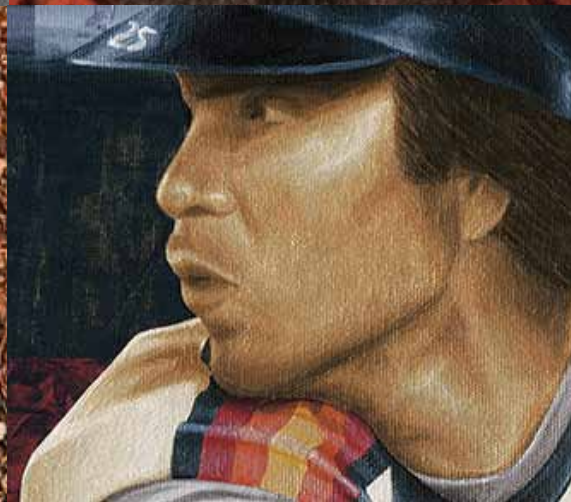


CARDINAL

CADENCE

THE MAGAZINE OF LAMAR UNIVERSITY

VOL. 52, NO. 2 | LATE SPRING 2024





| FROM THE **PRESIDENT** |

The Honorable Jeff Branick '81 and Sherrie Branick '81, left, President Jaime Taylor and Tammy and Scott Crutchfield at Le Grand Bal 2024.

Many of you know my background lies in computational physics. For nearly 40 years, I've been fascinated by things that are too small, too large or too fast to be directly observed, like the atom, the universe or the behavior of photons (particles of light). Computational physics allows us to create simulations of the things we can't see, revealing their surprising beauty or complexity.

This yearning to understand the world at a new level—isn't that what links science and art? At its core, higher education fosters this very curiosity. In any field, critical thinking is fundamental. The scientist thrives by testing established theories and the artist by pressing a different point of view upon a conventional way of seeing. This constant search for new angles of understanding is what fuels discovery and innovation in all disciplines.

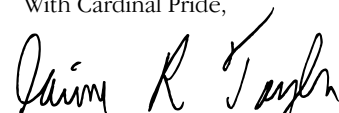
Take John Alexander, a 1968 alumnus, whose story (and paintings) are featured in this issue of *Cardinal Cadence*. His art ranges from landscapes to social and political satire. The contrast is jarring but instructive. His work makes us question what we think we see in the world around us. Then there's Keith Carter '70, a master photographer who captures Southeast Texas in a way that throws off our first impressions. He shoots familiar scenes from unique angles or in unusual, mystic lighting. The animals, the people, the objects, the Texas landscape itself – they're all there, but something's off. And it's that otherworldliness that helps us see something new.

As Distinguished Alumni of Lamar University, both John Alexander and Keith Carter are just two examples of the amazing artists Lamar University has nurtured and whose passion for their craft has captivated audiences far and wide. Their journeys began here, fueled by our talented faculty and a vibrant artistic environment. Their success is a testament to both their own talent and Lamar's commitment to fostering creativity in all its forms.

As you read through this issue, please take a moment to appreciate the incredible artistic talent Lamar University helps to cultivate. From established masters to up-and-coming artists to donors and curators, you'll see the power of art to inspire, challenge and make us see the world in a whole new light.

Lamar thrives because of its diverse group of talented individuals. We may not all speak the same language, but we share a passion for excellence, where all forms of creativity and discovery can flourish.

With Cardinal Pride,


Jaime R. Taylor, President



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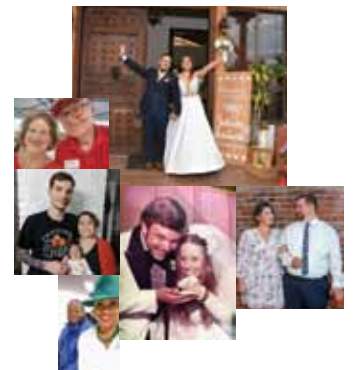
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Cardinal Love Stories



Eye and

instinct

by Kim Steinhagen

Lamar University's public art collection recently increased its holdings of art by over 30 percent with a generous gift of artwork from Houston art dealer Betty Moody. This impressive gift of art is the largest given to the collection that was started in 2014. Betty Moody, an icon in the Texas art world, is highly respected by artists, collectors, museum curators and her peers. She has been recognized with Lifetime Achievement Awards by the Houston Art League in 2019 and the Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art in 2021, and she received a Legend Award from the Dallas Visual Art Center in 2000.



Making Rhymes of Yesterday
Michael Kennaugh
2015 ★ Oil on canvas
*Gift of Betty Moody in
memory of Clint Willour and
Reid Mitchell*

Moody founded her eponymous gallery in 1975 with a focus on artists living and working in Texas. Her business acumen, attention to detail and ability to connect clients with art is unsurpassed. Moody's brilliant smile and welcoming demeanor make every visitor to her gallery feel like the most important person in the room. She has a discerning eye for art and can talk about it in a way that makes it accessible to everyone. As testament to her expertise, most of the artists she has represented over the years have had their work placed in prestigious museum and public art collections throughout the state and beyond.

Moody is drawn to artists who have creative personal visions and a commitment to their practice of making art. "The materials that they use to make art really don't matter to me. I work with artists who paint, photograph, sculpt, draw, make art with found objects or commercially made materials, make videos—essentially any materials—as long as the artist makes it well and the art has soul and meaning," she said. "I also look for a personal connection—I need to be able to talk honestly about the art with the artist." In reflecting on the evolution of her career, Moody stated, "I was an art major, primarily art history, in college, moved to Houston in 1968, worked in galleries, opened my own gallery in 1975, and, over the years, I have learned to trust my instincts."

Moody's connection to Beaumont runs deep. Many of her artists have been selected for exhibition at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas (AMSET). The museum has also purchased work from Moody Gallery, as has Lamar's Public Art Committee. In fact, the first purchase for Lamar's public art collection came from Moody Gallery. In 2014 Lamar's newly formed art committee, composed at the time of Nancy Evans, Kim Steinhagen and Donna Meeks, visited the gallery to see an exhibition of Michael Kennaugh's new

paintings. Moody recalled of the acquisition, "Michael graduated from Lamar University so it was only fitting that his painting be the first to be purchased for this new collection." Moody was intrigued by Nancy Evans' vision to enhance campus life with a public art collection and with her ability to identify sites that would be appropriate for art. Moody said of the Public Art Committee co-chairs, "Nancy's vision and Kim's knowledge and curatorial skills were the perfect combination to select and begin to form a stunning public art collection. After Nancy passed away in 2018, Kim has continued to carry on her legacy with vision, curatorial knowledge, scholarship and professional leadership."

Most of the works in the recent Moody gift to Lamar came from the estate of her close friend Clint Willour, longtime curator of the Galveston Art Center. Willour had a major impact on the careers of Texas artists and organized over 1,000 exhibitions in his lifetime. Willour toured Lamar's public art collection with Moody in 2019 and was so impressed that he offered to donate some art from his personal collection. Willour passed away in 2021 and Moody did not forget his wishes. When Willour's husband Reid Mitchell died the following year, Moody inherited the full collection of art owned by the couple. Moody explained, "Clint Willour and Reid Mitchell were very dear friends of mine for 45 years. They left all the art to me and, following what I know Clint would have done, I am giving it all away to institutions who will be excellent stewards. Clint was the epitome of philanthropy—he gave to major museums and universities throughout Texas."

Moody has dispersed works to the Menil Collection, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, AMSET and Lamar University. She is enthusiastic about the continued growth and direction of the LU Public Art Collection and commented that it "is recognized



Dilthro
 Otis Jones (b. 1946)
 1982 ★ Acrylic on carved wood
*Gift of Betty Moody in memory of
 Clint Willour and Reid Mitchell*

as one the best university collections in Texas. It is curated and has become a role model for other university collecting.” She wanted to give works to Lamar because Clint “had great respect for the collection that had been assembled at Lamar University. He knew the art would be placed in appropriate public and private areas (nothing stored) so that the work could be seen by students and faculty and visitors for all to enjoy.”

Steinhagen and her committee selected 20 works by 13 artists from the options available. In addition, Moody gave two pieces from her own personal collection: a Keith Carter photograph of Walden Pond and a large landscape painting by Houston artist Bob Camblin. Some of the highlights of the gift from the Willour/Mitchell estate include two whimsical, welded steel sculptures by New York artist Peter Reginato, a playful drawing by abstract expressionist Robert Natkin, a carved and painted wooden totem by Texas artist Otis Jones and a classic Earl Staley acrylic on canvas painted in Italy after Staley won the coveted Prix de Rome prize in 1981. In addition, Lamar now owns a second Michael Kennaugh painting from his 2015 *Locus in Quo* exhibition. The gift also includes a number of unframed works for which Steinhagen plans to raise framing funds. These wonderful works of art will be placed in various buildings throughout the campus to be enjoyed by students, faculty and visitors to campus. Details about each work soon may be found at lamar.edu/publicart.

N Earl's Backyard
 Bob Camblin (1928-2010)
 1977 ★ Oil on canvas
*Gift of Betty Moody in honor of
 Kim Steinhagen*



Grotesquery with Nine Landscapes
 Earl Staley (b. 1938)
 1983 ★ Acrylic on canvas
Gift of Betty Moody in memory of Clint Willour and Reid Mitchell

ALUMNI *Artist*

Contemporary artist Evita Tezeno creates works of comfort and joy

by Mona Brittain

“We are all bits and pieces of different things...I’m the fabric of culture, diversity, love and happiness.”

—Evita Tezeno '84 from the video “Our Common Bond - Artists Talk”

“A whirlwind” is how Tezeno describes the last few years of creating intricate, bright-colored collages; exhibitions; international sales; interviews; her work being acquired by collectors such as Pauletta and Denzel Washington; and receiving a 2023 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Fine Arts.

Tezeno is one of the artists whose work was chosen for “Multiplicity. Blackness in Contemporary Collage,” recently exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Her story

Born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas, Tezeno remembers telling her parents that she wanted to be an artist at age five. She won her first art award in third grade.

She talked about her family, which included accomplished seamstresses and quilters. “I grew up surrounded by love, positivity and encouragement,” Tezeno recalled. The artist’s multimedia work celebrates many childhood memories, which she calls “making memories tangible.”

“I quilt with paper. That’s what quilting is, laying different patterns together to see if they work,” Tezeno related in her recent feature article in *Vogue*. The results are portraits of enduring moments and storytellers with wide, welcoming eyes.

A 1984 graduate of Lamar with a bachelor’s degree in graphic design, she recalled “a lot of cut and paste in those days” and taking professor Robert O’Neill’s print-making classes. Tezeno said she held onto the words of her graphic arts professor. “Mr. [Phil] Fitzpatrick encouraged me to never give up on my dream.”

She remarked that later after moving to Dallas, she earned a living as a self-taught vegetarian chef and caterer while continuing to practice her art. “Cooking came naturally and I love it.” So which artists from the past would she have at a dinner party? “Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, William H. Johnson and Thelma Burke—my inspirations.”

Turning points

Meeting Frank Frazier. “He’s the godfather of the Dallas art community

who took undiscovered Black artists and our art to meet with gallery owners. Frank opened doors for many of us.”

The dream. “In 1998, I felt my work was stagnant, needing change. I prayed about it and one night dreamed that an angel knocked on my door and showed me sketches of the work I now create.”

Instagram. “It introduced my art to the world...Luis De Jesus Los Angeles contacted me and became my representative...My first solo exhibition with his gallery was sold out.”

Tezeno recounted another first. She was the first woman commissioned by the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival to create its Congo Square poster. How does this artist define success? “Not by what you do but how you feel...To me, it’s a million tons of happiness.”

“I’m just a simple woman from the South who loves life. I want to share my experiences and my joy,” Tezeno said in an April 20, 2023, feature in *Vogue*.

Discover more at evitatezeno.com. In January 2025, LU’s Dishman Art Museum will host an exhibition of her art.

A LEGACY OF ART:

The Journey of William “Bill” Colburn

by Jason Morton

In Texas’ rich cultural tapestry, there is a leading light whose passion for art transcends mere appreciation—it defines a legacy. William “Bill” Colburn, an accomplished alumnus of the Class of 1973, has forged a lifelong odyssey steeped in the vibrant hues and profound depths of Texas artistry. From his humble beginnings in Houston to his status today as a collector and custodian of culture, Colburn’s journey is a testament to the transformative power of art.

Colburn’s narrative unfolds against the backdrop of his academic pursuits as a business student. Equipped with an accounting degree, he embarked on a professional journey that eventually led him to Hines Interests LP. Joining the firm in 1979, his tenure spanned more than three decades, culminating in his role as vice president and controller. His contributions to the firm’s Ownership Accounting Group underscored not only his financial acumen but also his unwavering commitment to excellence.



Yet, amidst the demands of his corporate career, Colburn's soul found solace in the world of art—a passion kindled in his youth. Raised in a household where music was revered, Colburn's appreciation for artistic expression blossomed under the influence of his mother, a soloist in their church choir. It was here, amidst the resplendent beauty of Catholic iconography, that his love affair with art began to take root.

The spark that ignited Colburn's fervor for art blazed forth during a pilgrimage to the 1977 King Tut exhibit in New Orleans, a seminal experience that would shape his artistic trajectory. "The importance of seeing that blockbuster King Tut exhibit," Colburn said, "is that it got me interested in visiting art museums and buying the art posters that I began to have framed and hung on my walls."

Fueled by this newfound passion, he embarked on a soul-stirring journey across Europe in 1985, armed with nothing but a backpack and a Eurail train pass. For four weeks he traversed the continent, immersing himself in the timeless treasures of artistic expression—from the ethereal beauty of Renaissance masterpieces to the avant-garde innovations of contemporary artists.

His thirst for artistic enlightenment unquenched, Colburn returned to Europe in 1987, this time setting his sights on the venerable galleries of London, enriching his understanding of artistic diversity and cultural heritage.

"Before 1987 the only thing I had on my walls were art posters," Colburn recalled. "However in 1987, I attended a fundraiser that had a silent auction from which I successfully bid on a piece by Robert Camblin, one of the artists in the 1985 MFAH [Museum of Fine Arts, Houston] 'Fresh Paint' exhibit." He still owns that acquisition.

As the years unfolded, Colburn's gaze turned homeward, drawn irresistibly to the luminous landscapes and vibrant

colors produced by Texas artists. Through study, he cultivated a singular expertise in their works—a testament to his boundless curiosity and abiding passion.

Central to Colburn's journey is his role as a collector, tasking himself with helping to preserve the legacies of Texas's artists. His approach to collecting is imbued with a profound reverence for creative accomplishment—a sentiment echoed in his meticulous selection process and commitment to his collection.

"Looking back on it, my collection began with that acquisition, though I had not consciously decided to form a collection at that point. However what I had decided was to start replacing those art posters with works by established artists. It was that "Fresh Paint" exhibit that really piqued my interest in artists living and working in Texas," Colburn said.

His preferred genre, abstract art, serves as a canvas for his imagination and aesthetic sensibilities. Yet, amidst the variety of artists he has studied, one reigns supreme in Colburn's pantheon of Texas favorites: Nic Nicosia. Renowned for his evocative photographic works, Nicosia's ability to capture the essence of human emotion resonates deeply with Colburn, a sentiment mirrored in his admiration for the sculptural skill of fellow Texan James Surls.

Amidst the myriad treasures he has gathered, one piece stands out as a testament to Colburn's faith and spirituality: *And Then He Fell Once More* by San Antonio native Vincent Valdez. Part of a larger series titled *Stations*, this poignant masterpiece depicts a boxer's struggle for redemption, allegorically reminiscent of the Stations of the Cross—a metaphor for the eternal struggle of the human spirit. For Colburn, a devout Catholic, this piece serves as a



poignant reminder of the enduring power of faith and resilience.

Today, Colburn's three-story home in Houston stands as a testament to his boundless passion for art, a sanctuary where nearly every inch of wall space bears witness to his admiration of artistic expression. Stepping into his home is akin to embarking on a journey through the annals of art history, a breathtaking odyssey that inspires a sense of transcending time and space.

Yet, amidst the splendor of his carefully curated private collection, Colburn's heart hearkens back to his alma mater, Lamar University. In a gesture of profound generosity, Colburn has pledged in his estate plan to donate his collection to the Dishman Art Museum, ensuring that future generations of students will have the opportunity to admire and learn from the legacy of several Texas artists.

In the chronicles of Texas' cultural heritage, Bill Colburn's name shines brightly as a beacon of artistic enlightenment whose passion and dedication will continue to inspire generations to come. As his legacy finds a home within the walls of the Dishman Art Museum at Lamar University, Colburn's love for art will live on—a timeless tribute to the transformative power of creativity and expression.



Faggards are a dual-artist family

by Darragh Castillo





There was wine in Albert Faggard's past. Perhaps roses, too, but there were definitely cattle and lots of paint.

Living at the beach and painting a decade or so ago, an artist friend asked if he was making out all right. Was he making enough money to cover canvas and paint expenses? When Albert responded that he bought his supplies in bulk, the friend realized that he had "made it" as an artist.

Countless canvases later and now a tenured instructor at Lamar State College Port Arthur, the Beaumont native can share anecdotes of his wide range of experiences. He has raised cattle and wildlife in the Texas Hill Country and retired from Beringer Vineyards. Indeed, all his endeavors have exposed him to the natural beauty he shares in paintings.

Now Albert '03 lives in Southeast Texas with his wife, Amy Tolbert-Faggard '94, '13. This widely known artistic couple often are seen around the area as they support the arts community. Their paintings are on display throughout Southeast Texas and submitted to contests around the country. The Faggards have painted a lifestyle they love, with a Mid-County home offering studio space for each of them. What could be more cozy?

And the fact that this husband and wife can critique each other's work? That's an art in itself. They say they learn from

each other and are willing to share encouragement and support those continuing to improve their art. She's a morning painter, and it's his turn in the evenings, after coming home from Lamar State College Port Arthur.

Supporting the arts

Albert Faggard and Amy Tolbert-Faggard each have warm and welcoming personalities that seem to glow with positivity. This comes out as they reflect on the area's entities and artists who propel the movement.

"You know the arts community is a good thing. It's just a good thing," Albert said. "You have to support the arts or no one else will." The two have exhibited locally and Amy is especially prolific, entering competitions around

the country. This propels her to create on a regular basis. Landscapes and still life are her preference. "You're only as good as your last painting," she said.

With effortless enthusiasm, they preach that "keeping at it," keeping the ideas flowing, is the way to keep progressing—and loving—putting paint to canvas. "The more you do it, the better you're going to be. You can improve every day. The more you give it, the better you're going to be," Albert encouraged.

He's known for natural, realistic portrayals of birds, nature, and so on. Albert works in oils, and his second favorite medium is egg tempera. "I haven't done that in years and want to get back to it," he said.

Amy's morning studio time is currently inspired by gardens and baskets from the world of flowers.

Art into time and space

Morning painting sessions motivate Amy. She says the time passes quickly when she's working. "You lose yourself doing it," Amy said. "You lose yourself easily. You do it because you love to do it."

She's loved art since her school days and says student artists have good direction and support locally. "Lamar University has a really great art department. They work with you so you won't be discouraged," Amy said.

Blending a palate of experience

Both Amy and Albert are Lamar alumni. Albert earned a Master of Arts in visual art in 2003, and Amy holds a B.S. in interdisciplinary studies and an 2013 M.A. in visual arts. Albert's noted naturalist father, known as BoBo, was a 1948 graduate of Lamar who also was well known for his gardening. Five of Albert's seven siblings are alumni as well.

Albert's instructors included Jerry Newman at LU and John Alexander '68 at University of Houston, both eminent in the arts world. Admiring Albert's natural affinity for nature, Ducks Unlimited, Safari Club International and Coast Conservation Association are groups that have exhibited his work.

Amy's 2013 honors include being part of the After School Special Alumni Art Exhibition.

Any advice for those who see beauty and long to capture it? Do it and do it again and again. "Keeping at it" comes with satisfaction, Albert advised. But there is a caveat. "Have fun. No one makes art to have a bad time. God gave us the gift of creativity," Albert said.

More information is available at amyfaggard.com and AlbertFaggard@proton.me





Message in a Bottle ★ 32"x45", oil on canvas, 2024



Harriet's Roses ★ 50"x70", oil on canvas, 2024



Finding his path:

Michael Kennaugh

by Sarah Parker

Our lives can take countless paths. But, sometimes, all it takes is one person to change everything. One person to inspire you. One person to believe in you. One person to guide you onto the path that was destined for you.

When Michael Kennaugh '86 began his freshman year at Lamar University, he had never taken a formal art class before and certainly had never considered a career as an artist despite having a lifelong love and aptitude for drawing.

"All through high school, I was always drawing and was known as that kid that could draw," Kennaugh said. "I didn't really think much of it until I got to Lamar."

Initially, Kennaugh enrolled at Lamar to pursue the path of many animal lovers—veterinary medicine—but quickly realized that wasn't the right fit. Eager to help guide their son, his parents suggested alternatives such as dentistry—an immediate "no" for Kennaugh—and



commercial art, which seemed like a logical choice with his passion and talent for drawing.

“I had never met a fine artist before,” he said. “I only knew art in the terms of comic books and advertisements, and I thought I could do that, so I switched over to the School of Arts at Lamar.”

After changing majors, Kennaugh met Lamar Art Department professor Jerry Newman, taking both a drawing and painting course from him. Newman quickly saw Kennaugh’s artistic talent and helped secure Kennaugh a commercial art internship the summer after his freshman year.

“I just sat there [working on an ad campaign], and nothing came to mind. And then I just thought, ‘I really hate this,’ recalled Kennaugh. That kind of worried me because I thought now my path of life was even more questionable. If this isn’t what I want to do, what else is there?”

When he returned to school to tell Newman, the professor was unsurprised.

“I think at the time he saw that I was a painter when I didn’t even realize it myself. Sometimes it feels like when you look in the mirror, the way you perceive yourself is probably not an accurate

measurement of yourself because you’re too close. But to have someone look at you and say you might have a chance—and for it to be him, it was the confidence boost I needed for sure.”

With Newman’s encouragement and support, Kennaugh picked a new path: becoming a fine artist. Newman cautioned him the path would not be easy and would require serious commitment with no guarantee of success.

Kennaugh poured himself into becoming a fine artist, devoting countless hours to honing his craft and learning what it would take to be a true working artist from icons like Newman and fellow Lamar alumnus and painter Paul Manes ‘83. Many of Kennaugh’s days and nights over the next few years earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Lamar would be spent putting paint on canvas.

“I would paint all day. Newman gave us keys to the department, and we would kind of break in on the weekends and paint all weekend. We painted seven days a week, me and maybe

two other students who saw what we wanted to do in this world. You couldn’t just paint for an hour and a half or two in class. You would never get there.”

After graduating from LU with his B.F.A. in 1986, Kennaugh went on to pursue his master’s degree, earning his M.F.A. in painting from the University of North Texas in 1990. He also attended the American College of Switzerland in Leysin in 1990 and completed a residency at The William Flanagan Memorial Creative Persons Center in Montauk, N.Y., in 1996.

Once his education was complete, Kennaugh eagerly took off on his path to becoming a successful working artist and “finding his own voice” in his work. Today, he is known for abstract paintings, sculptures and, of course, drawings.

“Newman told me, ‘Just keep working. Don’t worry about sales. Don’t worry about recognition. Just make the work.’ That was our mantra at Lamar. It has stayed with me my entire life, and there’s nothing more true than that.”

For the past two decades, he has been represented by the well-respected Moody Gallery in Houston. Never wanting to be far from art, Kennaugh also has worked at The Museum of Fine Arts Houston since 1993, where he currently oversees the installation of art exhibitions. In 2005, he designed and built his own home and studio near downtown Houston.

“The essence of my work: I would say it’s a journal. I love living with my work. Something about it becomes part of your consciousness. It becomes so deeply ingrained in your life that your work becomes somewhat inseparable from yourself.”

Kennaugh’s works can be found in the permanent collections of The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Lamar University, Tyler Museum of Art, Mobile Museum of Art, and in private collections both nationally and internationally.

Numerous exhibitions of his work have been held at the Moody Gallery, as well as The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Dishman Art Museum, Beeville Art Museum, Stephen F. Austin University, Albright Knox Gallery (Buffalo, N.Y.), Hong Kong Visual Arts Center (Hong Kong, China) and Kouros Gallery (New York, N.Y.) among others. His next showing will be Sept. 12, 2024, at Target Texas, a five-artist exhibition at the Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi, and his 11th showing at Moody Gallery is set for 2026.

This past year, Kennaugh was featured in the Dishman’s joint exhibition, “Our Back Pages,” which highlighted work by distinguished Lamar alumni including Kennaugh, Marvin Hayes ‘63, Paul Manes, and Allie “Bill” Skelton III ‘65. Kennaugh was happy to return to his alma mater to speak to aspiring young artists and reminisce on the place—and the people—who set him on his path.

“I had artistic inclinations, but I never knew my life would shape up like this. When I bought in to be an artist, everything at Lamar was there in place...waiting for me. And once I devoted myself, it all just started to happen. I am very blessed being an artist. It’s an honor to do this.”

More information is available through moodygallery.com



Following inspiration, finding vision:

ARTIST PAUL MANES

by Brooke Barnett

Renowned artist Paul Manes '72, '82, believes that inspiration can come from anywhere and at any time. In creating his art, Manes said that continual practice helps him “create a flow, which opens up opportunities for synchronistic events to occur.”

“Sometimes the universe is just on your side,” he explained.

To expand his creativity, Manes follows best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell’s popular school of thought that practice is more important than natural aptitude. Based on research suggesting that 10,000 hours of focused practice is needed to achieve greatness, Gladwell’s theory indicates that practice is the essence of achievement. Manes applies this to his art, which has been showcased both around the country and internationally.

“Gladwell’s ten-thousand-hour referral allows for focused attention and enjoyment in creating whatever you create,” Manes elaborated. “To aspiring artists, I say draw until your fingers bleed. Examine the art of the past, as well as the present. Read anything and learn to synthesize information so you can use it in your work. Go out on a limb. The further out you go, the clearer the view. You’re here for only a moment, so make all you can of it.”

Manes has certainly made the most of his moments, exerting an influence on the art world for more than 30 years. He is well known for his large-scale imagery, focusing on surface, scale, space, light and form. He has never felt pressure to conform to current trends in the art world but

has found success following his own vision.

“You don’t forget where you come from,” Manes explains. “Beaumont, Texas, is surrounded by swamps and marshes. These are the wonderful places I used to explore as a youth. Alligators, 12-foot palmettos, otters and snakes, perch and smallmouth bass abound. My hope is that humans can come together and address issues and inequities before it is too late. We’re all from the same cloth and could use a little more love and compassion. These things I try to address in my paintings. It’s an ongoing process.”

Born in 1948 in Austin, Manes grew up in Beaumont and graduated from Beaumont High School. Attending Lamar as an undergraduate was a natural progression in his educational journey. He originally studied business and graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing in 1972. But the business world was not where Manes was destined to make an impact.

Manes began painting at age 30, and quickly knew it was the path he wished to take. He once again returned to Lamar, this time studying art. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1982 and went on to study at Hunter College in New York City.

“My painting teacher at Lamar, Jerry Newman, was a great teacher and a great man. I learned how to draw from him. He was a mentor. He and his wife Pattee became great friends,” he recalls. “My art history teacher, Lynne Lokensgard, was brilliant and taught me about the beauties of the Italian Renaissance. She was a great friend as well.”





Paul and Brenda English Manes

His work has been exhibited across the United States, as well as internationally in Italy, Spain, France, Monaco, Germany and Belgium. Most recently, his exhibition “Everyone is an Artist” was featured at ART BASE in Basalt, Colo. An exhibit will be on display in September at the Redbud Arts Center in Houston, and another in November at Cris Worley Fine Arts in Dallas. Past exhibitions have been featured at the Museum of Biblical Art (Dallas),

Grace Museum (Abilene, Texas), Dishman Art Museum (Lamar University), Galerie Simonne Stern (New Orleans) and many more.

His work is also included in the permanent collections of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York City), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City), the Detroit Institute of Art (Michigan), Rutgers University Art Museum (New Jersey), the Tucson Museum of Art (Arizona), The Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), The Art Museum of Southeast Texas (Beaumont) and in the private collections of Yoko Ono and Emeril Lagasse. His monumental work, *The Entry of Christ into New York*, is

on view at the Centro de Arte Moderno y Contemporáneo de Castilla-Mancha in Toledo, Spain.

“Living in New York was a lot of fun,” he says. “I showed at Kouros Gallery for years. There were many memorable shows in different cities in the U.S. and in Europe. I particularly enjoyed showing in Brussels, Malaga and Caserta, Italy, along with other artists involved with *‘Painting After Post Modernism,’* an exhibit orchestrated by Roberto Polo and Barbara Rose. The paintings featured in those exhibits I believe are among my best.”

Manes currently lives in Basalt, Colo., with his wife Brenda, and continues to paint in his studio in Carbondale, Colo. He is currently working on an ongoing sculpture project in Italy.

“After living in Texas and New York, I now live in the mountains of Colorado. Not much change in activities, just a different atmosphere,” he concludes. “A lifetime spent producing art has been enormously rewarding. There is no end or retirement from it. The best is yet to come!”

For more information, visit paulmanes.art.

The Entry of Christ into New York II ★ 1993-2006





Where Away

Between Tears and Laughter

Impermanence, time and memory

by Allison Lennartz

Sunni Forcier '15 began demonstrating her artistic instinct at a young age. As a child, she would “spend hours at the coffee table, cutting, gluing and coloring.” She even chose to be an artist for a career day when she was in second grade, donning an oversized white shirt that had paint all over it and carrying a palette in hand. Even as a seven-year-old, it seemed that Forcier knew that she was destined to become an artist.

A native of Beaumont, Sunni initially chose to attend Lamar because it kept her close to her family. But she quickly found that LU’s art program was “a hidden gem.” She appreciated the small class sizes and the program’s diverse course offerings. She also enjoyed the way art history was incorporated into her education. Her time at Lamar helped

expose her to different kinds of artistic technique and enabled her to develop her “artistic voice.” But perhaps her most important takeaway from the many hours she spent earning her degree wasn’t the lessons she learned as much as it was the people with whom she learned them.

After reflecting upon her Cardinal experience, Forcier said, “I hope that students in the art department now are able to find a dependable group like I was privileged to have, classmates who will grow and learn with them.” She credits this community for the work she was able to create while attending Lamar, and she still maintains those close relationships to this day.

Upon graduating from LU with her bachelor’s degree in fine arts in the spring of 2015, Forcier later attended the University of Houston where she earned

her master’s degree in fine arts in 2019.

Though Forcier returned to Beaumont to be closer to her family, some of her work is on display at the Hooks-Epstein Galleries in Houston. Kim Steinhagen, co-chair of LU’s Public Art Committee and development officer for the College of Fine Arts and Communication, saw Forcier’s work and recognized her as “a talented artist.” She admired the novelty and intricacy of her art and said that it is significant that her work is featured at Hooks-Epstein Galleries because of its long history and prestige in the Houston area.

Forcier now teaches art at Lumberton High School and serves as an adjunct faculty member at Lamar where she teaches evening classes. When she isn’t teaching art, she dedicates a lot of her time to developing her own techniques and expanding her creativity.

If she isn’t working or focusing on some of her personal projects, she enjoys spending time with her family and dog. She says that her family plays a very important role in her life, and one friend described her as “most comfortable” when she is watching her nieces and nephews run around the family living room.

Forcier’s tendency toward curiosity, her patience and her attention to detail all have contributed toward her success. She noted that some of her own personal experiences have led her to “explore themes of impermanence, time and memory” in her work. She concentrates primarily on photography and printmaking. Some of her pictures capture timeless and intimate moments with family members while others display the beauty that can be found in the mundane.

Forcier’s impact is not limited to her classrooms. This summer, she will lead a camp for seventh to tenth graders at LU’s campus for the month of June. She looks forward to teaching these students more about camera-less images and linoleum prints. As for her own projects and goals, she stays busy and continues to express herself in unique ways. In her own words, she is “always working on something.”

Sunni Forcier’s portfolio may be found at sunniforcier.com



Painting greatness

by Stephan Malick

From an early age, Jason Robichau '02 was obsessed with sports, a devotion that had a profound impact in some of his earliest memories. However, it would be during his freshman year at Lamar that an act of thoughtfulness and generosity turned him onto what would be his career path.

Robichau saw a story on ESPN about Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly's son Hunter and his battle with Krabbe Leukodystrophy, a rare genetic neurological disorder. The story told of the efforts of Hunter's Hope Foundation, founded to bring awareness and funding for research of the disease.

"I saw that the Kelly family was raising money for Hunter's Hope Foundation, and I called the organization and asked if I could paint a picture of Jim for an auction they were having," Robichau said. "I hadn't really done any significant art outside of my high school work, but I really wanted to help because I was moved by the Kelly family's story."

The foundation accepted the offer, and a few months later Robichau was in Buffalo, N.Y., presenting the painting to Jim Kelly and the foundation. The rest, some might say, has become Robichau's history. That act of compassion was the kickoff to his career.

"I feel like I have a blessing from God for my ability, and it gives me the ability to be able to pass blessings on in the best way I know how," he said.

Robichau and his wife Robbie (Waters) '04 live in College Station, but his works are literally a Who's Who of Hall of Fame athletes and entertainers—Michael Jordan, Peyton Manning, Yao Ming, and Jason's celebrity crush Faith Hill, just to name a few. Robichau's creations are made from photographs or sometimes from life.

Robichau said he has had great experiences working with so many personalities, but some stand out a little more than others. For example, one of the most rewarding and special memories was working with Muhammad Ali's foundation.

"I love Muhammad Ali's the best," he said. "I don't think I've ever found a bad picture. I worked for Muhammad Ali's foundation for 10 years and did at least one or two paintings every year. And he's by far the best to paint; he's just amazing. Jordan is the same way. You know, there's not a bad picture of Jordan. To work anytime with someone like that, you just kind of know you're painting greatness."

Robichau's brushes with greatness continue as he is the official artist for the Texas Sport Hall of Fame. Former *Beaumont Enterprise* sports editor Thad Johnson founded the TSHOF in 1949 to recognize athletes and figures who have contributed to sports excellence in Texas.

This year's inductees include two more Southeast Texas champions he'll be capturing on canvas, both from Port

Arthur: former Kansas City Chiefs running back Jamaal Charles and legendary women's track and field coach Barbara Jacket.

"I grew up watching the greats like Michael Jordan. I always wanted to be able to capture those moments, and painting is what felt the best way for me to do that," Robichau said.

Robichau's connection to campus goes beyond himself and wife Robbie. His two brothers Matthew '05 and John '01 also graduated from LU.

"So many great things have happened in my life because of me being an artist and what I experienced at Lamar because it gives me flexibility in other aspects of my life," Robichau said. "If I had a normal corporate job, I would not be able to. It's finding that passion that you love and then working towards it—and then just stay the course."

Working in an illusionist style, Robichau's technique captures a subject through tiny hand-painted squares of bright color and metallic gold and bronze paint that meld from collage to image as the viewer moves away from the painting. His work has been shown at the National Art Museum of Sport (Indianapolis, Ind.), American Sports Art Museum and Archives (Daphne, Ala.), George Krevsky Gallery (San Francisco, Calif.), Xanadu Gallery (Scottsdale, Ariz.) and Image Gallery (Edmond, Okla.).

Find his art at jasonrobichau.com



ARTIST JIM RICHARD:

Reflections on college, creativity & career

by Brooke Barnett



Look In Here ★ 2019



Waiting Game ★ 2020

When acclaimed artist Jim Richard '65 first came to Lamar State College of

Technology in the early 1960s, he originally dreamed of becoming a cartoonist. Pursuing a career in fine art wasn't his focus, but Lamar ultimately would become a springboard that helped him find his true talent and calling. Richard reflected back on a successful career as an award-winning painter, and explained how his time at Lamar helped set him on a pathway that has allowed his art to be showcased around the world.

As one of Lamar's most widely recognized and influential alumni artists, Richard's work has been showcased in numerous prestigious galleries during his more than 50-year career. While he currently lives and works in New Orleans, La., his story began with his Southeast Texas roots.

"I was the first in my family to attend college," Richard explained. "There was really no thought of me going away to school. It was assumed that when I graduated from high

school that I would continue my studies at Lamar like so many other Golden Triangle youngsters."

Richard entered Lamar in 1961, and earned a Bachelor of Science in commercial art in 1965. His time at Lamar allowed him to explore more deeply the world of fine art, which quickly became his passion. He bonded with several other undergraduates who were interested in pursuing careers in art, and he spent the majority of his time on campus in Lamar's art department. He fondly recalled the studio faculty who helped nurture his growing interest and talent.

"I appreciated my daily connection with studio faculty like Mr. [Robert] Madden, Mr. [Jerry] Newman, and Mr. [Robert] O'Neill. It became far more than 'school,'" he remembered. "It was where I wanted to be and what I wanted to do. I got a very solid grounding in painting at Lamar. It never really crossed my mind at the time that I should be anywhere else."

Lamar provided his first experiences in learning about important artists who would influence him greatly throughout his career,

including the Fauves and other French painters, the German expressionists, the abstract expressionists and other more contemporary artists. After finishing his undergraduate degree, he began to consider options for graduate studies.

"It was only when I began to apply to graduate schools that I started to wonder if my application would be competitive. The only studio degree available from Lamar's art department at that time was a B.S. in commercial art, which I knew was unlikely to impress the MFA programs to which I was applying," he admits. "I was delighted and relieved when I began to receive acceptances from very good schools. I started to allow myself to feel that the paintings I did at Lamar could be well-received in competitive environments."

Richard was offered a fellowship at the University of Colorado, where he went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1968.

"I was working with students from major universities and painting faculty who had New York galleries. I was learning something new and

“For aspiring artists who are looking into an education at Lamar, I would tell them to put their preconceptions on hold and be open to new and challenging outlooks. Once they are truly committed to being an artist, no one will be able to talk them out of it.”

challenging every day, but I was happy to discover that my Lamar background had prepared me to hold my own and be taken seriously,” he reflected.

During Richard’s early career, he had shows in New York City art institutions including the Whitney Museum, the Guggenheim Museum and the Drawing Center. He was also featured in an international show in a castle in Cagnes-sur-Mer in the south of France, which allowed him to travel abroad for the first time and explore the art world in Europe.

“This experience allowed me to see myself as part of a much bigger picture in a way I hadn’t done before,” he said. “Probably the most important mainstay of my art life when it comes to exhibiting has been my consistent relationships with excellent galleries. Most of my opportunities to exhibit in major art venues or to become included in museum collections have come as a result of those relationships.”

Looking back on his career, Richard recalled being deeply influenced by the move his family made in 1950 from downtown Port Arthur to the outskirts of town. The outskirts soon turned into suburbs, and he recalls being fascinated by a similar pattern across the nation.

“I became interested in the quest for an ideal that drove it,” he explained. “I was fascinated with the search for the utopian backyard paradise, but I craved the messiness and cultural opportunities that downtown offered. My art in one way or another throughout my life has dealt with these obvious, but layered, issues.”

Richard has an extensive exhibition record that includes the Arthur Roger Gallery, Galerie Simonne Stern and the New Orleans Museum of Art in New Orleans; the Inman Gallery, Watson/DeNagy Gallery and Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; the Jeff Bailey Gallery and Oliver Kamm Gallery in New York; and the Rebecca Cooper Gallery in Washington, D.C. He received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in 2004 and a Pollack-Krasner Foundation Award in 2006.

Cornered ★ 2018



Hot Slice ★ 2017

Richard lives and works out of New Orleans, where he also served as a professor in the School of Fine Arts at the University of New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina brought a life-changing experience when his studio had to be torn down and rebuilt after being flooded with more than nine feet of water.

“The terrible result was that I lost a lot of my art and my history, but it also allowed me to see things with fresh eyes and a sense of a new beginning,” he said. “I built a new home and studio on the same site and began making new work with an irrepressible vigor. I spent so many years making art that poked around at the notion of a suburban, backyard ideal, and now this new urban studio, built to my needs, may just be my own version of that ideal.”

At 81 years of age, Richard still enjoys being in the studio every day. He currently is preparing for a show at the Arthur Roger Gallery in New Orleans while also creating new work for Houston’s Inman Gallery as they expand into a new, larger venue. He continues to visit New York City each year, connecting with local artists and visiting the city’s galleries and museums. His process of choice is still painting, but he keeps his creativity alive and growing by experimenting with other mediums.

“I am currently using Flashe paint, a French vinyl paint that predates acrylics. For my works on paper, I have been experimenting with drawing and painting

on YUPO, a high-tech ‘paper’ that is non-absorbent,” he adds. “I also have a history of doing collages.”

Richard looks back fondly on his time at Lamar and the impact it has had on his career.

“For aspiring artists who are looking into an education at Lamar, I would tell them to put their preconceptions on hold and be open to new and challenging outlooks. Once they are truly committed to being an artist, no one will be able to talk them out of it.”

Richard is living proof of that.

For more information, visit jimrichardart.com



A lifelong art interest flowers in ancient art form

by Marilyn Tennissen

What do you do when you have hundreds of gourds growing across your farm? If you're like Lamar University alum Roy Cavarretta, you turn them into works of art!

The 1973 graduate earned a degree in art education, but it would be years before he learned about carving and transforming *Lagenaria* spp. hard-shell gourds. These particular species have thick bodies to support carving and burning.

"I got a degree in art education, but had trouble finding a job," Cavarretta said. "I ended up with a career in the corporate world." After retiring from a sales position in Houston with Federal Express, Cavarretta and his wife, Blanche, left the hectic city life behind and moved to a farm in Hallettsville, Texas.

When Cavarretta was a student, his favorite medium was pen and ink. Carving dried gourds came about almost out of necessity. "It all started when our daughter gave us a bunch of pumpkin and gourd seeds," he said. "Pretty soon we had hundreds growing all over the farm. We thought, 'What are we going to do with all these gourds?'"

So, Cavarretta started making birdhouses from dried and hollowed-out gourds, but soon he was carving, burning and painting the gourds in beautiful colors and elaborate designs. The finished products look more like finely made pots and vases than dried vegetables.

"If you ever told me there was a thing as 'gourd art', I wouldn't have believed it," Cavarretta said. He took courses and learned as much as he could about the ancient tradition of decorating them.

"They are made all over the world: the American Southwest, South America, even China," he said. Historical accounts trace the appearance of gourd art as far back as the Tang Dynasty from 618 to 907. "It's an ancient yet unknown art form. Each one is

different, each is a unique canvas."

He has won several awards including Best In Show and had his work published in western art magazines. "It's not a hobby now, it's a passion," he said.

His wife has joined him in that passion, although she never considered herself an artist before. She had retired from the corporate world, but when her husband started making gourd art, she wanted to give it a try too. "Now she's very good and has received awards of her own," he said. "Our work is different from each other. Sometimes we collaborate, but we each have our own style. She has a good eye and is very creative." Both have become master gourd artists.

Cavarretta said they attend at least six major shows a year in places like Ruidoso and Las Cruces in New Mexico and Kerrville and Lubbock in Texas. "We like going to shows and meeting the other artists and meeting the people that are buying our art," he said. "It's very rewarding."

Last fall, the couple was delighted when they were a featured segment on *Texas Country Reporter*, the weekly television series that chronicles the state's people and culture.

"I owe so much to Lamar," Cavarretta said. "Instructors like Jerry Newman and Robert Rogan really taught us to think outside of the box." Or in this case, the gourd . . .

Visit [Gravel Road Arts on Facebook](#) for more information and see the *Texas Country Reporter* episode titled "Gourd Art Texas Country Reporter" on [YouTube](#).



“THE POETRY ALL AROUND US”

Keith Carter on *Ghostlight*, swamp cosmos and magical accidents



SPENCE

**“KEITH CARTER HAS THE GIFT OF TAKING THINGS WE HAVE SEEN ALL OUR LIVES
— A WATERMELON STAND, A [COUNTRY CHURCH OR STORE], A GRAVEYARD, A
CLOTHESLINE WITH CHICKENS UNDERNEATH. . . AND GIVING THEM ANOTHER
DIMENSION, A BEAUTY YOU CAN’T EASILY BE RID OF”**

—HORTON FOOTE, AMERICAN SCREENWRITER AND PLAYWRIGHT

by Casey Ford



Oak Mott Study #2 ★ 2021 Carter



Crossing ★ 2019 Carter

If we thought he might be done after half a century making provocative art, we have another think coming. Five years on, Keith Carter '70 has followed his career-spanning book *50 Years with Ghostlight*. This latest book, with all its saturation and deep shadow, feels wholly new while also retrospective in its homage to the otherworld in our southern gulf wetlands. The aesthetic of tenderness in this collection is familiar; it comforts us as we wade through these unsettling images of a strange universe of dark water and gnarled cypress groves.

“Hold up a glass of that [swamp] water to the light,” Carter said, “and see it is a cosmos.” Like William Blake and his attention to the world in a grain of sand, in *Ghostlight*, Beaumont’s own “poet of the ordinary” beckons us to follow his line of sight into that shrouded space of emotional and visual density, where everything is happening all at once, from before birth to after death. Each allegorical image conjures a presence beyond itself, the haunted and life-sustaining eternity of the baygall.

The artist has been wading these waters since his family came to Texas in the early 1950s, and though he has traveled the world and unlocked celebrity-level renown—his iconic face and signature aesthetic featured over decades in pages from *Texas Monthly* to the *New Yorker* and beyond—Carter, a 2004 LU Distinguished Alumnus, has never left home. His splendid home studio, delicately camouflaged in Beaumont’s historic midtown oaks, evokes this duality. A visit there offers a sense of elsewhere and of rootedness with the grand trees on the grounds. It also whispers, “Patricia.”

When Carter talks about his late wife Pat, she feels so present, you might think she’ll come from around the kitchen corner with tea. His first monograph, *From Uncertain to Blue*, contains images from their travels in the late 1980s to obscure Texas towns with intriguing names. Pat is the reason we have his most famous photo, *Fireflies*. Carter recalls the moment in detail for Robert Keiner of *Professional Photographer* in 2021. He says he saw a flaw at first, but Pat saw “the blur,” and Carter says it changed his whole life. Together they had discovered what would become the thing that etches his art on our hearts: the haunted light and complicated textures of this place we move around in.

In the December 2018 issue of *Texas Monthly*, Mai Schotz said of his work, “Carter’s photographs provide a vision of Texas as we all want to imagine it to be: a hot-as-hell oasis where people lead picturesque yet complex lives, imbued with a sense of calm that can only be felt when an endless landscape extends in all



Hanging Moss ★ Carter

directions.” Some of us might struggle to be inspired by the muddy landscapes of our area, but Carter, whose sight literally was altered many years ago by an eye cancer, sees wonder there and holds it out for us. He suggests it does not take an altered vision to love and capture the beauty here—our eyes simply need to be opened to see layers of mystery in the mundane. “Perfection is overrated,” he says. Like our imperfect home, he says, “art can be sloppy and confused, and that might be where it is most brave, most vulnerable.”

Including the images in *Ghostlight*, Carter’s body of work has heavily studied landscape, but he has also always been interested in faces. The stories and spirituality of Southeast Texas luminesce in his photographs of its children, its rural and urban citizens, its blue-collar pillars. His loving study of faces emerged at the earliest part of his career. His mother, Jane, was a portrait photographer, and she saw the potential in some of his first photos of fishermen on the banks of the Neches River. With her encouragement, Carter set out on a quite different path than was typical for a new graduate of the LU College of Business.

However his art career may have diverted him to exotic locales, the good news for us all is that he has always found

his way home. Carter calls his career as a faculty member in Lamar University’s Department of Art and Design “a most magical accident,” but his legacy of mentoring and teaching here seems preordained. It has kept him close to our students and communities for almost half his life. On “field trips and walkabouts,” he encourages students to perceive the world with their own unique vision and to embrace “the loveliness of the evocative over the definable.” He passes on his unanswerable questions to them, the questions that live in his art: What is it to be human? What is it to see?

Since 1989, Carter holds the endowed Walles Chair in Fine Arts, and during his prolific academic career he has received the University’s highest teaching honors: the Regents’ Professor Award, the University Professor Award and Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. His world-class oeuvre and wise-but-affable personality have built LU’s prestigious art photography program, and he has helped the University recruit, mentor and produce many talented young artists, curators, teachers and leaders into the discipline.

He teaches away from home, too, in workshops around the country, and even a casual conversation with Carter inspires one to do whatever she must to sustain

a creative life, which he suggests is easy in a place like Southeast Texas, a place he has described as a “gumbo culture”—murky, mysterious and, in the case of the Big Thicket, like living on another planet. Not only nature, but people and things in everyday moments, as Carter said to Wes Ferguson in a 2018 *Texas Highways* interview, “the secret...is to resist intelligence, to intuitively and instinctively feel the value in a small gesture, in the light, in the poetry all around us.”

We can experience Keith Carter’s multiple-award-winning photography exhibited around the country: the National Portrait Gallery, The Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Getty, and even in the collections of presidents, movie stars and rock icons. The closest venues to home, though, are the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Lamar University’s own Dishman Art Museum and LU’s Public Art Collection on campus. *Ghostlight* and other monographs by Carter are available through the University of Texas Press.

Keith Carter’s work may be found at Stephen L. Clark Gallery (Austin), Etherton Gallery (Tucson), PDNB (Dallas), Redbud Arts Center (Houston), PhotoEye Gallery (Santa Fe) and A Gallery for Fine Photography (New Orleans).



Restoring body and soul

by Marilyn Tennissen

Lamar University alum Mary Welborn, 1970, is using her art degree to create not only beautiful paintings of flowers and plants but also to promote a larger appreciation of the natural world.

Mary has assembled a series that she calls her “New Botanicals” work, into a book, *Reflections of the Reverence for Life: A Beginner’s Guide to Repairing the Earth and an Artist’s Exploration of Value in Nature*.

Each page features a native Texas plant, flower or animal in a detailed and vivid watercolor plus a brief written statement about its uses or lore.

“I worked on them during the pandemic,”

Mary said. “I was able to do a lot of research about the plants.”

One entry in the book tells readers that “the dried fruit of the Mission Cactus sustained many tribes during the winter months when game was sparse.”

The artist lives in Burnet on Lake Buchanan, an area brimming with the varied beauty of Texas flora and fauna, but she spent most of her professional career as a commercial artist.

“I was the first in my family to go to college, and my parents could not believe I was getting a degree in art,” she said. “But the art department at

Lamar was special, the teachers showed us the possibilities.”

Mary counts herself lucky for having faculty members like Jerry Newman, Bob Willis and Robert Madden as art teachers.

With a commercial art degree in hand, Mary embarked on a successful career in advertising for several big agencies in Texas. She also did freelance work in Los Angeles and did design work for clients like Hilton Hotels.

When she’s making art, Mary uses acrylics, mixed media, assemblages and watercolors. She recently painted a beach mural in a hospital radiation lab in Newport News, Va., to provide a calming scene for patients.

Her interest in nature grew when she began volunteering at The University of Texas at Austin’s Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, an organization dedicated to the conservation of native plants through its gardens, research and education.

Environmental awareness hit close to home after her step-granddaughter died from leukemia, which some research suggests can be caused by toxins in the air and water.

“We need to reduce carcinogens in our environment,” she said. “There is no need for chemical pesticides. Our land is being consumed. I thought, ‘what can I do?’”

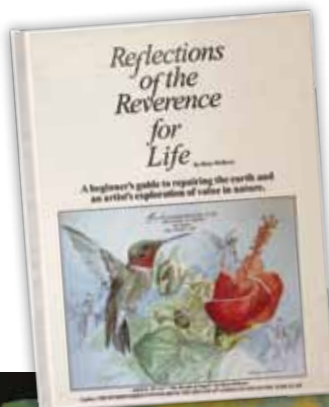
Soon Mary was doing what she calls a “fight against cancer series.”

And while it’s a serious subject, her project is lively and humorous, and written for “regular people,” she said. “I’m trying to say ‘come on folks, we can all do better!’”

Mary said her life in the Texas Hill Country is the result of a successful career made possible by hard work and a degree from LU.

“I’m proud to have a degree from Lamar,” she declared. “What a gift it is for the community!”

More information is available at the Mary Welborn Studio, (512) 715-8438, and facebook.com/1maryart/about





Juan Zabala '07, vice president of university advancement, and John Alexander '68

Learn your *craft*

by Jeff Spoeri

As is evident throughout this issue of *Cadence*, Lamar University has produced an abundance of artistic talent over its century of existence. However, perhaps no Lamar-educated artist has achieved more national and global acclaim, nor been as widely celebrated and renowned, as John Alexander '68, whose paintings can be seen in some of the world's finest museums, galleries and private collections, as well as across the Lamar University campus. The many books and articles written about Alexander over a career that has spanned more than 50 years explain how his roots in Southeast Texas—his upbringing in the pine thickets and bayous of the region—have influenced his work, but Lamar University was just as vital to his development as an artist and, he emphasizes, as a man. "I attribute so much of my social education as well as my artistic and academic education to Lamar," Alexander noted, adding that it made him "a different person: I matured. And I owe that to the University."

His childhood, though, shaped Alexander's future in ways he could not have imagined while growing up in a modest house on San Jacinto Street in Beaumont. The artist's father, John E. Alexander Sr. was born in 1878, making him 68 years old when young John was born. "He was very healthy and robust," recalled Alexander of his father, "and he had a deep passion and knowledge of the landscape and the land." The father shared that passion with his son, along with an intimate appreciation for the flora and fauna of Southeast Texas, which would go on to influence and inform Alexander's landscape painting even now. "The work I'm doing still comes directly out of those East Texas woods," Alexander said. "To see nature with a man from the 19th century who literally grew up on the land," he continued, "taught me a passionate love for that particular nature."

Along with that connection to nature, Alexander's parents—his mother, Zeila, was a native of Alabama who was 35 years younger than her husband—encouraged and supported their only son's artistic pursuits. "My parents gave me a painting kit

for my birthday," Alexander recalled, "so at eight years old I had a baseball glove and a football and a bicycle, but I also had paints and brushes and little palettes and canvases." He always enjoyed drawing and joked that his classroom failures in classes like algebra were a direct result of his constant drawing and doodling. It was his art classes in school, though, that helped Alexander hone his skills and help him begin to realize that art could be more than just a pastime. "I'm very fortunate because in those days you took art in school." He is quick to credit, along with his parents, his grade school and high school teachers, like Miss Fanny Jones at David Crockett Junior High School, for much of his artistic development, describing Miss Jones as "an unbelievable art teacher. She was so encouraging and made me feel like an artist; she made me excited to make art." Alexander's high school art teachers, first at Beaumont High and then at South Park, were equally encouraging; he described them as "marvelous."

Alexander enrolled at Lamar University as a freshman in the fall of 1964. Immediately, he found himself in a completely different environment from his grade school days. He always liked art but, as he put it, "when I got to Lamar, I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't know there was even a possibility that I would ever be a successful artist—I thought I might be an illustrator or something, but I didn't know anything about the professional side of art." Beyond his art education, which at the time at Lamar took place in what was known as the Department of Commercial Art, Alexander was facing many life changes. "I was at a very difficult place in my life, because being a teenager in Beaumont in the early 1960s was not an easy time," he recalled. "It was a time of great, tumultuous upheaval." He recalled that this was a time when headlines were filled with names and events like Emmitt Till, Rosa Parks, bus boycotts and lunch counters, and it was in that environment in a highly segregated Beaumont where young John was trying to find his own way. On top of all that, his beloved father died in May of 1965, at the end of young John's freshman year, at the age of 87. This was, as Alexander remembered, "paramount in my transition from my bucolic childhood in the woods," causing him to be "very confused and



traumatized, and somewhat lost.”

Into that breach, fortuitously for the budding artist, stepped a “legend,” in Alexander’s words. “I signed up for the beginning [art] courses at Lamar,” explained Alexander, “and my teacher in one or two of the classes was Jerry Newman.” Alexander remembered Newman as a great painter but perhaps an even better teacher—very academic and a strict disciplinarian, but more like “a tough football coach.” Newman, fewer than 12 years older than Alexander, told him soon after the death of John Sr., as Alexander recalled, “You have to learn discipline. You’re going to have to listen. You’ve got to take this seriously.” It was “a real stern talking-to,” and it changed Alexander’s life. He became a more serious student, not only in his art classes, but in his minor—geology, which he selected because of his love of the land and nature – and in the sociology courses he came to enjoy as well. “Jerry took me under his wing and mentored me, because he saw something in me, and we remained very close until he died” in 2008, said Alexander. He also was quick to acknowledge the great positive impact other Lamar faculty members had on him and his life and career, including geology professor William Matthews; sociology professor Ray Drenan; and art faculty Robert O’Neill, Robert Madden, Robert Rogan, and Ryan Howard.

The social climate of what was then Lamar State College of Technology in the mid-1960s shaped Alexander’s character and career at least as much as the natural beauty of the surrounding area, as anyone familiar with his more politically charged, satirical work can attest. One seminal event in Alexander’s Lamar experience involved the racial integration of the student union, in which he directly participated. “What Lamar taught me was tolerance,” he emphasized. “It taught me to be open-minded, it taught me a new way of looking at life.” It also taught him to succeed on his own. About the time Alexander graduated from Lamar Tech in the spring of 1968, then-president Lyndon Johnson announced that draft deferments would no longer be available for students in graduate schools other than medical school. Alexander had been accepted into several graduate schools for art, including Tulane, the University of Florida and SMU, which he chose thanks to their offer of a full scholarship. The loss of grad-school deferments, though, changed his trajectory yet again: he jumped at the opportunity to teach art

at Port Neches-Groves High School—“they assured me that [it came with a deferment], and I literally signed the contract on the spot”—which he did with pleasure for two years before enrolling at SMU. While studying in Dallas, Alexander was introduced by one of his professors to legendary Houston art dealer and gallery owner Meredith Long. Long was impressed by the young graduate student’s work and promptly put on several exhibitions of Alexander’s work in the early 1970s, launching him into the successful career he has enjoyed ever since.

Although he now calls New York home, with a home and studio on the eastern reaches of Long Island plus the time he spends in Manhattan after relocating there from Texas permanently in 1979, Alexander maintains many close ties to Lamar. He frequently has employed Lamar graduates as assistants, including Rick Lewis ’88, Paul Manes ’72 (an accomplished professional artist himself), and his current assistant, Mackenzie “Mac” Cumpian ’20, who is helping Alexander catalogue and compile his many papers and letters that he has bequeathed to Lamar University. His lifelong generosity to Lamar University also includes the establishment of the Zeila Alexander Memorial Scholarship in Art, in his mother’s memory. Alexander tries to visit campus anytime he is in the area, often attending arts events like Le Grand Bal and speaking to art students about his work and his career, as he did most recently in March 2024. The advice he shared with those students who are now in the place he occupied nearly six decades ago neatly summarizes his artistic philosophy. “You have to learn your craft,” he urged them. “Art has to have a human connection; the painting is a part of you. Learn your craft, learn how to make paint work. Painting isn’t much different from, say, refrigerator repair: it’s just a set of rules that work.”

“I will say it loud and clear,” Alexander concluded, “Lamar was a very, very important part of not just my academic education, but educating me to be a better citizen and a much different man. I can look back with absolute clarity and thank Lamar for so much of who I am. I’ve had shows in New Orleans, Dallas, Fort Worth, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, many bigger museums, and all of that success I attribute to those four years I spent at Lamar University.” John Alexander’s art reflects and portrays the Southeast Texas he knew and the Lamar University he honors and loves to this day.

New degree programs offered, including a Texas first

Lamar University has established two new degree programs, one undergraduate and one at the graduate level.

B.S. in Computer Engineering The Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering has created a new Bachelor of Science program in Computer Engineering that covers a broad spectrum of topics: devices and circuits, communication systems, control and instrumentation, power systems,



renewable and green energy, signal processing, and photonics, optics and electromagnetics. Students can also explore embedded hardware and software systems, network engineering and cybersecurity, robotics and artificial intelligence, and microchips.

Students enrolled in the program can expect hands-on experience through state-of-the-art laboratories and collaborative projects.



M.S. in Strategic Communication-Online The College of Fine Arts and Communication now offers an online Master of Science in Strategic Communication for individuals seeking advanced expertise in the field. It is the only master of science program in strategic communication in Texas and one of few nationwide.

Eight-week courses enable completion in one year so the program is accessible for working professionals. The courses cover advanced concepts in public relations, advertising, marketing communication, corporate communication, health communication, political communication and other fast-growing areas of communication.

Counseling student writes book to help people cope with the loss of a spouse

For five years, graduate counseling student Heidi Dixon has facilitated a grief support group for spouses, called Until We Meet Again. During a Monday session, she used a knitted potholder as a reference with the hopes of better understanding what the people around her were going through. She explained that it seemed like grief resembled the cut potholder—every separate strand, raw and aching for its former connection. This metaphor led to her recently published book, “My Little Blue House”—a publication targeted at helping people cope with the loss of a spouse.



From an early age, Dixon knew she wanted to pursue a career in clinical work. When she was 16, she took on the role of caregiver when her mother became paralyzed from the chest down in a car accident. As a current hospice chaplain, with a background in clinical pastoral education, Dixon is currently working on her master’s degree in marriage, couple and family counseling.

In helping people move on at their own pace, Dixon said she hopes to alleviate the pressures that come with grief that can often cause depression, disappointment, frustration, and disillusionment. “My ultimate goal for the book is to offer my love and encouragement to those who are grieving—starting with those who inspired it. I hope it will acknowledge and validate their lived grief experience, fuel their hope, and encourage connection,” Dixon said. “For those who are not grieving, I hope it will increase awareness of and compassion for those living little-blue-house-life and increase their gratitude for the time they have with people they love.”

FACULTY IN THE NEWS

White receives national mentorship award . . . The National Council on Family Relations recognized



Janeal White '03, '11, assistant professor of family studies, at its November 2023 conference with the organization’s Emerging Mentor/Teacher Award for her exceptional efforts in teaching and mentorship. The tradition of strong mentorship within family

studies dates back to when White was a Lamar student herself. She credits **Kim Wallet**, associate professor of family studies, for noticing her potential during her time as a graduate student. “I am thankful that she took an active role in encouraging me to explore academia as a career option,” White said. . . . **TJEA inducts Condit into Hall of Fame** . . .

Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Ensembles **Rick Condit** has earned a spot in the Texas Jazz



Educators Association Hall of Fame for his significant contributions towards jazz education. Condit’s extensive career, spanning 25 countries on five continents, is marked by teaching and performing. His career highlights

include membership in the first Monterey Jazz Festival All-Star High School Band, serving as a tenor sax soloist with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, and contributing to the UNT One O’Clock Lab Band. He has also been recognized as a Fulbright Senior Scholar and Kennedy Center Jazz Ambassador. . . .

Troxclair elected president . . . **Debbie Troxclair**, associate professor of educational leadership, has been elected president of the Association for Gifted & Talented Students–Louisiana for 2024-2025. Her experience with AGTS-Louisiana began in the late 1980s when she taught a pull-out class for gifted learners in St. Tammany Parish Public Schools.



At that time, the organization provided crucial professional and personal support to educators and parents of gifted and talented children. “This organization provided me with so much support as a new teacher and parent of a gifted and artistically talented son in Louisiana from the 1980s to 2000,” Troxclair said. Although she relocated to Texas in 2001 and became involved in various organizations at the state, national and international levels, Troxclair rediscovered AGTS in late 2021. “It is my goal to keep up the momentum and resurgence of this group of gifted educators moving forward in their efforts of supporting gifted education in Louisiana, as leaders in their field of passion, as advocates for gifted learners and their education, and in helping the association in networking with other educational organizations in Louisiana.”

Msengi publishes memoir



In a memoir titled *Spared*, Clementine Msengi '12, visiting assistant professor on the faculty at the Center for Doctoral Studies in Educational Leadership, recounts

her harrowing escape from one of the darkest chapters in human history—the Rwandan genocide. The memoir follows Msengi's journey from surviving the genocide against the Tutsi, which claimed the lives of over one million people, to her ultimate success as an American citizen, an award-winning community leader and a respected academic. *Spared* not only serves as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, but also provides a roadmap for newcomers seeking to overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams in the land of opportunity.



Msengi highlighted the profound lessons embedded in her narrative, emphasizing the importance of learning from the tragic events in Rwanda. "There are many lessons we can learn from what happened in Rwanda. My narrative opens doors for discussions on these and associated issues stemming from this abhorrent event in world history," Msengi said. "I believe readers will be drawn to timeless themes of hope, triumph over hate, faith, forgiveness and resilience, leading to a better awareness of how our universal experiences can unite us." The book is receiving acclaim for capturing the essence of the American spirit and portraying the journey of overcoming challenges to pursue one's dreams.

Professor Emerita Sandra Harris said, "Clementine is an ordinary girl who grew up in Rwanda during the genocide. Yet in the midst of horrifying experiences, she tells an extraordinary story of how the human spirit can achieve the seemingly impossible. In *'Spared'*, Clementine reminds us that one's dreams must not be consumed by tragedy. Instead, she encourages us to fuel our dreams with hard work and courage for the future."

Texas Academy excels at Model UN

Fourteen Texas Academy students showcased their abilities at The Woodlands High School Model United Nations Conference, with three receiving awards. Model United Nations, an academic simulation of the United Nations, provides students with a unique platform to delve into the realms of diplomacy and international relations. "The Texas Academy MUN team hit the ground running to prepare for this conference. The team meets weekly to strategize, conduct research, and write draft position papers," said Ariel Burgess, Texas Academy coordinator and student success coach. "While the students may be on different committees, the team works together to hold practice sessions on what it will be like the day of the conference."

Among the standout performers from the Texas Academy were junior Sidra Ganni, senior Joanne Yi, and junior Chloe Doyle, who earned accolades for their exemplary contributions at the conference. Ganni secured an Honorable Mention for her representation of David Lloyd George on the Crisis Committee. Yi earned Outstanding Position Paper for her portrayal of the country Gambia in the General Assembly Committee, and Doyle was awarded Best Delegate while representing Germany on the General Assembly Committee.

Ed.D. program secures spot

Lamar University has once again achieved recognition for its commitment to excellence in education as it joins The Princeton Review's 2024 Best Online Ed.D Programs list. The Princeton Review compiles its annual list based on valuable feedback from real students. LU's accelerated Doctor of Education program is designed to accommodate the busy schedules of full-time educators and working professionals, offering flexibility without compromising academic rigor.



Reaud Honors College launches leadership institute

With the generous support of Beaumont attorney and philanthropist, Wayne A. Reaud, Lamar University and the Reaud Honors College have launched the Reaud Leadership Institute with an accompanying honors studies minor. In its inaugural year, students participating in the institute are the first ever Reaud Fellows. As such, students will engage in challenging and unique professional opportunities

designed to cultivate and enhance critical thinking and leadership skills among Lamar's best and brightest.

The rigorous academic nature of the institute begins in the student's first year when they engage in an Honors Seminar on Leadership. Fellows participate in an intense book study on "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader" and then apply what they learn at all leadership events. Also, Reaud Fellows join in the Honors Leadership Community where they develop ePortfolios and identify their research goals, academic goals and "why" statements to guide their collegiate endeavors.

"In just the past year, the RLI Fellows have partnered with university stakeholders across campus, including the LU Office of Alumni Affairs and the Honors Student Association Executive Team. These opportunities have included teambuilding development workshops, as well as a formal event that included etiquette training, ballroom dancing, a multi-course dinner and tips for polite conversation," said Tony Kemerly, associate dean of the Reaud Honors College.

"Academically, fellows of the RLI will have access to incredible opportunities through the minor in honors studies, as well as the chance to engage with Lamar faculty in undergraduate research or creative works," Kemerly said. "Participating in research gives students a greater depth of understanding of their chosen field of study. Through research, they will be empowered to solve real-world problems, develop meaningful mentoring relationships and gain a competitive edge in industry."

A wide variety of volunteer opportunities, such as the Stepping Up Civic Leadership program, are also available throughout the Southeast Texas community. These volunteer experiences, in areas as diverse as local historical restoration, crime and safety, health, and environmental consciousness give the Reaud Fellows an unmatched experience in civic leadership and volunteerism.



We hope you enjoy reading about former classmates. If you have news to share—a position announcement, milestone, achievement, wedding, baby—or know the whereabouts of a lost alumnus, we want to hear from you.

SEND US YOUR NEWS:

Cardinal Cadence
P.O. Box 10011
Beaumont, TX 77710

lamar.edu/alumni-update
e-mail alumni@lamar.edu
or call (409) 880-8921

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50s

Bette Stead '57, B.B.A. general business, has written a new book, *"Strut, The Winning Crow,"* a story of a crow who tries to defend his home from a football team and ends up becoming a hero in the process. Bette is a 2004 Lamar University Distinguished Alumna and lives in Houston.

60s

Michael Hatton '69, B.B.A. marketing, is executive vice president and advisor to the chairman of First Security Bank. He lives in Beaumont.

70s

Jimmy Farmer '71, B.B.A. marketing, owns Texas Feed Stop. He and his wife, Donna, live in Mont Belvieu.
James "Jimmy" Allen '73, B.B.A. accounting, is director of the McCoy College of Business banking program at Texas State University. He and his wife, Kathryn, live in San Marcos.

David Bernsen '73, B.B.A. marketing, was named a 2023 Super Lawyer. He is an attorney with the Bernsen Law Firm and lives with his wife, Dinah, in Beaumont.

Samuel Job '73, B.B.A. general business, earned the 2023 Do Good National Hero Award, which honors fire fighters and police nationwide. He is a founding member of the Lake Rayburn Volunteer Fire Department, and he and his wife, Brenda, live in Brookeland.

Lt. Col. Chris Beaty '77, B.S. mechanical engineering, is state commander for Veterans of Foreign Wars of Nebraska. He is a retired instructor pilot and squadron ops officer for the Air Force. He and his wife, **Anne (Arnaud)** '75, A.A.S. radiologic technology, live in Bellevue, Neb.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Support Group of Southeast Texas honored Thomas Jefferson Middle School Assistant Principal **Sandra "Gail" (Ford) Castille** '77, B.S. speech, with its 2023 Woman of the Year Award. She and her husband, Lawrence, live in Port Arthur.

The USDA appointed **Ike Mills** '77, B.F.A. art, to Foreign Agriculture Services. He is also state legislative liaison for Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers and lives with his wife, Azzie, in Port Arthur.

Obie Dixon '79, B.S. communication, works at Propane Resources. He and his wife, Melinda, live in Shawnee, Kan.

80s

Zane Barra '83, B.S. speech, '90, B.M. music education, retired from New Caney school district in May 2023 after 33 years in music education. He lives in Humble.

Gov. Greg Abbott has reappointed **Cynthia (Kellam) Stinson** '80, B.S. nursing, who retired from Lamar University as chair of the JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing and owns Health Education Resources, to the Texas Health Services Authority Board of Directors for a term set to expire June 15, 2025. The board is responsible for coordinating the implementation of health information exchange in Texas. She and her husband, **Fred** '75, B.S. computer science, live in Lumberton.

Vidor school district named **Connie (Stone) Godeaux** '83, B.S.W. social work, September 2023 Employee of the Month. She teaches first grade at Vidor Elementary School and lives with her husband, Robert, in Vidor.

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce named **Cassie (Fiorenza) Simpson** -83 2023 Ambassador of the Year. She and her husband, Mike, live in Beaumont.

Billy Dixon '84, B.S. electrical engineering, retired as systems engineering manager at Lockheed Martin. He and his wife, Wanda, live in Camden, Del.

Gov. Greg Abbott has reappointed **Kal Kincaid** '84, A.A.S. drafting technology, '05, B.S. industrial technology, to the Lower Neches Valley Authority Board of Directors for a term that expires July 28, 2029. Kal is president of Texas Materials, is a board member and transportation chairman for the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, board member for Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County, chairman of Lamar University's Construction Management Advisory Board, and a member of the Rotary Club of Beaumont. He and his wife, Lisa, live in Beaumont.

Suzanne (Hopkins) Saunders '84, A.A.S. drafting technology, '86, B.S. industrial technology, is senior vice president of design and construction at Hospitality Ventures Management Group. She lives in Atlanta, Ga.

Silsbee school district honored **Sherrie (Scoggins) Thornhill** '84, B.S. elementary education, for 40 years of service. She and her husband, **David** '16, A.A.S. mid-management, who is president of Southwest Building Systems, live in Silsbee.

Vicki (Glasgow) Holcombe '85, B.S. communication, retired as director of volunteer services at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas after 23 years of service. She and her husband, **Gary** '93, B.B.A. general business, who is information technology manager at Steinhagen Oil Co., live in Beaumont.

The Bridge City High School Alumni Association honored **Nina (Scales) Leifeste** '85, B.S. biology, as a Distinguished Alumna for 2023. She owns Leifeste Dental and is an adjunct professor at the University of Texas. She lives in Orange.

Congratulations to **John Via** '86, M.E.S. engineering science, on being elected a fellow of the American Society for Engineering Management at the organization's 2023 conference in recognition of sustained and noteworthy contribution to the profession. It is the highest level of membership. A maximum of five fellows can be elected each year and only 100 individuals have been so recognized since 1988. He and his wife, Jennifer, live in Houston.

Congratulations to **Orlando Alvarez** '87, B.B.A. accounting, on his promotion to chairman and president of BP America, in addition to his responsibility as CEO and president of the company's trading organization. He and his wife, Kari, live in Houston.

Jay Jenkinson -87 and business partner **Allen Perkins** -81 opened Riverside Grille, a restaurant on Crockett Street in Beaumont. Jay is general manager of WOW Food Concepts, and he and his wife, Teri, live in Nederland. Allen owns WOW Food Concepts, and he and his wife, **Susan (Kelly)** '89, A.A.S. nursing, who is a registered nurse at the Beaumont campus of Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas, live in Beaumont. WOW Food Concepts owns five restaurants in Houston, Webster, Port Arthur, Beaumont and Lafayette, La.

Michael Mezell -87 is an artist and volunteer coordinator at St. Anne Catholic Church. He lives in Nome.

Helen Tangires '87, M.B.A. business administration, retired Oct. 7, 2023, as a director for the Center for Advanced Study in Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art. She and her husband, Dennis McDaniel, live in Washington, D.C.

Jeff Darby '88, B.A. history, retired from the U.S. Department of Labor Jan. 27, 2023, following a 33-year career as a wage and hour investigator. He serves as president of the Sabine Area Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO and vice president for Texas AFL-CIO District 2. He opened a consulting and mediation firm, JP Darby Services, Feb. 1, 2023, which specializes in compliance with federal labor and administrative law. He and his wife, **Christy (Lindsey)** '91, B.S. elementary education, who is a math teacher at Nederland High School, live in Nederland. They celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary Dec. 17, 2023.

Mellow (Seale) Tatmon '88, B.S. criminal justice, A.S. law enforcement, '09, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Homer Drive Elementary School. She and her husband, **Michael** '85, A.A.S. drafting technology, live in Beaumont.

| CLASS NOTES |



Layla Leventry, Josh Leventry '10, Jordan Leventry, Madelyn Leventry, Kristin (Lemond) Leventry '08 and Mackenzie Leventry



LU Ambassadors Harvest Prater, Drake Rothenberger, Kewwe Onakpoya, Peyton McLaurin, Hannah Thrash and Zuhair Merchant

LU Alumni Between-the-Games Basketball Party
 LU Alumni and friends joined in with the Cardinal Athletic Fund donors Jan. 27 for a between-the-games party and cheered on the Lady Cardinals and Cardinals as they defeated the Southwestern Louisiana Lions.



Keith Henke '91, Logan Henke, Jennifer (Hansen) Lyons '93, '11, Robert Lyons '93



Maxwell Thibodeaux, Phyllis (McAfee) Thibodeaux '00, '06, Peyton Thibodeaux



Donta Miller '18, Shannon (Copeland) Figueroa '02, '03, '07, Terry Savoy-Hadley '95 and Regina Miller



Jerry Mask Sr. '74, Beth Ann (Ingram) Mask '64, Carol (Ingram) Johnson '67, Larry Johnson '65



Calvin Smylie '20 and Bekah (Gonzales) Guedry '18



Micah Denison, Mike Tarver '99, '10, Amy (Babineaux) Tarver '99



Elohor (Okene) Jackson '20 and Sonja Beckman '23



Max Mannella, Cherrye Moore '98 and Guiseppe Mannella



John Rollins '12; Sharita Gardner '12; Evie Clifton, coordinator of the Office of Alumni Affairs; Hetty (Green) Brown '79



Andrew Allen, Emily (Everett) Allen '98, '04, and Aaron Allen



Judy (Appling) Bettis '84 and Walter Bettis

Congratulations to **Krissy (Schwartz)** '89, B.S. nursing, and **Lawrence Bonnette** '91, A.A.S. computer drafting technology, on the birth of their granddaughter, Amelia Mae. They live in Missouri City.

Gina Mannino '89, B.S. elementary education, '98, M.Ed. administration, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, retired as the principal of Sims Elementary School after 34 years of service. She is field supervisor of educational leadership at Lamar University. She lives in Bridge City.

Gayle (Combs) Stephens '89, M.Ed. supervision, taught reading in Kountze school district from 1973 until her retirement in 2011 and was recognized as an honorary life member of the Friends of the Kountze Public Library. She lives in Kountze.

Terry (Tomplait) Wuenschel '89, B.B.A. accounting, is the chief deputy tax assessor collector for Jefferson County and interim tax assessor-collector. She and her husband, Keith, live in Beaumont.

90s

Jeff Ayers '90, B.S. speech, is senior business advisor at Generational Group. He and his wife, Kim, live in Flint.

Cassie (Clark) Balla '90, B.B.A. office administration, teaches career and technology and yearbook at Silsbee High School. She lives in Silsbee.

Gov. Greg Abbott appointed **Edeska Barnes Jr.** '91, B.S. criminal justice, to the Texas Juvenile Justice Board. He is the chief juvenile probation officer with the First Judicial District Juvenile Probation Department. He lives in Jasper.

Jefferson County Texas Master Gardeners named **Brenda (Maywald) Beadle** '91, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, Master Gardener of the Year. She is capital projects manager for the City of Beaumont, and she and her husband, Drew, live in Beaumont.

Mollie Bell '92, B.B.A. business, earned a law degree in 2001 and is chief development officer at Ent Credit Union, and the Credit Union Executives Society named her a 2023 Exceptional Leader. She lives in Larkspur, Colo.

Lori (Dear) Graham '92, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '99, M.Ed. administration, is a realtor with SETX Properties–Neil and Julie Sanders Group. She and her husband, **Gary** '77, B.S. civil engineering, live in Port Neches.

Karen (Richardson) Ford '92, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '11, M.Ed. administration, is executive director of human resources for Silsbee school district. She and her husband, **Darrell** '92, A.A.S. computer drafting technology, who is an E&I designer at BASF, live in Port Neches.

Paul Knippel '92, M.E. civil engineering, is the public works director for the city of Westminster. He lives in Broomfield, Colo.

Dorothy (Chesson) Way '92, B.S. biology, earned her M.B.A. in health care administration in 2020 and is laboratory manager at HCA Houston Healthcare. She and her husband, **Joseph** '18, B.B.A. finance, live in Orange.

Melinda (Mosley) James '93, B.B.A. accounting, retired from Bridge City school district as business manager. She and her husband, **David** '89, B.S. industrial technology, live in Orange.

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals named **Brenda (Trahan) Brevell** '95, B.S. biology, '20, M.Ed. administration, 2023-2024 Region 5 Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year. She is assistant principal at Groves Middle School and lives with her husband, **Mark** '96, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who teaches industrial technology at Groves Middle School, in Groves.

Nikki (Brown) Hanson '95, B.M. music–vocals, teaches music at Oak Forest Elementary School in Vidor school district. She and her husband, **Brandon** '96, B.S. communication, who is ministry consultant for First Baptist Church of Vidor, live in Orange.

Dana (Day) Arceneaux '96, B.B.A. management information systems, is core operations administrator at Cypress Federal Credit Union. She and her husband, Justin, live in Hamshire.

Congratulations to **Shannon (Tarbett) Garrod** '96, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '01, M.Ed. counseling and development, on the birth of her grandson, Ethan. She and her husband, Ed, live in Sour Lake.

John "Wes" Johnson '96, B.S. industrial technology, '97, B.S. industrial engineering, is president of Ascent Tubular, a division of Ascent Industries Co. With 20 years of leadership experience, he most recently served as senior vice president and global general manager of Corpro, a subsidiary of Aegion Corp. that offers total corrosion solutions to the energy, Department of Defense, municipal and marine markets. He and his wife, Mary, live in Cypress.

Lori (Swan) Wright '96, B.S.W. social work, is social work program director and field director at Lamar University. She and her husband, Joel, live in Beaumont.

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals named **Vanessa (Peno) Bennett** '97, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '05, M.Ed. administration, 2023-2024 Region 5 High School Principal of the Year. She is the principal of Deweyville High School and lives with her husband, **Jeffrey** '15, M.Ed. administration, in Vidor.

Lance Broussard '97, B.S. chemical engineering, is vice president of business development at Refined

Technologies. He and his wife, **Dr. Crystal (Ray) Broussard** '97, B.S. chemistry, B.S. biology, who is a family medicine doctor with Genesis Medical Group, live in Spring.

Silsbee school district named **Deborah (Cooper) Haynes** '97, B.S. kinesiology, September 2023 Teacher of the Month. She is the head lady's basketball coach at Silsbee High School and lives with her husband, Travis, in Kirbyville.

Jennifer (Prejean) Sigler '97, B.S. nursing, earned a master's degree as a women's health nurse practitioner and co-owns Beaumont WELLness for Women. She and her husband, **Giles** '98, B.G.S. general studies, live in Beaumont.

Paula Trippel-Street '97, B.S. criminal justice, teaches special education at Elberta Elementary School. She and her husband, Jimmy, live in Pensacola, Fla.

Marie (Alvarado) Tucker '97, B.S. communication, '09, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal at Alvin High School. She and her husband, Hans, live in Rosharon.

Mark Barre '98, M.S. kinesiology, celebrated his 400th win during his 17th year leading the boys basketball program at Glenda Dawson High School in Pearland school district. He and his wife, Laura, live in Manvel.

Jamie (Skeldon) Larson '98, B.B.A. accounting, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is assistant vice president of financial reporting and planning at Texas State University–San Marcos. She lives in San Marcos.

Karen Kennedy-Moore '98, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '03, M.Ed. elementary education, is the elementary English Language Arts and Reading curriculum supervisor for Port Arthur school district. She and her husband, Billy, live in Beaumont.

Douglas "Keith" Tennison II '98, B.S. biology, is vice president of market access at KaiVista Pharmaceuticals Inc. He and his wife, Lori, live in Framingham, Mass.

Alaric Harrell '99, B.B.A. accounting, is chief accounting officer at Vantage Drilling International. He and his wife, Berdia, live in Richmond, Texas.

Paula (Rand) Leger '99, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, owns Glory B's Consignment Boutique. She lives in Port Arthur.

Vickie McGee '99, B.A. history, is human resources manager at PoolCorp. She lives in Covington, La.

Josh Smalley '99, B.A. history, became the winningest coach in Orangefield High School's history with his 68th career win in September 2023 as head football coach and athletic director. He recently became head football coach for Bridge City High School. He and his wife, **Kimberly (Fittz)** '97, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '10, M.Ed. administration, who is director of

curriculum and instruction for Bridge City school district, live in Bridge City.

00s

Julie (Romero) Fuller '00, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '15, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Orangefield Elementary School. She lives in Orange.

Cleve Glenn '00, B.B.A. accounting, earned his law degree in 2007 and is an attorney and partner in BakerHostetler's business practice group and a member of the mergers and acquisitions team and the energy team. He and his wife, Adele, live in Sugar Land.

Ireese (Battles) Gregory '00, B.S. criminal justice, is assistant principal at Abraham Lincoln Fine Arts Academy Middle School in Port Arthur school district. She and her husband, **Tim** '89, B.B.A. general business, who is a process operator for INVISTA, live in Beaumont.

Jennifer (King) Welch '00, B.A. theatre, teaches theatre arts at Silsbee High School. She and her husband, Nathan, live in Silsbee.

Heather (McRae) Barrow '01, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '13, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Langham Elementary School. She and her husband, **Keith** '94, B.S. kinesiology, who teaches and coaches at Nederland High School, live in Nederland.

Gabe Crosby '01, B.A. history, '03, M.A. history, '08, M.Ed. supervision, who earned his doctorate in organizational leadership and higher education in 2022, is executive director of student success at Lamar University. He lives in Beaumont.

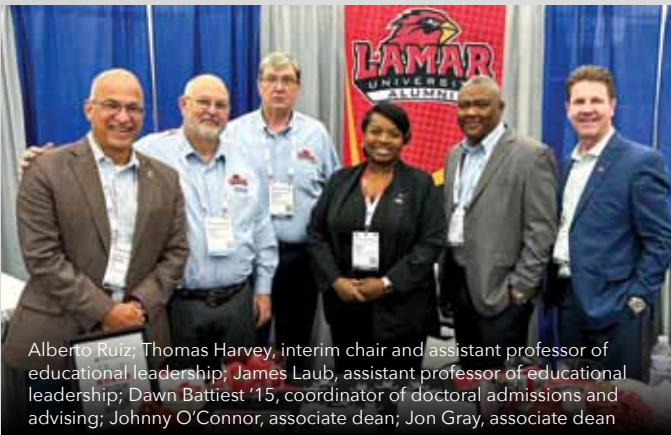
Melanie Cutler '01, B.B.A. management, teaches third grade at Little Cypress Elementary School. She and her husband, Chris, live in Orange.

The Diocese of Beaumont honored **Stephanie Do** '01, B.S. chemical engineering, and her company La Belle Fleur Wedding Designs and Events with its 2023 St. Joseph Worker Excellence in Stewardship Award. She and her husband, Phillip, live in Orange.

Southeast Texas Nurse Practitioners honored **Jennifer (McMullen) East** '01, B.S. nursing, as 2023 Nurse Practitioner of the Year. She is a nurse practitioner for Riceland Endocrinology, and she and her husband, David, live in Nederland.

Chrissy (Lane) LaComb '01, B.S. nursing, owns LaComb Health and Wellness as nurse practitioner. She and her husband, Jarred, live in Bridge City.

James Thomas '01, B.S. criminal justice, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, is chief of training operations for the Texas Department of Public Safety. He and his wife, **Keron**



Alberto Ruiz; Thomas Harvey, interim chair and assistant professor of educational leadership; James Laub, assistant professor of educational leadership; Dawn Battiest '15, coordinator of doctoral admissions and advising; Johnny O'Connor, associate dean; Jon Gray, associate dean

College of Education and Human Development Alumni Reception
 The faculty and staff from the College of Education and Human Development attended the Texas Association of School Administrators Midwinter Conference in Austin Jan. 28-30, 2024. Alberto Ruiz, dean of the College of Education and Human Development, hosted a reception for alumni Jan. 29.



Thomas Harvey and Brad McEachern '91, '02



Phe'Licia (Sterling) Thompson '17, '18, and Johnny O'Connor



Josh Dickinson '07



Thomas Harvey and Travis Edwards '97



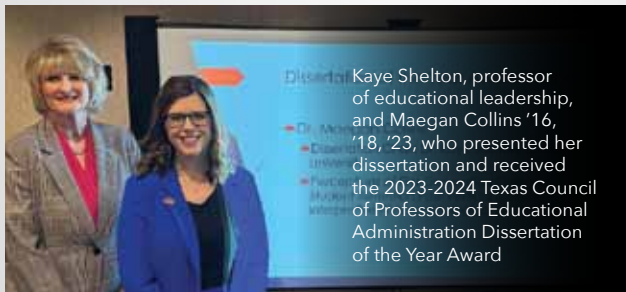
Melonee (Hargrave) Fife '16 and Thomas Harvey



Brandon Chandler '09



Norma Mottu '24 and Thomas Harvey



Kaye Shelton, professor of educational leadership, and Maegan Collins '16, '18, '23, who presented her dissertation and received the 2023-2024 Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration Dissertation of the Year Award



Thomas Harvey, Kristy Janecka '15, Skye Anderle '17, Stacy (Hayek) Heger '09, Johnny Brown and James Laub



Tammie (Elder) Marberry '88, '96, '01, '13

(Forrester) '22, M.S. management information systems, M.B.A. business administration, live in McGregor.

Luu Tran '01, B.B.A. management information systems, is a member of the Third Coast Restaurant Group. He lives in New Orleans.

Charles Cloudy '02, Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities, '06, B.B.A. finance, '13, M.S. accounting, is a financial analyst at Modern Group. He and his wife, **Roxanne (Homuth) '05**, B.B.A. marketing, who is co-manager of Body Central, live in Port Neches.

Amanda (Gagneux) James '02, B.S. biology, '12, M.Ed. administration, who earned her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction in 2019, is principal of Bridge City High School. She and her husband, Derek, live in Hamshire.

Stephanie (Chesson) Joslin '02, B.S. criminal justice, is director of development for the American Cancer Society in Houston. She and her husband, William, live in Houston.

Lance LaRue '02, B.S. communication, is president of 5 Under Golf Center. He and his wife, **Michelle (Poulter) '03**, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, who is the librarian at Lumberton Intermediate School, live in Lumberton.

Heather Montagne '02, B.B.A. general business, owns Heather Montagne State Farm Insurance with offices in Orange and Beaumont. She and her husband, Michael Mankopf, live in Orange.

Nicholas Phillips '02, B.G.S. general studies, '11, M.Ed. administration, is principal of West Brook High School in Beaumont school district. The Texas Parent Teacher Association named him 2023 Secondary Principal of the Year. He lives in Nederland.

Nicole (Smith) Wolford '02, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '13, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is assistant principal of Orangefield Elementary School. She and her husband, Bobby, live in Orange.

Christy (Reeves) Wood '02, B.S. biology, teaches science at Nederland High School. She and her husband, Steven, live in Nederland.

Texas Health and Human Services promoted **Jacob Bennefield '03**, B.B.A. management information systems, to director of network services. He and his wife, **Carrie (Dowling) '11**, B.A. American Sign Language, live in Leander.

Kristen (Brown) Hoffpauir '03, B.S. nursing, is an emergency department nurse at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital and earned a Daisy Award for nursing excellence. She and her husband, **John '06**, B.S. nursing, live in Beaumont.

Jason Jinkerson '03, B.G.S. general studies, is lead account manager at Veolia Water Technologies and Solutions. He and his wife, **Alicia (Wright) '02**, B.A. psychology, who is a family-based safety services specialist

for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, live in Nederland.

The governor of Kentucky named **Brandon Morgan** '03, B.S. communication, '10, M.Ed. administration, '22, M.Ed. counseling and development, an honorary lifetime "Kentucky Colonel" for his service to others and charitable actions in 2021. It is the highest honor a civilian can earn in the state. He works in federal law enforcement, and he and his wife, **Jana (Chauvin)** '01, B.B.A. management information systems, live in Orange.

The Beaumont Board of Realtors selected **Darci Piel** '03, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, as a 2024 director. She is a realtor for Coldwell Banker Southern Homes Real Estate and lives in Lumberton.

Charisma (Walker) Popillion '03, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '07, M.Ed. administration, who earned her Ed.D. in 2014, is senior director of innovation for Beaumont school district. She and her husband, **Byron** '22, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who is a sergeant for the Lamar University Police Department, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Collier (Christian) Thompson** '03, B.B.A. management information systems, and her husband, Brian, on the birth of their daughter, Margot Georgia. Collier is a clinical field specialist with Natera. They live in Lakewood, Colo.

The Rotary Club of Beaumont honored **Shawn Webb-Locke** '03, B.S. sociology, '12, M.Ed. school counseling, with its Vocational Excellence Award. She is team lead and realtor of Shawn Sold It Real Estate Team with American Real Estate Beaumont. The Beaumont Board of Realtors selected her as a 2024 director. She and her husband, **James Locke Jr.** '92, live in Beaumont.

Austin Williams '03, B.B.A. finance, is vice president of marketing and business development for First Security Bank. He and his wife, **Nichole (Lajudes)** '13, B.S. communication disorders, '15, M.S. speech-language pathology, live in Beaumont.

Amber (Barrington) Buchanan '04, B.B.A. marketing, '08, M.B.A. business administration, is senior regional director at Charlie Health overseeing the pacific northwest, California, southwest and mid-west regions. She and her husband, Holt, live in Beaumont.

Eli Clark '04, B.S. mechanical engineering, is technology manager of mechanical recycling at LyondellBasell. He and his wife, Annie, live in Liberty.

Jenny Hamilton '04, B.S. communication, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is business manager for the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Lamar University. She lives in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Rene (Slott) Latiolais** '04, B.S. communication, on receiving the Southeast Texas Young

Professionals Organization Legacy Award from the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce. Rene is director of marketing for Lamar University. She and her husband, **Toby** '10, M.Ed. administration, who is director of the City of Nederland Parks and Recreation Department, live in Nederland.

Jeffrey Lewis '04, B.A. history, is director of estimating for McDermott Inc. He and his wife, **Kari (Coker)** '07, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, live in Humble.

Angel (Lewis) Murphy '04, B.G.S. general studies, '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, in principal of Memorial 9th Grade Academy in Port Arthur school district. She lives in Nederland.

Danielle (Robbins) Pardue '04, B.S. communication, is business development and public relations director of Spindletop Center and a Press Club of Southeast Texas Excellence in the Media Award winner. She and her husband, **Clint** '05, B.S. communication, live in Port Neches.

Courtney (Hale) Revia '04, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, owns 7 Oaks Event Garden, a live, listening environment. She and her husband, Lance, live in Beaumont.

Clint Walters '04, B.B.A. finance, '11, M.B.A. business administration, is chairman and CEO of First Security Bank. He and his wife, Amye, live in Sour Lake.

Congratulations to **Beth (Yelverton) Whitley** '04, B.B.A. marketing, and her husband, Christian, on the birth of their son, Luke Mackenzie James. She is director of the Honors Program at Texas Woman's University, and they live in Denton.

Elise Becker '05, B.B.A. marketing, '12, M.B.A. business administration, owns Simple Elegance Wedding and Events. She lives in Bridge City.

The Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal named **Justin Burleson** '05, B.B.A. economics, as 2023 C.F.O. of the Year. He is senior vice president, chief operating officer and chief financial officer of Spire Credit Union. He and his wife, **Stacy (Enmon)** '05, B.B.A. accounting, live in Saint Paul, Minn.

Kate Ducote '05, B.F.A. graphic design, teaches fourth grade science at China Elementary School in Hardin Jefferson school district. She and her husband, **Damon** '03, B.F.A. graphic design, who is golf course superintendent at Aquila Golf Inc., live in Beaumont.

Holly (Killingsworth) Guidry '05, B.B.A. human resource management, is a trustee of the Texas Municipal Human Resources Association and is human resources director and director of civil service for the City of Nederland, where she lives.

Kirk Hampton '05, B.S. communication, owns Top of the Lion Roofing and Construction. He and his wife, **Lacy (Taylor)** '09, B.B.A. general

business-entrepreneurship, who owns and is a photographer with Lacy Hampton Photography, live in Beaumont.

Teri (Lounsberry) Harvey '05, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '23, M.Ed. administration, teaches sixth grade English at Vidor Middle School. She and her husband, **Thomas** '04, B.G.S. general studies, '13, M.Ed. administration, live in Vidor.

Jennifer (Sparks) Lowrance '05, B.S. communication, is director of educational programming at McFaddin-Ward House Museum. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Beaumont.

Holly (Simmons) Reames '05, B.S. nursing, '15, M.S. nursing administration, is a senior medical science liaison at Fennec Pharmaceuticals. She and her husband, Ryan, live in Humble.

Ebonee (Grant) Baltimore '06, B.B.A. accounting, '07, M.B.A. business administration, is director of financial reporting for CSI Compresso. She and her husband, Aaron, live in Houston.

Troy Bernhardt '06, B.B.A. finance, is senior vice president for the Baytown market of Texas Regional Bank. He and his wife, **Summer (Detwiler)** '15, B.A. biochemistry, '19, B.A. chemistry, who is a research technician at the ExxonMobil Corp. Baytown Refinery, live in Baytown.

Heather (Foster) Fountain '06, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '09, M.Ed. administration, is interim principal of Lumberton Early Childhood. She lives in Kountze.

Dawanna Jones '06, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '11, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is a community engagement specialist for Bechtel and was featured in the October 2023 issue of *Empowering Boss Life* magazine. She lives in Beaumont.

Christopher Lanier '06, B.B.A. accounting, is a senior tax accountant with Wathen, DeShong & Junker L.L.P. He lives in Port Arthur.

Sisters **Trinh Pham** '06, B.S. nursing, and **Nhi Pham** '12, B.S. forensic chemistry, co-own Nothing Bundt Cake franchises in Lake Charles and Port Arthur. Nhi and her husband, Vu, and Trinh and her husband, Duy, live in Nederland.

Rhonda (Hobbs) Ruben '06, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is president of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and the National Panhellenic Council Golden Triangle Chapter and won six awards at the 2023 National Panhellenic Council Leadership Conference. She lives in Beaumont.

Leah Scott '06, B.B.A. marketing, '10, M.B.A. business administration, is director of communications and information management at AIM Photonics. She lives in Mechanicville, N.Y.

The Better Business Bureau Serving Southeast Texas honored **Josh Smith** '06, B.B.A. management, who owns Bill Clark Pest Control, with its Torch

Award for Business Ethics. His business also won the Golden Triangle Business Roundtable Annual Contractor Safety Award. He and his wife, Sarah, live in Vidor.

Silsbee school district named **Casey (Green) Sundgren** '06, B.G.S. general studies, September 2023 Edwards-Johnson Memorial Middle School Teacher of the Month, where she teaches science. She lives in Silsbee.

Jason Yeaman '06, B.S. kinesiology, '11, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Bridge City Elementary School. He and his wife, Jillian, live in Orange.

Bridget (Moss) Kirby '07, B.A. English, '14, M.Ed. administration, is executive director of secondary learning for Silsbee school district. She and her husband, **Joseph** '05, B.G.S. general studies, who teaches at Lumberton High School, live in Silsbee.

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals named **Velvet (Knockum) Malbrough** '07, B.B.A. general business-entrepreneurship, B.B.A. general business-industrial engineering, '15, M.Ed. educational technology and leadership, 2023-2024 Region 5 Assistant Principal of the Year. She is assistant principal at Pathways Learning Center and lives with her husband, Nathaniel, in Beaumont.

Chris Swango '07, B.S. electrical engineer, is project engineer and manager at Alliance Engineers and Project Consultants. He and his wife, Angela, live in Lufkin.

Dean of students for Lone Star College **Jerry Wallace** '07, B.F.A. graphic design, '10, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, joined a panel at the October 2023 Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators Conference. He and his wife, **Belashia (Johnson)** '08, B.S. communication, who earned her law degree in 2016 and is a principal injury attorney and certified mediator with The Wallace Law Firm, live in Humble.

Congratulations to **Juan Zabala** '07, M.B.A. business administration, on being named a 2023 Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Beaumont. He is vice president of university advancement at Lamar University and CEO of the Lamar University Foundation Inc. He and his wife, Peggy, live in Beaumont.

The National Constables and Marshals Association presented **Constable Chris Bates** '08, B.G.S. general studies, who earned his master's degree in public administration in 2017, with the 2023 Constable of the Year Award. Bates is a constable for Jefferson County and minister of music at New Pilgrim Baptist Church. He and his wife, **Ariana (Jones)** '17, B.S. communication-broadcasting, '21, M.Ed. administration, who teaches second grade at Travis Elementary School, live in Port Arthur.



Jarett Reynolds '12, John Burroughs, Robert Glenn '83

LU vs. HCU Pre-Game Party

LU Alumni and friends gathered Jan. 20 at Spanky's Homemade Pizza and Bar in Houston before the LU vs. Houston Christian University basketball game.



Isabel Rodriguez '22 and Jose Rodriguez '91



Chris Graham '90 and Juan Zabala '07



Felicia White and Richelle Brewster '85



Ivy Holt, Zach Holt '16, Shalea (Francois) Holt '16, and Clover Holt



Donni Leaycraft and Carmen (Angelle) Jordan '90



Eunice Davis, Othellus Davis '80, Mario Watkins '81, and Chris Graham '90



Edwin Vallery '79



Tayla Thibodeaux '18 and Brianna Thibodeaux '20



LU Ambassador Drake Rothenberger

Sam Blanda '08, B.B.A. finance, owns Jack's Pak-It Inc. He lives in Beaumont.

Brytni (Humphrey) Borel '08, B.S. communication disorders, '12, Au.D. audiology, is an audiologist and owner of Orange County Audiology and Hearing Aids. She and her husband, Tony, live in Groves.

Congratulations to **Kayla (Pipkins) Clark** '08, B.S. family and consumer sciences, '12, M.B.A. business administration, and her husband, Christopher, on the birth of their son, Beck Christopher. She is a realtor and real estate consultant for Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, and they live in Beaumont.

Dakota Doman '08, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '11, M.B.A. business administration, is managing principal of TM2 Executive Search. He and his wife, **Ashly (Henson)** '08, B.S. psychology, live in Houston.

Erin (Lovelady) Lemoine '08, B.S. kinesiology, is director of pre-award and proposal development at Lamar University. She and her spouse, Jessica live in Nederland.

Perma-Pipe International Holdings Inc. promoted **Matthew Lewicki** '08, B.B.A. accounting, '10, M.B.A. business administration, to vice president, chief financial officer, and secretary and treasurer. He and his wife, Kara, live in Humble.

W.K. Kellogg Co. promoted **Katherine (Cowles) Piske** '08, B.S. communication, to account executive. She and her husband, Austin, live in Austin.

Jeremy Potts '08, B.S. family and consumer sciences—interior design, is an estimator for Casa Mechanical Services working on plumbing estimation for residential home builders in the Austin area. He lives in Temple.

The Texas Association of School Administrators named **Daniel Auchenbach** '09, B.S. chemical engineering, '14, M.Ed. educational technology and leadership, 2024 Region 5 Secondary Teacher of the Year. He teaches physics and engineering at Bridge City High School and lives with his wife, Marie, in Orange.

James Burnes '09, B.A. history, '12, M.A. history, earned his Ph.D. in history in 2023 and is a senior exhibition coordinator at the University of Oklahoma Libraries. He and his wife, **Jami (Davis)** '09, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, who teaches at Norman North High School, live in Norman, Okla.

Brandon Chandler '09, M.Ed. administration, is superintendent of the Academy of Accelerated Learning Inc. He lives in Houston.

Stacy Hall Jr. '09, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, earned a master's degree in educational leadership with principal certification in 2012 and is assistant principal of Alvin Junior High. He lives in Angleton.

Haley (Pickerson) John '09, B.S. family and consumer sciences—dietetics, '13, M.S. family and consumer sciences, earned her designation as a certified commercial investment member and is founder and managing principal of RH Capital Partners. She and her husband, Reji, live in Houston.

Megan (Sample) Kline '09, B.S. nursing, earned her family nurse practitioner master's degree and is a family nurse practitioner with CHI St. Luke's Health. She and her husband, Matthew, live in Rosharon.

Mark Koller '09, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Legacy Ranch High School in Liberty Hill school district. He and his wife, Natalia, live in Georgetown.

The Rotary Club of Beaumont honored **Diana (Davis) Miles** '09, B.S. nursing, with its Vocational Excellence Award. She is director of quality for Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital. She and her husband, Rodney, live in Beaumont.

Amanda Pooler '09, B.A. English, teaches English as a Second Language at Silsbee Elementary School. She lives in Silsbee.

Congratulations to **Ramiro Sanchez** '09, B.A. Spanish, and his wife, Ischhel, on the birth of their daughter, Zara. He works at ExxonMobil, and they live in Beaumont.

Christie (Ritter) Shoemaker '09, A.A.S. nursing, earned her master's degree as a family practice nurse and has opened Well Being Family Practice with her business partner where she is a nurse practitioner. She and her husband, **Elvis** '00, B.S. nursing, live in Beaumont.

Laura Terry-Brown '09, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, is associate principal at Westwood High School. She and her husband, Rob, live in Round Rock.

Kristin (King) Winzer '09, B.S. communication, '23, M.Ed. applied digital learning, is director of communication and community partnerships for Lumberton school district. She and her husband, Eric, live in Lumberton.

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Congratulations to **Jordan Allen** '10, B.S. industrial technology, on his marriage to Kaylee Flanigan Dec. 16, 2023. He is a project manager with JT Thorpe Co. They live in Orange.

Congratulations to **Christy (Minter) Boudreaux** '10, B.S. biology, and her husband, Cameron, on the birth of their daughter, Charlotte Mae. Christy owns Boudreaux Dental Group, and they live in Lumberton.

Alicia Doss '10, B.S.W. social work, '13, M.P.A. public administration, '18, M.Ed. clinical mental health counseling,

earned her doctorate in healthcare administration and is a mental health counselor for Bingman Head Start in Beaumont school district. She and her husband, David, live in Beaumont.

Naomi (Showers) Doyle '10, B.A. political science, '12, M.P.A. public administration, spoke to Sara Gubala's Cardinal Community about her work as a judge for Jefferson County. She and her husband, Earnest, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Katherine (Woodring)** '10, Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities, '16, B.S. nursing, and her husband, Rusty Evans, on their marriage Oct. 7. They live in Beaumont.

Justin Griffith -10 founded Relativity Software. He is the owner/operator and primary engineer. He and his wife, Katherine, live in Leander.

Toby Latiolais '10, M.Ed. administration, is director of parks and recreation for the City of Nederland. He and his wife, **Rene (Slott)** '04, B.S. communication, who is director of marketing at Lamar University, live in Nederland.

Teresa (Cossey) Simpson '10, M.Ed. supervision, '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, is assistant vice president for enrollment management at the University of Texas Permian Basin. She and her husband, **Art** '95, B.S. kinesiology, '16, Ed.D. educational leadership, who is a career and technical education teacher at Beaumont United High School, live in Beaumont.

Diane Zelezinski '10, M.Ed. administration, teaches fourth grade in Harrison school district. She lives in Colorado Springs, Co.

Madison (Malmay) Bonvillion '11, B.S. nursing, who earned her family nurse practitioner master's degree in 2018, is nurse practitioner at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas. She and her husband, Cody, live in Beaumont.

Bo Beaudry '11, M.B.A. business administration, is senior vice president serving as ministry market executive for Ascension Oklahoma Catholic health system. He and his wife, Jessica, live in Tulsa, Okla.

Congratulations to **Mike Blueitt** '11, B.G.S. general studies, on his marriage to Hatti Ternes Nov. 11, 1023. They live in Phoenix, Ariz.

Kari Busch '11, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, '13, M.S. kinesiology, is director of marketing for Golden Triangle Emergency Center. She received the Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce Next Generation Orange County Spotlight Award and lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **James Cooper** '11, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, and **Kessa Hayes** '12, B.S. health education, on their marriage in October 2023. James is a chemist with INEOS Olefins and Polymers USA and Kessa is a telecommunications analyst for

University of Texas Health Science Center Houston. They live in Pearland.

The Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce named **Josh Davis** '11, B.S. criminal justice, B.S. sociology, '15, M.B.A. business administration, '19, M.P.H. public health, 2023 Young Professional of the Year. He is vice president of development for Legacy Community Health. He and his husband, **Thomas** '15, B.B.A. marketing, B.B.A. advertising communication, who manages and is a baker for Debbie's Delights and owner of Davis Duo Design Studio, live in Beaumont.

The Texas Association of Soccer Coaches named **Austin Greenway** '11, B.G.S. general studies, '17, B.S. industrial technology, Boys 4A Assistant Coach of the Year for Winnie/East Chambers Region III. He is a teacher and coach at East Chambers High School. He and his wife, **Morgan (McClain)** '16, B.S. nursing, who is a nurse for Christus Southeast Texas-St. Elizabeth, live in Beaumont.

Adam Jaynes '11, B.S. biology, B.S. nursing, earned a family nurse practitioner master's degree in nursing in 2016 and is director of occupational medicine at Your Medical Home in Bridge City. He and his wife, **Carley** '11, B.S. nursing, who earned a master's degree in nursing and is a nurse practitioner at Christus Trinity Clinic with Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital. They live in Orange.

Stephen Junious '11, B.S. communication, is a media specialist at West Orange Stark High School. He lives in Beaumont.

William Kilgore '11, M.Ed. administration, is superintendent of Ingleside school district. He lives in Taft.

Amy (Okafor) Onyendu '11, M.Ed. administration, who earned her doctorate in education in 2023, is principal of Roosevelt Elementary School. She and her husband, Ikenna, live in Los Angeles, Calif.

Valerie (Hairston) Salazar '11, M.Ed. administration, is an educational consultant at Solution Tree. She lives in El Paso.

Bethany (Loden) Thomas '11, M.Ed. teacher leadership, is a career and technical education teacher at Howard Junior High School in Waxahachie school district. She and her husband, Jimmy, live in Waxahachie.

Ashley (Hicks) Thurgood '11, teaches sixth grade language arts at Cedar Bayou Junior High School in Goose Creek Consolidated school district. She and her husband, **Travis** '10, B.S. electrical engineering, live in Baytown.

Ashley (Gresham) Fisette '12, B.A. history, teaches eighth grade social studies at Marshall Middle School in Beaumont school district. She and her husband, Ryan, live in Beaumont.

Brittany Foley '12, B.S. nursing, is an RN/BSN at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, which honored her with a Daisy Award for Nursing Excellence. She lives in Buna.

Sharita Gardner '12, is corporate affairs manager for Chevron-Bayou Bend Campus. She lives in Beaumont.

Andrew Hill '12, M.B.A. business administration, is administrator of Cascades at Port Arthur. He lives in Bridge City.

Matthew McGuinness '12, B.B.A. management information systems, earned a master's degree in analytics in 2021 and is the business intelligence manager for Buckland. He and his wife, Jessica, live in Katy.

Congratulations to **Kara (Curran) Montellano** '12, B.S. chemical engineering, and her husband, Victor, on the birth of their daughter, Emma Victoria. She earned a M.B.A. in supply chain and business analytics in 2023 and is a global environment affairs coordinator at IBM. They live in Rock Island, Ill.

Kelly (Tackett) Mountjoy '12, M.Ed. school counseling, was named 2023 Lone Star School Counselor of the Year as school counselor at Parkhill Junior High School in Richardson school district. She and her husband, Bart, live in Richardson.

John Rollins '12, B.S. communication, is associate director of community relations and public affairs at Lamar University. He lives in Beaumont.

Christina (McCaghren) Swanson '12, A.A.S. nursing, received the Daisy Award for Nursing Excellence. She is a registered nurse at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital and lives with her husband, **Christopher** '08, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, in Nederland.

Congratulations to **Kelly (Rivera) Williams** '14, B.A. history, on the birth of their daughter, Sabrina Mae, in 2022. Kelly is academic advising team lead with the Undergraduate Advising Center at Lamar University and Scott is inventory supervisor at Best Buy. They live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Justina (Jennings) Beard** '13, B.S. graphic design, and her husband, Ryan, on the birth of their son, Tucker James, June 6, 2023. She is a graphic designer at Modern Group, and they live in Kountze.

Congratulations to **Lachell (Williams) Perkins** '13, B.B.A. management information systems, '15, M.B.A. business administration, and **Leonard Bradley Jr.** '14, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, on the birth of the second baby, Lola. Leonard is an exercise physiologist for St. Luke's Medical Center, and Lachell is an ERP specialist with BASF Agricultural Products Group. They live in Baytown.

Precious Byrd-Harris '13, B.S. family and consumer science-fashion retailing

and merchandising, published her first book The Faith Focus Formula. She is a life and brand strategist for The Clarity Coach and lives in Houston.

Congratulations to **Jillian (Plaia)** -13 and **Ryan Citrano** '18, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. management, on the birth of their daughter, Eleanor Anne. Jillian is a registered respiratory therapist with Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, and Ryan is a senior financial advisor with Turley-Hall-Albanese Wealth Management Group of Stifel Financial Corp. They live in Beaumont.

Lori (Summers) Davis '13, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal at McDonald Middle School. She and her husband, Olen, live in Forney.

Congratulations to **Dr. Alex Edgerly** '13, B.S. biology, and his wife, Mallory, on the birth of their daughter, Alexandra Jean. He owns Edgerly Dentistry, and they live in Orange.

James Feemster '13, B.G.S. general studies, is a strategic business developer with Mansfield Service Partners. He and his wife, **Kadi (Griffin)** '22, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who teaches fourth grade math and science at Kimmie M. Brown Elementary School in Dayton school district, live in Crosby.

The Texas Association of Secondary School Principals named **Aaron Herrington** '13, M.Ed. administration, 2023-2024 Region 5 Middle School Principal of the Year. He is the principal of Vidor Junior High School and lives with his wife, **Carly** '10, A.A.S. nursing, in Vidor.

Tamara (Thorsgard) Menges '13, B.S. communication, opened a Bricks and Minifigs franchise in College Station. She and her husband, Kason, live in Anderson.

Congratulations to **Amber (Thornhill)** '13, B.B.A. accounting, '14, M.S. accounting, and **Darian Johnson** '13, B.G.S. general studies, on the birth of their daughter, Bonnie Lee. Amber is a senior manager for Main Street Capital Corp., and they live in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Jessie Morehead '13, B.S. communication, '17, M.Ed. administration, is assistant principal of La Marque High School in Texas City school district. He and his wife, **Kristina (Luckett)** '13, B.S.W. social work, who is a clinical social worker for Aldine school district, live in Fresno.

Congratulations to **Tiffany (Rider) Perkins** '13, B.A. English, '17, M.A. English, '19, M.Ed. administration, and her husband, Jordan, on the birth of their son, Lucas Alexander. She is assistant director of study abroad and student exchange at Lamar University, and they live in Groves.

Kayleigh Romero '13, B.S. interdisciplinary studies '13, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, earned her doctorate in instructional systems design and technology in 2023.

She teaches at Magnolia High School and lives in Magnolia.

Eric Rose '13, B.M. music, '21, M.Ed. administration, is a band director at Nederland High School. He also teaches beginner band classes at both middle school campuses in Nederland, where he lives with his wife, **Carly (Duplant)** '19, B.M. music education, who is head band director at Central Middle School.

Jaryd Royer '13, B.A. chemistry, who earned his D.M.D. in dental medicine in 2021, is associate dentist with Boudreaux Dental Group. He and his wife, Kalenda, live in Beaumont.

Kai Tan '13, B.S. chemical engineering, owns Ellie Mental Health in Pearland, a new clinic that is part of a rapidly expanding Minnesota-based franchise. Kai also owns Luka Enterprise and is director of engineering, research, and development at Cyanco. He and his wife, Luisa, live in Pearland.

Nicole (Quebedeaux) Toney '13, B.S. graphic design, is marketing projects coordinator at MobilOil Credit Union. She and her husband, Matthew, live in Bridge City.

Monica (Fontenot) Walters '13, B.S. sociology, spoke to Lamar students, faculty, and community members about her work as a novelist at the Center for History and Culture. She and her husband, Brandon, live in Nome.

Congratulations to **Jada (Edwards)** '14, B.S. biology, and **Darlin Botley** '12, B.S. health education, on the birth of their daughter, Layla Nicole. Jada teaches first grade at Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Port Arthur school district, and Darlin is a pharmacy technician with Walgreens. They live in Port Arthur.

Congratulations to **Caitlyn (Hayes) Cox** '14, B.S. communication, and her husband, Tyler, on the birth of their son, Harrison James. They live in Nederland.

Gov. Gregg Abbott appointed **Ryan Dollinger** '14, B.S.W. social work, to the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners for a term expiring Feb. 1, 2029. He is a licensed clinical social worker and supervisory social worker for the Department of Veteran Affairs. He and his wife, **Amber (Chase)** '22, B.S. nursing, live in Plano.

Lachelle (Lavalais) Edwards '14, general studies, earned a master's degree in education and is activities director for Port Arthur school district. She and her husband, Jacoby, live in Port Arthur.

Kristin Francis '14, B.S. sociology, owns Monique and Co., a social media management and digital marketing firm. She lives in Beaumont.

Jackie Harris '14, B.A. American Sign Language, is a special education teacher at Hartman Elementary School in Wylie school district. She lives in Sunnyvale.

Congratulations to **Ann Marie (Lonadier) Horvath** '14, B.S. communication,

and her husband, Kyle, on the birth of their daughter, Camille. She is a human resources business partner with Phillips 66. They live in Ringgold, Ga.

Dallie (Logan) Miller '14, B.S. nursing, is director of nursing at Cascades at Port Arthur. She and her husband, Kent, live in Orange.

Dr. Paul Rizk '14, B.S. physics, B.S. chemical engineering, is an orthopaedic oncology fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital. He and his wife, Fantine, live in Boston, Mass.

Ashlyn (Larcade) Sanderson '14, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, teaches second grade at Sour Lake Elementary School. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Sour Lake.

Billy Schewee '14, M.Ed. administration, earned his Ed.D. in 2023. He is program director of Jindal Young Scholars Program at the University of Texas at Dallas and lives with his wife, Johanna, in Richardson.

Mark Sonnier II '14, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, is vice president of Coastal Industrial Services. He and his wife, Tracianna, live in Beaumont.

Charlie Trum '14 is a document control specialist at Tesla. He lives in Austin.

Sophia Vierro '14, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Capistrano Elementary School. She lives in El Paso.

Ray Woodard '14, Ed.D. educational leadership, is defensive coordinator for the Madrid Bravos in the European Football League. He and his wife, Penne, live in Corrigan.

Region 8 Education Service Center chose Paris Junior High School Assistant Principal **Amy Adkins** '15, M.Ed. school counseling, as Outstanding Assistant Principal of the Year. She and her husband, Kevin, live in Paris.

Congratulations to **Ashley (Wilson)** '15, B.S.W. social work, and **Josh Aych** '20, B.B.A. management information systems, '22, M.S. management information systems, on their marriage Nov. 18, 2023. She is a social worker with Medical Center of Southeast Texas, and they live in Houston.

The Canadian Football League named **Reginald Begelton** '15, B.B.A. general business-industrial engineering, an All-Star for 2023. He plays for the Calgary Stampeders and lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Mallory (Raborn)** '15, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '18, M.S. speech-language pathology, and **Brett Brown** '16, B.S. kinesiology, on the birth of their son, Clay Joseph. Brett is a teacher and baseball and football coach at Nederland High School, and Mallory is a speech language pathologist for Nederland school district. They live in Nederland.

Shelby Davidson '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Alba-

Golden school district and pastor of New Beginnings Community Church. He and his wife, Amanda, live in Van.

Alli Doty '15, B.S. studio art, '21, M.Ed. administration, teaches at Central Middle School in Nederland school district. She lives in Port Neches.

Congratulations to **Courtney (Thomsen) Garrett** '15, B.G.S. general studies, on her marriage to Byronn Garrett Oct. 13, 2023. They live in Kountze.

Andrea Moreno Hewitt '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is executive director of curriculum and instruction for Ector County school district. She and her husband, Max, live in San Antonio.

Philpott Motors named **Kayla (Bass) Hightower** '15, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, September 2023 Teacher of the Month. She teaches third grade at Helena Park Elementary and lives with her husband, London, in Bridge City.

Halie LaPoint '15, B.S. biology, earned her master's degree in microbiology and cell science in 2023 and is a microbiologist with the Texas Department of State Health Services. She lives in Pflugerville.

Chelsea (Wagner) Lee '15, B.S. criminal justice, is an advising team lead with the Undergraduate Advising Center at Lamar University. She and her husband, Tom, live in Nederland.

Shelly Lee '15, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, '22, M.B.A. business administration, owns Pen.Paper.Publish, which specializes in author coaching, proofreading, editing, particularly is support of aspiring Christian authors and ministry leaders. She lives in Beaumont.

James Morrison '15, B.S. nursing, earned his family nurse practitioner master's degree in May 2023 and is a family nurse practitioner at Beaumont Internal Medicine and Geriatric Associates. He and his wife, **Madelyne (Childress)** '17, B.S. nursing, who is an emergency room nurse at St. Elizabeth Health and Wellness Center, live in Beaumont.

Vaughn Ogrzydziak '15, B.S. chemical engineering, is a reliability engineer in operations at Georgia-Pacific. He lives in Lufkin.

Congratulations to **Anthony Olabarrieta** '15, B.B.A. marketing, on the birth of his daughter. He lives in Austin.

Ryan Peterson '15, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Shadycrest Elementary. He and his wife, **Kristin** '15, M.Ed. school counseling, who is an early college counselor at ECHS in Pasadena school district, live in Houston.

Congratulations to **Diem (Vo)** '15, B.S. nursing, who earned her master's degree in nursing in 2020, and **Thomas Pham** '15, B.S. nursing, on the birth of their son, Theo Hai. Thomas is a nurse practitioner at Kare Infusion Center, and they live in Nederland.

Juan Rodriguez '15, B.S. communication, B.A. modern languages, is a creative media designer and videographer for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. He lives in Austin.

Shannon Saylor '15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Aubrey school district. She and her husband, Jon, live in Aubrey.

Jack Spurlock '15, B.S. communication, is director of marketing, engagement and guest experience for university housing and dining at the University of Texas at Austin. He lives in Austin.

Yanni Thomas '15, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, who earned her master's degree in education in 2019, is senior CME coordinator at Houston Methodist. She lives in Pasadena, Texas.

Congratulations to **Sherry (Guidry)** '16, B.S. communication, and **Brandon Belaire** '16, B.S. civil engineering, on the birth of their son, Gabriel. Leonard is a civil engineer for the City of Beaumont. They live in Groves.

Congratulations to **Sholey Brooks** '16, B.S. exercise sciences and fitness management, and her husband, Quintus Hill, on their marriage Sept. 1, 2023. They live in Dallas.

Congratulations to **Melissa (Melton) Brydson** '16, M.Ed. administration, and her husband, Donald, on the birth of their son, Oliver Wayne. She teaches eighth grade at Park Crest Middle School in Pflugerville school district, and they live in Taylor.

Robyn (Winkle) Burdette '16, is associate dean of student services at Lamar State College Orange and was selected to participate in the 2023-2024 Texas Success Center Leadership Academy. She and her husband, **Christopher** '15, B.S. kinesiology, who is a teacher and coach at C.O. Wilson Middle School in Nederland school district, live in Groves.

Donna (Allred) Busby '16, M.Ed. administration, is principal of Haslet Elementary School in Northwest school district. She and her husband, Danny, live in Paradise.

The Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators honored **Maegan Collins** '16, B.S. political science, '18, M.P.A. public administration, '23, Ed.D. educational leadership, with its 2023 Dissertation of the Year award. She is chair of general education and developmental studies at Lamar Institute of Technology and lives in Nederland.

Ryan Creech '16, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, won a silver medal in the national championship at the Dublin Marathon is October 2023. He lives in C.O. Cork, Munster, Ireland.

Congratulations to **Andrea (Dearing)** '16, M.S. environmental engineering, and **Cody Elenz** '16, M.S. kinesiology,

on the birth of their son, Hank Thomas. They live in Orange Beach, Ala.

Eric Hernandez '16, B.S. psychology, received his graduate certificate in applied statistics in 2023. He is an instructor for the University of Alabama and lives in Baytown.

Congratulations to **Kayla (Comeaux)** '16, B.B.A. accounting, '17, M.S. accounting, and **Dalton Holly** '16, B.B.A. management, '18, M.B.A. business administration, on the birth of their son, Zane Michael. Dalton is assistant business manager for Melissa school district. They live in Anna.

Dr. Charles Huynh '16, B.S. chemical engineering, earned his medical degree and is an emergency room physician with Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas. He and his wife, Karen, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Jasmine (Morris)** '16, B.B.A. management, B.B.A. marketing, and **Dominique Johnson** '14, B.A. chemistry, on the birth of their son, Demarcus. Dominique is research assistant at MD Anderson Cancer Center, and they live in Missouri City.

Congratulations to **Donte Marcel** '16 and his wife, Alexis, on the birth of their daughter, Denym. They live in Houston.

Juan Mejia '16, B.B.A. economics, is director of federal relations at the University of Arizona. He and his wife, Alexandra, live in Tucson, Ariz.

Sarah (Ragsdale) Nash '16, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, was selected as the Assistant Coach of the Year in Class 3A for Region 5. She is assistant softball coach at Orangefield High School and lives with her husband, **Jake** '16, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, '19, M.S. kinesiology, who is a teacher and coach at Orangefield High School, in Orange.

Congratulations to **Angie (Nguyen) Nguyen** '16, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, and her husband, Huy, on the birth of their son Carson Khang. They live in Nederland.

Houston Ready Mix promoted **Mason Radford** '16, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, to assistant plant superintendent of the South Central Region. He lives in Stafford.

Bryan Rivera '16, B.S. communication, is the president of operations at Texas Hometown Solutions. He and his wife, Olivia, live in Liberty Hill.

Congratulations to **Erica (Edgerly)** '16, B.S. family and consumer sciences—fashion retailing and merchandising, and **Jacob Rone** '17, B.B.A. management information systems, '23, M.B.A. business administration, M.S. management information systems, on the birth of their daughter, Annalyse Kate. Erica owns Merle Norman and Milli Kids Boutique in Orange and Bridge City, and Jacob is an engineer with Scallon Controls Inc. They live in Orange.

Chris Southard '16, M.Ed. administration, is principal of College View High School in College Station school district. He and his wife, Amy, live in College Station.

Tracy Stone '16, Ed.D. educational leadership, earned her Registered Texas School Business Administrator Certification and is an assistant superintendent in Navasota school district. She lives in Caldwell.

Adam Vasconcellos '16, B.B.A. management, B.B.A. general business, is grant program manager at MD Anderson Cancer Center. He lives in Houston.

Congratulations to **Erin (Wilrich)** '16, B.S. nursing, and **Travis Wicker** '14, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, '17, M.P.H. public health, on their marriage April 22, 2023. She is a nurse and he is a mobility technician at Memorial Herman with Texas Medical Center. They live in Hockley.

Congratulations to **Katy (Williams) Mason** '16, B.A. psychology, '20, M.S. applied psychology, on her marriage to Brad Mason Oct. 28. She is a correctional mental health professional at CorrHealth. They live in Sour Lake.

Melanie (Bransford) Ayala '17, B.B.A. accounting, '19, M.S. accounting, is staff accountant at OCI Global. She and her husband, Jesus, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Chelsea (Anguiano) Benedict** '17, B.B.A. marketing, and her husband, Colton, on the birth of their son, Boone Joseph. She works for Dell, and they live in Taylor.

Naelyn (Mills) Carruth '17, B.S. nursing, earned her master's degree in 2023 and is a family nurse practitioner at Wise Family Practice Urgent Care. She and her husband, Bryant, live in Fort Worth.

Congratulations to **Katelyn (Parent)** '17, B.S. nursing, and **Jack Dillard IV** '21, B.S. chemical engineering, on the birth of their son, Asher Reid. She is a registered nurse with Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital, and he is an automation engineer with Hargrove Engineers and Constructors. They live in Magnolia.

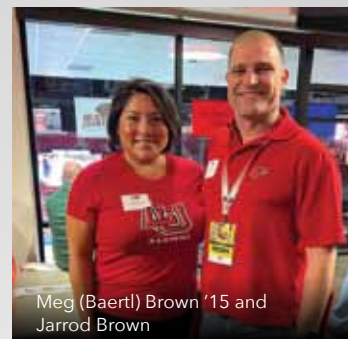
Congratulations to **Jamie (Deaton) Dillon** '17, B.B.A. human resource management, and her husband, Jacob, on the birth of their son, Miller Guerrant. Jamie is human resources staffing coordinator at Wellpath, and they live in Beaumont.

Leslie Garcia '17, M.Ed. school counseling, is special projects-professional development coordinator for Goose Creek school district. She lives in Baytown.

Congratulations to **Sarah Harris** '17, B.S. communication, on the birth of her daughter, Lydia. She is an accounting specialist and lives in Houston.

President's Suite Reception

President Jaime and Mrs. Stacy Taylor hosted a reception Jan. 22 before the LU vs. Texas A&M-Commerce basketball game in the President's Suite at the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena in Montagne Center. Members of the LU Alumni Advisory Board were among the guests who attended the reception and cheered the Cardinals to a 76-65 victory!



Meg (Baertl) Brown '15 and Jarrod Brown



J.T. Beckman '82, '87, and Usha (Balaratnam) Beckman '87



Brian Roberson II, '09, '10, Jocquelyn Roberson, Brian Roberson III, William Roberson, and Harper Roberson



Sharita Gardner '12, Chris Allen, Emily (Everett) Allen '98, '04, Yolanda (Johnson) Avery '86, '91, and Mary Saveat



Jake Fitzgerald and Charlee Chelette '18, '19



Meg (Baertl) Brown '15, Angie Wright, Golden Wright '21, dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, and LU Ambassador Sara Barboza Pereira



Lila (Creamer) Stevens '01, Brian Roberson '09, '10, Caralee (McDonald) Thompson '95



Tieraney Celestine and Gerard Celestine '91, '96



Celine Do '18, '22, and Anna Sigur '19, '22

Congratulations to **Bethani (Lee) Webre** '17, M.S. family and consumer sciences, on her marriage to Kyle Webre Sept. 9, 2023. She is a registered dietician. They live in West.

Darylann (Harvey) Lemoine '17, B.G.S. general studies, teaches special education at Orangefield Junior High. She and her husband, Kyle, live in Orange.

Johnny Ray Lively '17, B.S. communication, earned his meteorology degree in 2023. He and his wife, Hayleigh, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Kelsey (Burt) Love** '17, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '19, M.S. speech-language pathology, and her husband, Cameron, on the birth of their son, Jackson Hayes. She is a speech pathologist for Groves Intermediate School in Port Neches-Groves school district, and they live in Port Arthur.

Congratulations to **Weslynn (Taylor) Morris II** '18, B.S. mechanical engineering, on the birth of their daughter, Emorie. Weslynn is a senior chemist at ChampionX. Johnny is a supply diversity data analyst at Dow. They live in Houston.

Congratulations to **Emily (Carl) Rhine** '17, B.B.A. marketing, on her marriage to Justin Rhine Dec. 16, 2023. She is senior digital marketing strategist for Education First Federal Credit Union. They live in Port Neches.

Noe Rodriguez '17, B.S. communication, '19, M.B.A. business administration, is chief information officer of the City of McKinney. He lives in Fate.

Congratulations to **Kailey (Rountree) Sharp** '17, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '21, M.Ed. administration, and her husband, Jordan, on the birth of their son, Hagan Slade. Kailey is the assistant principal of Vidor Elementary School, and they live in Orange.

Congratulations to **Yangti (Shah) Trevino** '17, M.E. mechanical engineering, becoming a U.S. citizen. She and her husband, Edgar, live in Alvin.

Bekah (Wells) Woodard '17, B.S. communication-corporate, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is an academic recruiter for University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center School of Health Professions. She and her husband, Adrian, live in New Caney.

Breanne Bell '18, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, teaches kindergarten at Helena Park Elementary School. She lives in Nederland.

Brian Bonner '18, B.S. civil engineering, on his marriage to Sydney Thames Sept. 3, 2023. He is a design engineer assistant with the Texas Department of Transportation and lives in Conroe.

Crystal Calhoun '18, B.S. nursing, received the Daisy Award for Nursing Excellence at Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, where she is a registered nurse. She lives in Beaumont.

Morgan Contreras '18, B.M. music, '20, M.M. music, is head band director and teacher at Anahuac Middle School. Texas Music Educators Association named the band its 1C Honor Band. He and his wife, **Olivia (Gerals)** '22, B.M. music education, who is head MS director at Henderson Middle School in Hardin-Jefferson school district, live in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Tish (Crider) Cornell** '18, B.S. sociology, for being named the Greater Beaumont Chamber of Commerce 2023 Volunteer of the Year. She is vice president of marketing for CommonCents Credit Union. She and her husband, Christopher, live in Beaumont.

Priscilla (Packard) Healy '18, M.Ed. administration, opened a Crumbl franchise in Lake Charles, La., in March 2023, in Baytown in June 2023 and one in Nederland in December 2023. She lives in Vidor.

Michael Horton '18, B.S. communication-broadcasting, is the audio visual technology teacher at West Orange Stark High School. He lives in Orange.

Stephanie Messina '18, B.S. studio art-education, teaches art at York Junior High School. She lives in Spring.

Karli (Noonkester) Padia '18 is director of community outreach and student services for the Lamar University College of Engineering. She and her husband, **Joshua** '11, B.B.A. general business, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, live in Lumberton.

Autumn (Thrasher) Taylor '18, B.S. nursing, is a mother/baby nurse at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital. She and her husband, Myles, live in Raywood.

Seth Villafano '18, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches sixth grade English at Central Middle School in Nederland school district. He lives in Nederland.

Congratulations to **Spencer Wommack** '18, B.S. construction management, and his wife, Bailey, on the birth of their son, Jack. They live in Port Neches.

Kaela Arrington '19, B.S. psychology, is West Houston Elementary Kids Director at Hope City. She lives in Houston.

Congratulations to **Jamaine Boyd Jr.** '19, B.S. criminal justice, and **Cemoria Phill** '22, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, on their marriage Oct. 7, 2023. They live in Humble.

Cecilia Carrillo '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches at Bob Hope Elementary School. She lives in Port Arthur.

Shelby (Bickham) Curl '19, B.S. criminal justice, is a culture and talent associate for Seamless AI. She and her husband, **Jordan** '20, B.S. biology, live in Lubbock.

Congratulations to **Angelica (Cardenas)** '19, B.S. psychology, '23, M.B.A. business administration, and **Erik Guerrero** '16, B.B.A. management,

'23, M.B.A. business administration, on the birth of their son, Cristiano. Angelica is an assistant director in the Lamar University Office of Admissions and Erik is a relationship manager with Bank of America. They live in Beaumont.

Cassie Jenkins '19, B.S. communication-journalism, is a reporter with Community Impact covering the Montgomery-Conroe area. She won an Eppy Award in 2023, runnerup for Best Business Reporting on a Website. She lives in Cleveland.

Cindy Kennerly '19, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, teaches special education at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. She lives in Port Arthur.

Laurie (Harris) Kolp '19, M.Ed. special education, is an educational diagnostician at Sour Lake Elementary School. She and her husband, **Peter** '12, M.B.A. business administration, who is vice president of Sabine Surveyors, live in Beaumont.

Jayna (Lacy) '19, B.S. communication-corporate, married **Josh Bonnette**, '19, B.S. mechanical engineering, Aug. 5, 2023. Jayna is health education program coordinator at Lamar University, and Josh is an engineer at Scallon Controls Inc. They live in Beaumont.

Wynde (Tidwell) Longbottom '19, B.G.S. general studies, M.Ed. applied digital learning, teaches at Vidor Elementary School. She and her husband, Richard, live in Vidor.

Cory (Werner) Nelson '19, B.S. nursing, earned her M.B.A. in healthcare administration in 2023. She is an operating room nurse at Surgery Specialty Hospitals of America, and she and her husband, Ryan, live in Houston.

Dylan Newton '19, B.B.A. marketing, is a digital production designer at Threshold and a cyberpunk photographer known as Picklefig. Superchief Gallery's CYBERPUNK Volume 5 exhibitions featured his photos in Austin; Miami, Fla.; Valencia, Spain; Paris, France; Rome, Italy; Tokyo, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; New York City; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He lives in Austin.

Caroline Nwandu '19, B.A. biochemistry, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is a research assistant at Baylor College of Medicine. She lives in Houston.

Connor Raborn '19, B.S. political science, earned her law degree in 2023. She is an associate attorney at Shackelford, Bowen, McKinley & Norton and lives in Houston.

Ashley Reece '19, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, is purchasing supervisor at Bechtel Energy Inc. She lives in Groves.

Annette Rewa '19, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is assistant principal of Stafford Elementary School. She lives in Stafford.

Cheniery Energy promoted **Brenda (Hernandez-Iglesias) Reza** '19,

B.S. chemical engineering, to senior commercial analyst. She and her husband, Peter, live in Houston.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association presented **Natalie (Sfeir) Vanz** '19, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, who earned her master's degree in speech-language pathology in 2021, with the Distinguished Early Career Professional Award. She is a speech language pathologist at Tufts Medical Center, and her husband, **Carlo Vanz** '18, B.S. biology, '19, M.B.A. business administration, who earned his Ph.D. in integrated biomedical sciences in 2023, is life science consultant at EY-Parthenon. They live in South Boston, Mass.

Caylin (Choate) Verrett '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches third grade math at Orangefield Elementary School. She and her husband, Dustin, live in Bridge City.

Triffiany Wilson '19, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches at Laura Reeves Primary School in Silsbee school district. She lives in Kountze.

20s

Benita (Maldonado) Acosta '20, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, owns Safari Custom Printing. She lives in San Antonio.

Leo Arredondo '20, B.S. electrical engineering, is an electrical engineer with TotalEnergies in Port Arthur. He lives in Groves.

Candace (Hebert) Baumgardner '20, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, who earned her doctorate in occupational therapy in 2023, is an occupational therapist at Texas Children's Hospital. She and her husband, **Brandon** '21, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, who is a patrol division officer for the Houston Police Department, live in Spring.

Sarah (Knight) Borowicz '20, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Anderson-Shiro school district. She and her husband, Jason, live in Elgin.

Makenzie (Sattler) Coplen '20, B.B.A. human resource management, '23, M.B.A. business administration, is the human resource manager for G&G Enterprises Construction Corp. and was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. She and her husband, Caden, live in Kountze.

Patricia Correa '20, B.F.A. graphic design, is a production designer at Airbnb. She lives in Harker Heights.

Congratulations to **Taylor (Angelle)** '20, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, '23, M.S. speech-language pathology, and **Jackson Dolce** '20, B.B.A. management, on their marriage Nov. 11, 2023. They live in Port Neches.

Bechtel Corp. promoted **Shelby Harris** '20, B.S. nutrition-dietetics, to employee relations administrator. She lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Sydnee Hawkins** '20, B.G.S. general studies, on the birth of her daughter, Ava. They live in Houston.

Osha Jones '20, B.S. speech and hearing sciences, who earned her master's degree in communication science disorders in 2023, is CF-speech language pathologist at MedCare Pediatric Group. She lives in Sugar Land.

Govin Kaggal '20, B.S. political science, earned his law degree in 2023. He is an associate attorney with Latham & Watkins and lives in Houston.

Tatum Kieschnick '20, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, earned her doctor of chiropractic degree in 2023. She lives in Nederland.

Raegan Minaldi '20, B.S. political science, who earned her law degree in 2023, is a criminal defense associate attorney with The Gertz Kelley Law Firm. She lives in Port Neches.

Phillip Morgan '20, Ed.D. educational leadership, is director of fine arts and special academic programs at Plano school district. He and his wife, Angela, live in Rowlett.

Congratulations to **Toa Neher** '20, B.S. exercise science and fitness management, on earning his doctorate in physical therapy in December 2023. He and his wife, Aolele, live in Queen Creek, Ariz.

Emi Pham '20, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, works for Stellar Bank and lives in Orange.

Casey Smith '20, B.B.A. human resource management, B.B.A. management, '21, M.B.A. business administration, is human resource specialist for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He lives in Beaumont.

Erial Smith '20, B.S. health education, earned her master's degree in healthcare leadership in December 2023 and is a project manager with Eli Lilly and Co. She lives in Dallas.

Congratulations to **Ally (Souza) Davis** '20, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, on her marriage to Jacob Oct. 7, 2023. She is an ACCESS teacher at Mueller Elementary in Klein school district and they live in Spring.

Megan Thompson '20, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is cheer coordinator at Lamar University. She lives in Groves.

Ashley Towers '20, B.S. nursing, earned her certification as an acute or critical-care nurse and is a registered nurse with the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit at Houston Methodist Texas Medical Center. She lives in Houston.

Congratulations to **Makayla (Brown) Corbello** '21, B.S. nursing, and her husband, Alex, on the birth of their daughter, Camden "Cammie" Hope. She

is an ICU registered nurse with Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital, and they live in Orange.

Kara Exum '21, B.B.A. accounting, '22, M.S. accounting, earned her certified public accountant license. She and her husband, **Alexander** '21, B.B.A. finance, who is marketing director for Mometrix Test Preparation, live in Orange.

John Garza '21, B.B.A. management, '23, M.B.A. business administration, is assistant athletic director at Texas Tech University. He lives in Lubbock.

Congratulations to **Madelyn Hamilton** '21, B.B.A. management, on her marriage to Taylor Eubanks Nov. 18, 2023. She works for ProMiles Software and lives in Cypress.

Congratulations to **Kelsee (Kimbrough) Hunley** '21, B.S. nursing, and her husband, Dylan, on the birth of their daughter Everest "Evie" James. Kelsee is a nurse in the surgical ICU at Baylor St. Luke's Health Medical Center, and they live in Lumberton.

Tina Le '21, B.S. civil engineering, completed the two-year Logistics Career Field--Department of the Army Fellows Program and works in the USACE Galveston District's Port Arthur Field Office as a civil engineer. She lives in Beaumont.

Jennifer Lopez '21, B.S. graphic design, is campus secretary for Bob Hope School in Beaumont. She lives in Groves.

Congratulations to **Destini (King)** '21, M.Ed. administration, and Brandon Oliver on the birth of their son, Malachi. They live in Rosharon.

Congratulations to **Cassidy Ricker** '21, B.S.W. social work, on the birth of her son. She lives in Beaumont.

Congratulations to **Hannah (Bell)** '21, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, and **Nathan Toutloff** '08, B.S. chemical engineering, on their marriage Dec. 16, 2023. Hannah teaches fourth grade science and social studies at Ehrhart School. They live in Groves.

Dulce Rodriguez Velazquez '21, B.B.A. human resource management, '23, M.B.A. business administration, is a human resources compensation/classification specialist with Lamar University. She lives in Beaumont.

Morgan Dollar '22, B.B.A. general business, teaches sixth grade English language arts and history at Little Cypress Junior High School. She lives in Orange.

Mya Handy '22, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, teaches third grade math and science at Dulles Elementary School in Fort Bend school district. She lives in Richmond.

Germer Beaman & Brown promoted **Cameron Hargroder** '22, B.B.A. general business, to office services assistant. She lives in Groves.

Congratulations to **Paisley (Romero) Hawkins** '22, B.S. university studies

multidisciplinary, on her marriage to her husband, Will, and to both on the birth of their daughter, Hattie Lynn. They live in Lumberton.

Congratulations to **Halley (Rutland) Herman** '22, B.B.A. finance, B.B.A. economics, and her husband, Daniel, on the birth of their son, Rowan Arthur. She is an accountant at Richmond Bennett & Co. PC., and they live in Lumberton.

Shahed Mahamud '22, M.E. industrial engineering, is a manufacturing engineer for Avanzar Interior Technology. He and his wife, Farjana, live in San Antonio.

Caleb Parker '22, B.B.A. economics, B.B.A. finance, is a contract specialist at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He lives in Sour Lake.

Byron Popillion '22, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a sergeant with the LU Police Department. He and his wife, **Charisma (Walker)** '03, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '07, M.Ed. administration, who is senior director of innovation for Beaumont school district, live in Beaumont.



Congratulations to **Alexis Price** '22, B.S. criminal justice, on becoming a Texas State Trooper. She lives in Evadale.

Dion Tran '22, B.B.A. accounting, '23, M.S. accounting, earned his CPA license. He lives in Port Arthur.

Karime Abdeljalek '23, B.S. chemical engineering, is an engineer with Samsung Austin Semiconductor. She lives in Houston.

Garrett Ashworth '23, B.S. university studies, is a web communications career and technical education teacher and football coach at Little Cypress Junior High and a high school baseball coach. He lives in Orange.

Anessa Byerman '23, B.S. mechanical engineering, is a manufacturing engineer with LivaNova. She lives in League City.

Kelly Caraway '23, B.S. communication, is an account manager for Centene Corp. Superior Health Plan Texas. She lives in Kyle.

Congratulations to **Morgan (Carnish)** '23, B.S. nutrition, and **Dakota Beene** '22, B.B.A. management, on their marriage Oct. 1, 2023. They live in La Porte.

Miguel Dubon '23, B.S. civil and environmental engineering, is a marine structural engineer with Schneider Engineering and Consulting. He lives in Houston.

Laura (Click) Edmundson '23, M.B.A. business administration, is vice president of pharmacy at Brookshire Brothers. She and her husband, Terry, live in Lufkin.

Gabby Gaspard '23, B.S. communication studies, is digital producer for KBMT-TV Channel 12. She lives in Nederland.

Arturo Gonzalez '23, B.S. chemical engineering, is technology specialist at BASF. He lives in Beaumont.

Grace Harmond '23, B.S. forensic chemistry, is quality control gas chromatography chemist at Altvia Specialty Chemicals. She lives in Houston.

Kimberly Jackson '23, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, teaches third grade at Little Cypress Elementary School. She lives in Orange.

Beverly (Schulman) Kemp '23, B.A.A.S. applied arts and sciences, is a senior compliance officer in the Office of Research Integrity of the University of Tennessee - Chattanooga. She and her husband, **Christian** '95, B.S. interdisciplinary studies, '11, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, who is systems manager for Hardin-Jefferson High School, live in Lumberton.

Congratulations to **Katie (Rice) Mayfield** '23, B.S. political science, on her marriage to Justin Nov. 17, 2023. They live in Lumberton.

Callie Melancon '23, B.S. communication studies, is coordinator of student organizations for the Division of Student Engagement at Lamar University. She lives in Port Neches.

Lac Nguyen '23, B.S. industrial engineering, is a manufacturing engineer at QEMS Inc. and lives in South Carolina.

Congratulations to **Shelby (May) Santana** '23, B.S. university studies multidisciplinary, on her marriage to Leo Nov. 18, 2023. She teaches fifth grade at Little Cypress Intermediate School, and they live in Groves.

Misty (Bishop) Schattle '23, Ed.D. education leadership, is librarian at Tomball Memorial High School. She and her husband, Gerald '09, M.Ed. administration, who is principal of Teague Middle School, live in Spring.

Congratulations to **Grace (Richard) Theriot** '23, B.S. exercise science, on her marriage to Caleb. They live in Groves.

Lizbeth Trujillo '23, B.S. computer game development, is software development engineer at Amazon. She lives in Beaumont.

CARDINAL love stories

Evan (Weathington) '14 and Steven Hoffman Jr. -16

We met in the University Theater's paint shop in 2010. Since we both were theatre majors, we worked closely with one another for years, acting in shows and attending classes together as friends. Steven directed and I did the costume design for one of our last shows, *A View from the Bridge*, which allowed us to get to know each other better. I asked him out to lunch at Which Wich and the rest is history. Steven proposed in March of 2014 and on Valentine's Day of 2015, we were married in a Renaissance-themed costume wedding. After six years of marriage, we discovered we were expecting, and on Nov. 10, 2021, we welcomed our first baby, Octavia, into the world.

Juliana (Ocampo Andrade) '19 and Eduardo Trevino '20

We met at college while we both worked at the Rec Center. We realized we had a lot of things in common, one of them being the love of sports. Juliana was a business student and part of the soccer team at Lamar, and I was a mechanical engineering student and very engaged with my engineering fraternity as well. We became very close and decided to start a relationship that now has us as husband and wife after four years. We are from different countries and currently facing the distance since Juliana had to leave for her home country after her student visa expired. However, our love transcends the miles and we continue our relationship with the hope to be reunited together and start our family and work for our dreams. We consider ourselves a team and always support each other on everything.

Keli (Wells) '21 and Ryan Lee '21

Although we were both students at the time, Ryan and I didn't meet that way. Ryan is from Illinois and took a job at Lamar University in the early spring of 2019 and I, a native of Southeast Texas, was already an employee on campus. We met when he was a part of the panel in my interview for a job opportunity in the Financial Aid department. The moment our eyes met for the first time, he looked away, but I knew he was special. I eventually got the position (I was their second choice), and we became casual working friends. We joked, we enjoyed each other's company, and we encouraged each other. Eventually, we noticed that we both were ready to take a step to expand our working relationship outside of the office. After dating for a while, we ran off to Arkansas in June 2021, eloped and never looked back. We both graduated in the summer and fall that year, he with his MBA and I with a BAAS. Ryan is a wonderful stepdad to my kids from a previous marriage, and we welcomed our sweet girl, Cora Jade, in May 2022. Without Lamar University, our paths would have never crossed.





Jamerica (Malbrough) '15 and Morgan Bacon '15

Jamerica and I met each other sometime between 2013 and 2015. Our first conversation was in the BSM [Baptist Student Ministry] after a bible study. She asked my perspective on a tattoo that's located on the back of her arm. She specifically asked was the tattoo a leaf or a feather. Afterwards our acquaintances were at best "hi and bye." It wasn't until Feb. 5, 2021, that an unction from the Holy Spirit caused me to inquire of her relationship status through a gentle Instagram dm [direct message]. And from a series of conversations, I knew—and she confirmed—that she is the one. We began seriously dating April 8, 2021. We got engaged May 7, 2022. We were married Nov 6, 2022. And now we have a son, Kenneth Elijah, born in 2023.

Cheryl (Boyd) '79, '84, and Garland "Walker" Linscomb '77, '81

Walker and I met during first summer session in a graduate class in 1980. Our first date was a picnic on July 4th at my friend's lake in Liberty. Our love quickly grew, and we were married two months and two days later on Sept. 6. Last year, we celebrated our 43rd anniversary. We're blessed to have two wonderful daughters, a son in love and two amazing grand blessings. We will be forever thankful that LU brought us together.



Brenda (Schaefer) '74 and Phil Caletka '75

I met Phil at the Foxy Lady in October 1973. I did not like him at first but went out with him anyway. I guess you could say the rest is history. We were married in November of 1975 and had two children less than a year apart. I taught high school for 35-1/2 years. He worked in air conditioning construction for 40+ years. Phil died in October of 2019, one month short of our 44th anniversary.

Submit your Cardinal Love Story at alumni@lamar.edu



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Omar '04 and Katie Bitar with Heather '99 and Danny Montalbano '99

For more than a decade, Pairings has been one of Lamar University's most successful events, providing both vital funding for the Dishman Art Museum and an unforgettable evening of exceptional food, wine and entertainment for guests.

"We wouldn't be able to do what we do without Pairings," Dishman Art Museum Director Dennis Kiel said as he proudly showed off the Dishman's current exhibition, a collaborative showcase with The Art Studio Inc. celebrating both organizations' 40th anniversaries with artwork by Maudee Carron and Lynn Sweat, two innovative artists with strong ties to the Dishman and The Art Studio. "See the size of these paintings. We never would have been able to bring this here [without Pairings]. You have to use a professional art transportation company to get the works here safely, and it costs a lot of money. Because of Pairings, we were able to bring this show in and all the other shows that come from far away."

Each year, Pairings generates substantial funding that provides the Dishman with

the means to safely and securely bring in quality exhibitions from across the country, host lectures with an array of talented artists and other public speakers, and purchase necessary equipment for the building like benches and window screens to protect light-sensitive artwork.

Kiel says much of Pairings' continued success is thanks to the creativity and hard work of the event's creators, Kim and Roy Steinhagen.

"Everything we do [at the Dishman] is literally from Pairings," Kiel said. "Without [the Steinhagens], we wouldn't be able to do Pairings, and without Pairings, we wouldn't be able to do anything. So I always thank them."

When efforts to reinvigorate the Dishman's previous fundraiser, La Dolce Vita, began in 2013, the Steinhagens were tapped to bring that vision to life. Inspired by Roy's travels to Napa Valley, Calif., and their passion for fine wine, the Steinhagens envisioned a fresh format to "breathe new life" into the important museum fundraiser: a five-course dinner paired with the wines of a single winery.

From the start, Pairings was a highly sought after event, selling out because of its limited size and unique offerings of "cult" wines. It continues to be one of the most popular events in the area through unparalleled donor support including many repeat underwriters, its dedicated annual event chairs, and the continued involvement of the Steinhagens, particularly Kim, who joined the Lamar staff as a development officer in 2014. As part of her duties at Lamar, Kim oversees all aspects of putting on Pairings each year.

"Before this event, the Dishman had no budget at all," Kim Steinhagen said. "There was no money to be spent on exhibitions. [Pairings] allowed the Dishman to have exhibitions for the first time: really quality exhibitions that are brought in from around the state and even out of the state. Dennis Kiel has really put our museum on the map with these exhibitions he's organized. It's amazing. What's happening is that we're bringing this quality artwork to campus, and we're making a name for the Dishman and for Lamar and the art world."