

THE HILLTOP

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Volume XXI : Issue I

SPRING 2021

BECOMING HEALTH CARE HEROES

HEALTH SCIENCE
STUDENTS ENTER FIELD
DESPITE PANDEMIC

Briana Beamer



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Neither a global pandemic nor an arctic cold blast can chill the blazing progress of Weatherford College. Our students continue to demonstrate the work ethic necessary to overcome adversity and accomplish their life objectives. Our faculty and staff continue to adapt to new teaching and learning conditions in an effort to both challenge and intellectually transform WC students. Equally as important, our generous donors continue to provide the financial resources necessary to turn dreams into reality.

Despite the health risks associated with the global pandemic, WC students continue to excel in a variety of medical-related fields. Our medical licensure examination scores are among the highest in the nation. These exceptional pass rates are accomplished all while charging a fraction of the tuition incurred at competing institutions. The resulting low college debt levels position our graduates to both advance their professional careers and to improve the human condition.

Also highlighted in this edition of The Hilltop, you will enjoy details on the Weatherford College strategic plan, the growth of our agricultural programs, and the activity of our generous donors. Because of you, exceptional things continue to happen at our beloved Weatherford College. Thank you for your continued support of our noble institution. As incredibly fantastic as things have been, our best days lie just ahead!



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COVER STORY

BECOMING HEALTH CARE HEROES

HEALTH SCIENCE STUDENTS ENTER FIELD DESPITE PANDEMIC



David Coone



Emily Boetz

by Brent Baker

Not just anyone can be a health care provider.

Much like the firefighter who runs toward danger when most others are running away, those called to the health science careers offered at Weatherford College haven't let COVID-19 keep them from their destiny.

Briana Beamer is currently studying in WC's Respiratory Care program and supports herself working as a cardiac monitor in a Metroplex hospital. When asked whether the virus gave her second thoughts about entering her chosen field, she answered emphatically.

"No, COVID actually propelled me to finish my degree as a respiratory therapist," she said. "I saw the pandemic unfold and remember the first positive case that came to our hospital. I saw all of the frontline medical workers band together to provide the best care and solutions for each patient. It made me want to become a part of that team even more."

The Weatherford native is in her second semester. She is scheduled to complete her degree in May of 2022, and she says she can't wait to get started as a respiratory therapist.

"IF I AM BEING HONEST, THE THOUGHT OF JOINING THE NURSING PROFESSION DURING A PANDEMIC SCARED ME. BUT I NEVER SECOND-GUESSED MY CHOICE BECAUSE I KNEW IN MY HEART I COULDN'T IMAGINE DOING ANYTHING ELSE."

- EMILY BOETZ

"My favorite thing about this field is the ability to breathe life into people," Beamer said. "The primary thing we accomplish with each patient is managing their ability to breathe and to breathe better. I am so honored to be on a career path to help people."

Obviously, the last 12 months have not been easy for Beamer or any WC student entering the health care field. Hands-on training sessions in area hospitals/clinics, known as "clinicals," are required by the state and are critical in preparing these future professionals. When all classes nationwide went virtual in the spring of 2020,

many of these students had to adjust to virtual lecture sections overnight and also cope with the reality of working on the front lines amongst COVID-positive patients.

Emily Boetz is a registered nurse at Palo Pinto General Hospital in Mineral Wells and a recent WC nursing graduate.

"If I am being honest, the thought of joining the nursing profession during a pandemic scared me," she said. "But I never *continues with HEALTH CARE HEROES on page 11.*"

MEMORIES



The 1917-18 WC baseball team. Courtesy of Kent Hudson.

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Rosalene Plumlee Bassett, 92, of Plainview, passed away March 1.

Richard Morris Biggs, 76, of Weatherford, passed away February 14. Class of 1963.

Martha Ann Buckner, 67, of Arlington, passed away December 3.

Pat Cook, 82, of Weatherford, passed away January 26. 36 year math instructor, retired in 2006.

Sheriff Larry Fowler, 82, of Weatherford, passed away February 27.

Larry Carlos Hammonds, 74, of Fort Worth, passed away November 17. Class of 1975.

Nelda Jean Glover, 84, of Nocona, passed away November 28.

Mikaela Miller Grauman, 25, of Weatherford, passed away February 9.

Rev. Kenton Harvey, 83, of Azle, passed away December 14. Class of '58. Distinguished Alumnus 2014.

Mary Holcomb Holloway, 92, of Weatherford, passed away December 13. Class of 1948.

Rex Hughes, 71, of Weatherford, passed away December 2. Class of 1969.

Marion R. Jean, 90, of Fort Worth, passed away October 13.

William "Fred" Frederick Liles, 91, of Weatherford, passed away December 21.

James Hollis Maddux, 81, of Weatherford, passed away November 25.

Jimmy Columbus McKenzie, 81, of Hurst, passed away February 7.

Edith Marie Thomas Mince, 94, of Weatherford, passed away March 18. She served WC alongside her husband, President E.W. Mince.

William Claude Scoggin, Jr., 68, of Fort Worth, passed away December 24.

JW "Dub" Stewart, 92, of North Richland Hills, passed away February 1. Class of 1951.

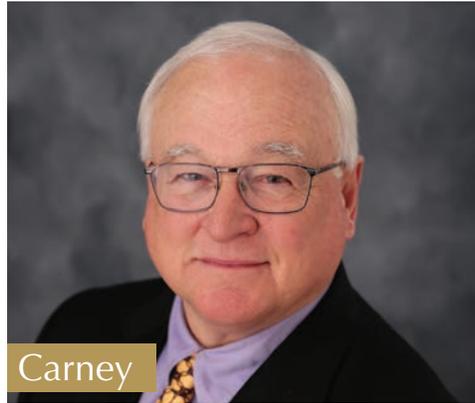
Joyce Sturdivant, 86, of Mineral Wells, passed away December 10.

Pamela Ann Brown Tarpley, 76, of Weatherford, passed away January 17.

Samantha Erb White, 31, of Breckenridge, passed away January 1.

Johnnie Merck Wright, 86, of Weatherford, passed away November 5.

WC ANNOUNCES 2021 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS



Weatherford College has announced Sharon Hayes, former city manager of Weatherford, as the 2021 Alumna of the Year. She will be honored during the annual Alumni Awards Luncheon on April 16, along with Distinguished Alumni Award honorees Dan Carney and Jessica Cundiff.

Hayes worked for Tandy Corporation for ten years following her graduation from Springtown High School. During that time, she attended WC, mainly taking night classes as a working mother from the late 1970s until the mid-1980s.

Dr. Nelson Rand, her biology instructor at WC, inspired her to continue studying science and pursue a career managing water for municipalities.

She went on to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree from Tarleton State University and a Master of Science in environmental science from TCU as well as a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Texas.

In the year following her graduation from WC, James Dickason hired Hayes to work for the City of Weatherford. And in 2019, she retired after a 34-year career which saw her rise through the ranks, ultimately serving as city manager.

Hayes was named one of the “Great Women of Texas” by the Fort Worth Business Press in 2019 and received the Athena Award from the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce in the same year.

She and her husband, Wayne, have two children and seven grandchildren.

Carney, a 1973 graduate, is one of many in his family to call WC their alma mater. His mother attended as did his two brothers and, most recently, his granddaughter.

After attending WC, Dan received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of North Texas followed by his Doctor of Jurisprudence from Texas Tech University School of Law.

His law career spans more than 40 years including a partnership in the Vick Carney law firm. He is past president of the Parker County Bar Association and a fellow with the Texas Bar Association.

He is also a member of The National Trial Lawyers Top 100, and for 25 years he has maintained an AV Preeminent Rating by Martindale-Hubbell, the highest rating achievable under the national peer reporting system for attorney performance. Less than 1 percent of lawyers maintain this rating for 25 continuous years or more.

In 2020, Carney was sworn in as a member of the WC Board of Trustees.

Cundiff is a 1998 graduate of WC who found her way from her hometown of Hermann, Missouri, to Texas to play basketball thanks to her aunt, Betty Jo Graber.

While at WC, her grades earned her a spot in the Phi Theta Kappa national honor society and into Who’s Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges.

She continued her education at Missouri State University studying geology. While working on a Master of Science degree in Geology at Kansas University she met a Harvard professor who informed her of an open position at the Ivy League institution.

Cundiff completed her master’s degree in 2000 and moved to Massachusetts the following year where she also completed a Master of Liberal Arts in Museum Studies at Harvard.

She is now a curatorial associate at the Department of Invertebrate Paleontology at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard.

The three awardees were honored at the Alumni Awards Luncheon on April 16. See WC’s YouTube channel for recordings of the award presentations.



BOARD APPROVES FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Approved by the Board of Trustees earlier this year, the new Weatherford College Facilities Master Plan envisions a campus with increased green space, streamlined access to student services and parking garages to accommodate student growth.

The Workforce and Emerging Technologies Building, the first piece of the 2021-26 plan, is already under construction with an anticipated completion date of Fall 2022.

The conceptual plan includes a new student union building and large green spaces to be used as student activity zones in what is now the main parking lot.

“As we come into campus now, the concern was ‘What catches our eye? What do we want to see when we first drive

into campus,’” Mike King, a planner with Huckabee Architects, pondered. “Right now, you see a large parking lot, and that’s our impression of Weatherford College. First impressions are very important. So we felt like what needed to happen is a new student union building could possibly be located in this place.”

From there, a pathway would connect the new roundabout on College Park Drive to the historic arch at the top of the hill. The green space could be a place for student activities and group meetings.

To replace lost parking, a garage could be constructed on top of existing parking.

Other possible structures in the five-year facilities plan include additional student housing and a new tennis center.

Looking further into the future, the plan calls for a possible addition to the Don Allen Health Science Building, creating additional pedestrian pathways, a new business building and a new gymnasium/coliseum.

The facility’s strategic plan presented by Huckabee and approved by the board does not bind the college to build any of the structures outlined in the plan.

“Strategic planning is generally a view from 30,000 feet,” said Dan Curlee, WC general counsel. “As we consider things from that view we know the devil’s in the details. We also know that if we’re planning something that’s supposed to give us guidance for five years, it has to be revisited on a regular basis.”



DO YOU RECEIVE THE MONTHLY COYOTE CONNECTION EMAIL BLASTS?

IF NOT, WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!
GO TO WC.EDU/ALUMNI AND CLICK ON “ALUMNI CONTACT FORM.”

THANK YOU!

EQUINE STUDENTS GAIN HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

When it comes to learning about horses, hands-on experience can't be replaced.

To that end and to best prepare Weatherford College equine students, horse stalls were added to the WC Agriculture Science Center and a partnership with Bonds Ranch was developed.

Two years later, WC is producing graduates who are sharp academically and skilled in horse handling skills such as leading, grooming and general health care.

"The students as well as the foals are interacting and progressing extremely well," said Vance Christie, agricultural program director. "It is an exciting dynamic as an instructor to evaluate who is learning more, our students or the horses as each is an integral part of teaching the other.

"By the end of the fall semester all of the students and foals had achieved proficiency in halter-breaking, backing, lunging, round-pen/groundwork, picking up feet, basic grooming, loading in a trailer and leading over and through obstacles."

Christie, a graduate of the Equine Program at Tarleton State University, had been exposed to foals from the famous 6666 and Wagoner ranches during his behavior and training class as an undergraduate and knew from that experience that a similar educational model would be successful if facilities could be modified to accommodate the foals.

So in the summer of 2019, an existing shed along with new construction at the WC Agricultural Science Center on South FM 51 was set up to stall horses. And a chance meeting between adjunct faculty member Melinda Mayes and Pete Bonds of Bonds Ranches in Saginaw led to those stalls being filled with foals.

In the Fall 2019, semester the first round of foals arrived at WC just a few days after being weaned from the mares.

"Other than receiving vaccinations and medications, they have not been handled before the students start with them," Christie said. "The first task is bonding with

and desensitizing the foals so that they can be haltered."

Once haltered, the foals are taught to respect the halter, flex, yield their fore and hindquarters and eventually lead. Once the foals are leading with some confidence, students teach them to lounge, back, navigate obstacles and load in a trailer.

Their final evaluation is based on how well the student and their assigned foal can accomplish these tasks along with grooming, cleaning of feet and other critical skills that both the students and foal will need to be successful in the industry.

"If we need to place students in the workforce that have practical horse handling experience, I do not know a more practical way to do it than expose them to a foal that has never been touched except for maybe experiencing a couple of shots and some not so tasty paste in their mouth, and in approximately 30 hands-on sessions have them ready to be introduced to the saddle when age appropriate," Christie said.



WEATHERFORD COLLEGE AROUND CAMPUS



1a.



1b.



2.



3a.



3b.

1. Weatherford College celebrated its valued faculty and staff at the annual Employee Awards Dinner in December. Dr. Diane Ainsworth won the 2020 Faculty Member of the Year Award. The respected professor has taught English at WC for 15 years. Adam Finley won the 2020 Staff Member of the Year Award. Finley is the executive dean of student services and is in his 17th year at the institution. Ainsworth and Finley each won \$2,000 from the privately-funded Gayle and Wanda Grant Award of Excellence Program in the WC Foundation.

2. WC President Tod Allen Farmer hosted a lunch for students in WC's pilot honors program in March, in the Alkek Fine Arts Center.

3. The Parker County Hospital District hosted a COVID-19 vaccination clinic on campus for WC employees in March and April.

4. Weatherford College recognized 35 of the finest teachers from across the region at the annual Jack Harvey Academy of Exemplary Teachers celebration in February, at the Doss Heritage and Culture Center.

5. Students from area high schools converged on the Weatherford College campus Friday, Feb. 5, for the 19th annual Coyote Area Math Championship to compete in pre-calculus and calculus competitions via written tests. Pictured is the first-place calculus team from Trinity Christian Academy.



6. Coyote golf signed its first players for the new team in January. Logan Moore and Sam Benson are both from New Diana High School in east Texas.

7. Imperial Construction began work on the new Workforce and Emerging Technologies Building this past fall and has made great progress in constructing the three-story building that will house WC workforce programs and Texas Workforce Solutions.

8. Ralph Willingham, WC Veterans Coordinator, recently received the annual President's Excellence Award for 2021 from the Texas Association of Collegiate Veteran Program Officials organization. This award is for excellence of service in the state of Texas for Veteran and Military Students. Ralph has served two terms as president of TACVPO.



Shantee Siebuhr



Phi Chapter



President Farmer

WC HONOR SOCIETY CHAPTER ADDS TO LENGTHY LIST OF AWARDS

Phi Theta Kappa International, the honor society for two-year colleges, has recognized Dr. Tod Allen Farmer, Weatherford College president, with the 2021 Paragon President Award.

This award is presented to new college presidents who have shown strong support of student success by recognizing academic achievement, leadership and service among high-achieving students at their college. PTK students nominate recipients.

Farmer, an alumnus of WC and its Phi Chapter, said membership in the honor society forever changed his thinking.

“Despite working long hours in multiple jobs as a student, I challenged myself to make the high grades necessary to gain admittance to PTK,” he said. “When I successfully accomplished that lofty goal, I realized for the first time that I was capable of accomplishing difficult goals. Phi Theta Kappa was an important part of my college experience, and I am honored and humbled to be a recipient of this award.”

Phi Chapter has amassed a multitude of awards over the years. They recently added a REACH Reward designed for chapters focused on “Recognizing Excellence in Acceptance and Completion with Honors”

and are awarded to chapters that achieve or exceed 15 percent for their membership acceptance rate.

WC’s Phi Chapter inducted 225 new members in 2020, up from the 2019 induction of 185 students. Another 376 invitations have been sent to students

“IT IS AN INCREDIBLE FEELING TO WORK WITH AMAZING STUDENTS.”

- SHANTEE SIEBUHR

most recently qualifying following the Fall 2020 semester.

To qualify for membership, students must have completed at least 12 hours of coursework toward an associate or bachelor’s degree or at least six hours towards a certificate in one year and have a cumulative 3.5 grade point average or higher. More than 112,500 students across the world became PTK members in 2020.

The 2021 REACH Chapters will be rewarded with free graduation stoles for their members.

Other awards received by the chapter at the recent state convention include:

- The College Project Merit Award for instructional videos created for students to learn the new Coyote Connect system.

- Michael Samuels was added to the Texas Member Hall of Honor, an award bestowed on those who go above and beyond other Phi Theta Kappa students.

- The chapter’s Honors in Action Topic 3 for “Sustainable Living — How to Get Started” was awarded Best Honors in Action submission out of all 92 Texas chapters for this topic.

- Shantee Siebuhr, Phi Chapter’s advisor, was presented with an Advisor Horizon Award, a recognition for advisors who guide their chapters to new levels.

- And once again, Phi Chapter was named a Texas Top Chapter, ranking 13th out of 92 active chapters, moving up from spot 16 last year.

“It is an incredible feeling to work with amazing students,” Siebuhr said. “Each year we climb the ranks of Texas Top Chapters, and I am continuously impressed by our students’ work ethic and enthusiasm to do their absolute best in all they take on. As the oldest active chapter in Texas, eyes look to us often to set a good example and to lead with pride, and our students do not disappoint.”

TWO WC CAFETERIA EMPLOYEES AWARDED FOR EFFORTS DURING WINTER STORM

Winter weather raged. Power went out. Water pipes froze. But Carmen Mendoza and Blanca Villavicencio didn't let anything stand in their way of keeping the Weatherford College cafeteria up and running for residents living in the Coyote Village student housing complex.

"Blanca and Carmen worked around the clock to insure our dorm students were provided with warm meals while the college was closed," said Erin Davidson, WC's director of food services.

This task meant the pair stayed on campus through the storm, sleeping in the Allene Strain Community Room near the cafeteria.

"When they were not cooking and serving students they took it upon themselves to do some deep cleaning and organization of the kitchen in order to occupy their time," Davidson said. "Blanca and Carmen's service and commitment to Weatherford College is exceptional and we are very fortunate to have them on our team."

WC President Tod Allen Farmer presented them with Presidential Core Value Coins in recognition of their dedicated service.



"Like many other WC team members, these extraordinary ladies went above and beyond the call of duty," Farmer said. "Their exemplary service to our students is one more shining example of our culture of caring. I am so proud to be associated with such persons of character."

HEALTH CARE HEROES *from page 3.*

second-guessed my choice because I knew in my heart I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

COVID hit during Boetz's third semester of nursing school, throwing her face-to-face classes immediately online and interrupting some of her clinicals at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth. She said she had some anxiety about the altered schedule and her preparation for her licensure exam, but she and her instructors put in the extra work to make sure she was ready.

"My instructors went above and beyond in filling the gap," Boetz said. "COVID-19 made nursing school so much harder but it also made me become much more versatile as a person and a nurse.

"Whether it's celebrating with someone who just came off the ventilator or being at someone's bedside at the end of their life, I have the opportunity to make a positive

impact on someone's life," she said. "This I consider a privilege and a joy."

David Coone is a 2017 WC graduate, now working as a nurse at St. David's Georgetown Hospital. He said an instructor's words have rung eerily true.

"We had a class that talked about pandemics and the impact they could have," Coone said. "The professor told us that our nursing class would most likely see a pandemic in our career. I didn't think it would actually happen, especially only a few months after becoming a nurse.

"The virus is a real thing; unlike any other virus we have seen. I've seen first-hand what it can do and the impact it has had on the hospital's staff, patients and their families."

But he remains optimistic in the battle against COVID-19.

"I think we are making great progress against the virus and soon we will be able to manage it better."

The pandemic has impacted all aspects of higher education, but none more pervasively than in the health sciences. WC's nursing, respiratory care, sonography, radiological technology, phlebotomy, occupational therapy assistant, physical therapy assistant and health-related workforce programs have all pivoted to provide safe training while sending graduates into fields that have changed in a few short months.

Boetz continues her work on the front lines, serving in the Intensive Care Unit at PPGH. Although the end of her RN education and the beginning of her career have been a challenge because of the virus, she says she wouldn't change a thing about her path.

"I chose Weatherford College because all of the best nurses I know went to Weatherford College for nursing," she said. "It is so rewarding to make a difference in the lives of others."

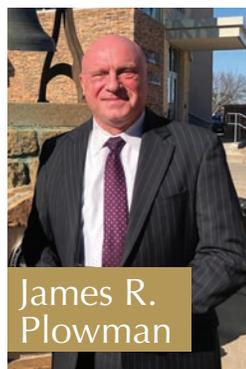
FOUNDATION WELCOMES NEW SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENTS



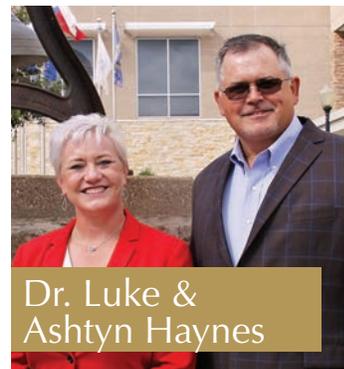
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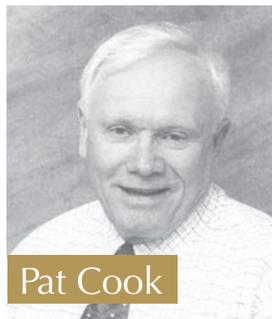
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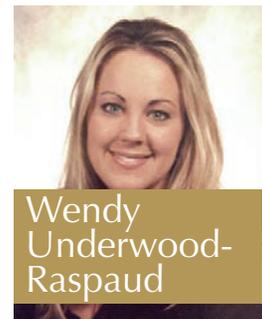
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CLASS NOTES

Bethany Allen ('16), a former WC softball player, joined the Ball State University softball coaching staff as the new assistant coach.

Brandy Cole, vice president of marketing and communications at Wayfarer Studios, has been selected to the executive jury for the Gerety Awards, a Los Angeles-based international recognition of advertising.

Garret Collins recently graduated from the WC Law Enforcement Academy and is the newest addition to the Dublin Police Department.

Duane Durrett ('66) and his wife Anita celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in January.

Taylor Maliska ('16), a former WC softball player, graduated from Baylor University earning her Doctorate in Physical Therapy degree.

Margie McGhee was selected as the Mineral Wells ISD Teacher of the Year and recognized at the 25th Annual Jack Harvey Academy of Exemplary Teachers ceremony held in February. McGhee currently teaches kindergarten at Lamar Elementary.

Neil Noakes ('98), a 20-year veteran of the Fort Worth Police Department, has been chosen as the next police chief for the City of Fort Worth.

Thomas Pinder Jr. accepted an offer to become the full-time fire chief for the Lincoln Fire Department in Lincoln, Texas.

Jocelyn Trejo ('16) accepted a position as a Johnson County deputy sheriff and is one of the few female deputy sheriffs in the history of Johnson County.

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LILES ESTATE ESTABLISHES \$242K SCHOLARSHIP FUND AT WC

The Weatherford College Foundation has announced a gift from the William F. Liles estate in the amount of \$242,202 to establish a permanent scholarship endowment for WC students.

Liles made a commitment to a planned gift in 2012 during the foundation's "Now is the Time for Your College" capital campaign. He passed away in December of 2020.

"What a generous gift and a wonderful way to help people in his hometown," said Bob Glenn, WC Foundation president and chair of the campaign. "We are appreciative of Mr. Liles and his financial advisor, Leon Henry, for thinking of our students in this way."

Liles was born in 1929 and was a lifelong resident of Parker County. After serving in the U.S. Army, he built a career as an administrator for the City of Fort Worth Zoning Department.

Established in 1978, the Weatherford College Foundation exists to raise funds to benefit the college and its students.

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