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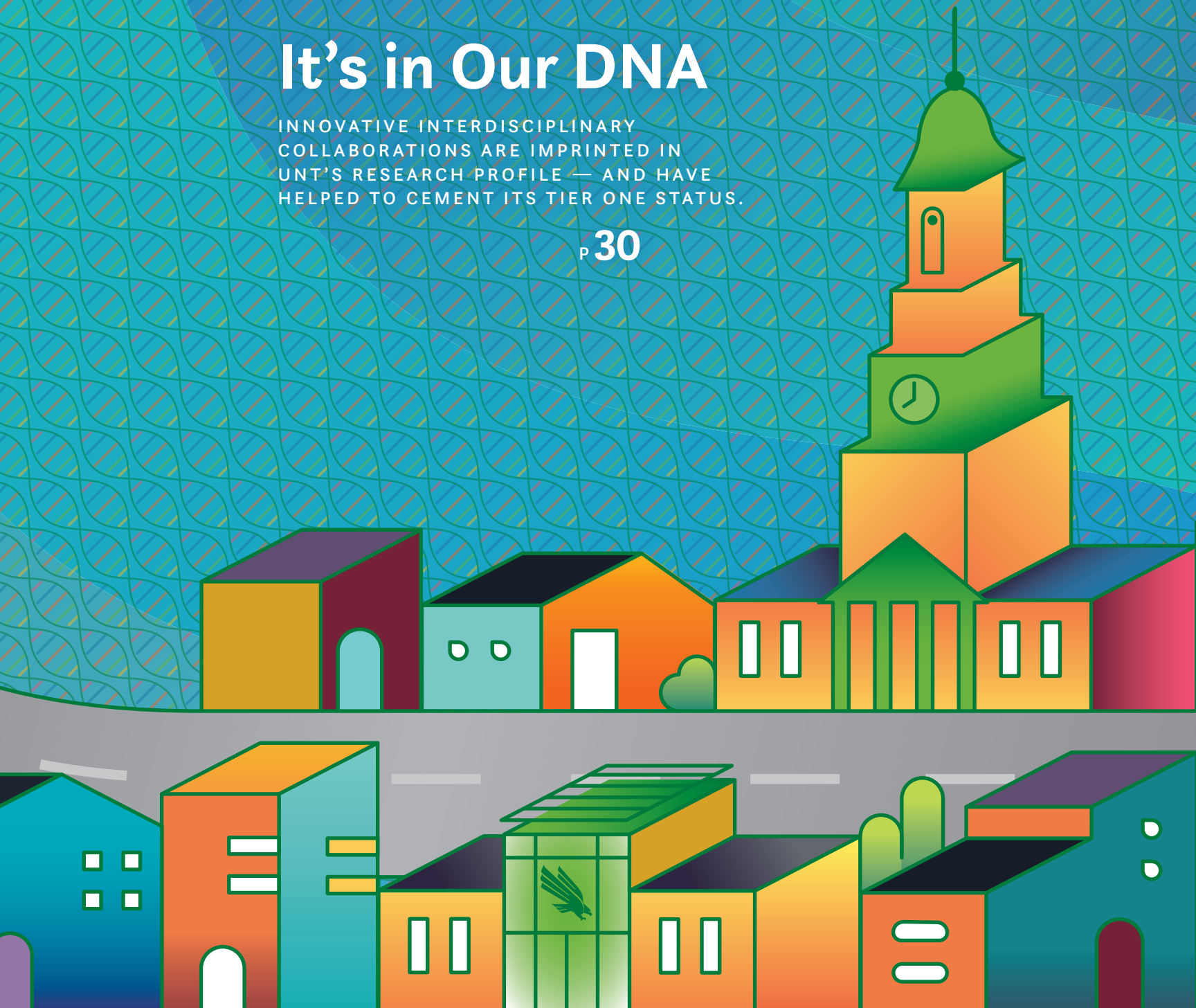
TEXAN

Vol. 70, No. 1 Spring 2020

It's in Our DNA

INNOVATIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY
COLLABORATIONS ARE IMPRINTED IN
UNT'S RESEARCH PROFILE — AND HAVE
HELPED TO CEMENT ITS TIER ONE STATUS.

p 30





TALK ABOUT CREATING WARM MEMORIES.

After returning to campus for the start of the spring semester, students combatted the chilly winter weather with some deliciously toasty s'mores and cheerful camaraderie as part of the University Program Council's Backyard Campfire, which took place Jan. 29 on the Union rooftop.

— *Photography by Ahna Hubnik*



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FEATURES



It's in Our DNA

Multidisciplinary meetings of the minds — both in-house and across industry and institutions — long have been an essential component of UNT's scholarly culture, where a commitment to research in all fields is so deeply ingrained, it's practically coded into the institutional DNA. Now, that interdisciplinary imprint is informing the university's innovation mindset moving forward. And it just may be its ticket to the top of the Tier One pack.



Sound Advice

Dustee Jenkins' ('01) personal mantra is “keep going” — and it's guided the journalism alumna to the top, as head of global communications and public relations at Spotify.

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Forward-thinking Programs, Collaborations

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Academic Home Run

UNT's sport entertainment management program gives students a home-field advantage, encouraging internship opportunities with sport franchises like the Dallas Cowboys and Texas Rangers.



Feeding the Mind

Anyone hungry to learn more about food can find a home for their curiosity at UNT, where food researchers are tackling topics ranging from race relations to global shortages to economic impacts.

ONLINE

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SNOW BUSINESS

Communication design alumnus Bret Hawkins ('16) turned his quirky senior project into the Denton Square-based Gnome Cones, which serves sweet treats year-round. "If you have a cool idea," he says, "go for it."

STRIKING A CHORD

Lindsey Miller's ('06) guitar skills have taken her from the Two O'Clock Lab Band to Dolly Parton's *Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol*. "It's like no mistake," Miller says. "Dolly is who she is."

BUILDING A SAFER PATH

Sara Cederburg ('00) helped construct a bridge above the San Jacinto River for a small town in Bolivia as part of a project for Parsons, an international technology company. And, she says, every day of building the bridge was an adventure.

northtexan.unt.edu/online

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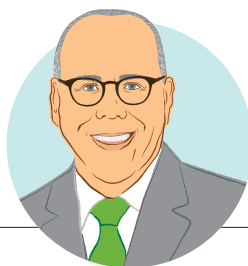
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CVAD Professor Takes Artistic Leap into AI

[[FROM OUR PRESIDENT]]



CREATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY

Forward-thinking Programs and Collaborations Yield Opportunities for 21st Century

We're only a few months into the new decade, and UNT continues to make tremendous advancements to provide our students with unparalleled opportunities for success. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved plans for the UNT at Frisco branch campus and the university's new partnership with Coursera, the world's leading online learning platform, which will allow students across the globe to earn our highly popular Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree.

UNT's climb as a Tier One research university continues with an interdisciplinary approach to innovation, and we have developed new programs to help faculty secure some of the nation's most competitive research funding. As you will read in this issue's cover story (page 30), UNT is committed to building new strengths in STEM disciplines, while bolstering our programs in the arts, humanities and social sciences that led to UNT's top-tier designation from the Carnegie Classification.

Alumni like Spotify's Dustee Jenkins ('01) (page 28) and smart cities problem solver Abdulrahman Habib ('13 M.S., '19 Ph.D.) (page 20) have applied the innovative skills harnessed as UNT students to become leaders in their evolving professional fields. You also will learn about the interdisciplinary ways UNT researchers and alumni are working together to feed the mind (page 42).

This fall, we also will launch Texas' first Master of Science degree in artificial intelligence with concentrations in machine learning, autonomous systems and biomedical engineering, and a 36-credit-hour professional online M.B.A. in sport entertainment management designed with the Dallas Cowboys for industry executives, coaches, and current or former professional athletes.

Our commitment to providing students with innovative learning experiences for 21st-century career preparation is not going unnoticed. UNT recently was ranked one of the Top 10 U.S. public universities on the rise by *College Gazette*. In supporting our students to rise up and find success, we are ensuring their dreams.

UNT proud,

Neal Smatresk

President

president@unt.edu

@UNTPrez

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North Texan

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NEW DESIGN
Only halfway through the most recent *North Texan*. Redesigned magazine is outstanding! Fresh format, white space provides breathing room and matte paper removes the so painful glare of glossy images. Have already forwarded links from two items to unsuspecting friends. The new look is a huge hit with me!

Cathy Green Moore ('70)
Haltom City

IMPRESSED
I wanted to let you know that I am so impressed with your new design. The high-quality paper, the clean layout, the modern graphic design, the sharp and creative photos — it all adds up to a beautiful publication. Your font selection, leading between lines and intensity of the black on the text make the magazine easy to read. The illustration on page 28 of Joe Greene is stunning. Kudos to the team who worked on this.

Teresa Cage Beasley
Mother of Kyle Cage ('10)
Carthage

STUNNING PUBLICATION
I did a double take when I got the latest issue of the magazine in my mailbox. Hats off for crafting a stunning publication. I've showed it off to anyone and everyone. Caw!

Paul Bottoni ('12)
Garland

COMPELLING FEATURES
Please know your new version of the *North Texan* alumni magazine is terrific! Everything — from the beautiful front and back cover photography, the look and feel of the matte-finish paper with such rich deep printed colors, and so many inspiring stories — was exceptional. The pleasures continued inside. I especially loved reading about the remarkable alums who overcame adversity in “Tenacity Takes Root.” As a graphic design major, I found Augustine Uzor’s story and artwork quite compelling, especially after seeing the interview on your website.

Marianne Baier Phelps ('69)
Dallas

WONDERFUL MEMORIES
My wife, Melania Kang ('82), and I met each other in the fall of 1978 while in the art program. Melania always had a love of food and cooking, so while still a student, she sold desserts and sandwiches at HMS Art supply and during special events at the Fry Street Fair and downtown on the square.

In the fall of 1982, we were about a month from opening a bakery when we were presented an offer we couldn't refuse: cater a Robert Altman movie in Dallas at The Studios at Las Colinas. We canceled the bakery plans and that led to catering other productions, including *Raising Arizona* and *Dirty Dancing*. In 1987, we opened a café in a great neighborhood in San Francisco.

We have the best memories of our time in Denton and attending North Texas. I'll always remember what wonderful people and inspirational teachers Rob Erdle and Elmer Taylor were.

We look forward to visiting Denton and the campus sometime in the future. It will bring back wonderful memories of a very special place and time in our lives.

Steven Baker
Santa Rosa, California

DIALOGUE

FINDING COURAGE

I entered UNT in 1992 as a Denton Mormon mother of five children on academic probation due to my zero-point-nothing GPA from 1970s courses begun at UC Irvine and Orange Coast Community College. I discovered myself and my life changed at UNT, and I was off probation and on the dean's list by the end of my first semester.

By the time I graduated in 1995 and headed to graduate school (history) at the University of Arizona, I had come out as a lesbian, had myself excommunicated from the church I had joined at 16, and been forced to surrender my children to a remarried (in Utah) ex-husband due to financial and legal hurdles. While I was 37 at graduation, I underwent similar changes that much younger students experience — with added challenges thrown in.

I write because when I was there (1992-1995), I would see flyers for a student organization, "Courage," representing LGB students (at the time TQ* were not as visible in the nomenclature). I never went, but I want UNT to know that those flyers, those students involved who were willing to be "out," and the knowledge that I was not alone were a reassurance that I can't describe and makes my emotions swell even now.

I want to thank those who might remember those days or who were part of Courage — and it did take courage. And for those who wonder if their efforts matter, they do.

Pamela Stewart ('95)
Senior lecturer, history
Arizona State University
Phoenix, Arizona

When snow fell on campus Jan. 11, alumni couldn't resist sharing their memories of when UNT became a winter wonderland when they were students.



Glenda Robinson Webb

I remember it snowing several times while I was a student at UNT from 1959 to 1963.



Taylor Autry Reminds me when we borrowed trays from Bruce Hall and sledded down the hill across the street from Fouts Field. Luckily there wasn't much traffic because we easily made it across the street!

Dave Walsworth Graduated in 1964 and I still remember those snowfalls — and snowball fights.

Kaye Dail I remember snow on the weekends and sunbathing on the weekdays in between.

TELL US ABOUT

Do you have a favorite souvenir or object from UNT that you've kept and cherished? How does it bring you Mean Green pride? Email, write or tweet us @northtexan: What are your favorite UNT keepsakes?



@hmjenna *as I'm getting off the bus*

Me: Thank you, have a good day.

Bus driver: Well I'm already having a good day because I'm here with you all.

— the UNT bus drivers must be protected at all costs #dcta #unt



@dennerndinner A day before classes start and I found #LuckytheSquirrel !!! @UNTsocial What a great way to start my last semester!

STAY IN TOUCH!

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1.




2.



3.



4.

 **1. djcalliente** Did I mean to bring a flag in my suitcase? No. Did it work as a sunburn shawl and photograph well? Yas.

2. @UNTSocial Get you a mascot that can do it all like @NTScrappy #DollyPartonChallenge

3. cafeconheart Happy Halloween just hanging out with scrappy at school #babyscrappy #unt #scrappy #homecoming #eagle #babycostume

4. udwende I'm a Texas girl! For those of you that didn't know — I was born in Texas and went to @unt. I had some big dreams and big hair when I first set foot on that campus. #everythingsbiggerintexas #urbandecay #prettydifferent #meangreen #scrappytheeagle



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frisco.unt.edu

BG

BRILLIANTLY GREEN

The One O'Clock Lab Band, UNT's premier jazz ensemble, participated in the Jack Rudin Jazz Championship at New York City's Lincoln Center in December. The group was awarded Outstanding Saxophone, Trumpet and Trombone Sections. Individual Outstanding Soloist awards were given to Will Nathman on alto saxophone and Chris Van Leeuwen and Austin Ford (pictured) on trumpet.



NEW INITIATIVE

WITH ONLINE B.A.A.S., LOG IN TO GET A LEG UP

UNT will offer the first bachelor's degree from a U.S. university on Coursera, the world's leading online learning platform.

The university has partnered with Coursera to bring its Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (B.A.A.S.) program to the online platform beginning in fall 2020. Ranked among the nation's top 100 for ethnic diversity and social mobility, UNT initially developed the unique degree program to help students with diverse backgrounds, including those who have prior college or military credit, earn an accredited bachelor's degree in the most streamlined way possible.

The B.A.A.S. is one of the fastest, most affordable ways for transfer students from community colleges and technical institutions, veterans or active-duty military personnel, and other non-traditional students with

college credit to earn their bachelor's degree. International students with a three-year bachelor's degree also can apply their previous credits to this program to earn a four-year bachelor's degree. UNT also plans to offer a limited number of full scholarships for the online B.A.A.S.

"The Coursera program will offer students the same engaging support, personal interaction and career services as our on-campus B.A.A.S. program to ensure they are set up for success post-graduation," says Jennifer Cowley, provost and vice president for academic affairs.

The multidisciplinary degree offers seven focused concentrations: administration, organizational supervision, social services, hospitality, media innovation, consumer behavior and information technology. Those students who successfully complete the Google IT Support Professional Certificate, hosted on Coursera, can also earn credit toward the information technology concentration.

The first cohort is expected to begin this fall. To learn more about the B.A.A.S. from UNT, including how to apply, visit coursera.org/degrees/unt-online-bachelor-completion.



New Programs Unveiled

Beginning in fall 2020, UNT will offer three new innovative programs designed to give students marketable, real-world skills — the latest additions to UNT's rich history of developing first-of-their-kind, groundbreaking degrees for Texas and the nation.

Master of Science in artificial intelligence

The degree, the first and only in Texas, offers three concentrations: machine learning, autonomous systems and biomedical engineering.

UNT at Frisco's design and project analysis program

The program launched in 2019 and now is a fully available cohort degree program that allows students to learn, grow and graduate together as a team.

Online M.B.A. in sport entertainment management

Offered with the Dallas Cowboys, the degree will offer six specialization courses: sports in the global marketplace, corporate partnerships, analytics, event operations, talent management and consultancy.

▶▶ NO TOLERANCE FOR GLUTEN? SHELLFISH? PEANUTS? NO WORRIES. UNT'S KITCHEN WEST WAS RECENTLY NAMED TEXAS' ONLY DINING HALL CERTIFIED FREE FROM GLUTEN AND THE "BIG 8" FOOD ALLERGENS BY *KITCHENS WITH CONFIDENCE*.

Frisco Expansion

Board Approves Campus Creation

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board voted in January to approve UNT's creation of a Frisco-based branch campus to provide upper-level and graduate courses on 100 acres donated by the city of Frisco.

Construction at the new location is expected to begin in October 2020, with completion expected in November 2022. The first classes in the new building are anticipated in spring 2023. The new location will allow UNT to continue to support cutting-edge programs and partnerships in a location that is becoming synonymous with innovative growth.

Open Access

Innovative Data Trust

UNT is leading a team with members from around the world to create an international data trust that will improve the measurement and analysis of open access book usage.

The new data trust, funded through a \$1.2 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will be the first of its kind for scholarly publishing, enabling universities and publishers to share and analyze data on open access works.

As a pioneer for open access, UNT was the first public institution in Texas to adopt a policy in support of open access and has hosted an annual Open Access Symposium since 2010.

Appointments

Regents Named

Gov. Greg Abbott recently appointed Melisa Denis, Daniel Feehan and John Scott Jr. to the UNT System Board of Regents for terms set to expire in May 2025. Denis, Feehan and Scott will replace Regents Rusty Reid, Gwyn Shea and Glen Whitley, respectively.

Denis, of Southlake, serves as KPMG's national tax leader for consumer goods and the global lead partner on two multinational accounts. Feehan, of Fort Worth, is chairman of FirstCash Inc. and previously served as the president and chief executive officer of Cash America International Inc. Scott, of Keller, is the chief medical officer and chairman of the board of ALLCARE Physicians Group and an assistant professor at UT Southwestern Medical Center.



IN THE MEDIA

THE TEXAS FASHION COLLECTION and its director Annette Becker ('15 M.A.) were featured in a splashy spread in *D Magazine* and in a WFAA segment about Oscar fashion.

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT spotlighted UNT's efforts to bolster prospective students' success through articulation agreements with community colleges.

ALICIA EGGERT, sculpture program coordinator and assistant professor of sculpture in the College of Visual Arts and Design, received attention for her work from *D Magazine*, *Texas Monthly* and *Fort Worth Weekly*.

ALUMNA SARAH BROOM ('02) discussed her National Book Award-winning memoir *The Yellow House* with *PBS NewsHour* in December. She spoke at UNT in February.

NBC 5 covered UNT's newly named Linda Truitt Creagh ('67 Ph.D.) Statistics Lab.

STAR STUDENT



A DETERMINATION TO CREATE CHANGE

Juan Loya ('17, '19 M.P.A.) always believed school wasn't for him. As a high school student, he was so truant he flunked his sophomore year. His GPA barely hovered above a 1.0. He was in and out of juvenile detention facilities.

But then there was a moment — the kind that, even if it doesn't exactly change the course of your life, sets you on a path to decisions that will. He'd turned to alcohol and drugs and petty crime as an escape from the reality of a turbulent home life, but as Loya studied his mom's worried face through the double-paned glass where he had once again been incarcerated, he knew: It was time to change.

"It was like a light bulb went off," he says.

He finished high school, then took a job as a production associate at McKinney-based Raytheon. In 2012, he gave school another chance, taking classes sporadically at Collin College, though he's the first to admit he didn't take them seriously enough. But after he was laid off in 2014, Loya decided to transfer to a four-year university, entering UNT as an integrative studies major, where he took classes in business, public administration, political science and public affairs.

During his time at Collin, he had become involved in the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and the picture began to coalesce: He was meant to learn more about public administration.

"LULAC really got me into advocacy,

policy and legislation, especially when we took trips to Washington, D.C., for lobby days," says Loya, who is working on a second master's degree in higher education. "At UNT, I loved the public administration classes and knew that's what I wanted to get a master's in."


Since then, he's been elected to leadership positions in LULAC, such as district deputy director for young adults. He's the national director of community affairs for Lambda Theta Phi fraternity and a graduate assistant community director for UNT.

It's all a long way from where he began, and his goal, he says, is to help others as they embark on their own journeys.

"No one in my family went to college. There was no one to tell me I could apply for loans or fill out the FAFSA — I didn't know any of that," says Loya, who credits his mentors, UNT history professor Roberto Calderon and Renato De Los Santos, director of LULAC's National Educational Services Center, with guiding his collegiate experience.

"Being first-generation can be tough, especially if you're dealing with issues like a broken home or drug abuse or domestic violence. That's why I want to be in a role where I'm out there talking to people who need information or help. I want to be representative of those who come from first-gen, low-income Latino backgrounds and make sure we have a seat at the table. I want to help change the narrative."

— Erin Cristales

 Learn more about UNT's integrative studies program.
unt.edu/academics/undergrad/integrative-studies

TED^xUNT

x = independently organized TED event



SAVE THE DATE

The UNT community will explore topics ranging from research and innovation to social justice and sustainability at TEDxUNT: Create the Change, set from **1 to 4 p.m. Oct. 9 in the Union Ballroom.**

Free tickets will be available beginning in August.

Visit TEDxUNT.org for updates or email tedxunt@unt.edu if you have questions.

UP FIRST

UNT RANKED SIXTH ON COLLEGE GAZETTE'S LIST OF THE TOP 10 U.S. PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ON THE RISE, AND THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION'S ONLINE MASTER'S PROGRAMS RANKED AMONG THE NATION'S TOP 20 IN MULTIPLE CATEGORIES IN U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT.

RESEARCH

BUILDING SELF IMAGE

Assistant professor Tran Nguyen Templeton is helping children express themselves and tell their own stories even though they are not yet old enough to write.

Templeton, who teaches in UNT's College of Education, researches how 2- to 5-year-olds express their understanding of the world and how they fit into it through photography. She works with classrooms of children in the Denton area, letting each child take a Kodak digital camera home and snap up to 75 photos. Templeton prints the photos and goes through them with the child, letting the young photographer explain which pictures are most important and why. She asks them to choose five photos to share with their friends, noting the differences in what they tell each other versus what they tell her about the snapshots. "For me, it's about having kids be heard," she says.

Hearst Winner Shares Storytelling Inspiration

Joe Valdez ('19), a broadcast/digital graduate, placed in the top 20 this year in the prestigious Hearst Media One Multimedia Narrative Video Storytelling Contest for his story about Pride and Glory Pro-Wrestling, a nonprofit serving Denton County charities. Valdez, who now works as a reporter for News 12 in Ardmore, Oklahoma, completed the project as part of a multimedia class at UNT.

How did you develop the idea for your story?

The multimedia class was themed around "transformers" in Denton County. I was taken by the fact that the charities Pride and Glory supported were able to continue providing services in Denton County, including counseling and veterans services, with some even gaining funds that would last for months.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1

November marked the 10th anniversary of the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act, a federal law which protects military spouses with regard to voting, property and taxes, and equitable treatment. Mayborn journalism lecturer **Rebecca Poynter ('11 M.J.)** petitioned for the landmark legislation while she was still a UNT graduate student.

2

UNT's Texas Center for Performing Arts Health collaborated with Denton ISD on a two-day project to teach performing arts practices that can keep students safe and prevent potential health risks such as hearing damage and musculoskeletal injuries.

3

UNT's Texas Teratogen Information Service recently was awarded a \$6,000 grant from the Organization of Teratology Information Specialists to send nearly 3,000 first aid kits for pregnant and breastfeeding women to homeless and domestic abuse shelters in several states.

How did your time at UNT help you as a multimedia storyteller?

Studying at the Mayborn cemented the fact I wanted to be a storyteller. Then I stumbled into photography through Hatch Visuals. Honing my aesthetic eye through photography shaped my videography, and then everything involving pace, sound mixing and writing came naturally as I progressed in my broadcast classes.

What would you consider essential viewing for anyone interested in telling multimedia stories?

I was hooked by a story by Lisa Krantz of the *San Antonio Express-News* titled "A Life Apart: The Toll of Obesity." Cinema like *Manchester by the Sea*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and countless Quentin Tarantino movies also provided inspiration.



EXTRACURRICULARS

A Weighty Goal Achieved



As a high school freshman, Laisha Gardner felt a little shiftless.

The Laredo native joined the track team as a thrower after a stint on the basketball team hadn't worked out, and though she enjoyed it, track and field didn't quite feel like the perfect fit.

And then one day during practice, her coach told her to go lift weights in the gym.

"I saw the powerlifters, and I was like, 'OK, that looks really cool,'" says Gardner, a sophomore physics major. 'I talked to the coach, and he was like, 'Yeah, anybody can join.' So I did.'

She earned three state championships in high school, and after graduation, began competing in USA Powerlifting competitions.

Gardner, an Emerald Eagle Scholar and Bruceteria employee

"I WALKED A LITTLE BIT TALLER AFTER I STARTED LIFTING. IT'S DEFINITELY FUN AND EMPOWERING."

who is part of UNT's Powerlifting Club, is ranked No. 2 nationally in her raw collegiate division weight class. She trains two to three hours per day in preparation for the USAPL Collegiate Nationals.

While winning is always a treat, she says lifting has given her a bigger gift: confidence.

"I fell in love with the sport after I saw the way it changed me physically, how much healthier it made me feel," says Gardner, who is coached by Jordan Glenn. "I walked a little bit taller after I started lifting. It's definitely fun and empowering."

Dream Team

UNT had four teams advance to the American Moot Court Association's national tournament this year, more than any other public university in the U.S., with three of the teams advancing to medal rounds. At the January event — which featured 80 of the best collegiate teams from across the country, including Yale and the University of Chicago — the UNT team took home three of the top 15 speaker awards. Senior Ty Hayes ranked fifth, senior Victor Huertas ranked eighth and senior Victoria Nevarez ranked 13th.



Logistics Win

UNT took first place in the 2020 Operation Stimulus national case competition hosted by the Denver Transportation Club in February. The winning team included business students John Murphy, Clayton Maxwell, Michael Quintana and Cameron Hood. Terrance Pohlen, director of the Jim McNatt Institute for Logistics Research, served as their advisor. Founded in 1982, Operation Stimulus is the longest running supply chain and logistics student case study competition in North America.

EXPERT TAKE


The Mind Matters

Madison Clary-Wortham ('16, '18 M.S.) first began taking Zoloft for anxiety when she was 11. By high school, depression had kicked in, and during her freshman year at UNT, she realized she needed to seek additional help for her mental health.

"I remember sitting in a psychology class, and I felt like an elephant was sitting on my chest," she says. "That's when I had my first public anxiety attack."

Clary-Wortham's story is not an uncommon one. Generation Z in particular is one of the most stressed age groups, according to the American Psychological Association.

That's why, as the campus continues to grow, UNT is dedicated to helping students with all of the challenges that can stand in the way of mental health through resources such as the Office of Disability Access, Psychology Clinic, and Counseling and Testing Center. For a full list of on-campus, online and Denton-based mental health resources, visit speakout.unt.edu/how-get-help.

 Hear more of Clary-Wortham's story, and learn more about how to know if and where you should seek help for yourself or others. northtexan.unt.edu/podcasts

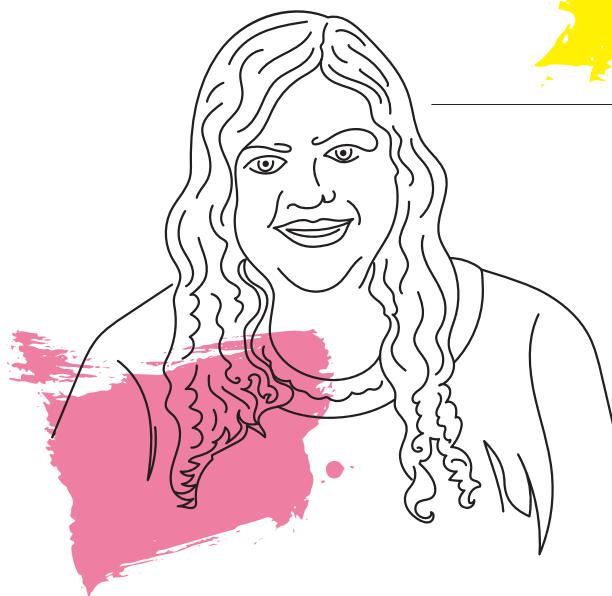
REBECCA WERTS ('13, '19 M.S.)
UNT College of Science advisor and recent graduate of UNT's mental health counseling graduate program

"I heard this analogy, and I absolutely love it: When you get sick, or you want preventative care, the first thing you do is go to your primary care physician. We do that with our physical health — why don't we do it with our mental health?"



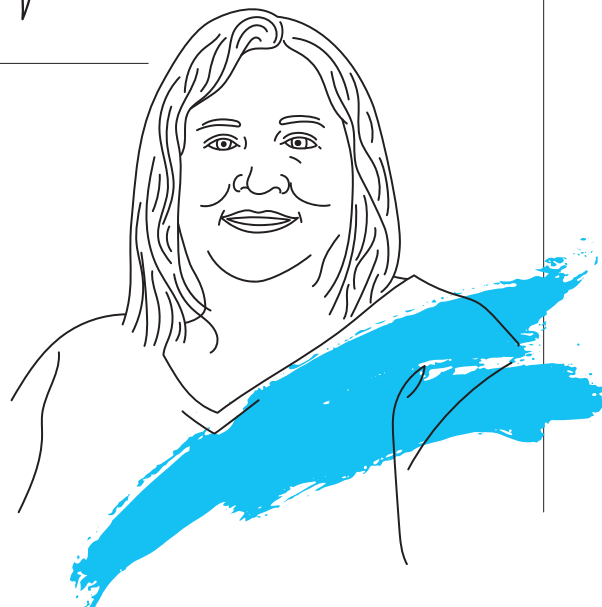
RACHITA SHARMA
Senior lecturer in UNT's College of Health and Public Service and clinical director of UNT's Wellness and Employment Learning Lab (UNTWELL)

"If you notice chronic mental health issues in a friend, try to talk to that person in a comfortable space. Being there for them in a nonjudgmental, genuinely kind way is really important."



TAMARA KNAPP-GROSZ
Licensed psychologist and senior director of UNT's Counseling and Testing Center

"I think we are seeing a greater number of students seeking out mental health resources. One hypothesis is that we've done a great job of destigmatizing mental health treatment. In recent years, we've talked about how it is so healthy to have someone to talk to. And students took us at our word."



GROUND-BREAKING TIER ONE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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Above
 Sonya Layton, a biology doctoral student and teaching assistant in the UNT PHAGES program, assists freshman students with a lab experiment.

 Read more about UNT's PHAGES program.
northtexas.unt.edu/phages

Students Discover New Paths

For 10 years, UNT's Phage Hunters Advancing Genomics and Evolutionary Science (PHAGES) has inspired undergrads.

Amy Schade ('13) never had much interest in science growing up. But now, she's a postdoctoral research fellow at Boston-based Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, where she studies triple-negative breast cancer. It was UNT's PHAGES program that changed the course of her career — and really, her whole outlook on science. "It was pretty quick into the first semester that I realized research was what I wanted to do," says Schade, who was inspired to join the lab after hearing its director Lee Hughes, associate professor of microbiology, discuss the chance for undergraduates to discover new viruses. "That sense of discovery and ownership from what I had contributed to our understanding of bacteriophages, that was really empowering and exciting for me."

“When Ginkgo biloba trees die, it is generally the result of external stressors. But, if those stressors are removed and perfect conditions existed, Ginkgo biloba could go on forever.”

— Richard Dixon

The Distinguished Research Professor in UNT’s College of Science is part of an international team of scientists who have found that Ginkgo biloba trees aren’t programmed to die due to their lack of senescence, the genetic programming that causes plants and mammals to perish.



ADVANCING ARCHAEOLOGY

Reid Ferring, a Professor Emeritus in UNT’s Department of Geography and the Environment, is part of an international team of more than 40 prominent scientists from different specialties who have developed a breakthrough method of identifying the sex and species of animals in fossils more than a million years old.

“This is very exciting because our current method for determining sex and species — examination of extracted DNA — was limited to approximately 200,000 years. Through palaeoproteomics, the study of ancient proteins, we can now look back over a million years,” Ferring says.

Ferring believes that palaeoproteomics will prove to be the key for establishing the evolutionary line between the earliest hominids and modern man. The reason, he says, is that proteins like collagen, which is found in tendons, ligaments, skin, bone and teeth, last much longer than DNA in fossilized material.

He says the team was able to sample collagen from 1.7 million-year-old fossilized animal teeth

and determine they belonged to a *Stephanorhinus*, an extinct form of rhinoceros.

POWER PLANT SENSORS

UNT associate professor of mechanical and energy engineering Haifeng Zhang, together with researchers in the Pacific Northwest National Lab, earned a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to work on a solution for what he believes is a critical sensor problem in nuclear power plants — they typically don’t last long and are not easy to replace, making it harder to detect atypical operating conditions.

Zhang’s sensors, however, will couple light and sound waves to measure different physical parameters in a reactor’s core using the latest in piezoelectric technology. Piezoelectric sensors use the ability of certain materials to generate an electrical charge in response to applied mechanical stress to measure changes in pressure, acceleration, temperature, strain and force.

SPOTLIGHT

Bright Mind, Smart Cities



Read more about Habib's Smart Cities expertise. northtexan.unt.edu/smart-cities

WHEN CITIES FIRST BEGAN DIPPING THEIR TOES into the largely untested waters of autonomous vehicles, Abdulrahman Habib ('13 M.S., '19 Ph.D.) was ready for the ride. Despite the *Jetson*-ian coolness of driverless cars, the technology wasn't technically Habib's interest. The UNT at Frisco-based clinical assistant professor in the Interdisciplinary Program of Analytics and Computational Science (IPACS) — a joint venture among UNT's College of Science, the Toulouse Graduate School and UNT at Frisco — was instead intrigued by collecting data on how residents would react to the potential deployment of the

futuristic fleet. "It's not the technology itself, but the question of how we deal with it and how others perceive it," says Habib, who while still a Ph.D. student at UNT began suggesting ways for the city of Denton to improve everything from parking to weather monitoring to non-emergency reporting. Transportation and public safety are the top areas within "smart cities" — a somewhat malleable term that has generally come to signify a region's problem-solving capabilities and flexibility for change, as well as its ability to provide sustainable, intelligent service — in which consumers notice changes and effects of

technology utilization and improvements. The smart cities concept is of vital importance as urbanization continues to expand. According to the United Nations, by 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in cities.

"Smart cities hinge on a mentality of connectivity, continuous improvement and convincing a community to consider how to best use its resources," says Habib, who notes UNT is leading an effort, in collaboration with other universities and private partners, to promote multiple smart cities projects in the DFW area through public-private partnerships with cities and government agencies. "If you work on it this year, the next five years, the next 10 years, the technology and the challenges will keep changing. But the important question to keep in mind is: How are we going to deal with these challenges as a community?"

— Erin Cristales

Computing Honors

Yan Huang, senior associate dean and director of graduate studies in UNT's College of Engineering, recently was named a distinguished member of the Association for Computing Machinery — the world's largest educational and scientific computing society — for her scientific contributions to the field of computing. Huang's research forms core technologies for modern spatial databases and spatial data mining, which is the process of discovering interesting and previously unknown patterns from large spatial datasets.

Better Way to Rebuild Knees

UNT College of Engineering professor Wonbong Choi and associate professor Gayatri Mehta are developing a sensor system for use in rebuilding and balancing the human knee, funded by a \$150,000 grant from the National Science Foundation.

"Currently, surgeons tend to rely on their best judgment in determining what 'feels' like a balanced and stable knee," says Choi, who is part of the materials science and engineering department. "Dr. Mehta and I believe we can create a flexible, internal wireless sensor system that will measure interactions between the tibia and femur and provide doctors with real-time information on joint pressure distribution both during and after surgery."

“THIS CONNECTION TO LACORE GIVES STUDENTS EXPERIENCE THAT PUTS THEM YEARS AHEAD.”
 — Michael Rondelli, UNT vice president for research commercial agreements, about a new collaboration between LaCore Labs and UNT that will include a \$1 million gift eligible for matching funds from the Texas Research Incentive Program, a new laboratory, sponsored research, a license to UNT technology and real-world opportunities for students

Preventing Pipeline Leaks

Complex organic chemistry experiments often take days or weeks to conduct in a laboratory, but Oliviero Andreussi — an assistant professor in UNT’s Department of Physics — has created a virtual organic chemistry laboratory inside a supercomputer to conduct these same experiments in a matter of minutes.

By using computational chemistry, Andreussi will begin cycling through scientific databases listing thousands of organic molecules to determine the various effects of different compounds on the production or suppression of natural gas hydrates.

“Natural gas hydrates are crystalline structures made of gas molecules trapped in a cage of water molecules,” Andreussi says. “The increase and decrease of the production of these natural gas hydrates could be used to do everything from preventing undersea oil pipeline breaks to storing greenhouse gases.”

National Appointment

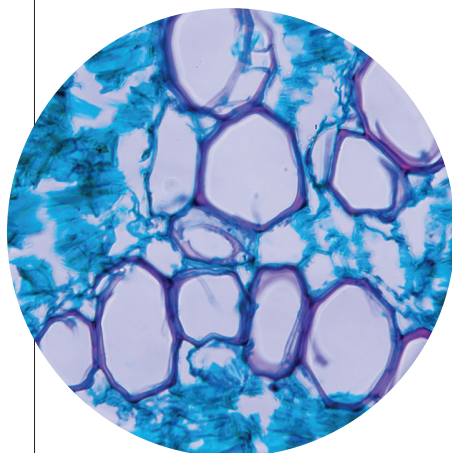
Pamela Padilla, associate vice president for UNT’s Division of Research and Innovation, was elected president of SACNAS, the nation’s largest multicultural and multidisciplinary STEM diversity organization.

New Uses for Lipids

Kent Chapman, Regents Professor and director of UNT’s BioDiscovery Institute, is questioning decades-old assumptions in plant biochemistry to find better ways of storing and using lipids, the energy molecules found in all plants.

Lipids are among the most energy-dense organic molecules on Earth and offer many advantages over fossil fuels. Chapman’s work involves understanding the methods plants use to package and store lipids, which would allow scientists to manipulate plants to store lipids in any part of the organism.

Right now, lipids are generally concentrated in seeds and some fruits, with leaves and stems considered waste products. But if lipids could be stored in all parts of the plant, a farmer would suddenly have one super-efficient crop that can be used both as food and fuel.



By the Numbers



3 That’s how many seniors from UNT’s Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science were named among the top 300 scholars in the 2020 Regeneron Science Talent Search, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious science and math competition. Eunyoung (Lucy) Kim (pictured above at left) and Nikhil Vicas (center), both of Coppell, along with Abhishek Joshi of Frisco (right), each earned a \$2,000 prize.

Kim’s research was conducted to better understand nanoparticle cancer treatments.

Vicas worked to develop nano-sized sensors that will increase clarity in single-molecule imaging technology. These sensors may help researchers find ways to image and detect diseases on an incredibly small scale.

Joshi created an algorithm that uses different statistics to predict which set of numbers will produce the best neural network for use in artificial intelligence.



Above
Alumna Jackie Lawrence ('19) is pictured with a preview of her installation for "Intangible." The jungle theme incorporates bright colors and differing densities and lengths in the latch hook patterns to create a 3D environment.

Weaving a World

Alumna will help re-create a series of hotel rooms — with fibers.

While at UNT's College of Visual Arts and Design, Jackie Lawrence ('19) switched from medium to medium. But she found her place in an introduction to weaving course her junior year. Her work will be seen as part of the "Intangible" exhibit this April at the Sweet Tooth Hotel near Victory Plaza in Dallas. Each room will be transformed with fibers with Lawrence's topographical latch hook colorscaes acting as a façade for a wall. "Weaving was the first medium I ever worked with where I felt like I could talk about my spirituality and things I had been wrestling with for years in an articulate way," Lawrence says.

66 | MY SATURDAY NIGHT JUST WENT FROM READING IN SWEATPANTS TO DANCING AROUND THE HOUSE IN SWEATPANTS!”

— Jessica Chiccehitto Hindman ('13 Ph.D.) on being nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award for her memoir *Sounds Like Titanic*

Books

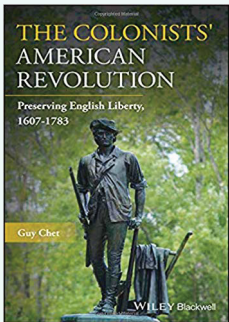
Empirical Paradox

Three authors with UNT connections use mathematical models to challenge “either/or” thinking in favor of “both/and” thinking.

Paolo Grigolini, professor of physics and director of UNT’s Center for Nonlinear Science, says science can expand beyond many disciplines.

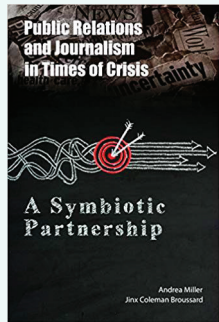
“Critical thinking that seems to belong to physics, the origin of cognition that seems to belong to psychology, and the social organization that seems to belong to political science and sociology are actually the key words of a single challenging issue that is not yet settled,” he says.

The other writers are Korosh Mahmoodi ('14 M.S., '18 Ph.D.) and Bruce J. West, former head of UNT’s Department of Physics and now a senior scientist at the Army Research Office. Rohhisha Tuladhar ('19 Ph.D.) also contributed to the book.



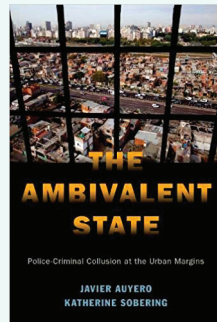
The Colonists’ American Revolution: Preserving English Liberty, 1607-1783: A Dissenting Companion to the U.S. History Textbook
Guy Chet

The history professor challenges the conventional narrative of the colonists’ Americanization. He presents the Atlantic as a bridge (rather than a barrier) between England and its colonies.



Public Relations and Journalism in Times of Crisis: A Symbiotic Partnership
Andrea Miller, co-author
Jinx Coleman Broussard

The new dean of the Mayborn School of Journalism explores the coverage of crises communications from both journalism and public relations perspectives through case studies of weather disasters, disease outbreaks and school shootings.



The Ambivalent State: Police-Criminal Collusion at the Urban Margins
Katherine Sobering, co-author
JAVIER AUYERO
KATHERINE SOBERING

The assistant professor of sociology examines how clandestine relationships between police and drug dealers shape urban life in Argentina.

Designing Memories

Major companies such as Nike and LEGO turn to two alumni for big projects.

Dora Drimalas ('96) and Brian Flynn ('94) create big ideas.

Drimalas is the founder of Hybrid Design, which enabled basketball fans to shop at a pop-up Nike store that looked like a sneakers box in San Francisco in 2016. Flynn is the founder of Super7 Toys, where he imagines toy mash-ups like Jumbo Star Wars Stormtroopers.

Drimalas and Flynn, both communication design alumni, also brought a life-size LEGO Star Wars X-Wing kit to Times Square in New York City, and created a Knit Con event for Pinterest employees.

Drimalas says they want their ideas to resonate with people. “The really difficult part is creating something memorable,” she says.

The two met at UNT. Drimalas was a film student but was so taken with Flynn’s work as a communication design major that she switched majors. She also found inspiration as a resident assistant at Bruce Hall. “Living in a place with such a wide range of creative expression made me want to create a studio environment that was the same,” she says. “Our studio is cleaner than Bruce Hall was, but at Hybrid and Super7, ‘weird’ is always considered high praise.”



▶▶ MARK “HAWKEYE” RYBCZYK ('83), ON-AIR PERSONALITY FOR KSCS IN DALLAS-FORT WORTH, WAS INDUCTED INTO THE COUNTRY RADIO HALL OF FAME.



Unamplified Voice

Baritone brings stories to life on the opera stage.

After a football injury forced Michael Mayes ('99) to select another elective in high school, he chose choir — leading to a career in which he has performed around the world in traditional and contemporary operas.

Mayes has landed classic roles such as the title characters of *Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni*, but he prefers operas that touch on current events, like *Dead Man Walking*, in which he plays the convicted murderer awaiting his execution.

“When I discovered opera for the first time, as a result of my scholarship to come study at UNT, it was the storytelling aspect that truly drew me in, combined with the sheer power of the unamplified voice and all the trappings of the stage that really hooked me,” he says. “It was the ultimate culmination of so many things that I loved, and it’s that sweet spot of convergence that is the center of my artistic universe to this day.”



Learn more about how Mel Ivey, the late Professor Emeritus of music, influenced Mayes’ career. northtexas.unt.edu/unamplified-voice

The Gift of Time

Four professors got a full semester off from teaching this academic year to pursue creative projects as part of the Faculty Fellows program with UNT’s Institute for the Advancement of the Arts.

Corey Marks, Distinguished Teaching Professor of English and director of creative writing, is writing a new set of poems focused on the relationships between nature, technology, history and politics.

Another professor’s work also links the natural world with modern technology. Art professor Lari Gibbons is combining non-toxic, water-based printmaking methods with computer-numerically-controlled etched plates to make a series of artworks.

“Zoomusicology” is a 45-minute piece that features an omnidirectional sound environment from Panayiotis Kokoras, associate professor of composition and director of UNT’s Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia.

Fabiana Claire, assistant professor and director of music business and entrepreneurship, created a multimedia lecture recital exploring the works and careers of three of the most iconic nineteenth century women musician entrepreneurs, who created professional opportunities for themselves while also running households, raising children and facing the gender discrimination of their times.

Human Canvas

Bailey Turfitt can make people look like they belong to another world.

The senior biology major is a sought-after makeup artist for events and photo shoots in Dallas.



Turfitt adorns flower crowns with LED lights, skewers or candles. She drops colored eye drops so her subject looks like they’re crying blue and red tears. She scatters crystals over bodies. She’ll also turn people into Zodiac signs and horror movie victims, and she imagines Beatles tunes as people.

Turfitt’s models often tell her, “You make me feel so cool.”

“That’s my goal,” she says, “to make people feel good about themselves.”

And Turfitt, who is deaf, says her work helps her feel better too as she’s had three surgeries in the last year.

“To continue to create art keeps me grounded,” she says. “This is who I am no matter what happens.”



Read more about Turfitt’s work. northtexas.unt.edu/human-canvas

A Netflix for Africans

Alumna uses skills she honed as a student to launch streaming platform.

The word *kuumba* means creativity in Swahili.

For Freda Frimpong ('12), it means the opportunity to bring African film online.

This spring, Frimpong plans to launch KUUMBA Media, a streaming platform for African filmmakers to place their works online while fans pay to watch each film. The idea for KUUMBA began in 2017 when Frimpong was frustrated that she couldn't find Ghanaian films online.

She notes that Africa, which boasts the youngest population in the world, is the next promising market for digital media consumption.

"The Africa in me keeps me going and keeps me very positive about the future of my continent and my business," she says.

She's using the skills she learned at UNT, where she served as a senator for the Student Government Association, participated in moot court and co-directed a few student theater productions.

"Everything I know about accountability, leadership, critical thinking and perseverance all came from my time at UNT," says Frimpong, who majored in political science and theatre. "UNT shaped the way I think and how I navigate myself in the world."



Forward Thinking

What Teacher at UNT Influenced You Most?

"Richard Last, former director of the digital retailing program, taught me that retail is an ever-changing landscape. The most important thing we can do is to always keep learning and educating ourselves because what is relevant today may not be relevant tomorrow. I learned to always keep innovating, embrace new technologies and try new things."

— **Kelsey Henry ('15), Pinterest and podcasting consultant, happiness blogger at *Positively Delighted* and author of the book *Growing Up Roadschooled: Stories, Lyrics & Lessons Learned from Full-time RVing and Life After Roadschooled***

"I know I wouldn't be where I'm at with my career and life if it weren't for Barbara Cox, associate professor of costume design. The biggest take away I have from my time with her was to push boundaries wherever possible. Art doesn't evolve and expand by following guidelines."

— **Duran Lucio ('15), playwright whose work *Dragón* was a finalist in the LTC Carnival of New Latinx Work and whose most recent work, *Forever and a Day*, played this February at the Margo Jones Theatre at Dallas Fair Park**

"Klaudia Cop, teaching fellow and doctoral student in the College of Music, instills in her students great discipline and hard-working tactics. Klaudia constantly encourages and uplifts her students in any circumstance and that is something I admire and learn from as a future leader and/or teacher."

— **Sophomore Amari Green, a singer-songwriter-guitarist who was named to KERA's "North Texas' 20 Under 20" list under her stage name Amari Amore**

Building the Hoopla

Mean Green become Conference USA Regular Season Champions with victory against Western Kentucky.

The Mean Green men's basketball team secured their title as the 2019-20 Conference USA Regular Season Champions on March 1, marking their first regular season conference championship in 31 years.

The Mean Green defeated second-place Western Kentucky 78-72 in overtime to clinch the title. The team's 14 conference regular season wins is a program record for North Texas.

"This championship is about and for everyone," says third-year head coach Grant McCasland. "There are so many people over the years who have put their sweat and soul into this. We wouldn't be here without them."

Redshirt junior Javion Hamlet, pictured, led all scorers with 25 points and had nine assists. Junior Thomas Bell chipped in a career-high 20 points and eight rebounds. The Mean Green's victory against Western Kentucky marked the end of an 11-game losing streak to the Hilltoppers.

"We never stopped believing," Hamlet says. "From the first day we got here during the summer to when we were trailing at the last timeout. We never stopped believing."



 Learn more about the team's 2019-20 season. meangreensports.com/sports/mens-basketball

New Assistant Coaches Join Football Staff

Head football coach Seth Littrell named five new assistant coaches to his staff this spring.

Clint Bowen returns to North Texas as defensive coordinator after spending several years in the same capacity at Kansas. Bowen coached one year at UNT in 2011 before leaving for Kansas.

Former Tulsa assistant Mike Bloesch was named the new offensive coordinator, while Mike Ekeler is the new special teams coordinator. Ekeler was an assistant under Littrell in 2016 before leaving for an assistant job at North Carolina. Littrell also hired Tate Wallis to coach Mean Green quarterbacks in 2020 and Eric Mathies to coach the defensive line.

James Ranked 38th Nationally

Soccer player Dominique James ('19) was named the 38th best player in the nation by *Top Drawer Soccer* in its postseason ranking. This is the second year in a row James, a back-to-back first team all-region selection and 2018 All-American, has been ranked in the top 60.

James, who in December graduated magna cum laude from the G. Brint Ryan College of Business, concluded her college career as one of the most successful student-athletes in UNT history.

By the Numbers

1

The Mean Green football 2020 recruiting class was ranked No. 1 in Conference USA by *247 Sports*. The Mean Green ranked No. 68 nationally, which is the highest ever since *247 Sports* began ranking recruiting classes in 1999.

6

Mean Green student-athletes had their best combined GPA in over six years when they posted a collective 3.01 GPA for the 2019 fall semester.

34

Feb. 5 marked 34 years of the annual National Girls & Women in Sports Day, empowering women and girls to push past their limits in sports and life, and reap the benefits of physical activity. To see Mean Green female athletes talk about what the day means to them, visit meangreensports.com.



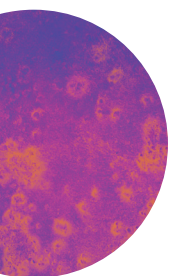
Super Bowl Appearance

When Jeffery Wilson Jr.'s team, the San Francisco 49ers, played in Super Bowl LIV in Miami on Feb. 2, he became the first former Mean Green football player to play in a Super Bowl since 1996. Wilson ranks No. 4 on the all-time leading rushing list in UNT history, gaining over 3,200 yards from 2014 to 2017. The Elkhart, Texas, native was undrafted after his college career, but he signed with the 49ers in 2018 and was a backup running back the past two seasons. Wilson had one catch for 20 yards in the Super Bowl, where the 49ers fell to the Kansas City Chiefs 31-20.

Softball Starts Strong

For the first time ever, the Mean Green softball team was selected as the preseason favorite to win a Conference USA championship, and the team had a history-making win over the Oklahoma Sooners on Feb. 29. The win over Oklahoma became the first win by a North Texas intercollegiate athletics team over a top-five opponent on the road. The Mean Green also became the first team to beat Oklahoma in the Courtyard Marriott Tournament since its inception in 2014. UNT will look to win its first-ever C-USA championship at the conference tournament in May in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

SOUND ADVICE



DUSTEE JENKINS ('01) ACHIEVED HER ROLE AS SPOTIFY'S HEAD OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS BY HEEDING A FEW KEY WORDS OF WISDOM — AND EMBRACING NEW CHALLENGES.

TEXT BY HEATHER NOEL

KEEP GOING. IT'S A MANTRA that has inspired Dustee Jenkins ('01) through all of life's twists and turns.

First, when she made the move from West Texas to Denton to attend UNT. Then, after she graduated with a journalism degree and took a job on Capitol Hill working in U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison's office, and later being appointed director of communications in the Department of Housing and Urban Development by President George W. Bush.

As she's built a successful, award-winning career in communications and public relations, she hasn't coasted but willingly leapt into the unknown to keep moving forward and challenging herself. Now she's living in New York City and taken on her most expansive role yet as head of global communications and public relations for Spotify, the world's largest audio streaming company.

"I'm not intimidated by what might seem like a really big challenge, even if it feels daunting," Jenkins says. "I try to embrace and be grateful for each opportunity that is thrown my way."

Prior to her time at Spotify, while serving as the senior vice president and chief communications officer for Target, she guided the company through a highly publicized data breach and significant corporate restructure, overhauled its brand storytelling with its *A Bullseye View* blog, and helped publicize the launch of multimillion-dollar brands such as Cat & Jack.

Jenkins started her current role at Spotify at a historic moment for the company. In her first months on the job, she propelled Spotify through its widely covered debut on the New York Stock Exchange and created the company's first editorial newsroom, *For the Record*, to offer fresh, daily coverage on everything from partnership backstories to new industry trends.

"I love the art of telling a story and ensuring that it is relevant, straightforward and will resonate with the right audience," Jenkins says. "We try to do that every

single day on *For the Record*. It probably comes from writing and those early days of sitting in a newsroom at the *NT Daily*."


At Spotify, she's helping the audio streaming innovator carry on its entrepreneurial spirit on a global scale.

The Stockholm, Sweden-based company completely revolutionized how the world listens to music when it launched in 2008. Since then, its offerings have branched out far beyond music streaming with audiobooks, news content and more. It's made major moves into podcasting, acquiring Gimlet Media and Anchor in 2019, *The Ringer* in 2020 and expanding the number of podcasts available on the Spotify app to more than 700,000. It's also exploring the possibility of launching its own podcast, Jenkins says.

"Everyone is very dedicated to what they do. It's the kind of group that you want to show up and work with every single day — building really cool things and advancing the future of streaming," she says.

Growing up in the small town of Andrews, Jenkins never imagined she'd one day live in New York and max out her passport with business trips to places like London, Sweden and Vietnam. Every new experience teaches you a little more about yourself, she says. Like how leaders should be forward thinking and see beyond where they sit today, a valuable lesson she learned while advocating as Student Government Association vice president for what would become the Pohl Recreation Center, an amenity added years after she was a UNT student.

"When someone asks me where I came from, I say with tremendous pride, 'Texas.' I would not be sitting in this chair were it not for my student experiences. I know that for certain," Jenkins says. "I also feel very fortunate that I had a modest upbringing with two hardworking parents in West Texas. They taught me the importance of giving your all, being accountable and not backing down from a challenge."

 Read a Q&A to learn more about Jenkins' life and career. northtexan.unt.edu/dustee-jenkins

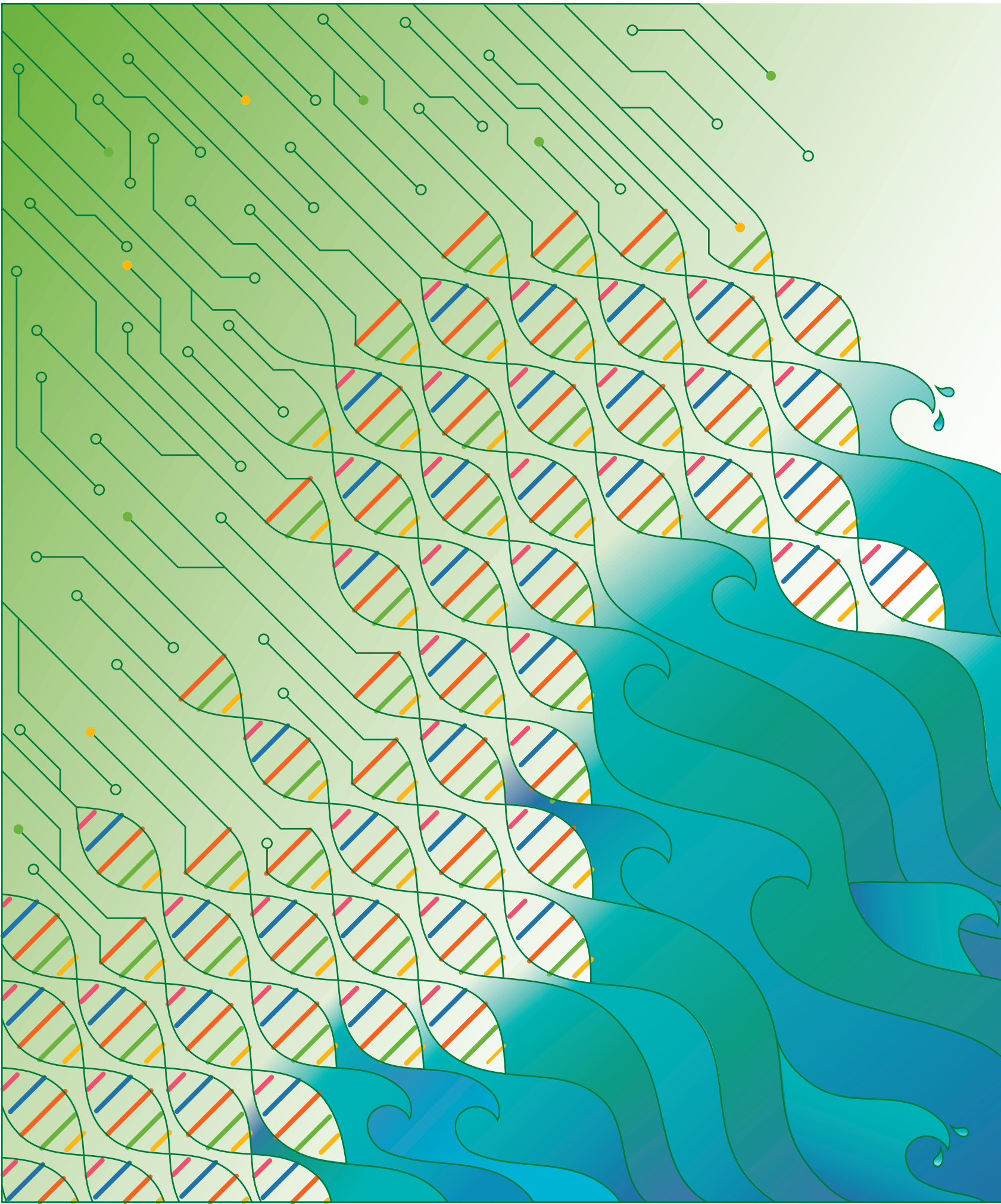




I love the art of telling a story and ensuring that it is relevant, straightforward and will resonate with the right audience.”



Photo courtesy of Spotify

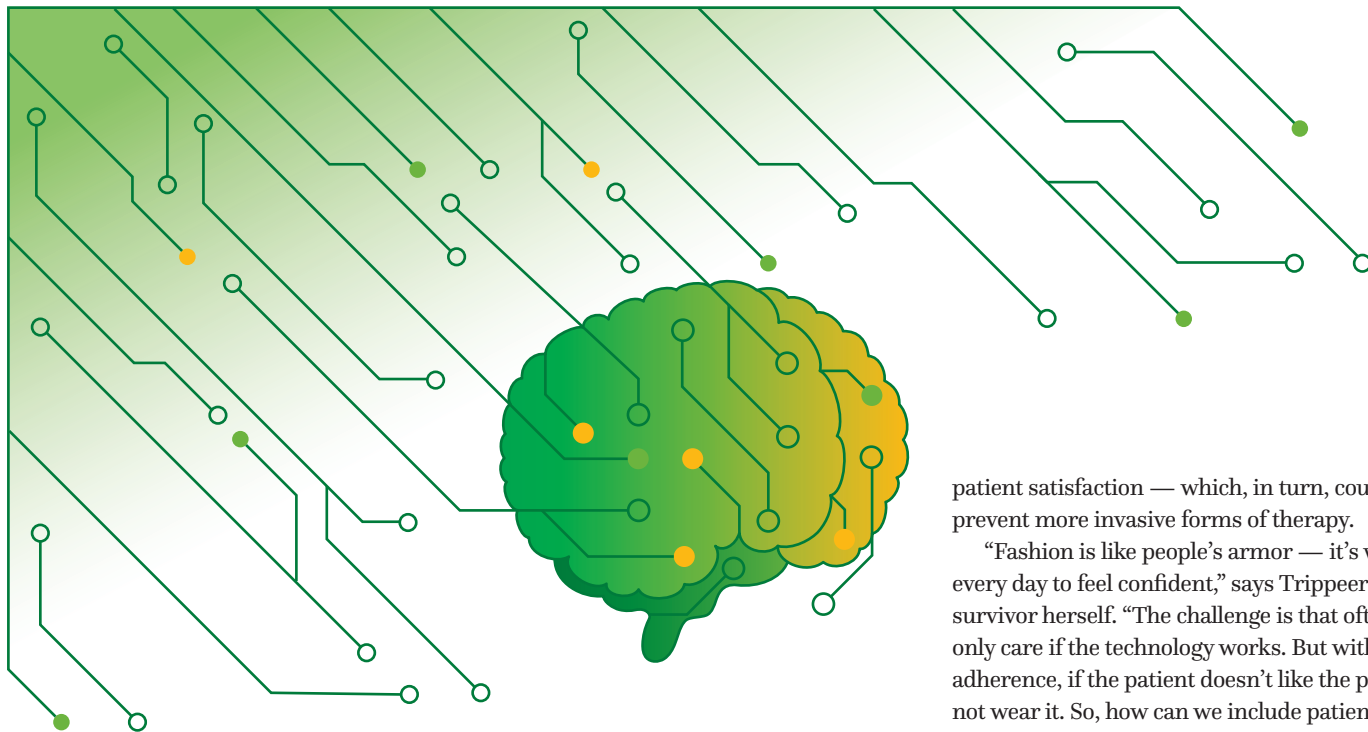


IT'S IN OUR DNA

**AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO INNOVATION HAS
CEMENTED UNT'S STATUS AS A TIER ONE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
— AND IT'S GUIDING AN EVEN BOLDER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE**

TEXT BY ERIN CRISTALES ILLUSTRATION BY CLIFFTON CASTER





A rack of garments flanks one wall of Barbara Trippeer’s (’14 M.F.A.) office in the Art Building, where the assistant professor of fashion design is prepping for an exhibition of costumes her students fabricated for last semester’s production of *Don Giovanni*. Although she’s surrounded by apparel, her thoughts are swathed in more atypically high-tech concepts — today, she’s all talk of optical sensors and additive manufacturing and user interface.

Her specific expertise is fashion as “assistive technology,” an area she became interested in while pursuing her M.F.A. with a focus in design innovation. Wearable tech was *the* buzzword, but Trippeer aimed to explore a deeper question: Beyond eye-catching aesthetics, how could fashion help patients with disabilities or other health challenges?

That query led her to projects such as developing user-friendlier wearable devices for pediatric diabetes patients and using 3D printing in the creation of healthier, customized bras. Now, in collaboration with researchers from Columbia University’s College of Engineering and the Fashion Institute of Technology, she’s part of a project in which optical light sensors track changes in breast cancer tumors. But would patients actually wear them?

That’s where Trippeer’s expertise comes in. She’s crafting a garment to contain the sensors, and it features the kind of comfortable, fashionable design that promotes

patient satisfaction — which, in turn, could ultimately prevent more invasive forms of therapy.

“Fashion is like people’s armor — it’s what you put on every day to feel confident,” says Trippeer, a breast cancer survivor herself. “The challenge is that often scientists only care if the technology works. But with medical regime adherence, if the patient doesn’t like the product, they may not wear it. So, how can we include patients in the process so they are engaged and invested?”

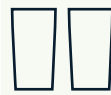
Trippeer’s user experience expertise means she’s able to see the project from a divergent, yet no less critical, perspective. It’s those kinds of multidisciplinary meetings of the minds — both in-house and across industry and institutions — that have long been an essential component of UNT’s scholarly culture, where a commitment to research in all fields is so deeply ingrained, it’s practically coded into the institutional DNA. Now, that interdisciplinary imprint is informing the university’s innovation mindset moving forward. And it just may be its ticket to the top of the Tier One pack.

A LOOK BACK AND A PATH FORWARD

Founded as a local teacher’s college 130 years ago, UNT is now internationally recognized for scholarship in fields ranging from fine arts and technology to humanities and life sciences, offers 230 degree programs and continuously expands hands-on research opportunities, often with industry collaboration.

In 2015, UNT reached a new pinnacle: It earned the elite designation of a Tier One research university by the Carnegie Classification of Institutes of Higher Education®, a status that matters because it bolsters the university’s reputation in national rankings, its ability to recruit students and faculty from other Tier One universities, and its success rate for grant proposals and prestigious faculty awards. Last year, UNT’s Tier One status was reaffirmed, making the university one of only 131 institutions in the nation in those ranks. Its diversity of doctoral programs and strengths in non-STEM research areas were major factors in UNT earning, and retaining, that designation.

Add to that a stunning 2019 — in which UNT saw a record \$78.4 million in research expenditures, \$10 million awarded by the Texas Legislature to fund its Center for Agile and Adaptive Additive Manufacturing, an all-time



We're relatively young in this game, but our opportunity and potential are sky high."

— Mark McLellan, vice president of research and innovation

high income in technology licensed for commercialization, and the opening of world-class facilities to house its College of Visual Arts and Design and biomedical programs — and it's mission accomplished, right? Not quite.

"By continuing to drive our growth in the rankings, we will be on par with some excellent institutions," says President Neal Smatresk, who notes that UNT is committed to securing its place among the best of Tier One, standing shoulder to shoulder with universities such as Brown, Cal Tech and Notre Dame. "That's a pretty nice neighborhood, and it's one we want to live in."

Enter Mark McLellan to take the wheel. This fall, he joined UNT as vice president of research and innovation, bringing 35 years of experience in leading major university research programs, including stints at Portland State, Utah State, the University of Florida, Texas A&M and Cornell.

Like all great researchers, McLellan understands the power of iteration. That's why he's drawing on his past successes — along with a healthy dose of support from Smatresk and UNT Provost Jennifer Cowley — to illuminate the path forward.

"Not every institution has that all-hands-on-deck approach to its future in terms of building out the role of discovery and innovation," says McLellan, whose own research centers on food science (read more about UNT's food research on page 42). "We're relatively young in this game, but our opportunity and potential are sky high."

In his first months on the job, McLellan began laying out a comprehensive vision, which aligns with UNT's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan that outlines the university's audacious goals for the future. For one, he has placed an even higher priority on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) initiatives and collaborations, with particular interdisciplinary research emphases in areas such as applied artificial intelligence, urban water and integrated intelligent mobility systems.

Many of the faculty involved also are part of UNT's Institutes of Research Excellence: the Advanced

Environmental Research Institute, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Processes Institute, BioDiscovery Institute and Jim McNatt Institute for Logistics Research.

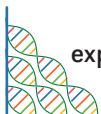
Another fundamental piece of the puzzle is to expand the university's efforts in supporting faculty to apply for more — and bigger — sponsored research grants, particularly by providing them with face-to-face experiences that will help them better pitch the potentially disruptive nature of their work for society, industry and their individual disciplines.

Trippeer, for example, is part of UNT's new D.C. Faculty Fellows program — led by Pamela Padilla, associate vice president of research and innovation — in which she and 18 other junior faculty from across all disciplines traveled to Washington, D.C., in February to meet with funding organizations. Weeks before the trip, she already had secured an appointment with the National Science Foundation's Smart and Connected Health initiative.

"For those of us who have been waiting for these kinds of opportunities, we're very excited that UNT is supporting and encouraging us to go after them," says Trippeer, who adds that her optical sensors collaboration could eventually expand to include user research groups based out of UNT at Frisco. "This is a serious acknowledgment of the potential these integrative relationships can have."

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO AI

A handful of Mark Albert's graduate students have set up laptops and digital screens in just about every corner of the biomedical AI lab in UNT's Discovery Park — a place where "the only chemical is coffee," but the number crunching that goes on is applied to conditions including cancer, Parkinson's disease, spasticity, leg amputations, aphasia and cerebral palsy. Albert, an assistant professor of biomedical engineering and computer science and engineering, is looking to provide the kind of career-shaping, discipline-disrupting experiences that can boost his students' potential — and better society in the process.



Go online to watch a video that explores the history of UNT's climb to Tier One. northtexas.unt.edu/dna

□□ It's sort of like the starfish story — if I've saved one drop, I've saved one drop. If we say the issue is too big to address, we've saved nothing.”

— Rudi Thompson, associate professor in the College of Science and co-director of Teach North Texas

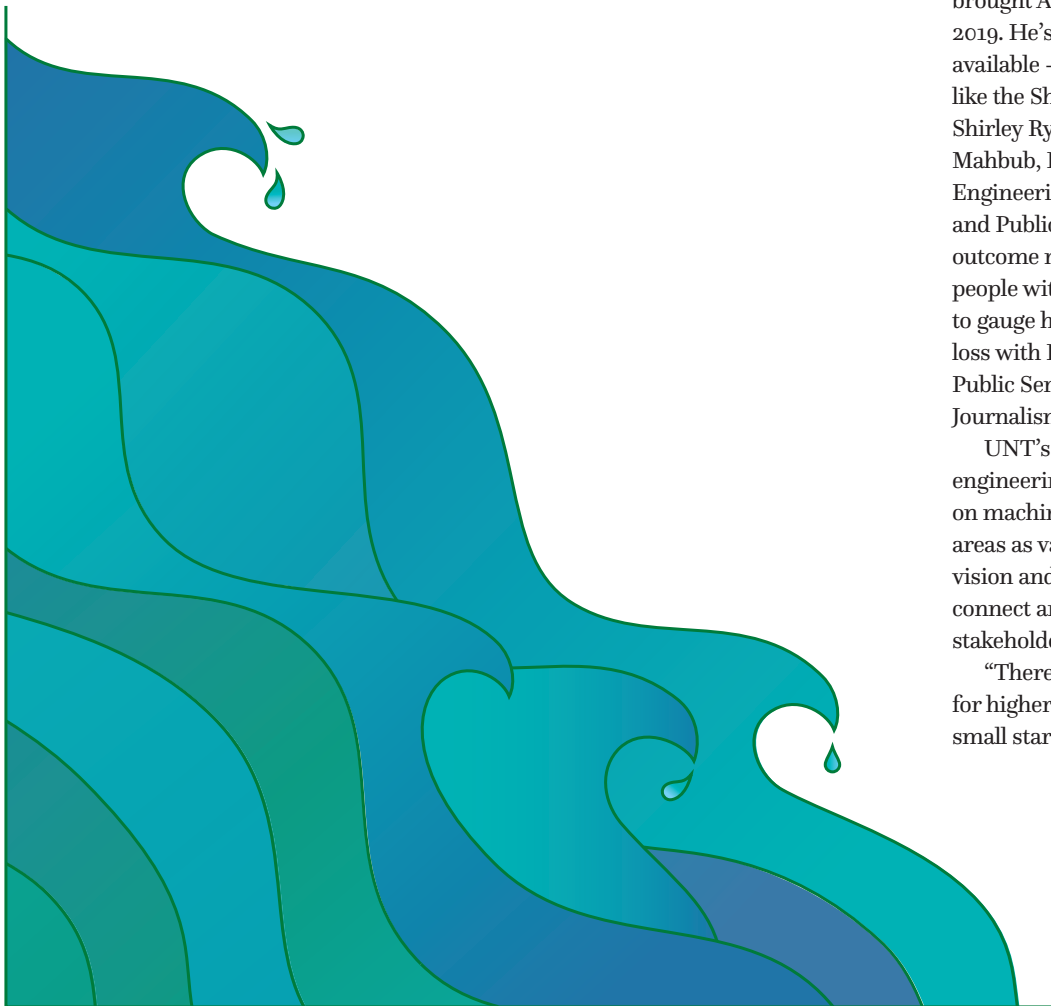
That's why he's set up open houses where other students can see what opportunities await in artificial intelligence — a field so transformative, the possibilities are practically endless. After all, his current grad students are taking part in collaborative projects ranging from real-time tumor tracking with radiation oncologists to improving assessments of microprocessor-controlled prosthetic legs with physical therapists. The scope of their research is outlined on the monitors they've set up, and they expertly explain the importance of their work to the students who travel from station to station, eager for a peek at how sifting through data can lead to real-world impacts.

“Students pursuing hot areas like natural language processing and deep learning — if they have the research papers to back up their knowledge — are asking for starting salaries of \$150,000,” says Albert, noting that UNT's new M.S. in AI degree program, set to launch this fall, will provide students with in-demand skills and ample research opportunities.

It's that kind of cross-disciplinary scholarship that brought Albert to UNT from Loyola University Chicago in 2019. He's already made hay of the synergetic opportunities available — in addition to ongoing work with organizations like the Shriner's Children's Hospital Network and Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, he's collaborating with Ifana Mahbub, Diana Berman and Ting Xiao from the College of Engineering and Gloria Olness from the College of Health and Public Service on a project to improve vocalization outcome measures to address clinical interventions for people with aphasia. He's also collaborating on a project to gauge how music instruction may impact hearing loss with Kamakshi Gopal in the College of Health and Public Service, Sara Champlin in the Mayborn School of Journalism, and Kris Chesky in the College of Music.

UNT's approach to AI — with faculty from business, engineering, information and other colleges collaborating on machine learning, deep learning and data science in areas as varied as natural language processing, computer vision and autonomous control — has the potential to connect and engage academic, corporate and government stakeholders across the state, Albert says.

“There's a lot of excitement here about the possibilities for higher-level engagement — not just individual labs or small startups, but rather more coordinated efforts,” he



says. “In a large number of these AI problems, the technical aspects are clear. The challenge is ensuring that they are fully supported by an AI-ready workforce and understand how to responsibly adopt and use AI.”

Any industry, from refineries and railroads to auto-makers and aerospace, could benefit from UNT’s AI research, says Arunachalam Narayanan, associate professor in the G. Brint Ryan College of Business’ Department of Information Technology and Decision Sciences.

“Companies have a lot of data, but they don’t know how to use it,” he says. “We want to be a one-stop shop for businesses looking to solve problems using AI.”

WATER CONSERVATION AND QUALITY

Back in 2006, when Rudi Thompson detailed her plans for the Dallas Environmental Education Initiative, nearly everyone scoffed at the idea that teaching kids to turn off the faucet while brushing their teeth could make any kind of dent in the water hemorrhaging most cities experience every day. They never imagined 10 gallons saved would eventually turn into 22 billion.

Despite the skeptics, Thompson, an associate professor in the College of Science and co-director of Teach North Texas, envisioned a future where biologists and educators united by a common purpose could make a difference in urban water quantity and quality.

“I wanted to help Texans be more conservative and aware in their use of natural resources,” she says.

One prong of the initiative involves providing Dallas-based elementary teachers with conservation lessons they relay to their students through hands-on activities such as building mini-aquifers in cups, creating water filtration devices and singing about the urban water cycle. The other is Thompson and her team’s deep dive into water usage data on thousands of single-family homes in the Dallas zip codes from which the students hail, allowing them to correlate the effects of education on changing behavior.

“There are two areas in which kids are prone to teach their parents — one is technology and the other is the environment,” Thompson says. “And we think that’s happening here, because the water conservation we’re seeing is larger than what any one person can do.”

In fact, Thompson’s research has made Dallas green

in more ways than one — the decreased water usage has saved the city nearly \$30 million over 10 years. Last year, Dallas awarded the program a \$2,252,475 grant renewal through 2024.



“It’s sort of like the starfish story — if I’ve saved one drop, I’ve saved one drop,” Thompson says. “If we say the issue is too big to address, we’ve saved nothing.”

And what better way to tackle a big issue than with big ideas? When it comes to urban water, UNT embarked on that journey nearly 85 years ago with its first funded water quality research undertaken by biologist J.K.G. Silvey, who studied the microorganisms responsible for changes in the taste and odor of city water supplies. Fast forward to the mid-1970s, when the Silvey-created Institute for Environmental Studies evolved into the Institute of Applied Sciences that now is part of the Advanced Environmental Research Institute. AERI also serves as the umbrella for the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA), a living lab for scientific research that features a diversity of waterways, including the Elm Fork of the Trinity River.

Today, researchers from across the university — including biology, philosophy, urban planning and geography, among others — are expanding their efforts in urban water, developing and identifying solutions for policymakers, municipalities and stakeholders throughout the state. Their work spans topics from toxicity to environmental impacts to access.

Irene Klaver, professor and chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, is an expert in environmental philosophy and, specifically, social justice issues connected to urban water centers. In the early 20th century, mostly poor communities lived near rivers, which were so polluted they were often literally fatal: In the 1920s, the Texas Department of Health called the Trinity the “Mythological River of Death.” But after the Clean Water Act, wealthier citizens took over the now scenic riverfront, forcing more impoverished residents out.

“For a fair distribution of water, even a view of the water, you need public policy and intervention,” says Klaver, who spoke as part of a social and environmental justice panel at

 Check out videos of UNT researchers explaining their work — and its potential benefits to society. northtexas.unt.edu/dna 

the Denton Black Film Festival focusing on environmental issues affecting communities of color. She also was invited to a think tank event at the Houston SWA Architecture group to re-center their urban planning around water.

With climate change and increasing urbanization, she says, it's more important than ever to think about the potential consequences of dwindling water supplies.

"North Texas is one of the fastest-developing regions in the world, and that comes with so many questions," Klaver says. "Drinking water, wastewater — these are fascinating and desperately urgent issues. By approaching them from multidisciplinary perspectives, we can make a significant difference in this region and many others as an example of how to deal innovatively with urban water issues."

INTELLIGENT MOBILITY SYSTEMS

Not long ago, Qing Yang, assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, received an email from a local company with ties to the autonomous vehicle industry.

"They were worried about whether Texas can produce enough well-trained engineers for this growing field," Yang says. "In the past, they've had to recruit people from either Pittsburgh or California."

As luck — and foresight — would have it, UNT is already revved up and ready to go. The university is encouraging integrated intelligent mobility systems research spanning disciplines including engineering, business, science, information, and health and public service. Researchers and students are working collaboratively on the complexities inherent in the field, including the technology itself, the data collection that helps drive its development, and the planning, policy and business practices necessary to support it.

Yang, whose expertise is in vehicular networking, has partnered with Song Fu, an associate professor of computer science whose expertise is in cloud and edge computing, for NSF-funded connected and autonomous vehicle research. The goal of their work is to link all autonomous cars via wireless communication techniques, creating a network through which the vehicles can get a better sense of their surroundings, communicating information about everything from traffic flow to malfunctioning stoplights.

"We know there's a huge market there, and in terms of the future of research, making the technology safer is the highest priority," says Yang, who pitched the research to the National Science Foundation and Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center as part of the D.C. Faculty Fellows trip. "We know autonomous vehicle technology is safer than human-driven vehicles, but people still have concerns."

Yang and Fu currently have eight Ph.D., three master's, two undergraduate and six TAMS students assisting them in their research. Three of their students have been placed in internships with companies like Fujitsu America and Nokia Bell Labs, and as part of their research funding, the duo hosted a 10-week summer camp in 2019, in which 10 undergraduates from populations underrepresented in the computer science industry learned about autonomous vehicles. Two more camps will be funded through 2021.

And there are plenty more opportunities for students to delve into the intelligent mobility realm, they say, from civil engineering to cybersecurity to public policy.

That's certainly true in the College of Health and Public Service, where professor Simon Andrew has taken a leading role in coordinating and representing the college's expertise in mobility systems. Andrew himself is experienced in intelligent mobility research, having collaborated with Kamesh Namuduri, a professor in the Department of



Electrical Engineering, on an NSF-funded grant that used networked drones to enable emergency communications during disaster recovery, a critical step in assisting first responders as they navigate crisis situations.

“Intelligent mobility systems aren’t just one system, but multiple systems in one environment,” says Andrew, who notes the concept is about using new ideas and technologies to look beyond traditional approaches to transport. “It’s not just about the smart transportation, it’s about the integrated structure of this mobility.”

That is especially relevant in the North Texas region, where the abundance of suburbs means there are many local governments whose attempts to navigate new technologies aren’t synchronized.

“It is critical that local governments are aware of different types of technologies and how they can be implemented in terms of policy development and adoption,” he says. “When we look at mobility systems, there is a tendency to be very siloed — we don’t look at in a holistic way. That’s why it’s wonderful we’re taking this interdisciplinary approach.”

EXCITEMENT FOR THE FUTURE

Though it has barely been 24 hours since Trippeer returned to UNT after spending two days in the nation’s capital as part of the D.C. Faculty Fellows program, she is anxious to delve into the ideas and opportunities presented. The experience was “exhausting, but rewarding,” she says. In addition to meeting with the NSF, she spoke with representatives from the National Institutes of Health and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The NSF was particularly taken by the telemedicine opportunities of an optical-sensors-lined bra, while the NIH’s excitement was piqued by Trippeer’s ability to create a comfortable, aesthetically pleasing device that would lend itself to regular patient use.

“They were calling me a ‘scientist,’ and I had never really put myself in that bucket before,” she says. “I feel much more enabled by this. They’re just looking for great research, so it’s just a matter of actuating these opportunities.”

See a roundup of stories about
UNT’s latest and greatest research
developments. northtexas.unt.edu/dna

LEAVING THEIR MARK

UNT researchers never stop striving to make the world a better place — and licensing agreements help their work make an even greater real-world impact. Learn more at northtexas.unt.edu/dna.



Guido Verbeck, chemistry professor

He has disclosed 14 inventions to UNT, five of which have been issued patents and three of which have been licensed to companies. One of the licenses is to Frisco-based InspectIR for a portable opioid breathalyzer technology.

Oliver Chyan, chemistry professor

In 2019, he received \$157,000 in his share of license royalties, the largest royalty distribution to date at UNT, for a method to detect flaws in microchips.



Sheldon Shi, mechanical and energy engineering professor

He developed a patented cost-effective method to rapidly clean up spills and contamination in water and on hard surfaces. The technology has been licensed to EnviroMAC Solutions.



UNT's sport entertainment management program is designed to cultivate **FUTURE HEAVY HITTERS** in the sport entertainment industry.



ACADEMIC HOME RUN

*Text by Leigh Anne Gullett
Photographs by Michael Clements*



Far left

Chad Wynn ('05) at Globe Life Field, the new home of the Texas Rangers, where he is director of business partnerships

Left

Bob Heere, director of UNT's growing sport management program, with junior Isabel Pate at UNT at Frisco

C

had Wynn's ('05) office is half packed in boxes. He digs a personalized Louisville Slugger out of his "keep" pile, slings it across one shoulder and strolls across the street to the nearly finished, billion-dollar Globe Life Field he soon will call home.

The Texas Rangers' director of business partnerships, he has been with the club for almost 15 years, and the bat was a gift commemorating his 10th season in a job he dreamt about his entire life.

"I'll do anything. I'll cut the grass. I'll cook the hot dogs, but I really want to be in sales," Wynn remembers telling Rangers executives in 2006. It wasn't his first meeting with his future employers — or his second, or even third. He remembers hearing "no" a lot. But Wynn had decided this was the career for him.

"So I came out one last time, and in essence said, 'I'm not leaving here until you hire me,'" Wynn says. "And they were like, 'That's a little weird. We have security for that, but we appreciate the passion.'"

A few months later, Wynn finally got the call. The Rangers hired him for inside sales.

A PATH TO THE TOP

UNT's sport entertainment management program exists for students who, like Wynn, are certain they are destined for

careers as leaders in sport franchises. The program, housed at UNT at Frisco, includes a sport entertainment management track as part of a B.B.A. in business integrated studies, as well as an M.B.A. in sport entertainment management.

Bob Heere was appointed the program's director in 2018, and already he's launched an annual Texas Sport Entertainment Industry (TSEI) conference, as well as a new 36-credit-hour professional online M.B.A. in partnership with the Dallas Cowboys, which begins this fall.

It will offer six specialization courses: sports in the global marketplace, corporate partnerships, analytics, event operations, talent management and consultancy.

Heere says he has all the pieces to build one of the best programs in the world, and his goals are very clear: He expects UNT to lead the way in undergraduate and graduate sport business education, and in industry engagement and research.

To meet that goal, Heere has spent significant time nurturing industry relationships, engaging with UNT alumni like Wynn, and putting together an advisory board of industry executives who span practically every possible area of sport.

Advisory board member Eric Sudol, vice president of corporate partnership sales and marketing for the Dallas Cowboys, is an integral part of the

university's relationship with the franchise. He delivered the keynote address at Heere's inaugural TSEI conference last spring and has been heavily involved in developing the online M.B.A. program.

"I'm energized about the opportunities Bob is creating for students," Sudol says. "The combination of the Cowboys' multifaceted business success and UNT's academic rigor is special."

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES

Like Sudol, Risa Hall ('04 M.J.) serves on Heere's advisory board and touts the importance of grasping opportunity. A senior executive with the Allstate Sugar Bowl, Hall wasn't focused on sports in college or early in her career. Her original track was public relations, and she came to UNT as a graduate student while working full-time in Dallas.

She crossed paths with the Dallas Mavericks during her time with Dallas CBS affiliate KTVT, and then with Deion Sanders when she worked as an executive for a local car company.

Hall grew up playing basketball and competing in track, but an athletic career never crossed her mind. She focused her job search on off-the-field public relations and community relations positions. Hall eventually landed a community relations role for the Houston Texans, which sent



Above
Risa Hall ('04 M.J.), a senior executive with the Allstate Sugar Bowl

Right
Mason Hendrix ('19), group sales executive, who landed a job at The Star in Frisco following a UNT internship there

her on a whole new path within the industry.

While in Houston, Hall became involved with the local organizing committee for the 2011 NCAA Men's Final Four. Because the staff was small enough, she dipped into the operations and logistics side of running major events. Nearly a decade later, Hall's world is a far cry from her early days in television.

"If I could give any advice to students," Hall says, "it would be to take advantage of as many internships as you can and connect with the people you meet, maximizing your relationships and networking as much as you can."

If there is a poster child for following the path Heere and his advisory board have presented, Mason Hendrix ('19) is it. Not only did Hendrix recently graduate from UNT with his B.B.A. in sport entertainment management, the Frisco native parlayed his final internship into a full-time job.

"I really got a lot from Dr. Heere," Hendrix says. "His connections in this area and really wanting to see us succeed, being able to connect well with all the major sports teams and having the business-specific classes — all of that was invaluable."

Hendrix always knew he wanted to work in sports, going back to his high school days when he got a job with the Frisco RoughRiders through Frisco ISD. He returned to the RoughRiders the summer of his junior year at UNT, then added an internship in ticket sales at the UNT athletics department.

His final internship before graduating was with Legends, a joint venture between Yankee Global Enterprises and the Dallas Cowboys. The food, beverage, merchandise retail and stadium operations corporation serves entertainment venues and companies.

Hendrix was an intern in its global partnerships department,

where he helped sales staff with prospecting potential clients.

When Hendrix graduated, the company had an opening for a group sales executive at The Star in Frisco, and he says it was a pretty easy transition from his six-month internship into the full-time position. He credits the relationship between UNT and the Cowboys with getting his foot in the door for that first interview.

It's the key Wynn didn't have in 2004 — one that makes the path from dream to reality a little bit clearer.

"If students really take advantage of somebody as passionate as Bob, and the university for bringing this program on, they're going to be exposed to executives across all professional and minor league sports and all the different venues across DFW and, potentially, throughout the state and the nation," Wynn says. "That exposure and the ability to sync up with these

people on LinkedIn and have an email or a phone conversation is going to give them nuggets they can use in an interview or first coming into the workforce.”

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Junior Isabel Pate earned her associate degree in business from Collin College and transferred to UNT last fall. Although it’s only her second semester in the sport entertainment management program, she’s already working on her resume.

Heere expects his students to earn at least five line items on their resumes outside the classroom by the time they graduate. The program requires one internship, but students are encouraged to do two.

“We tell them to volunteer,” says Heere, noting the abundance of volunteer opportunities in the DFW area. “We actually tell them to try to start working part-time in the sports industry because this is one of the few markets where you can do that. You can be an usher. You can be a ticket taker. We tell them to get engaged and become involved.”

Pate has been following Heere’s advice, working with the Dallas Sports Commission during the State Fair and again for the NHL’s Winter Classic, in addition to

a U.S. Paralympics swimming competition.

A North Texas native, she first read about the sport entertainment management program online and says she feels like the degree was “literally created for me.”

“There are so many sports in the Frisco area that it just seems like the ideal situation,” she says. “I think that’s what drew me the most.”

Pate’s assessment is spot-on according to Wynn, and pretty much everybody else involved with the programs Heere is building.

“When you can be thrust into real-life working scenarios in the sports world and have networking opportunities with folks who have been doing this their entire careers, that’s going to differentiate these students from the thousands upon thousands of resumes we get every year,” Wynn says. “That’s what I look for when hiring young people.”



When you can be thrust into real-life working scenarios in the sports world and have networking opportunities ... that’s going to differentiate these students from the thousands upon thousands of resumes we get every year.
— Chad Wynn (’05)



Learn more about UNT’s program, housed at UNT at Frisco, that includes a sport entertainment management track as part of a B.B.A. in business integrated studies, as well as an M.B.A. in sport entertainment management. frisco.unt.edu/programs/sport-management and online.unt.edu/mbasport

UNT is exploring the relationship between food and the human experience.

Feeding the Mind

TEXT BY JESSICA DELEÓN

ILLUSTRATION BY CIERA SCHIBI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANJANI GROTH

Joshua Lopez was in high school when, while driving to pick up materials for a school project, he told his mother he had a crush — on a guy.

His mother, Julie, stayed quiet as he came out to her as gay. When they arrived home, Lopez worked at the dining room table and could hear the banging of pots and pans and the flame of the stove from the kitchen. Then, Julie placed a cup of Mexican hot chocolate in front of him.

It wasn't until five years later that he realized the meaning of the beverage. Lopez's relationship with his mother had been awkward during that time but, as they stood at the grave of his grandmother, who died before he was born, he asked his mother to tell a story about her.

His mother said she never heard the words "I love you," but she felt them when Chavez made her Mexican hot chocolate.

"I connected with that drink and my family in a way I never had before," Lopez says.

Lopez believes these kinds of stories are an important part of history. As such, he's compiling oral histories from the Latinx and queer communities as a history doctoral student studying food history. And UNT's newly launched food studies program, encompassing many disciplines from history and biology to philosophy and hospitality and tourism, centers on how food affects the world — through economics, food insecurity and race relations, among other topics.

This research is just one of the ways food has become a focused topic at UNT. The College of Merchandising, Hospitality and Tourism has developed several initiatives that launch students into careers in the food industry. UNT's fresh baked goods in Clark Hall Bakery, allergen-free dishes in West Hall and vegan options in Mean Greens all help the university stand out nationally as offering the campus the best, most innovative food options.

UNT's Department of History has taken a leading role in expanding the university's food-based curriculum. In 2018, the department rolled out a Body, Place and Identity concentration available to its doctoral students, and last year it launched an interdisciplinary food studies certificate for undergraduates. In 2019, the department also began offering a \$5,000 graduate-level food history fellowship funded by the Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts.

"We use food to celebrate, to soothe ourselves, to build our identities and relationships, to create social boundaries," says history professor Jennifer Jensen Wallach. "We use it to survive."

As the first recipient of the Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Fellowship in Food History, Lopez wants to bridge queer and food studies.

In addition to his oral history project, he's read up on other stories, such as LGBTQIA

writers who came out as they were making food and a Chicana who, after she was diagnosed with cancer, changed her diet to reflect her indigenous ancestors.

"Food studies is very interdisciplinary," Lopez says. "It can be a great meeting ground for different types of people."

The Body, Place and Identity concentration, for example, reconfigures traditionally historical scholarship by examining the history of the body and bodily practices, such as cooking and eating, that are significant but overlooked expressions of culture and identity.

"Because our approach powerfully unites cultural and environmental scholarship bearing on many of the pressing issues of the 21st century, UNT's leadership in food studies signals our emergence as a visionary research university," says history professor Michael Wise, an environmental historian of food and agriculture in modern North America.

Wallach and Wise, who are spearheading the university's expansion of food studies, have organized several projects such as presenting "Moral Cultures of Food: Past and Present," a conference on campus in 2015 that focused on current and historical food practices, as well as adopting one of the 20 plots in UNT's Community Garden near Legends Hall to create a History Garden. That project provided students with experiences in food planting and harvesting.

Other UNT history professors are studying food, from Rachel Moran's research



*Food Studies is very interdisciplinary.
It can be a great meeting ground for
different types of people.* — Joshua Lopez

on the history of nutrition and federal policies to Sandra Mendiola Garcia's research on food vendors in Mexico. Clark Pomerleau has explored the quest for food self-sufficiency of the "back-to-the-land movement," while Marilyn Morris has studied the body size of 18th century British royals. Nancy Stockdale is editing a book about the foodways of the Middle East, and Kate Imy has studied about food and the British Empire. Wallach has written three books focused on food history, including *Getting What We Need Ourselves: How Food Has Shaped African American Life*.

Professors from other departments also are exploring the many effects of food. Chetan Tiwari, professor of geography, and Edward Rincón, a Dallas-based research psychologist who is taking a special problems class with Tiwari, explored how supermarkets that do not build in poor urban areas — often called "food deserts" — could be making bigger profits, while also improving the overall health of the community, by establishing locations in those areas.

And researchers in UNT's BioDiscovery Institute are making new discoveries in plant science that will lead to future breakthroughs in more sustainable crops such as wheat, corn and coffee to meet the market needs.



HISTORY DOCTORAL
STUDENT
JOSHUA LOPEZ



The challenge is ... to fashion food systems and cultures that are equitable, sustainable and resilient. — Michael Wise



**HISTORY
PROFESSORS
JENNIFER
WALLACH AND
MICHAEL WISE**

“We’re fortunate to live in a world where food has never been more plentiful,” Wise says. “But, our food systems face major threats from climate change as well as from social inequalities. The challenge is not simply to produce enough food, but to fashion food systems and cultures that are equitable, sustainable and resilient.”

When it comes to preparing food or running a business in the industry, the College of Merchandising, Hospitality and Tourism has long been a leader in educating students.

“The global food business is roughly valued at \$8 trillion,” says Jana Hawley, the college’s dean. “With our courses in nutrition, restaurant operations, food preparation, food safety and food retailing, UNT is a leader in preparing students in one of the world’s most important commodities.”

This fall, the college will offer a new class in food retailing with plans for a certificate in the field. This spring, the college launched The CoLab in Denton, which will host culinary events along with lectures, recitals and art exhibitions. And students learn how to cook in the Marriott Culinary Lab that models industrial kitchens.

The college also has paired up with Dining Services to work with the Menus of Change University Research Collaboration, a nationwide organization that promotes sustainability and social responsibility in the food service industries to bring healthy, sustainable foods to campuses around the country. Students also can immerse themselves



Learn about how Andrew DeCaen, associate professor of art, turns the rituals of eating into imaginative printmaking and see some of his thought-provoking work. northtexan.unt.edu/andrew-decaen

in the restaurant business by working at the Club at Gateway on campus.

Brent Reaves ('99), a hotel and restaurant management major, worked in the restaurant back in the 1990s when it was at College Inn and says it prepared him to help run his family business, Smokey John's Bar-B-Que, in Dallas.

"We all had a chance to manage the whole machine of a restaurant," he says. "It was exactly the same high-pressure, high-energy experience that exists in the real world."

Reaves puts in 80 hours a week at the restaurant, which he runs with his brother Juan. Founded by their parents, the late "Smokey" John and Gloria Reaves, Smokey John's has been through some tough times, including a fire that destroyed the building in 2017.

But the business, which reopened a year later, maintained its presence thanks to the family's dedication and creative ideas. They frequently win awards at the State Fair of Texas, including the 2019 "best taste — sweet" award for Big Red Chicken Bread, a doughnut infused with Big Red soda and paired with a fried chicken wing wearing sunglasses.

For Black History Month, the restaurant sold shoeboxes filled with barbecue, a side, fruit and pound cake, as a nod to when African American families ate their meals out of shoeboxes while traveling during the Jim Crow era because they were not allowed to eat in restaurants. Just like Joshua Lopez's hot chocolate connecting him to his family and his identity, the barbecue meals mean more than nourishment.

"Our hope is people hold onto the experience of eating our shoebox meal," Reaves says, "so that they never forget about that moment in history."

These experiences are what drives the university's creative efforts to help impact the world's collective future.

"We are a university on the forefront of thinking about food in eclectic and sophisticated ways," Wise says.



**BRENT
REAVES ('99)**

EN

EAGLES' NEST

Ready for a little razzle dazzle? Alumni who rolled the dice on the 2019 Wingspan Gala, themed “Viva North Texas,” sure were. The night featured Elvis, Cirque du Soleil and Rat Pack-inspired performances, magic acts and “Lucky’s Casino,” as well as the presentation of the Wings of Eagles Award to alumnus Jerome Max “Bruzzy” Westheimer Jr. ('65) for his transformative impact on UNT.



CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS

CLASS NOTES

KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS in the UNT family and tell your peers what you've been up to since leaving the nest. Send your news to the *North Texan* (see contact information on page 7).

1955 JACK HAYS, Austin. The former head football coach at Columbia High School saw the school's fieldhouse named in his honor by the Columbia-Brazoria ISD Board of Trustees last year. He led Columbia to five district championships and an appearance in the state finals. He attended North Texas on a football scholarship and played quarterback, becoming a three-year letterman. He also met his wife Ellen Mae Sikora ('55), to whom he has been married for 67 years.

1962 MARY LYNNE HAYNES JONES, Sherman, won the Sherman Ex-Students Association Distinguished Faculty Award. She taught business and economics for 26 years at Sherman High School and retired in 1997.

1966 JAMES H. GRAY ('67 M.A.), Dallas, retired from medical practice in 2018 after working for 40 years in private practice and at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, where he served as chief of the Department of Ophthalmology for 10 years. A 1971 graduate of the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, he served in the U.S. Army from 1971 to 1975. He then worked as chief of emergency room at Walter Reed Army Hospital from 1974 to 1975. At North Texas,

he was the editorial and sports cartoonist for the *Campus Chat* from 1963 to 1966.

1973 CHARLES CARONA (M.ED., '86 ED.D.), and SUZETTE ROBERTS CARONA ('71, '79 M.S.), Dallas, are marking longtime careers in education. Charles has served 52 years in education, including as professor and dean of the College of Education at Dallas Baptist University and as the principal of J.J. Pearce High School in Richardson ISD. He currently is an adjunct professor of math at El Centro College in Dallas. Suzette was an English, humanities and film studies teacher for 40 years.

1977 ROBIN SAENGER, Tarpon Springs, Fla., started an organization in her city that has made it the first trauma-informed community in the nation. As vice mayor of Tarpon Springs in 2010, she founded Peace4Tarpon, whose mission is to seek out the root causes of people's most challenging issues. The model has been followed by cities in Florida and Pennsylvania, and Robin speaks at conferences all over the nation.

1978 KATHY BYNUM HOPPE, Broken Arrow, Okla., co-wrote the book *Discovery Teaching Like Jesus: Engaging Adult Learners* with Jeff Hoppe. She is a licensed marital and family therapist. While at North Texas,



THE PICTURE OF HEALTH


After earning an associate degree in business from Tarrant County College, Patricia Ebaire ('98) knew she wanted to transfer to a university. A friend asked, "Why not study something you truly enjoy?"

Ebaire had been a lifelong fitness fanatic who loved biking, walking, dancing and yoga. When she found she couldn't shake her friend's question, she decided to enroll in UNT's kinesiology program.

"Everybody looked at me like I was just another student, even though I was old enough to be their parent," she says.

The gym enthusiast, now approaching her 70s, detailed her weight loss struggles and fitness routine in the fall 2019 issue of *Healthy Aging*.

"The only time I feel my age is when I'm brushing my teeth and look in the mirror and think, "Who is that old woman?" she says. "Other than that, I feel like a big ol' kid."

 Read a Q&A with Ebaire about her fitness journey. northtexan.unt.edu/picture-health.

ALUMNI PROFILE

BLAZING HIS OWN TRAIL



AS A FRESHMAN, Brett Luce ('18) attended a free climbing session at the Pohl Recreation Center. He then became addicted to the outdoors and sought to achieve one of hiking's greatest feats — completing the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine last year.

For four months, the geography alum conquered the trail's big boulders and steep inclines — as well as storms, a stomach virus and cranky knees. But those issues seemed small compared to his love for the hiking lifestyle — being free, forming relationships and waking up in different places.

"I really loved the adventure, but I also loved how being outdoors connected me to people," he says.

His love for adventure began at the free climb at Pohl, where the people were so "friendly and cool" that he returned again and again. He took part in the Outdoor Pursuits Center's other activities, such as day hiking trips, and even got a job there.

Then he picked up a book from the center's free library called *Becoming Odyssea* by Jennifer Pharr Davis, who tells her story of hiking the Appalachian Trail after college.

"Man, I have to do this," he recalls thinking after reading the book.

Luce planned the adventure for a year. He saved money by couch-surfing with friends and pinching pennies to help with the cost of the trip — \$1,000 a month to hike the trail, food and the occasional hotel. His parents didn't want him to start the trail by himself, so he and a friend began it together, starting in Springer Mountain, Georgia, in March. Luce was the 1,609th person to do so that year.

Every day, he made breakfast — usually cold oatmeal — and packed his backpack. He'd walk for 20 miles a day, meeting new people and, since he burned about 5,000 calories a day, he munched on high-calorie foods such as honey buns, Snickers bars, crackers, Nutella and granola bars. After setting up his base camp for the night, he

usually ate ramen noodles for supper. He went through a pair of shoes about every 500 to 700 miles — four in all.

"There's always a state of awe each day," he says. "You go into trail mode. You get your trail legs. You do just fall into the rhythm. You do what you have to do to get to your next campsite."

He'd get supplies by hitchhiking into the towns when the trail crossed roads — the locals recognized hikers and were always willing to help. Friends and family occasionally sent him supplies.

Was there ever a low moment?

"Oh yeah," Luce says. "There were quite a few days when I questioned whether I wanted to be out there."

He missed his friends. His stomach acted up. He thought his knees would explode. He got stuck on some ridges in lightning storms, praying the next bolt didn't hit him. He lost 20 pounds along the way and, when he reached the White Mountains of New Hampshire, he worried that a fierce windstorm would carry him away.

Luce's favorite moment was when he and his new friends stayed at a vacation home in Connecticut, where they threw a party to celebrate their progress.

"It was the memory of dancing and having fun with the friends who I was sharing the experience with," he says.

When Luce reached the end last August in Maine, he became the 187th person to complete the trail for the year.

"The experience was very surreal," he says. "It felt like it would never end. Then it was time to go home."

He currently works as ski instructor at a Washington state ski resort and plans to work as an apprentice guide for an Alaskan travel company.

"Teaching and guiding is super stimulating in a way that reminds me of the trail," he says. — Jessica DeLeón

she was a member of the Baptist Student Ministry. Her favorite campus memories are having breakfast at the student union and listening to the One O’Clock Lab Band.

BOB SINGLETON, Lavon, co-wrote the concert, “When Instruments Roamed the Earth!” Its world premiere was presented by the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in February 2018 at Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth. Bob, who was the music director for *Barney*, continues to compose, arrange and produce from his studio in rural Collin County.

SARA NURRE TARVIN (’79, ’83 M.ED.), Sherman, won the Sherman Ex-Students Association Distinguished Faculty Award. She taught for 36 years, with 24 in Sherman ISD. She retired in 2015.

1985 JOAN STADLER HYAMS SCHMITZ, West Chester, Ohio, released her memoir, *Carried by a Feather*, about her “teeny, tiny family” — father, mother and son — that was tragically splintered and how she rebuilt her life. In her book, she mentions her time at UNT and her membership in the Jewish Student Organization.

1986 LAURA COBB HAYES (M.ED.), Allen, is national executive director of Urban Specialists, a nonprofit organization focused on identifying concerns in the urban community and working to provide sustainable solutions. Laura worked for 20 years at EdisonLearning and was most recently its chief academic officer. She has 35 years of experience in education.

LISA HOUSTON, Spring, will serve a two-year term on the board of directors of the American Chemical Society beginning in 2020. She has worked 30 years in the chemical industry, beginning with a summer job that turned into a seven-year stint as a research chemist at ARCO Oil & Gas. She also was promoted to vice president of process analytics at PAC LP, a petroleum products company.

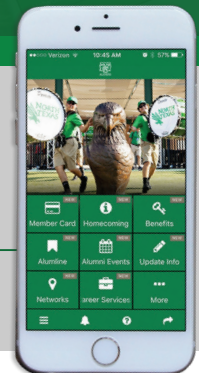
THEODORE TIMMS, Dallas, has written *The Black Girl in the Classroom*, a handbook that provides educators with a guide to build self-esteem and self-efficacy for African American female students, with lessons applicable to African American boys. Theodore is a retired principal who has worked for Dallas and Tyler ISDs.

1988 TAMI GRAFFEO NANTZ, Denton, founded *artofthepet.net*, which sells handmade pet products and supplies. In 2018, the company was recognized at the Mayor and City Council Annual Business Awards. Her favorite campus memory is playing in the inaugural women’s soccer program, in which players paid their own expenses to compete in club soccer around the state.

PATRICIA RACETTE, Santa Fe, N.M., was named artistic director of the young artist program by the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Patricia made her directorial debut with a production of *La Traviata* at the Opera Theatre in 2018 and will direct Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah* in 2020.

UNT Alumni Association

MOBILE APP



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ALUMNI PROFILE

Cut From a Different Cloth



AS THE OWNER OF Elizabeth Leese Bridal in Addison, it's Elizabeth Leese's ('17) job to keep trends top of mind — and set a few of her own. At her boutique, the fashion design alum creates custom pieces, as well as yearly collections, that complement each bride's unique vision.

"The one-on-one interactions are something you don't see in the rest of the industry — there might be 50 to 100 people between the designer and the client," she says. "Getting to hear what brides envision, and their reactions, is irreplaceable. It's so sweet."

In 2012, Leese enrolled in UNT's fashion design program. She was particularly inspired by associate professor and fashion design undergraduate program coordinator Anny Chang, who "pushed us to be better designers, work harder and really fine-tune our craft."

As a student, Leese interned in the bridal department of Nha Khanh, where she was


mentored by fellow fashion design alum Khanh Nguyen ('96).

"I was drawn to the idea that people still cared about their wedding gown, that women would keep it forever and maybe pass it down to their daughter or granddaughter," she says.

In September 2016, Leese officially entered the bridal design business, with the opening of Elizabeth Leese Bridal. Her designs take inspiration from architecture and nature to ensure each creation has a one-of-a-kind flourish.

In the years ahead, she has plenty of ideas for the future of Elizabeth Leese Bridal. First and foremost is ensuring custom remains the heart and soul of the brand.

"It's how we started," Leese says, "and that precious time with clients is something I don't want to give up." — Erin Cristales

 See a video about Leese's bridal business. northtexas.unt.edu/different-cloth

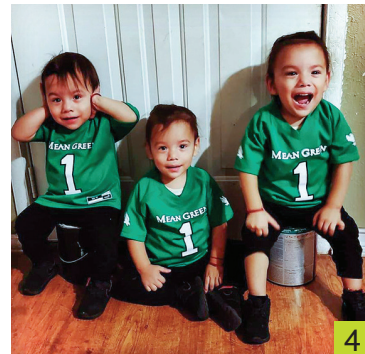
1999 KURT KLEIN, New Braunfels, has published his first book, *The SMITH Principles: Leadership from a Place of Truth*. He first worked as an exercise psychologist at the GM Truck Assembly Plant in Arlington and as a personal trainer for 24 Hour Fitness before going into management with Life Time Fitness. He currently runs his own wellness company and is an adjunct faculty member at Hallmark University in San Antonio.

2005 JOSH ROBERTS ('08 M.P.A.), Argyle, was promoted to assistant chief for the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) for Region 1. Josh has served more than 12 years in several positions in emergency management agencies in Texas and Florida. He periodically guest lectures in emergency management courses at UNT.

2006 TROY Y. BETHLEY (M.ED., '17 ED.D.), Lake Charles, La., wrote the children's book *My New Grandmother*, which chronicles young children who watch their older relatives cope with dementia. Troy is an elementary school principal whose own mother was diagnosed with dementia and wrote the book so youngsters can create "new memories" with their relatives.

LAURA WALDUP ENWERE (PH.D.), Dallas, was named to the *Forbes* Best-In-State Next-Generation Wealth Advisors list for 2019. She is a private wealth advisor and vice president for Ameriprise Financial Services in Dallas. At UNT, she was a member of NT40, Phi Sigma Pi and Panhellenic Council. Her favorite campus memory is competing in Greek Week with her sorority Alpha Delta Pi.

Mean Green Pride



1 SINCE CHARTERING ON CAMPUS in October 1969, nearly 700 African American women have been initiated into the Epsilon Mu chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and 260 returned Oct. 4-6 to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Read more: northtexan.unt.edu/aka

2 CURRY HOUSE APARTMENT residents from 1964 to 1970 reunited Oct. 24-25 in Denton. They had a going-away party in 1969 and returned 50 years later to see the old building. Read more: northtexan.unt.edu/curry-house

3 EIGHT NORTH TEXAS ALUMNI celebrated the 50th anniversary of their friendship on Labor Day last year in Richardson. The four men were roommates living in a duplex on Lovell Street while the women lived in various dorms on campus. From left to right: Bill Latham ('69), James Earp ('66), Jack Hale ('67) and M.J. Brown ('69). Their wives, from left to right: Shirley Grubbs Latham ('68, '71 M.M.Ed.), Mary Graham Earp ('67), Paula Propes Hale ('67) and Nancy McGee Brown ('70). Read more: northtexan.unt.edu/lovell-street

4 TWO-YEAR-OLD TRIPLETS Isaias, Isaac and Ivan Romero are the nephews of Francisco Valtierra ('13) and future student Samara Valtierra and the children of Israel Romero and Monica Rodriguez.

5 MICHAEL WOLVERTON ('94), a Boy Scout all his life, majored in business administration at UNT and now works as a senior development manager at Tyler Technologies. His oldest son, Chandler, made Eagle Scout in 2018. His other son, Tristan, became an Eagle Scout this fall. Both plan to attend UNT.

CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS

66 | WE'RE TRYING TO TEACH KIDS THAT FAILURE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS. IF YOU HAVEN'T FAILED AT LEAST ONCE, YOU HAVEN'T LEFT YOUR COMFORT ZONE. — *Sam Williamson ('12 M.A.)*

LEGACY FAMILY

LEGACY OF COMPASSION



FOR SAM WILLIAMSON ('12 M.A.), the joy of creativity is more about the process than the product. As associate director of UNT's High School Career Connect and co-founder of Kinful, a virtual reality curriculum for social-emotional learning, Williamson

is helping lead UNT's charge toward a more caring, creative and innovative future.

After studying art and education at the University of Texas, Williamson traveled to West Africa with the Peace Corps, where he helped build a mentoring program for local students.

"The Peace Corps was the first time I truly understood that I couldn't do everything myself," Williamson says. "If I didn't focus on replacing myself in all capacities, it probably wouldn't last after I left."

When he returned to the U.S. in 2009, Williamson settled in his hometown of Denton while contemplating his next move. His Denton roots go deep: His father, Tim Williamson ('85 M.S.), studied industrial technology, and his mother, Celia Williamson, worked for UNT for more than 24 years before retiring as vice provost for educational innovation. His grandfather Merril Delwin Williamson taught industrial design and his great-grandfather Elmer began studying at UNT in 1912, a century before Sam would cross the stage with one of UNT's first master's degrees in innovation studies.

"The professors took a different approach to research," he says. "They taught us how to search for voids, which is where innovation lives."

As part of his graduate research on creating more relevant and engaging curriculum, Williamson reached out to Dallas educational nonprofit Big Thought. The group connected him with local middle schools and, upon graduation, offered him a position as an instructional specialist.

Inspired by Big Thought's vision and the lessons he learned in grad school, Williamson began to focus on social and emotional intelligence.

"Studies show that kids today have fewer friends and feel more isolated," he says. "Bullying is still a serious issue, not just for the victims, but for the kids who are acting out as well. A lot of teachers don't feel like they have the resources to address it."

That's where Kinful comes in. Kinful is a turnkey learning system. Using virtual reality headsets and kid-friendly software, students can create their own immersive 360-degree videos to share with peers in their classroom and all over the world.

Kinful exercises combine a virtual reality experience — such as a kid being left out of a basketball game — with an in-person activity like a game of spoons. The teacher then uses these shared experiences to guide group discussions that emphasize empathy and self-reflection.

"We're using a coded conversation to help kids start unpacking their own emotions and impulses," he says. "We ask things like, 'Did the competition raise your stress level, or did it raise your fun level? Do you wish you could play spoons alone, or with more people at the table?' These choices tell us how a kid operates and approaches a problem."

In July 2016, Williamson returned to UNT as the community and service learning coordinator of High School Career Connect, a grant-funded peer mentoring program that partners with Denton County schools to provide college and career guidance to middle and high school students.

"We're trying to teach kids that failure is an integral part of the creative process," he says. "If you haven't failed at least once, you haven't left your comfort zone."

— *Amanda Fuller*

BRIAN KETCHAM, Fort Worth, was named Region 11 Secondary Teacher of the Year in August 2019. Brian taught eighth grade U.S. history for a decade before teaching technical theater at Keller High School. He is married to Trista Heinen Ketcham ('06) and is the brother of Kayla Ketcham Gilmore ('11).

2007 **PETER J. FOLLIARD**, Sioux Falls, S.D., has published the book *The Bach Initiative: Flexible Chorales for Ensemble Musicianship* (GIA Publications), a series of Bach chorales that he used to increase the unity of ensembles when he was director of Air Force Strings, part of the U.S. Air Force Band and Orchestra, and now as director of orchestras at Augustana University.

2008 **ELVIRA AGUILAR** ('13 M.J.), The Colony, is a career and technical education teacher at Leadership Prep School in Frisco, where she helped build the computer science program thanks to a partnership with Microsoft Philanthropies TEALS. Her colleagues include Amy Aviña ('08). At UNT, Elvira was a member of LULAC, New Product Development and Delta Sigma Pi. She is married to Sean King ('06).

2010 **BETHANY HARDWICK**, Denton, was one of 25 semi-finalists for the Grammy Music Educator Award, given by the Recording Academy and Grammy Museum. As orchestra director at Downing Middle School in Lewisville ISD, she developed the program "Downing Gives Bach," which allowed special education students to become part of the orchestra program by modifying their instruments and their music.

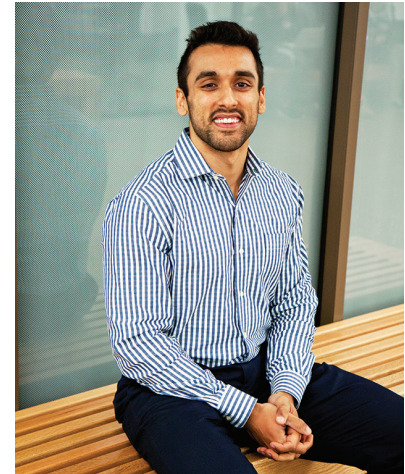
ASHLEY SEARS, Irving, has been promoted to account supervisor at Cooksey Communications, a strategic communications firm. She has worked at Cooksey for three years, joining as an account executive and then being promoted to senior account executive.

2013 **CORALEE TRIGGER**, Austin, a freelance social media producer, has launched her first product, *Doodle Different*, a sketch book that gives prompts for users to unleash their creativity and then share their results online. Coralee worked as an intern for Conan O'Brien's TBS show, as well as new media coordinator for *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

2014 **JONATHAN A. MOLINA-GARCIA**, Richmond, Va., is assistant professor in the photography and film department at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts. He is a photo-based media artist who focuses on the themes of national and sexual identity.

2016 **CHELSEA WAGENAAR**, (PH.D.), Valparaiso, Ind., won the 2018 Michael Waters Poetry Prize for her second book of poems, *The Spinning Place* (Southern Indiana Review Press). She is director of the writing center at Valparaiso University. She is married to Mark Wagenaar ('16 Ph.D.).

2019 **WILL ST. PETER** (M.M.), Denton, was a semi-finalist for the seventh annual international Wilson Center Guitar Center Festival last August in Brookfield, Wis. He developed his passion for jazz guitar at age 15 and has taught music at public schools in Maine.




SURPASSING EXPECTATIONS

Omeed Shams ('10) started at UNT to take over the family business, which specializes in providing health software for medical facilities, but he soon cultivated a passion for starting his own ventures. He generated and farmed resources in *World of Warcraft* to gain in-game currency and then sold it to other players for real-world money, helping to pay his rent.

"Getting a business degree at UNT helped light that initial fire," he says.

After graduating, he co-founded Kwest, a consumer tech company that creates augmented reality and consumer-faced gaming. While he does do part-time consulting work for his family, he's focused full time on new projects, including one that combines immersive technology and fitness.

"I'm kind of a serial entrepreneur," Shams says. — *Trista Moxley*

 Read more about Shams and his entrepreneurial projects. northtexan.unt.edu/surpassing

GIVING IMPACT

ALUM POURS WINE PROCEEDS INTO STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS, UNT ALUMNI INITIATIVES

In 2015, after more than 30 years of working in law enforcement, John Matthews ('83, '87 M.B.A.) decided to put a few grapes in the ground in Ovilla. When 500 vines showed up on his doorstep a few months later ready to be planted, his wife wasn't surprised. Matthews never does anything small.

Within four years, he would open Cassaro Winery and Vineyard and turn some of his 2,000 grapevines into North Texas Tempranillo, the official wine of the UNT Alumni Association. At first, though, planting a vineyard with the help of family and friends was just a way to grow a little joy.

"I've seen the dark side of humanity, but when you come to the winery, people are smiling," says Matthews, an expert on serial killers and mass shootings. "It's a wonderful feeling to see people happy. And when they're enjoying something you made, it's even better."

Matthews is passionate about blending Texas wines with the tradition of his Italian heritage. He's equally enthusiastic about supporting the school that led him to a career full of variety — and a life that energizes him.

"It may sound cliché, but I still use what I learned at the university every day," he says. "There are people throughout my life at North Texas that really made a difference."

During his time at UNT, Matthews was involved with leadership groups like the Student Government Association and NT40, and he worked side-by-side with top university leaders on campus advocacy efforts. He earned a bachelor's degree and an M.B.A. before becoming a Dallas police officer. After leaving the department, he continued to hone his public safety career, developing federal law enforcement initiatives, appearing as a regular CNN and Fox News analyst, and serving as a White House advisor. Now he owns and operates Cassaro.

"My time at North Texas helped me learn that if you can excel in one area, you can excel in multiple areas," he says. "I'm not in one plane or on one track, but I think things build on each other."

Matthews credits some of his academic and career success to the scholarships he received as a UNT student, and he is paying it forward with his North Texas Tempranillo. It was his idea to create an official wine for the UNT Alumni Association and donate a portion of all proceeds to student scholarships and other alumni initiatives.

Selecting Tempranillo for UNT was an easy choice —




the wine is made from 100% Texas High Plains grapes and pairs well with Texas favorites like barbecue and fajitas. For Matthews, the North Texas Tempranillo is a way to honor his alma mater and help others do the same.

"People want to keep a piece of UNT close to them," he says. "That's a neat thing to see."

He's happy to hear that alumni and friends are adding North Texas Tempranillo bottles to memorabilia collections and displaying them on mantles and shelves — as long as they enjoy the wine first and save the empty bottle. Primarily, though, he's pleased to be supporting UNT Alumni Association outreach and scholarships.

"There are huge donors out there doing amazing things," Matthews says. "If we can just contribute in a small way, it helps."

— Amanda Yanowski

 Cassaro Winery and Vineyard will ship anywhere in Texas. To purchase and support UNT Alumni Association scholarships, visit the winery or place an order at cassarowines.com/store.

“People want to keep a piece of UNT close to them. That’s a neat thing to see.”

— John Matthews ('83, '87 M.B.A.)

OLLI AT UNT PODCAST



Open the doors to lifelong learning with the *OLLI at UNT* podcast that features fascinating audio interviews with the program’s members, faculty and other recognized experts in a variety of fields. In each episode,

host Susan Supak (pictured) and a guest bring the *OLLI at UNT* classroom into your home or vehicle. With topics ranging from classical music, opera and birding to Frankenstein, cybersecurity and near-death experiences, the *OLLI at UNT* podcast speaks to all curious minds.

The podcast is free for anyone interested in lifelong learning. Subscribe in the podcast application on your smartphone or tablet, or visit oli.unt.edu/podcast for detailed instructions.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UNT offers non-credit courses, events and trips designed by and for adults 50 and better. Want to get involved with this dynamic community? Visit oli.unt.edu to become a member or volunteer to teach a course.



Digitizing the Texas Fashion Collection

The **UNT Diamond Eagles Society** — donors who work together to fund an annual, high-impact project on campus — voted this year to support Digitizing the Texas Fashion Collection. Thanks to the group’s collective investment, 7,500 more of the Texas Fashion Collection’s 20,000 historic and designer garments will be archived and shared.

With the Diamond Eagles backing the digitization project, the people behind the Texas Fashion Collection will snap publication-quality images of garments created by internationally known designers. This process will provide extended professional development opportunities to students and facilitate the preservation of artifacts, ensuring the collection’s longevity while increasing its accessibility and influence.

“The Diamond Eagles’ support of this project is critical,” says Annette Becker ('15 M.A.), director of the Texas Fashion Collection. “It not only provides the staffing and professional materials we need, but it also ensures that UNT students gain experience with this process to prepare them for future career opportunities.”

To learn more about the Diamond Eagles Society, or to join in time to participate in next year’s project selection, visit one.unt.edu/diamondeagles.

Far left
From left, UNT Alumni Association Executive Director Rob McInturf and John Matthews ('83, '87 M.B.A.)

Right
From left, President Neal and Debbie Smatresk, Texas Fashion Collection Director Annette Becker ('15 M.A.) and Vice President for University Advancement David Wolf ('04 Ph.D.)


A GROWING DEDICATION TO CAMPUS INCLUSIVITY



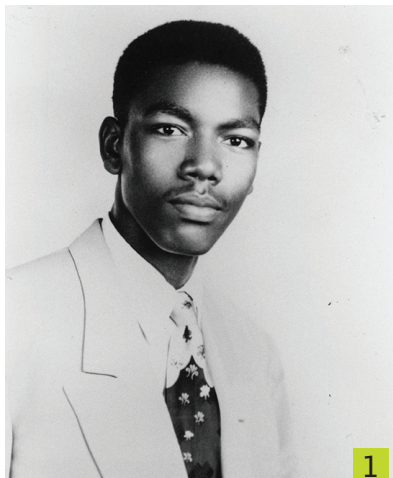
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS BEGAN ITS MARCH TO DIVERSITY on its opening day in 1890, welcoming women as well as men to what was then the Texas Normal College and Teacher Training Institute. That year, about 30 members of the Muscogee Creek tribe became the first non-white students to attend the school (read more at northtexan.unt.edu/online), and the earliest Hispanic students enrolled within a few decades. It was in the summer of 1954 that the first African American student, A. Tennyson Miller — a high school principal seeking enrollment in a doctoral program — was allowed to attend. “There are decisions to be made, and we cannot be without the courage to make them,” Miller wrote to President J.C. Matthews while awaiting word on his acceptance. A lawsuit brought by prospective student Joe Atkins (’66 M.Ed.) opened the school to African American undergraduates in time for the spring 1956 semester, when Irma E.L. Sephas became the first African American undergraduate to attend. In the first class of African American freshmen in the fall of 1956 were Abner Haynes and Leon King (’62, ’72 M.S.), who joined the freshman football team — a decade before many other Southern colleges integrated athletics. The prejudice the team encountered in its travels motivated the members to pull together and finish their season undefeated. Haynes became a professional football star, and King earned a doctorate and had a distinguished career in education. The diversity of the student body continued to increase in the 1970s and beyond as more international students enrolled and groups formed to focus on the issues of sexual identity, race and ethnicity. “UNT is focused on ensuring that its diverse community is welcoming and inclusive, thereby creating an environment where all can work and learn to their full potential,” says Joanne Woodard, vice president for institutional equity and diversity. “At UNT, every student and every story is important.”

“I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT I AM HAPPY TO BE A STUDENT ON THE CAMPUS OF DEAR OLD NORTH TEXAS THAT EXEMPLIFIES THE TRUE TEXAS SPIRIT, BECAUSE CERTAINLY EVERY HOUR THAT I HAVE BEEN HERE HAS BEEN A PLEASANT ONE. I’M ANTICIPATING MANY MORE PLEASANT HOURS HERE.”
 — **IRMA E.L. SEPHAS**, SPEAKING TO A REPORTER FROM WBAP-TV IN FORT WORTH IN 1956

“I REMEMBER FOUTS FIELD AS ONE OF THE FEW STADIUMS THAT WAS INTEGRATED. THERE WERE MANY GAMES WHERE I WAS ABLE TO LOOK UP IN THE STANDS AND SEE MY BROTHER, HIS WIFE, MY SISTER AND HER HUSBAND, AND I KNEW THAT WASN’T PERMITTED AT ALL STADIUMS.”
 — **ABNER HAYNES**, WHO PLAYED FOR THE MEAN GREEN FROM 1956 TO 1960

 Watch a video about the 25th anniversary of the UNT Multicultural Center. northtexan.unt.edu/campus-inclusivity.

Milestones



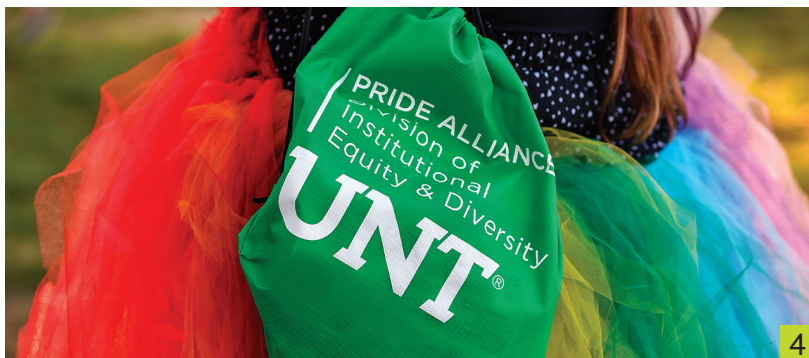
1



2



3



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1 65 YEARS

Prospective student Joe Atkins ('66 M.Ed.) won a lawsuit to open the college to African American undergraduates in 1955. Atkins enrolled at Texas Western College in El Paso while the lawsuit was pending and finished his bachelor's degree there, later enrolling at UNT as a graduate student.

2 25 YEARS

Passionate to effect change, Elliotte Dunlap ('97) and some of his Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity brothers — along with students such as Collette

Nero ('95), James Guillory ('13) and Raymond Mbala ('95) — pressed for the creation of a Multicultural Center in 1992. In 1995, the center opened on the fourth floor of what was then the University Union. More than 1,500 students walk through its doors on the third floor of the new University Union each month.

3 20 YEARS

The Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity's UNT Equity and Diversity Conference, which features keynote addresses and workshops from thought leaders who speak on topics related to social justice, identity,

equity and inclusion, celebrated its 20th anniversary this year on Feb. 20. The keynote speaker was Bakari Sellers (pictured), son of civil rights icon Cleveland Sellers and the youngest African American elected official in the nation.

4 5 YEARS

Following its opening on National Coming Out Day in 2013, UNT's Pride Alliance saw exponential growth. So in 2015, the alliance officially appointed a director, becoming a fully staffed operation with a student services coordinator, administrative coordinator and three student assistants.

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

UNT ALUMNI, FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS are the university's greatest legacy. When members of the Eagle family pass, they are remembered and their spirit lives on. Send information about deaths to the *North Texan* (see contact information on page 7).

1940s

CLARENCE JEFFERSON 'WOODY' WOOD ('49), Denton. He served as a U.S. Navy petty officer at Pearl Harbor during World War II. He then studied music instrument repair at the Conn Musical Instrument factory in Elkhart, Ind., before coming to North Texas, where he was the lead alto saxophonist and a founding member of the One O'Clock Lab Band. Woody repaired instruments for his own stores in Texas and Louisiana and after retirement. He also created a flute for one-handed players. He continued playing in jazz bands until a month before his passing. He is survived by his wife, **Mary** ('52), daughters **Christie Wood** ('78), and her husband, **George D'Ascenzo** ('78), and **Candis Wood Kimball** ('80), and her husband, **Robert Kimball**. Donations may be made to the Woody Wood Scholarship in the College of Music.

1950s

MILDRED COLLIER LANCASTER ('50), Troy. While a physical education major at North Texas, she played piano for dance classes and entertained troops during WWII. She was one of the first female coaches in central Texas and spent 32 years teaching and coaching in Troy, Rock Springs, Holland and Temple schools. She created the Temple High School girls athletic programs, fought for equality for girls sports and provided leadership with school integration during the 1960s. She was a member of the UNT Alumni Association.

JOHN RIVERS RODEN ('50), Bedford. In 1943, he joined the Navy and served in WWII. An industrial arts major, he worked as a pneumatic temperature control pipefitter and belonged to the Plumbers & Steamfitters Local Union No. 146. He was part of the Hurst Amateur Radio Club and was an avid fisherman. He and his wife traveled across the U.S. in their RV.

1960s

BRUCE BULLOCK ('62, '71 D.M.A.), Shreveport, La. He was a clarinetist who performed with symphony orchestras across the nation and as principal clarinetist of the Amarillo Symphony. He also served as a faculty member at Amarillo College, the University of South Florida, Northeast Louisiana University, University of Iowa and Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, where he worked for 22 years until he retired in 2005. He earned his master's degree at Yale University.

LARRY SMITH ('68, '70 PH.D.), Richardson. He was a chemist who worked for American Hoechst Co. and Sun Oil Co. He also served as director of research administration and technology management and taught at Southern Methodist University. After retiring in 2008, he ran Knotsmith, in which he made custom braided lanyards. While at North Texas, Larry was a member of Alpha Chi Sigma and served as president his senior year. He also met his wife **Lee Ellen** ('66) during chemistry lab their freshman year.

ORION DWAIN SMITH ('69), Duncanville. He served as an Army medic in the Vietnam War, assisting servicemen who had been affected with post-traumatic stress disorder. He worked as a veteran's representative for the Texas Workforce Commission for 35 years and served as a customer service representative for the Texas Rangers for 10 years. He is survived by his wife, **Marilyn Moffett** ('68).

1970s

CHARLIE COLE ('78), Bali. He won the World Press Photo in 1990 for the iconic picture he took of a Chinese man protesting in front of tanks during the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. He took the picture from the upper balcony of the Beijing Hotel after he and another photographer had a run-in with Chinese police earlier that day. He hid the film in plastic in the hotel room toilet tank so the police wouldn't confiscate it — which had happened with other film he had taken. Cole had worked as a freelance photographer since 1980 when he moved to Japan.

2010s

CRAIG ANDREW STOVALL, Denton. He was a junior business major and worked at Denton PepBoys. He was known for his kindness to people and animals, and his organs helped save three lives.

University Community

HORACE BROCK, 92, Professor Emeritus of accounting, died Oct. 26 in Denton. A premier expert in oil and gas accounting, he taught at UNT from 1954 to 1991, serving as chair of the accounting department and acting dean of the College of Business during that time. He founded the university's Institute for Petroleum Accounting and helped establish the Chief Executives Roundtable (CERT). Brock and his wife, the late **Euline Brock** ('74 Ph.D.), who taught at North Texas and served as the mayor of Denton, were life members of the UNT Alumni Association and members of the McConnell Society. The Brocks contributed to numerous programs and endowed several scholarships. The Euline and Horace Brock Grand Lobby in the Murchison Performing Arts Center is named in their honor for their contributions. Horace received the Honorary Alumni Award in 1993, the UNT President's Award for outstanding service in 1984 and the UNT Alumni Association Distinguished Teaching Award in 1975. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Sam Houston State University and his doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin. He also served in the U.S. Air Force.

JERRY DAKE, 80, of Denton, a longtime employee in the G. Brint Ryan College of Business, died Aug. 28 in Denton. Since 2001, he served in numerous positions, including executive lecturer and managing director of the Center for Quality and Productivity, director and executive director of the Center for Decision and Information Technologies, and senior lecturer for UNT's Department of Information Technology and Decision Sciences. He previously served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and as an assistant professor for the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School from 1965 to 1967. He taught at Georgia Institute of Technology and worked at Coca-Cola and ERLY Juice Inc.

HAYDEN FRY, 90, the head coach and athletic director who led the Mean Green football team to winning records in the 1970s, orchestrated a storied victory over Tennessee and created the unforgettable Flying Worm logo, died Dec. 17. After graduating from Baylor University, he served in the U.S. Marines, then began his coaching career at Odessa High School before moving to Baylor, University of Arkansas and Southern Methodist University. In 1973, he came to North Texas and led the Mean Green to one of its most successful stretches — becoming one of only four coaches to achieve above a .600 winning percentage and winning a Missouri Valley Conference championship. He also served as athletic director until he went to the University of Iowa in 1978. During his tenure there, the Hawkeyes won 14 bowl games and three Big Ten championships and made three Rose Bowl appearances. He was inducted into the UNT Athletic Hall of Fame in 1997 and the College Football Hall of Fame in 2003. He also served as the inspiration for the lead character in the 1980s TV show *Coach*.

RICHARD HARRIS JR. ('62), 79, former associate vice president for computing and chief technology officer, of Denton, died Aug. 4 in Sparta, Ill. During his 43 years at UNT, he was instrumental in creating and leading computing and technology services. He was one of the first computer operators and programmers for North Texas when he started working as a graduate assistant in 1962. The next year, he was appointed acting director of the Academic Computer Center and taught programming courses. In 1964, he became director of computer systems and led the Academic Computer Center and the Administrative Data Processing Center, which merged in 1970 as the university's Computing Center. He retired as associate vice president for computing and chief technology officer in 2005. He and his wife, **Joneel** ('75 M.S., '99 Ph.D.), who served as registrar and

associate vice president for enrollment management until her retirement in 2006, were members of the President's Council and the UNT Alumni Association. They also funded the Richard and Joneel Harris Scholarship in Higher Education in the College of Education for graduate students with a minor in research or technology.

ELIDA TAMEZ ('81), 59, a former development officer in the College of Music, died June 9 in Denton. She is remembered for her courage during her 20-year battle with cancer, even being arrested for protesting against fracking in the city of Denton while in the midst of chemotherapy. After working at North Texas' bookstore, she ran her own regional sales book firm, McLemore and Tamez. She worked at UNT from 2000 to 2013. She and her husband, Theron Palmer, were strong supporters of UNT — from making donations to hosting music students and visiting faculty in their home. Memorials can be made to the Elida Tamez Endowment for Choral Conducting.

NANCY ALICE-FITZGERALD VIENS, 86, who served as secretarial assistant at Willis Library, died May 17 in Denton. She attended the University of Vermont before moving to Denton, where she rode her bike to work every day and earned the title of the hip bicycle lady of Denton. She was a published poet, and her poems are included in several major poetry anthologies. She loved mystery novels, tea and cats.

MEMORIALS

Send memorials to honor UNT alumni and friends, made payable to the UNT Foundation, to University of North Texas, Division of University Advancement, 1155 Union Circle #311250, Denton, Texas 76203-5017. Indicate on your check the fund or area you wish to support. Or make secure gifts online at one.unt.edu/giving. For more information, email giving@unt.edu or call 940-565-2900.

PERSPECTIVE

I JUST COMPLETED A PROJECT, *CHANNELING*, where I collaborated with computer scientists from Carnegie Mellon. We took everything the CIA rescued during the Osama bin Laden raid — computer hard drives, phones, CDs, DVDs, memory cards — and fed them to a Generative Adversarial Network. The GAN made new images from them, but because the pieces are all so different, it never fully resolves. It's a video that morphs between something that looks like a face, a landscape, a weapon, and there's text coming through.

— Christopher Meerdo, professor of photography and new media



Channeling, which was recently exhibited in Berlin, is pictured above. Learn more about Meerdo's interdisciplinary work, his approach to teaching, and how his family inspired his fascination with photography and new media. northtexas.unt.edu/channeling

LASER-FOCUSED

Nicole Ochotnicki
Catcher | Kinesiology Senior
2019 C-USA All-Academic Team

Nothing gets past Nicole. She's plugged into every move. Her studies in kinesiology help her to understand human movement, which gives her an advantage on the field, bringing Conference USA Champion Mean Green Softball to one of the best team records in UNT history.

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