he said. "You'd carry it into the sports department of whatever medium you were visiting and personally drop it off."

"Along the way, you'd visit and talk to everyone from the sports editor to the newest reporters, and it was a personal connection," he said. "Now, reporters are working out of their homes, and everything is done through email or on the phone, so you don't have the opportunity to form those relationships. I miss that."

These days after games, Ridings and his staff are putting their stories on the gobearkats.com website, thinking about social media,

putting stats on the Internet, uploading information to both the NCAA and Southland Conference websites, and identifying photos to distribute.

"The computer certainly helps to generate material more quickly," he said. "However, we have to do so much more with the information we have that it still takes a lot of time for us to complete our tasks."

Even with long hours, deadline pressure, and time on the road away from his family, Ridings readily admits there are perks and benefits to his job.

"I have a passion for sports, and I actually get paid to go to games," he said. "I also work with some really good people. I've been very fortunate here at Sam. We have a great coaching



staff and great administrators. We've been told by the media that they enjoy working with us because we are so helpful and our coaches and players are so accommodating."

He especially enjoys working with the Bearkat student-athletes.

"Our student-athletes have been good through the years," he said. "It's rewarding to see them grow both as players and as people. They've been good to stay in touch and come back for visits. We now even have the children of former athletes coming for their own

recruitment visits. That's been fun."

Arranging post-game interviews are also a part of the job. Although other members of his staff now handle the details, Riding had responsibility for those duties, as well.

"Sometimes, the coach will select the player to address the media, or our staff does," he said. "In playoff situations, the media often will ask for specific players. Most of the time, it's pretty obvious who the best people to answer questions about the game are."



**"Through the years, I've been able to meet and visit with some of my own sports heroes, such as Pete Maravich, Roger Staubach, and Dennis Raltson. I've also had the opportunity to watch quite a few famous athletes play in person."**

Addressing the media following the two losses to North Dakota State in the FCS National Championship games was particularly difficult, but Ridings said the players represented SHSU well.

"You get that far, and it's just tough to talk about the loss after a game," he said. "But the guys really came through. We've been very lucky. We've got some articulate athletes who understand that it is more important to talk to the media after a loss than it is after a win."

In 2014, Ridings was named

the recipient of the Southland Conference's prestigious Louis Bonnette Sports Media Award. The award is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution in the field of sports information, print journalism, broadcasting or other media focused on the conference or its member institutions.

He says he has too many special moments in his career to choose just one or two as favorites. However, he does acknowledge that he's enjoyed working during the national championships and the NCAA playoffs and covering activities relating to the celebration of the 100th season of football.

"Through the years, I've been able to meet and visit with some of my own sports heroes, such as Pete Maravich, Roger Staubach, and Dennis Raltson," he said. "I've also had the opportunity to watch quite a few famous athletes play in person.

"I know that my career has given me the opportunity to have some great experiences in the field that I love," he said. "It really is a lot of fun."★

## Thompson Honored By TSUS Board of Regents



To many Bearkat student-athletes, Chris Thompson is the person on campus who has most inspired them to achieve greater accomplishments, both in the classroom and in personal development, than they ever thought possible.

In recognition of her work to help those students reach their fullest potential during their collegiate years, the Texas State University System Board of Regents honored Thompson with the 2016 Regents' Staff Member Award earlier this year.

Thompson is the associate

athletic director for student services and senior women's administrator for the SHSU athletic department.

The Board of Regents annually selects an exceptional staff member from one of the eight component institutions in the system to receive the award.

The award recognizes staff who excel in six areas—commitment to the university and its mission; job competency; collegiality; duration of service; community involvement; and exceptional achievement. Thompson will

retain the title of Regents' Staff Member for life.

An SHSU tennis letter-winner, a Bearkat graduate and a member of the athletic department staff as a coach or an administrator since 1982, Thompson has touched the lives of thousands of student-athletes.

Under her direction, for the past 22 years, student-athletes have produced overall department grade point averages higher than the university's general student population. Most recently,

**"Her innovative ideas and unfailing encouragement have motivated numerous Bearkat athletes to be successful in the classroom, be role models for school children, and to be leaders in life, long after they have graduated from Sam Houston State University."**

the department produced a record high GPA of 3.22 for the 2015 fall semester. It also marked the sixth consecutive semester that student-athletes have produced a GPA of 3.0 or better.

Thompson also serves

as the CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinator, directing a comprehensive program that assists freshman student-athletes in their transition year and provides a solid foundation for their years at SHSU.

Her other areas of responsibility include student-athlete welfare; eligibility certification; student-athlete affairs course instruction; SHSU student-advisory committee liaison; FAR/Athletic Advisory Council; SHSU Lettermen's and Women's Letter-Winner Associations; and Title IX coordinator.

She has overseen the student services programs for the athletic department since 1997. As a part of the program, Bearkat athletes have contributed numerous hours of service within the community and region and have worked to positively impact young lives.

"Chris is truly deserving of this honor, not only because of all that she has personally accomplished, but also because of the difference she has made in the lives of so many students," SHSU President Dana Hoyt said. "Her innovative ideas and unfailing encouragement have motivated numerous Bearkat athletes to be successful in the classroom, be role models for school children, and to be leaders in life, long after they have graduated from Sam Houston State University."★

# Deans of Destiny



## Stacey Edmonson



## College of Education

One of the most satisfying responsibilities of serving as the dean of a college is having the opportunity to direct the founding of new programs that might sound overwhelming and risky, but can be tremendously impactful.

“Our goal is to produce the best educators of all types in the state of Texas, if not the entire United States,” said Stacey Edmonson, dean of the College of Education since 2014.

“Everything we do is designed to move us in that direction, including being engaged in some innovative areas that will help us accomplish the goal in new and exciting ways,” she said.

The college’s latest, and arguably most exciting, venture is the establishment of a charter school in Houston, which will open in 2017. Starting out as K-2, the school is approved to add grade levels to be PK-6.

“We have always done a great job preparing teachers, and now we are going to be able to give our students an even richer experience as they work with students of all different backgrounds across a large area—in a way that is unprecedented for us,” Edmonson said.

“A couple of years ago, our College of Education Leadership Team was talking about how to move forward in our mission, and someone suggested exploring the idea of a charter school,” Edmonson. “Literally, the very next day, things began to fall into place.

“We have talked with the other school

districts in the area, been working with the Texas Education Agency, and done everything possible over the past two years to ensure that we are providing enhanced opportunities for our own students, as well as making a difference in the lives of the children whom we will be teaching,” Edmonson said. “That’s what a College of Education is all about.” (For more information about the SHSU charter school, see [bit.ly/1QyhB8X](http://bit.ly/1QyhB8X).)

Although the new charter school has taken a lot of work by the college to get off the ground, Edmonson says that other new programs also are a part of the big picture, particularly the expansion of school district partnerships, and Huntsville is at the top of the list.

“We offer a tutoring program in which some of the most at-risk school children come to SHSU,” she said. “Our teacher candidates work with them, providing not only academic tutoring but socialization coaching, as well.

“We even involve our counseling education students, who come in and teach life skills,” she said.

“We feel a commitment to our community, and we really are trying to build a positive relationship in every sense of the word.”

## College of Health Sciences

Interim dean Kenneth Hendrickson is in a unique position in that he is a professor of history who has been tapped to lead a transition in the College of Health Sciences.

Rather than having a “fish out of water” outlook, he has embraced his role of leading a newly established college to its permanent life with SHSU.

“Dr. Michael Lacourse came a few years ago specifically as a founding dean, which is a very specialized line of work,” Hendrickson said. “From here, he moved on to another university to serve as provost, which aligned with his career goals, and we are all really proud of him.”

Hendrickson compares his assignment to that of building a house.

“You frame it, and you close it in to protect the interior from the weather,” he said. “Then, someone has to come in and finish it out and make it a home. The foundation has been placed, but there are

other decisions, such as flooring, colors, textures, fixtures and things like that.

“I get to be in that phase,” he said. “We are turning this college into a home.”

Hendrickson said he is particularly looking forward to new initiatives for the college, including first-year learning communities and experience outcomes; advising advancements; cross-disciplinary support opportunities; and building upon the existing culture of research and teaching excellence.

“We have also reached out to the community, looking to build and enhance an advisory board so that we can get medical practitioners and informed citizens to help us do a better job of being a good neighbor and define what we do,” he said.

One of the things that has been most valuable to Hendrickson, he said, is to sit down with the faculty and plan as a group how the college should chase its dreams.

“It’s so rare that you get a chance to step in with a group of people and create something on purpose,” he said. “In most of our careers, we come into an existing culture, and we learn to work within it.

“During this period, we have this incredible chance to sit down and think about how to take the resources that Dr. Lacourse acquired for us and plan to

use them in the years and even decades ahead,” he said.

“Just as much as I am excited about building a home for the students, I’m kind of helping to build a house for the faculty, too.”

## College of Criminal Justice

As dean of the College of Criminal Justice Phillip Lyons also serves as the director of the Criminal Justice Center, that part of the program that provides training for professionals with established careers.

“Because we are uniquely positioned with the college on one side of the house and the professional institutes on the other side, we have a rare opportunity to maximize synergies between them,” he said.

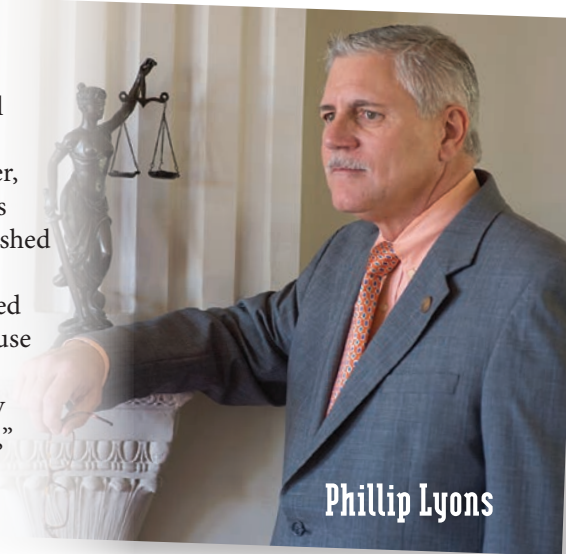
“Our professional development institutes—the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas and the Correctional Management Institute of Texas—can look to the academic side for information on the latest empirically-supported, evidence-based practices to employ in the field, while our academicians can look next door to find opportunities to conduct research and to find consumers of that research,” he said.

The partnership has worked well through the years. An article published in the March 2016 *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* ranks SHSU No. 1 in research productivity of faculty in criminal justice and criminology doctoral programs in the United States.

In addition, the partnership has extended far beyond the halls of the familiar red brick building in Huntsville, Texas. Not only does the college offer a dual degree program with the Zhejiang Police College in Hangzhou, China, but LEMIT has participated in an exchange program with professional law enforcement command staff from China, as well.

SHSU’s criminal justice program also provides community police training in Central America through the U.S. State Department, and CMIT has a relationship with the Polish prison system.

“The director of the Polish National Police forensic laboratory is a Master of Science graduate of ours,” he said. “We also have some Ph.D. graduates on the



Phillip Lyons

faculty of the Central Police University in Taiwan, and we’ve had several Ph.D. graduates who served major roles in both government and in law enforcement in Thailand.”

The field of criminal justice is ever-changing, and during his time at SHSU, Lyons has seen an increasing emphasis on security issues, particularly on homeland security.

“Global threats—from health to terrorism—do not respect borders,” he said. “Here at SHSU, we’ve done really well with our international outreach, as well as our regional outreach.

“However, I believe that we have a responsibility and an opportunity to do better with establishing and furthering a national presence,” he said.

“If we are going to be prepared to meet the needs of the United States in a decade or two, we need to ensure that the face of the criminal justice system of the future more closely matches those who are caught up in the system,” Lyons said.

“In addition to contributing to a more culturally-competent criminal justice system, which is a benefit in and of itself, we can also provide individuals who enter the criminal justice field with an opportunity to have a professional career that will improve their own lot and that of their families.”

## College of Business Administration

When a dean has been associated with a college in various roles for almost three decades, he has the opportunity to watch and participate in the growth of a successful program from its infancy throughout its development as a source of pride for the college and the university, as well.

Mitchell Muehsam came to SHSU as a faculty member in 1989. He moved through the ranks, and 20 years ago, when he was the associate dean, a gentleman named Robert Hutson visited the college to discuss an anonymous donor’s wishes to endow a Chair of Banking and initiate financial support for an academic achievement program, known as the Smith-Hutson Scholarship Program.

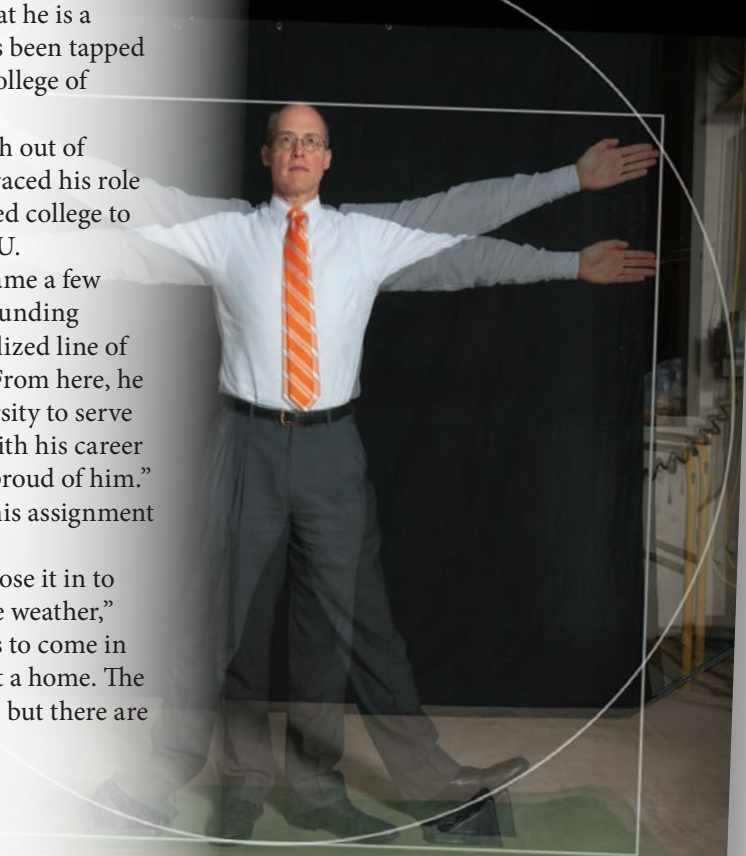


Mitchell Muehsam

“We started with a small class of scholars, and I was the adviser,” Muehsam said. “The primary criteria the donor wanted to address was financial need.

“The students come from a large

## Kenneth Hendrickson



**John Pascarella**



**College of Sciences**

The administrative responsibilities that deans must handle rarely leave them time for work in the classroom or in labs; therefore, the contact they have with students can be limited.

However, when an undergraduate student asked John Pascarella, dean of the College of Sciences, if he would be able to do a directed study with him, not only did the opportunity allow Pascarella to be involved with students' work, but it re-kindled an interest in his own research that had been on hold for awhile.

"The student was interested in ecological research, but initially, I didn't know what he could do," Pascarella said. "I told him that I had worked in pollination biology in bees, and he said he could do that."

"Recent studies have shown that native bees are very effective pollinators of agricultural crops, both in farming ecosystems, as well as in backyard gardening," he said. "Not only does preserving these bees help us in terms of agriculture, but also in terms of native plants, which in turn promotes clean water and clean air."

The student worked in the fall of 2014 and presented his results for his undergraduate research. Around the time he was to graduate, a teaching colleague asked Pascarella if he would mentor another undergraduate student who was interested in insects and pollination.

"So I allowed the new student to

continue work on the bees and pollination project," he said.

Since then, Pascarella and his student have devised another project, one involving research that stems from a collection of bees that Pascarella gathered in the Everglades 20 years ago. In fact, he has applied for a permit to collect additional samples in the Everglades this summer to conduct a genetic analysis.

Pascarella is also looking at a possible project to study plants and insects across the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast prairies.

"To be honest, I really wasn't doing any research until these students asked me to work with them," he said. "I'm happy to be able to do something for their benefit."

In addition to being able to use the research work in future endeavors, Pascarella's current student will be listed as a co-author, along with Pascarella, of a poster that he will present at the Ecological Society of America meeting this summer.

Pascarella also is working with bee professionals in Austin and Singapore to compile a checklist of Texas bees.

**College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication**



**Ronald Shields**

It didn't take long for Ron Shields to discover "pockets of excellence" across the College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication when he came to SHSU three years ago as the college's new dean, particularly in how the faculty and staff

were investing in the community and in students.

"Those glimpses showed me some of the exciting ways our college is taking SHSU beyond campus so that the heart of Huntsville can beat in tandem with the heart and the passion of the things taking place in our classrooms and our various departments," Shields said.

Since his arrival, the college has continued to invest in both community engagement and student excellence with several initiatives that support success.

In 2014, the Department of Art opened a Student Satellite Gallery in Huntsville's downtown square area, exclusively featuring student work.

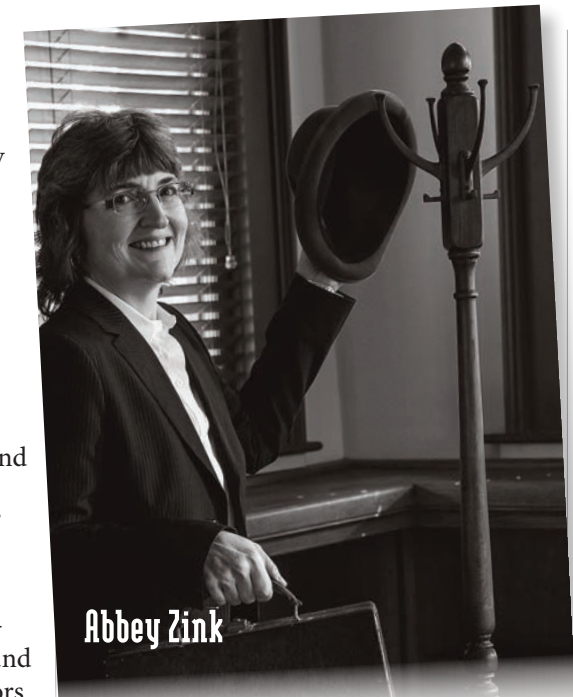
"This new location has been successful in reaching new audiences and provides a valuable source of cultural enrichment to the greater community," Shields said. "It also gives our students the opportunity to gain experience exhibiting their work publicly in a real-world setting. Our college's ambition and enthusiasm for this unique space mirrors the overall excitement and creativity of our art students and faculty."

Last fall, the college launched a community partnership with Old Town Theatre—the historic venue in the heart of downtown Huntsville—where the college has hosted several free film history presentations, a silent film concert, animation and film student showcases, as well as a children's theatre production and a dance presentation.

Over Christmas, professor of dance Dana Nicolay delivered a production of the Nutcracker to Huntsville, which was tailor-designed for the celebrated and revered Wynne Home and was well received by the community. Shields hopes to expand other partnerships with Wynne Home, such as the impressionist painting workshop the college co-sponsored with "Friends of the Wynne" this spring.

As proud as he is of his college's programs, Shields is equally dedicated to seeing that the students of his college have every opportunity to achieve excellence in their academic experiences.

He and his wife, Renee Thompson, established the SHSU Art Song Competition in 2014 as an annual event to promote student singer and collaborative



**Abbey Zink**

pianist achievement and promote degree studies that encompass vocal and piano arts. The onstage showcase features 18 to 20 student singer/pianist teams.

"The final round of the competition, a formal evening concert presented to audience members, features finalist teams and concludes with three winning teams selected by a panel of esteemed judges," Shields said. The winners receive prize money for scholarships.

"All of these are simply representative of all the exciting things taking place in our college that support community engagement and student excellence," he noted. "They are not at all exhaustive."

**College of Humanities and Social Sciences**

One of the things that made Sam Houston State University attractive to Abbey Zink when she applied for dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences almost two years ago was that it is a Carnegie, community-engaged university.

Community involvement has always been important to Zink. She

earned recognition for a partnership she coordinated between Western Connecticut State University and two local school systems that became a model in the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System. She also led the effort to form a partnership with LULAC Council No. 1 Foundation to establish the Tejano Civil Rights Museum in Corpus Christi.

"Even before I applied for the dean's position at SHSU, I was aware of the university's involvement in community engagement," she said.

"Between the Academic Community Engagement programs and the Ethics, Western Civilization and American Traditions classes offered through CHSS, I could see that the things happening at SHSU in this area were very exciting," she said.

Once she arrived at SHSU as the new dean of the college, she was caught up in the enthusiasm of several of the faculty members who share her passion.

"With their vision in place, we proceeded to explore the possibility of establishing a minor in community leadership," she said.

They approached local entities directly and asked them what attributes they were looking for in community leaders.

"They wanted individuals with good communication skills who could think critically and work well with others," she said.

The group also visited with the other deans to make sure they were not infringing on their programs. Then they collaboratively built a curriculum around the expectations.

The minor is launching this fall and will be housed jointly within the Department of Sociology and the Center for Community Engagement.

"The community leadership minor is great to pair with a liberal arts degree because it will give our students some applied skills, and they can also make a difference in their communities." ★



## ALUMNUS MAKES MAJOR DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENTS

By Romney Thomas

Preston Johnson attributes the success of his nearly 40-year career spanning multiple industries to strong core values from his parents and the education he received at Sam Houston State University.

This has driven his desire to give back and to show the university how grateful he is for the part SHSU played in launching him for career success.

“Sam Houston is a great university, and after graduating from SHSU with my undergraduate degree and from the University of Houston with my graduate degree, I’ve always made sure to give back,” said Johnson, a 1977 graduate. “Both of those schools have provided the foundation for much of what I’ve been able to do for the last 40 years.”

Johnson chose to attend SHSU to study accounting because of its sterling reputation in business and accounting.

An added bonus came from the strong relationships Johnson built during his time at SHSU, which stand out in his mind as a unique aspect of the education offered at the university.

“Sam Houston is one of the only schools that I’ve been around where students are able to get to know their faculty and the administration on a first-name basis,” Johnson said. “I think that openness and the ability to communicate and interact with people you have respect for speaks volumes about the quality of SHSU and the down-home atmosphere you find at the university.”

Those relationships and experiences directly translated into the success Johnson has enjoyed both in his professional and personal life.

Johnson’s career has included work in various industries, from chemical manufacturing, to utilities and pipelines, to exploration and production, and then oil and gas management. His final



*“If you are blessed enough to be fortunate in your own life, you should always give back and be a blessing to others.”*

assignment was in the health insurance arena as the Houston and Southeast Texas market president for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas.

“I’ve had a very good career because I’ve been able to gain experience and transfer that learning across a number of different industries,” Johnson said. “The strong educational foundation I received at SHSU has allowed me to make a difference across a broad section of business and industry. The experience and interaction I received in school was invaluable.”

Of all his career accomplishments, Johnson most treasures the opportunities he had to use his leadership skills to impact and develop others and help them reach their fullest potential.

“I’m retired but based on the relationships I’ve been able to develop over the course of my career, I’m still giving back,” Johnson said.

In addition to service with several Houston outreach organizations, Johnson gives back in numerous ways to SHSU. He has not only contributed financially to several scholarship endowments and enrichment programs that benefit various populations across SHSU, but he has been generous with his time, as well.

He established the Johnson-Brown-Perkins Family Scholarship Endowment in 2001 for students in the College of Business Administration, and in 2013, he was the speaker at SHSU’s winter commencement ceremonies for the Colleges of Business Administration, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Criminal Justice.

Currently, Johnson serves on the President’s Circle, the Sam Houston University Foundation board of trustees and the College of Business Administration advisory board.

He also has supported the Alumni Association Legacy Endowment; Bobby Kees and Colleen Ann Marks Presidential Endowment; COBA Enrichment; Department of Accounting; Department of Agricultural Sciences and Engineering Technology; John R. Ragsdale Alumni Enrichment Endowment; LET’S TALK!; Ron Mafrige Basketball Endowment; and other university scholarships.

In addition to giving back, Johnson enjoys spending time with Joslen, his wife of 37 years, and their children, Alexis and Sean.

“I tried to teach my children and all those that I’ve mentored over the years to always give back,” Johnson said. “If you are blessed enough to be fortunate in your own life, you should always give back and be a blessing to others.” ★



## Alumni Work To Build Better Futures

By Tammy Parrett

For many students at Sam Houston State University, the university motto, “The measure of a Life is its Service,” is much more than just a phrase they walk past on the way to class each day; it’s the force driving them to use their gifts to help provide others with better opportunities.

The same could be said for College of Business Administration alumni Murphy Yates and Bruce Agness and College of Sciences alumnus Tom Fordyce, who work to improve the lives of those who cannot easily help themselves.

➤ **Murphy Yates graduated from SHSU in 1992 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in management and founded Harbour Classic Homes in 1999.**

He was attending a Bay Area Builders Association board of directors meeting when fellow board member Dan Wallrath approached him with a proposition.

“Dan had remodeled a house free of charge for a wounded veteran and was now going to try and construct a new home for another deserving recipient returning from war,” Yates said. “He asked me to be a part of a small group that would collaborate as builders to get this new mortgage-free home built. I loved the idea of helping someone who had sacrificed so much in the defense of our country’s freedoms, so of course I agreed.”

Soon after, the small group of builders realized that by pooling their resources and donating some of their time and money, they could work together to build custom, mortgage-free homes for deserving veterans or families of the fallen.

Thus, Operation Finally Home was born.

The organization is responsible for locating builders who are able to work with their vendors and subcontractors



Murphy Yates



to drive the cost of materials and labor down, helping builders in fundraising efforts, and identifying an admirable recipient.

Ten years later, Operation Finally Home has built 100 houses in 26 states.

“The most rewarding part is seeing the reactions of the families who are chosen,” Yates said. “I remember in one instance, we held a fundraising event for a family, and they only knew that they were being considered to receive the house; they didn’t realize they had gotten it. They had no clue until we got them onstage, and I remember looking down to see his daughter pulling on her mother’s arm, saying ‘Momma, we got the house, we got the house!’ She was so excited, and it was a really poignant moment.”

Yates said that since many military children are used to moving a lot, these homes are often the first place they can really call their own.

➤ **Bruce Agness, like Yates, has used his talents to benefit the lives of the less fortunate.**

After graduating with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in finance, Agness began his career in the insurance business. He currently is president of Lumber Insurance Services, which he founded in 2005.

While on a church retreat in 1989, he met the man who would become his best friend, Alan Graham. Having grown up in the same community, they realized that their shared values and experiences would make a strong friendship.

When Graham asked Agness if he would like to embark on a journey for personal growth with him, Agness, along with three other friends, agreed without hesitation. Realizing that they could better serve their community, the men founded Mobile Loaves and Fishes.

“When we started Mobile Loaves and Fishes, we would get together and make a bunch of sandwiches, pile in my mini-van, and drive all over Austin delivering the sandwiches to the homeless,” Agness said.

Mobile Loaves and Fishes now owns 20 food trucks, with more than 20,000 volunteers operating in different communities across the country.

“I know we say that we go out and help those in the community, but really, our volunteers get just as much help from those we’re giving to,” Agness said. “It’s about building a one-on-one relationship with someone who might not have anyone else to turn to.”

Seeking a way to expand Mobile Loaves and Fishes, Agness and the other founding members thought of an idea to help keep some of the homeless people they’d come to know personally off of the street and provide them with opportunities to keep trying to better their lives.

They began planning Community First!, a location with sustainable and affordable housing for the disabled and chronically homeless in Austin.



Community First!, the 27-acre community will be fully operational later this year.

Through various fundraising efforts, they have raised more than \$12 million dollars for Community First!.

The 27-acre community, which Agness hopes will be fully operational later this



Bruce Agness (left) with clients at Community First!

year, offers a mix of affordable housing options, with rent ranging from \$180 to \$200 a month; a community garden and kitchen; a workshop and art gallery; a medical facility for physical and mental health screenings; an outdoor theater donated by the Alamo Drafthouse; places for worship, study and fellowship; walking trails; Wi-Fi; and a Metro bus stop.

“It’s kind of like a RV park on steroids,” Agness said. “But we wanted it to have that supportive, friendly vibe. We didn’t want to just give them a place to live; we wanted to provide them with an opportunity to build a better life for themselves. There are numerous ways to earn a living within the community—they can work in the on-site commissary, create art in the gallery or build something in the workshop to sell.”

When the community is complete, it should house approximately 250 people, according to Agness.

“I come from humble beginnings,” said Agness, who spent his free time in college working for his family’s real estate business. “I know what it’s like to need help, so I’m very proud to be able to help these people who have become like a second family to Mobile Loaves and Fishes over the years.”



Bruce Agness



The Warrior and Family Support Center

**Tom Fordyce began his journey to help veterans in 1967 in Vietnam, when a bullet ripped through his left arm while out on patrol one day. He was flown to a military hospital where he was told that his arm would need to be amputated.**

One day in 2009, while touring the Brooke Army Medical Center's Center for the Intrepid, Fordyce and two friends visited the center's Warrior and Family Support Center.

The Warrior and Family Support Center provides coordinated services to patients, next-of-kin and extended family members.

Veterans and families visit the WFSC to maintain contact with other military members or extended family members; to receive emotional support and answers to their questions; and to extend their rehabilitation away from the hospital.

"We were on the way home, and we all agreed that it was really important to us that we do something to support the facility," Fordyce said.

They held the first Walker County Wounded Warrior Banquet on Jan. 14, 2010, and were able to raise \$50,000 for the Warrior Family and Support Center.

"We were hoping that at least 200 people would show up and we'd be able to raise a couple thousand dollars, but 650 people showed up and we were able to donate \$50,000," Fordyce said.

It was very important, Fordyce said, that they were open with the people who

were donating such large amounts of money.

"We're not affiliated with the Wounded Warrior Project, because we believe that if you're donating \$100 to the center that you want \$100 to help veterans and their families," Fordyce said.

As the years have gone by, the banquet has continued to grow and, in turn, so has the amount that they are able to raise each year.

"Last year we raised \$270,000 and overall we've been able to raise more than \$600,000," he said. "Walker County is actually the single largest contributor to the Warrior and Family Support Center."

Fordyce said the most rewarding part is seeing the community come together to support the facility.

"We've had a sell-out crowd for the past four years, and it's just amazing to

see how the community supports those injured in combat, as well as amputees and burn victims and their families," he said. "We're also able to honor World War II veterans, as well as the Gold Star Mothers, who have lost a son or daughter in combat."★

Tom Fordyce



CECIL WINDSOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATION, STATE AND HIS COMMUNITY FAR OUTNUMBER HIS 100 YEARS AND COUNTING.

## A Lifetime of Service

Cecil Windsor was just 17 years old when he stepped on the campus of what was then Sam Houston Normal Institute in 1931.

He had come to Sam Houston not for an education but for a job in the brand new library in the Estill Building.

"I graduated from high school in 1931, ready to begin my life," he said. "There was only one thing for me to do, according to my older sister, and that was to find some place to get out of my little hometown. So I found a job at Sam Houston in the library."

While working in the library, Windsor decided to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering; because Sam Houston didn't have that degree program, he began taking courses that would allow him to transfer to another school to complete his degree.

But when he stepped into "Professor Joe" Pritchett's class to fulfill a mathematics requirement, Windsor's plans changed. Joseph Pritchett, the brother of former President Henry Pritchett, is the man for whom Pritchett Field was named.

"I really respected that man, even to this day," Windsor said. "He was my favorite professor, so I decided to major in mathematics. Joe Pritchett still is my favorite professor of all of the professors in all of the schools I've been to."

Several women with whom he worked at the library also had a positive impact on his life.

"The lady I worked for most was Mrs. Eliza Van Camp, who was the loan librarian," he said. "I also remember that the head librarian was a real spicy little lady; I really loved her. All the ladies I worked with had a great deal of influence upon me."

Upon graduating in the summer of 1935—a memory he holds among his fondest at Sam Houston—he entered the workforce as a teacher.

When World War II erupted, Windsor's public teaching career ended, but he was able to use his

experience and skills as part of the war effort.

"As a mathematics major, I was selected by the Army Air Force to attend an aviation career program that produced meteorologists," he said. "Because I was a teacher, I taught meteorology to pilots for about two years in the Air Force."

Following the war, he and two others moved to Yoakum County and established a seismic exploration company for oil and gas. After 15 years, they sold the company and Windsor took a job with the Texas Department of Transportation, where he eventually became a district auditor.

At the age of 87 he retired, but it didn't slow him down; he continued to run an accounting and tax business that he operated for about 20 years.

Windsor also remained active in his



Cecil Windsor and his wife Bernice recently celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary.

community, serving on the Yoakum ISD School Board, helping to build the first little league field, chairing the local Cub Scout Pack, and working within his church.

In 2011, the Yoakum Chamber of Commerce recognized him with the "Lifetime Community Service Award," and in 2014, to celebrate his 100th birthday, the Yoakum mayor declared his birthday, Feb. 13, "Cecil Windsor Day."



Throughout it all, Windsor attributes Sam Houston for providing a solid education and opening several doors.

*“Don’t spend your life looking for something – like what you have.”*

“Without Sam Houston, I couldn’t have accomplished, I don’t think, any of these things. Because of my degree in mathematics, I was able to become a meteorologist and because of my degree I was able to go into the seismic business,” he said. “So I would say that my education at Sam Houston was the biggest of all my accomplishments.”

Not only did Windsor turn 102 this year, but he and wife Bernice Poteet recently celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary. Poteet studied education at Sam Houston in the 1940s, and the two met through a Sam Houston connection.

“There was a young man who lived in North Zulch (Poteet’s hometown) who was a basketball player—Manuel Cole. He was a friend of mine, and when he came home for visits, he helped me with coaching,” Windsor said. “Manuel introduced me to Bernice, and from then on, it was between Bernice and me. It was about nine months or so after we had met that we mutually decided that this would be a real good union between us, and it has so proved because we have been together for 75 years.

“I could not have made it without her, and I am happy and proud of my wife.”

These days, the Windsors can be found in Tennessee,

where they moved at the end of January. He spends his days doing odd jobs around the house, exercising and utilizing his computer.

“I make contact with other people through e-mail, I use the Internet to get my news and daily information, and I play a lot of games on the computer,” he said. “The computer has been my contact with the outside world; that thing has been a joy to me and is a good source.”

While he attributes his longevity to good family genes, particularly on his mother’s side, his positive outlook on life certainly contributes to his wellbeing.

“I have found that whatever you do, whatever profession you get into, or whatever is pointed in your direction, do your best to like what you’re doing,” he said. “Don’t spend your life looking for something; like what you have.

“You will find that works better than anything else. Live for the moment, and I think you’ll find yourself in a pretty good position anywhere along the way.”★

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### COLORS OF NEW ENGLAND

8 Days – 10 Meals  
October 2 – 9, 2016

**Highlights:** Boston, Woodstock, Quechee Gorge, Stowe, Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream Factory, Rocks Estate, North Conway, Lake Winnepesaukee Cruise, Kancamagus Highway, Boothbay Harbor, Lobster Dinner

**Travel By:** Collette Vacations



### NEW YORK ALUMNI & FRIENDS TRIP

4 Days - 3 Nights  
December 13 – 16, 2016

**Highlights:** Experience NYC during the holiday season. Includes round trip air and limo transportation, lodging at the Sheraton NY Times Square, Bearkat welcome reception on December 13 and reception and dinner at the ‘21’ Club on December 14.

**Travel By:** SHSU Alumni Association



### SOUTH PACIFIC WONDERS

18 Days – 23 Meals  
March 14 – 31, 2017

**Highlights:** Dinner cruise of Sydney Harbour, visit to a Canterbury farmyard to observe a sheep shearing demonstration, scenery of the New Zealand fjords on a cruise of Milford Sound, excursion to the Great Barrier Reef, City Tour of Sydney, explore New Zealand, Mount Cook, and more.

**Travel By:** Collette Vacations

\*Single room and triple room rates also available.

For more information visit [alumni.shsu.edu](http://alumni.shsu.edu) or call the Office of Alumni Relations at 936.294.1841

# Where Are They Now?

**Sam Houston State University alumni are doing interesting things with their degrees. Take a moment to see where life has taken them after graduation.**

plays against the Harlem Globetrotters—and then with the International Basketball League’s San Diego Stingrays.

Dillard became involved with the Generals “by total chance” but saw it as a fun opportunity. Through the Globetrotters, he was able to travel the world for about seven months.

“Coach Steve Spurlin, who was an assistant coach at Sam Houston, knew someone at the Globetrotters organization who then put me in contact with the Washington Generals,” he said. “They asked me for a tape of me playing and then asked if I wanted to go on tour.

“It was so much fun. I didn’t have any responsibilities or stress; we had to lose,” he said, with a smile. “I made some great friends with whom I still stay in touch. I don’t actively tell people about my experience with the Globetrotters/Generals, but it definitely turns into a conversation when they find out.”

Within a couple of years, he had married Krisha Hatch, had son Trey, and started a new venture—fundraising.

Like with the Generals, Dillard hadn’t planned on going into fundraising when he took a job in the field, but it worked out, because in 2000, he started a fundraising company in Tucson to assist high school sports programs. Sixteen years later, the company has worked with more than 2,500 Arizona athletics groups to raise more than \$10 million.

“I maintain my career in fundraising because I absolutely love to work with coaches and help motivate young people to do things they don’t think they can do,” he said. “I get to make a difference in a child’s ability to participate in sports, and that is awesome. It gives me an opportunity to give back daily.”

Dillard and his family live in Oro Valley, Arizona, where they enjoy being active, watching Trey play sports, traveling the world, attending Arizona State football games, and serving the community.

“I have had the privilege to volunteer in many capacities, whether it be time or money, in America and Mexico,” he said. “It’s very important to give back to the community.”

Among those who have benefited from his generosity are Tucson and Mesa community food banks; New Beginnings for Women; Casa de Elizabeth Orphanage; Habitat for Humanity; Families Helping Families; UNICEF; Aviva; Devereux Foster Kids; Special Olympics of Arizona; Wounded Warrior Project; Casa Del Los Ninos; Gospel Rescue Mission; Big Brothers Big

Sisters; and numerous Southern Arizona high school sports programs, just to name a few.

Though he doesn’t work in the field in which he earned his degree, Dillard said his time at SHSU has been valuable in making him who he has become today.

“My education at Sam Houston was more of a real life education; it taught me how to interact with people on a daily basis,” he said. “I have always been a people person, and I really came out of my shell when I arrived at Sam Houston.”



## STEVE SELTZER '77

During his time at Sam Houston State, Steven Seltzer learned four things that have carried him through his life and career.

“I learned how to value relationships, to have courage in your convictions, to have personal responsibility and to capitalize on networking opportunities,” he said.

The 1977 graduate earned his bachelor’s degree in education and fondly recalls the friendships he made as among his best memories.

“While at SHSU, I made many of the friends with whom I’m still in contact today,” he said. “They include my Sigma Chi fraternity brothers, who are life-long friends.”

They also include some of his favorite educators, English professor William Fleming, health department chair Ruth Cady and the late Elliott T. Bowers, who was president of SHSU and for whom Seltzer had worked during the summers.

“Doc’ Fleming was our fraternity adviser, as well as my English professor. His caring attitude about his students was very genuine and had a lasting effect,” Seltzer said. “He was able

to connect on all levels with his students. I am fortunate to still see him on a regular basis on my visits to Huntsville.

“Dr. Cady was one of my first professors at Sam and one of my all-time favorites,” he continued. “She saw my potential early on and had a tremendous impact on my adjusting to college life.”

Since graduating, Seltzer has worked in the commercial real estate investment field for 35 years, now serving as chief operating officer and executive vice president for TPMC Realty Corporation in Houston.

In addition to his work with TPMC Realty, he is a board member of the Houston Fire Fighters Foundation, which raises money independently for the Houston Fire Department; is an active member of the Houston Office Leasing Brokers Association; has served as a past president of the Houston Building Owners and Managers Association and held a board position on the Texas Building Owners and Managers Association; and has worked for more than 15 years in raising more than \$1 million with three Harris County Judges for Harris County Children’s Protective Services.

“I was fortunate to be on the ground floor of the opening of the BeAR Room (Be A Resource) for CPS Kids with former First Lady Laura Bush,” he said. “I knew early on in my college life and career that volunteering would play a major role. I enjoy giving back to my community and helping those who cannot help themselves.”

At SHSU, Seltzer is a Life Member of the SHSU Alumni Association, is a Bearkats in Business sponsor and is active with the Sigma Chi Alumni Association. He also served for three

**“The word alumni stems from the Latin *alere*, ‘to nourish or be nourished.’ Being associated with the Alumni Board of Directors and our great university nourishes that need.**

years on the SHSU Alumni Board of Directors.

“One of the best decisions in my life was attending SHSU. It made such a great impact on me not only from an educational perspective but a personal one, as well,” Seltzer said. “Giving back to the university and alumni association not only financially but spiritually should be an objective for all alumni.

“The word alumni stems from the Latin *alere*, ‘to nourish or be nourished,’” he continued. “Being associated with the Alumni Board of Directors and our great university nourishes that need. I, like many SHSU alumni, bleed orange and white.” ★



## MICHAEL DILLARD '98

Like many students, Michael Dillard chose to attend Sam Houston State University because of the people and the environment. But unlike many students, Dillard also came to SHSU to play basketball.

Following his graduation in 1998 with a degree in broadcast journalism, Dillard took a shot at professional ball, playing for one year with the Washington Generals—the team that

# CLASS NOTES

**E. L. "Scottie" Scott, '57 and '65**, recently qualified for the 2017 Texas Senior Games in badminton for ages 80-84, which is a qualifier for the National Senior Games in Birmingham, Alabama. Scott has won two gold, two silver, two bronze and fourth place in previous nationals.

**Linda Bowers Rushing, '64**, serves as the president of the Walker County Alumni Club. The Walker County Alumni & Friends Club holds regular monthly meetings and activities for area alumni and friends. The club is active in providing service and financial support to the community, students and the university.

**Lindsay Siriko, '76**, was recognized for his 30 years of service with the Houston Police Department during the Mayor's Service Awards Reception in June 2015 for City of Houston employees. During the



event, Siriko was presented a certificate from HPD executive assistant chief M. A. Dirden and former Mayor Annise Parker (pictured, with Siriko). Siriko is a graduate of the SHSU College of Criminal Justice's master's program and is a Life Member of the SHSU Alumni Association. He retired from the HPD as a senior police officer.

**Charles "Chuck" Jones, '81**, a leader in the auto finance community, recently served as a speaker at the 15th Annual Auto Finance Summit conference in Las Vegas.

**Ron DeLord, '82**, a master's graduate in police science and administration,

recently published his fifth book, "Eternity at the End of a Rope."

**Jody Addy, '90**, was recently named the "Lane Murray Excellence in Education" (teacher of the year) winner for the Windham School District. WSD serves the Texas Department of Criminal Justice offender population. Addy works with offenders at the Robertson Unit in Abilene, teaching a computer-assisted literacy course to help prepare students for GED testing and to ready themselves for future employment. She is a 20-year veteran of correctional education. WSD employs more than 550 certified teachers at 92 prison and state jail sites.

**Jeffrey Whitney, '96**, was recognized with the 2014 Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Award for "Excellence in Investigation." Whitney, who works as a special agent for the State



Department, was the only individual recipient that year, a recognition deputy assistant IG for investigations Wesley Kilgore called "very well deserved." The award was presented by the attorney general in Washington, D.C., for his "outstanding investigative efforts in an extremely adverse environment" for his "investigations supporting contingency operations in Southwest Asia and the protection of high-risk department resources against fraud, waste and abuse" in Afghanistan, according to the award.

**David L. Bohmfalk, '00**, recently released his book "The Crossbow and the Beret." Bohmfalk, a disabled veteran and former police chief, is planning a stop at SHSU during a future book-signing tour.

**Dhwani Chauhan, '10**, opened his new store, Bearkat Junction in Huntsville. Chauhan also is employed with Texas A&M University in the Office of Institutional Advancement.

**Ayomide Shittu, '11**, an Alumni Association Life Member, graduated in 2015 from the University of Texas School of Law. Shittu recently joined the Houston office of the law firm of Thompson & Knight, LLP. Her specialization is in bankruptcy and restructuring.

**The SHSU Ag Alumni Board** held its annual social this past summer in Waco with more than 300 attendees. The Ag board



Pictured is department chair Stanley Kelley (far right) and the Ag Alumni Board.

sponsored live and silent auctions that benefitted outreach activities by the SHSU Department of Agricultural Sciences and Engineering Technology and student organizations. ★



2016 Alumni Board: EXECUTIVE BOARD: Ray Burgess '75, Roland Black '61, Rick Hanna '79, Bryan Brown '89, Wayland Rawls '95, and Leanne Woodward '74 and '78; BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Joe Amato '72, Jonathan Amato '08, Michael Bakewell '06, David Brady '89, Barbara Bright '61, Chance Brown '00, Conrell Brown '75, Justin Burnett '02, Ronny Carroll '65, Jason Culpepper '99, Jim Ferris '69, Walter Fitzgerald '79, Billy Goeke '80, Brian Hall '88, Jean Hendricks '82, Sam Kennedy '83, Todd Kercheval '97, Estella Koryciak '71, Larry Larrison '77, Kyle Lehne '94, Joel Michael '90, Rebecca Mohr '83, Rissie Owens '80, Mike Pavelka '96, Will Peltier '97, Ken Ross '81, Charlene Sandel '83, Troy Thompson '87, Mary Ellen Thornton '64 and '68, Chris Tritico '83, Ryan Weber '09 and '10, and Tameka Williams-Bruce '99.



# 2016 SHSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TAILGATE SPONSORSHIPS



The 2016 SHSU football season is fast approaching! The Alumni Association is proud to be a part of this honored tradition and look forward to you joining us in the excitement for both home and away games.

The Alumni Association provides food and beverages to alumni, students, and friends before each game to encourage a great Bearkat tailgate atmosphere.

Sponsor packages are listed below:

White Sponsor: \$250

Orange Sponsor: \$500

Bearkat Sponsor: \$1,000

Touchdown Tailgate Season Underwriter: \$2,500

For more information visit [alumni.shsu.edu](http://alumni.shsu.edu). We request all commitments be made prior to August 1, 2016 to ensure adequate time in preparation of tailgate signage and displays.

Thank you for your support and consideration. **GO BEARKATS!**

## 2016 Bearkat Football Schedule

(Orange denotes home game)

*Sat., Sep. 3	OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE
*Sat., Sep. 17	@ Lamar (Beaumont, TX)
*Sat., Sep. 24	@ Houston Baptist University (Houston, TX)
*Sat., Oct. 1	@ SFA - Battle of the Piney Woods (NRG Stadium)
*Sat., Oct. 8	@ Incarnate Word (San Antonio, TX)
*Sat., Oct. 15	ABILENE CHRISTIAN - HOMECOMING
Sat., Oct. 22	@ Nicholls (Thibodaux, LA)
*Sat., Oct. 29	TEXAS SOUTHERN - BEARKAT FAMILY WEEKEND
*Sat., Nov. 5	MCNEESE STATE - PINK OUT
Sat., Nov. 12	@ Northwestern State (Natchitoches, LA)
*Sat., Nov. 19	CENTRAL ARKANSAS

\*Indicates Alumni Association pre-game tailgates



# IN MEMORIAM

Edith Evelyn (Bibens) Bruns '35  
 Lula Florene (Adams) Little '40  
 Brownie Alice (Neason) Burwell '40, '55  
 Viola Margaret (Weiss) Arnold '41, '68  
 Bryan Newton Cooney '42, '51  
 William Wilson Newberry '43  
 Thelma (Rosser) Terry '43, '50  
 Bennie Mildred (Reese) Beaver '44  
 Mary Lou (Shannon) Bryant '46  
 Shirley Carolyn (Smith) Bernardino '46  
 Edna Kathleen (Adams) Riley '46  
 Doris Jean Martin '47  
 Thomas Marion Branyon Jr. '48, '49  
 Stansyl (McBay) Watson '48  
 Donald Ray Mathis '48  
 Hazel Mildred (Cooper) Schlegel '48  
 James Elwin Farris '48, '60  
 Dorothy Claire (Sullivan) Poindexter '48  
 Willard H. Backhaus '49, '49  
 James Lanier Gibson '49 '50  
 Louis Ross Gant Jr. '50  
 Geraldine (Mittanck) Luetge '50  
 Jesse Curtis Vermillion '50  
 Coloma Dell Lafferty '50, '53  
 Johnnye (Carter) Devereaux '50, '63  
 Doyalton Dan Dominey '50, '56  
 Paul William Jury Sr. '50  
 Billy Gene Hamilton '51  
 Natha Lee (Tarwater) Lovell '51  
 John Earl Hahn '51  
 Thomas Jackson Risinger '51  
 Betty Marie (Goeddertz) Cowan '51  
 Robert Wiseman Fitch '51, '56  
 William Roque Halloran '51, '53  
 William Platt McLaughlin '51, '56  
 Joseph Paul Schwander III '51  
 Jean Elizabeth (Carter) Dabney '51, '69  
 Muriel Gwendolyn (Cruse) Knotts '52, '70  
 John Anthony Lampson '52  
 Joseph Wright Griggs '52  
 Benny Nelson Peal '53  
 Donald Glenn Russell '53  
 Betty June (Arnold) Maranto '54 '57

Albert Gayle Smith '54  
 Don Temple Jobes Jr. '54  
 James Albert Hughes '55  
 Barbara Ann (Ballard) Buckow '55  
 Van Buren Hereford Jr. '55  
 Gladys (Felts) Dickison '55  
 Frank J. Robinson, Sr. '55  
 Ira David Gilmore '56  
 James Claiborne DeShong '56  
 William Edwin Lowe '56  
 William Charles Byers '56  
 Murdelle Collins (McDonald)  
 Thomas '56, '57  
 Shirley Ann (Taylor) O'Brien '56  
 James Muriel Salmon '56  
 James Street '57  
 Johnnie Alex Elfarr '57  
 Margaret Ann Westmoreland '58, '62  
 Jack Paul Cox '58  
 Betty Lee (Taylor) Hill '59  
 Nicolas Gonzales Jr. '59  
 James Alvin Hayley '59  
 Kenneth Neal Hull '59  
 Doris Marie (Young) Lowery '59, '64  
 William John Durham '60  
 Ray Dixon Langston '60, '64  
 Archie Raymond Anderson Jr. '60  
 Donald Herbert Muery '60, '71  
 Randall James Holloway '60, '66  
 Billy James Griffis '60  
 Roy A. Champiomont '60  
 David Lawrence Trotti '61  
 Robert Otto Hueske '61  
 Eugene Edgar Spiser '62  
 Harold Louis Heidemann '62  
 Lynda Lee (Buffington) McCreary '62  
 Robert Charles Smith '63  
 Bennie Lee Kennon '63  
 Alice Sharon (Price) Powell '63  
 James Roy Bunner Jr. '63  
 Garvin Farris Alfrey '63  
 Rex Boynton Smith Jr. '64  
 Emily Ruth (Buffington) Robinson '64, '93

Sandra Elan Lou Fleckenstein '64  
 Pauline (Stichler) Elliott '64  
 Johnny Everett Wilson Jr. '64  
 Thomas Steve Wall '64  
 Mary Ursula (Habermacher) Ekvall '65  
 Robert Lee Dunning Sr. '65  
 Susan Jane (Schember) Holtkamp '65  
 Woody R. Cunningham '66  
 Mattie (Moore) Ehler '66, '75  
 Patsy Ann (Akin) Hutto '67  
 William Sprott Neumann '67  
 William Lee Rathke '67  
 Gale (Tilotta) Streetman '68  
 Max Gene Hulse '68  
 Noe Guerra '68  
 Cheryl Lucile (Neumann) Snyder '69  
 Lewis Harold Walker Jr. '69  
 Tommie Lynn Gillen '69  
 Anna Margaret (Winningham) Riggs '69  
 John Dwain Barnes '69  
 Tommy Edward Yates '70  
 Mary Ellen (Kettler) Bruce '70  
 David Hurston Adams '70, '72  
 Virginia Ann Ennis '70  
 Allen Ray Mueller '70  
 Wilburn Furn Foster Jr. '70  
 Lyn Hall Levens '70  
 Johnny Don Duke '70  
 J. Edward Sydow '71  
 Sari Lynn (Reber) Cockrell '72  
 John Ross Martin III '72  
 Leonard Eston Betts '72, '75  
 Mary Lou (Hiatt) Dunn '72  
 Bobby Dean Warren '73  
 Sue M. (Holt) Greene '73  
 William C. Mullan '73  
 Bertha Ruth (Warden) Hutto '74  
 Dick Kent Erwin '74  
 Mary Elizabeth (Sudie) West '74  
 Daniel Lee Taylor '74  
 Frank Lee Schwab '74  
 Blaine Paul Stepp '75  
 David Orien Garrett '75

Jean (Shaddix) Baggett '75  
 Jon Dicksona Eikel '75  
 Anita (Morris) Dent '76  
 James August Compis '76  
 Bobby Lee Jackson '76  
 Doris Lorraine (Harms) Matthys '76  
 Dale Andrew Nicholson Jr. '77  
 Stephen Sheridan Graeter '78  
 Roy Kent Westmoreland '78  
 Ford Hal Bazar '78  
 Robert Gregory Oshel Jr. '80  
 Betty Ann (Harris) Daniel '80  
 Richard H. Travis '81  
 Richard Naylor Colegrove Jr. '81  
 Kenneth Sloan Haynie '82  
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 Ramon Rodriguez '82  
 Shirley Ann (Davis) Harper '82  
 Cheryl Denise (Brown) Luke '83  
 Judy (Enos) Smelley '84  
 Brian Gene Young '84  
 Mark Allen Kelley '85  
 Ann (Webb) Galatas '85  
 Daniel Thomas Ortego '85  
 Dwayne William Hohlt '86  
 Marilyn Yvonne (Gatlin) Bryant '86  
 Donald Ray Adams '87  
 Dawn René (Andrews) Sutter '87  
 Josephine A. (Duplantis) Howell '89  
 Robert Joseph LeBlanc '89  
 Timothy Clayton Smith '93  
 Kenneth Alan Wilkinson '95  
 Duane Edward Sterling '95  
 Jalani M. Sanders '98  
 Chad Lenz '98  
 Melissa Ann (Vodovar) Wofford '00, '03  
 Kyle Bernard Ognoskie '01  
 Karen Kaye (Elliott) Hurst '01  
 Sean David Hill '02  
 Eric Louis Taylor '08  
 Candice Nichele Wise '11  
 Heather Dunavan (Munro) Thompson '12  
 Jason Thomas Westmoreland '13



Jimmy Hayley, '59 BBA, died on Feb. 6. The La Marque High School graduate remained connected with SHSU throughout the years even after he received his degree.

He was active in the SHSU Alumni Association and was appointed to the first of two terms as a member of the Texas State University System Board of Regents in 1999.

A member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, Hayley enjoyed getting together with his fraternity brothers at least twice a year.

After graduating from SHSU, Hayley spent almost three decades in the savings and loan industry. In addition to the dozens of small businesses whose doors he helped open in the community, Hayley was credited with brokering many of the biggest economic development projects in Texas City and La Marque.

He also used his statewide influence to help steer legislation that helped chambers of commerce across the state and created a pro-business environment.

Hayley was a lifelong champion of his

community. In addition to his many years of service as president of the Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce, he was a member of the board of the Galveston County Historical Foundation, the Galveston County Historical Museum, the United Way-Galveston County Mainland, the Rotary Club of Texas City, the Bay Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and was an active member of the St. John's United Methodist Church.

He also spent almost three decades as a member of the La Marque school board, including three years as board president.

A celebration of his life was held Feb. 13 at the Charles T. Doyle Convention Center in Texas City.

# Heritage



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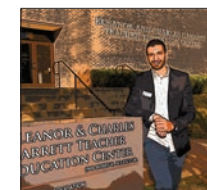


Every day, SHSU faculty, students and alumni harness their talents to emerge as heroes in their service to others.  
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## 1 Heroes of SHSU

Meet some of the everyday SHSU heroes who are making a world of difference around the globe

- *Skysoldier Travis Watson*
- *Art Warrior Davis McTier*
- *Dr. DNA Sheree Hughes-Stamm*
- *Justice League Lawyers*
- *Hi-Tech for Heroes with Pamela Zelbst*
- *Global Citizen Slimane Aboulkacem*



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 Chris Thompson



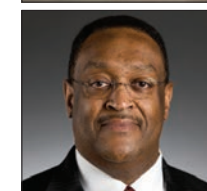
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Building Better Futures  
 Cecil Windsor  
 Class Notes; In Memoriam



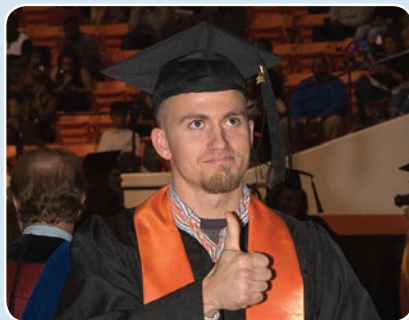
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Your annual \$35 membership gives you the power to make a difference, so students may pursue their dreams.

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Our Alumni Association membership is at an all-time high approaching 12,000 active members, including more than 2,800 Life Members.