

THE HILLTOP

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Volume XXV : Issue I

SPRING 2025



LEARNING, LEADING & LIFESAVING

EMS PROGRAM EXPERIENCES EXPONENTIAL GROWTH UNDER LEADERSHIP OF SAMANTHA GRIMSLEY

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

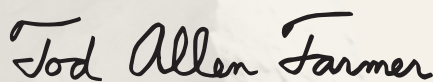
Record enrollment, record numbers of scholarships, new facilities and additional new programs are driving Weatherford College to new heights. For the first time in the 156-year distinguished history of our noble institution, WC officially has over 6,000 students enrolled in a spring semester. Additionally, 88 percent of WC students now receive grants or scholarships compared to a 60 percent average among like institutions. Finally, our new programs and facilities are truly separating WC from the pack.

Collectively, these factors and more have made WC the fastest growing college in the region.

This issue of The Hilltop highlights our EMS program and our award-winning faculty member Samantha Grimsley, our highly successful athletic programs and our 2025 Alumni Award winners. I hope that you enjoy the update.

I want to sincerely thank you for being a valuable part of the Weatherford College stakeholder community. Collectively, we are changing lives on a scale never before realized. Your support, coupled with our culture of caring, is transforming the lives of our students. The Presidential Core Values of faith, hope and love are permeating our organizational culture and manifesting themselves in the success of our students.

The best is yet to come!



Dr. Tod Allen Farmer
President



Hilltop Staff

Katie Edwards
Editor/Designer/Photographer
Brent Baker
Writer/Photographer
Crystal Brown Woerly
Writer/Photographer
Halle Copeland
Designer/Photographer
Joseph DuFrain
Designer/Photographer

Weatherford College President

Dr. Tod Allen Farmer

Board of Trustees

Dan Carney
Chair
Doug Dowd
Vice Chair
Lela Morris
Secretary/Treasurer
G.B. Bailey
Mary Beth Dennie
Dr. Trev Dixon
Dr. Robert Marlett
Judy McAnally

WC Foundation, Inc.

Board of Directors
Brent Gough
President
Nancy Stuart
Vice President
Jacy Guynes
Secretary
Justin Hooper
Treasurer
Dr. Arleen Atkins
Lin Bearden
Jamie Bodiford Brinkley
Warren Creason
Doug Dowd
Vickie Durant
Roy Eaton
Dr. Tod Allen Farmer
Lisa Flowers
Paul Gray
Chris Hodges
Sen. Phil King
Dr. Sumant Kumar
Lonna Leach
Dr. Tom MacKenzie
Courtney Paschall
Mike Scott
Ashtyn Sweatt
Mark Tackett
Members Emeritus
Dr. Richard McIntosh
Dr. Mike White

Readers may send comments,
story ideas or letters to:

THE HILLTOP
225 College Park Drive
Weatherford, TX 76086
817-598-6279
kedwards@wc.edu

© 2025 Weatherford College
Equal Opportunity/Equal access institution

COVER STORY

LEARNING, LEADING AND LIFESAVING



EMS PROGRAM EXPERIENCES EXPONENTIAL GROWTH UNDER LEADERSHIP OF SAMANTHA GRIMSLEY

by Crystal Woerly

In the ever-evolving world of Emergency Medical Services, the cycle of learning and teaching is vital, not just for individual growth but for the well-being of the community. For Samantha Grimsley, coordinator of the EMS program at Weatherford College, this cycle is at the heart of her approach to education and leadership.

And it recently earned her the spotlight when she was honored as the EMS Educator of the Year by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Grimsley's journey began in 2006 as a new high school graduate and certified EMT. Over the years, she worked her way up the ranks, gaining experience in various aspects of emergency medical services working on ambulances, fire trucks and helicopters.

She never stopped learning. And that thirst for knowledge led her to discover a love for teaching.

In 2021, when she received the call from WC to teach 19 hours a week, she had a tough decision to make that resulted in her leaving her full-time ambulance job and going to two part-time jobs.

It was a "hit the ground running" experience, Grimsley said. She quickly took on more responsibilities, eventually becoming the dedicated skills lab instructor for the paramedic program.

Shortly after starting her role as an adjunct, the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians contacted her to sit on a panel to help develop and analyze certification exam questions. She said it was mentally exhausting. But she did

such a great job that the registry offered her a part-time job as a subject matter expert.

At this point, Grimsley had three part-time jobs, was a mom to a child with medical complications and was working on her bachelor's degree. The only thing she said "no" to was sleep.

"I'm not one to say no," she said. "I might say 'Let's figure it out' or 'We'll make it happen.' But not 'No.'"

A week after completing her bachelor's degree in April 2022, Grimsley received a phone call that the program director was leaving WC. Of course, she became the interim director and then director with a mission to revamp the entire EMS program.

After developing a new curriculum for both the EMT and paramedic programs with a focus on hands-on learning, the EMT program achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the registry exam for the first time in college history.

"Even if they end up with an associate degree, if they don't have that registry, they can't actually get on an ambulance," she said about pushing the students to take and pass the exam. "If you have to come back for a second attempt, you also owe me a week of your time because now we're going to go into a full-force refresher course."

The lab areas also drastically changed with the addition of a grant-funded ambulance simulator and areas for students to work through scenarios while instructors view remotely via cameras.

continues with Grimsley on page 6

MEMORIES



WEATHERFORD COLLEGE WISE COUNTY

WC opened the Education Center at Decatur in January of 2000 in a ceremony highlighted by Lt. Governor David Dewhurst and other officials. Originally housed in a former Walmart building, the campus grew and later moved to the former Decatur High School campus.

Wise County voters approved a branch campus maintenance tax in 2008, and the current WC Wise County campus between Bridgeport and Decatur opened in 2012.

The community celebrated the 25th anniversary of WC in Wise County with a reception in January.

Decatur City Manager Nate Mara spoke at the event, not only as a local official but as an alumnus of WCWC.

“I can say WCWC set me on a path that shaped my career through the learning environment and the resources this campus gave me,” Mara said. “WCWC is a place of opportunity for anyone who is willing to work hard and learn. Knowing that my own children and so many others will have access to the same education platform I had is very comforting as a parent raising a family in Wise County.”

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Gary Lee Beck, 84, of Weatherford, passed away Feb. 9.

Jim Coleman, 84, of Weatherford, passed away Jan. 4.

Doris Erickson, 89, of Rockford, IL, passed away Feb. 4.

Curtis Jefferson, Jr., 79, of Weatherford, passed away Nov. 10. Served on the Weatherford College Foundation Board.

Charles W. Killough, 78, of Granbury, passed away Nov. 19.

Thomas Maddux, 81 of Weatherford, passed away Feb. 9.

Donald Kent Miller, of Weatherford, passed away Nov. 22. A former professor of history and government at Weatherford College for nearly four decades.

Linda Nation, 71, of Rockwall, passed away Oct. 31.

Prissy Neely, 77, of Weatherford, passed away Oct. 24. Distinguished Alumna Award Recipient.

Nancy Marie (Rhoads) Nielsen, 72, of Weatherford, passed away Nov. 9.

Naomi Sue Cornelius Nix, 91, of Weatherford, passed away Dec. 14.

James Edward Slattery, Sr., 88, of Mineral Wells, passed away Oct. 21.

Joe (Reuben) Yancy Smith, 86, of Celina, passed away Oct. 18.

Chrys Ann Fowler Turner, 65, of Mineral Wells, passed away Dec. 8.



WC ADDS COMPUTER SCIENCE TO BACHELOR'S DEGREE LINEUP

Weatherford College continues to demonstrate its commitment to accessible and affordable higher education with the addition of its fifth bachelor's degree program, a Bachelor of Applied Science in Computer Science.

This new program, approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and scheduled to begin this fall pending approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, makes WC only the second community college in the state to offer five bachelor's degrees, further solidifying its position as a leader in providing innovative educational opportunities.

"The addition of this computer science degree is a significant milestone for Weatherford College," said WC President Tod Allen Farmer. "It reflects our dedication to meeting the evolving needs of our students and the workforce by providing high-quality, high-demand programs."

The program is designed to prepare graduates for a variety of careers in computer science, such as software engineer, web developer, database administrator and cybersecurity analyst.

It also builds upon WC's existing pathways designed to provide students with a clear and affordable route to success in this high-demand field. Students can start with certificates in cybersecurity or information systems then progress to an associate degree focused in either field. These credentials seamlessly feed into the

new Bachelor of Applied Science in Computer Science, allowing students to stack their credentials and advance their careers.

The new computer science degree joins WC's existing lineup of bachelor's degree programs including:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing: This program prepares registered nurses to advance their careers and assume leadership roles in healthcare settings.
- Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Organizational Leadership: This degree offers a flexible pathway for students to gain leadership skills and knowledge needed to advance their careers and take on more challenging roles.
- Bachelor of Applied Technology in Medical and Health Services Management: This program prepares students for management and administrative positions in the healthcare industry.
- Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Early Childhood Education and Teaching: This program prepares students to become licensed Texas public educators with certifications in Early Childhood through sixth grade.

"By offering these bachelor's degree programs, Weatherford College is providing students with a cost-effective and convenient way to earn a four-year degree without leaving their community," said Dr. Shannon Ydoyaga, executive vice president of academic services. "This not only benefits students but also strengthens the local workforce by providing skilled professionals in high-demand fields."

RANKED

#1

IN THE NATION



When the National Junior College Athletic Association released its first regular season Division I baseball poll in February, the Coyote baseball team was listed at No. 1 in the country.

Originally ranked No. 11 in the preseason poll, the Coyotes started the year at 13-1, defeating two top 10 teams and averaging 9.5 runs per game.

The regular seasons for baseball and softball run through May 3. The softball team was ranked No. 19 at press time. For schedules and more information, go to wcathletics.com.

GRIMSLEY *from page 3.*

Grimsley has also fostered collaborations with other college departments, such as the Physical Therapist Assistant program, to enhance learning experiences for all students.

The program is also no stranger in the community as they are regularly seen at community festivals like National Night Out and Spark in the Park.

Under Grimsley's leadership, WC's EMS program has become known for its high standards, innovative teaching methods and commitment to student success. This has led to increased enrollment, with the program now facing the welcome challenge of having to waitlist qualified applicants.

"We're maxed for space. Like we're busting at the seams," Grimsley said.

"Come fall, we're going to have two paramedic programs and an EMT program all in one semester. There will be somebody in this building every single day, if not both programs on top of each other."

To help ensure the program is a good fit for potential students, Grimsley has implemented a student interview process emphasizing the importance of understanding the demands and expectations of the EMS profession.

"You're going to see people in some of their worst moments," she said. "We want to make sure this is the right fit for them."

She also makes sure they understand the level of continued learning required from this career path. Always the student,

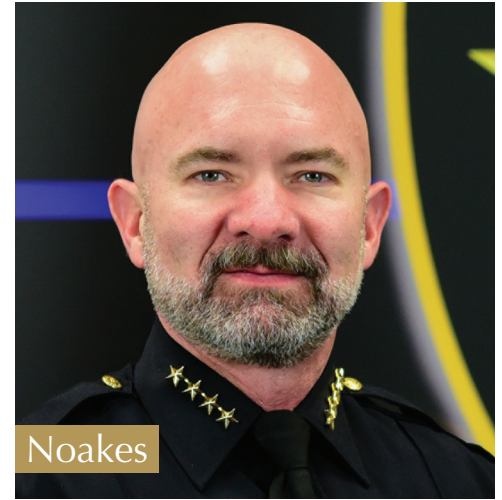
Grimsley is currently working on her master's degree while she continues to find ways to improve her own teaching.

"Every year we put more on the students, keep raising the bar," she said. "From when I first started, students are now learning skills like a critical care paramedic and that's not the scope of practice for a paramedic, but the employers are wanting that out of them because there's a need for it in this area. In five years, if protocols keep changing the way they are, we're going to be asking way more." 📖



SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFO ON WC'S PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONS PROGRAMS.

WC ANNOUNCES 2025 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS



Weatherford College has announced Brent Gough as the 2025 Alumnus of the Year. He will be honored during the annual Alumni Awards Luncheon on March 28, along with Distinguished Alumni Award honorees Dr. Deborah Liles and Fort Worth Chief of Police Neil Noakes.

Gough, a 1985 WC graduate, currently serves as president of the Weatherford College Foundation. He has served on the WC Foundation Board of Directors for 10 years and has been instrumental in securing significant donations for student scholarships.

“I can’t think of another volunteer that has done more in the last three years to promote scholarships and giving to Weatherford College than Brent Gough,” wrote a nominator. “He has invited multiple potential donors to events, hosted lunches, and spoken to multiple prospects about giving to support student scholarships.”

A native of Graham, Gough paid his way through Weatherford College while also competing in rodeo, and he continues to believe in the college’s mission and works tirelessly to increase scholarship funds available to students.

In the past 12 months alone, Gough has brought three new endowed scholarship funds to the foundation from donors who previously had no ties to WC. He is passionate about fostering positive relationships with donors and is currently working with the foundation’s Executive Committee to establish a plan to systematically stay in touch with donors, listen to their ideas, express gratitude and develop stronger ties with the college.

Gough and his wife, Meredith, have also established a permanent scholarship endowment for WC students. He is the founder of Gough Wealth Management in Aledo and has been in the financial planning business for more than 25 years.

Liles, a 2005 WC graduate, is the W.K. Gordon Chair of Texas History at Tarleton State University. She has authored or co-edited five books, including award-winning titles on Texas women’s history.

“Attending WC inspired Liles to continue her education,” wrote a nominator. “Building on the passion for history inspired by her mother... and former WC instructor Bill Coody, Liles immersed herself in the history of Texas.”

Liles is a fellow in both the East Texas Historical Association and the West Texas Historical Association. She serves on several boards, including the Texas State Archives and Libraries and the Bob Bullock State Museum.

Noakes, a 1997 WC graduate, serves as police chief for the City of Fort Worth. He has spent more than 25 years in public service and will retire from his position in May 2025.

“Chief Noakes manages a department of 1,875 sworn peace officers serving more than 978,000 residents,” wrote a nominator. “In May of 2021, Chief Noakes rolled out the Fort Worth Safe initiative, a more strategic approach to violent crime prevention that combined community policing with technology and data.”

Noakes has served in multiple ranks within the FWPD, including patrol, DWI, motors and internal affairs. He is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute’s 137th Administrative Officers Course and TCU’s inaugural Leadership, Executive and Administrative Development program.

The Alumni Awards Luncheon will take place at 11:30 a.m. Friday, March 28, in the third-floor community room of the Emerging Technologies and Workforce Building.

Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. Contact Susan Sodek at ssodek@wc.edu or 817-598-8924 for more information.



SCAN QR CODE TO PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE.

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE AROUND CAMPUS



1. The Mince Administration Building came down in November to make way for the next stage of growth at WC.

2. The Lady Coyote and Coyote basketball teams were both in the running to qualify for the postseason when The Hilltop went to press in early March. Check wcatletics.com for the latest Coyote sports info.

3. WC Board of Trustees Chair Dan Carney was named Outstanding Citizen of the Year by the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce at their annual banquet in October. Carney is a 1973 graduate of WC and received the Distinguished Alumni Award from WC in 2021.

4a. To help celebrate the 25th anniversary of WC Wise County, a representative from State Senator Tan Parker's office presented WCWC Executive Dean Kristin McLaughlin with a formal state recognition of the campus's anniversary and its impact on the community.

4b. WCWC student ambassadors helped ensure the 25th anniversary party at the campus was a success.

5. Under the leadership of David Chilcutt, the WC Fire Academy is busy preparing the next round of first responders. Check out their Facebook page for regular updates including photos and videos of the students at work.



6. Five WC students competed at the spring Texas Music Educators Association All-State Choir competition: Kara Isom, Reina Brooks, Maryn Milligan, Jasmine Houze and Logan Thomas.

7. A ribbon cutting was held in October celebrating WC's new Alumni House located at 301 East Park Avenue.

8. Another ribbon cutting took place in December celebrating the completion of the newest hike and bike trail extension constructed by the city of Weatherford. The trail system now extends from Texas Drive behind the baseball and softball fields up to the roundabout at Martin and College Park.

9. Logan Thomas starred in the musical "Jekyll & Hyde The Musical," along with a full cast and crew who brought 19th century Victorian London to the Alkek stage.

10. Dr. Christi Cook provided an update on the honors program to the board of trustees in January. The number of students active in the program has grown to 42 as of the spring semester.

WC VOLLEYBALL FINISHES 9TH IN THE NATION



After three seasons, the Weatherford College volleyball program has shown that it's here to stay as a powerhouse program.

So far, that's three conference championships in the only three years of the program's existence.

WC was historically dominant in conference play in 2024, as the first team in Northern Texas Junior College Athletic Conference history to go 14-0. The Coyotes finished the regular season with 16 straight wins and 17 total sweeps overall.

Weatherford's Kailee May won her third conference Coach of the Year Award, Weronika Urbanska won the Player of the Year Award and Kiana Souza was named Defensive Player of the Year. Urbanska and Souza were also named All-Region V.

The postseason started in Roswell, New Mexico, as New Mexico Military Institute hosted the Region V Tournament. WC swept Frank Phillips College and No. 9 Odessa College en route to the finals, where they were defeated by No. 3 NMMI on their home court in a thrilling five-set match.

The Coyotes did earn an at-large bid to the NJCAA Division I National Tournament, playing as the No. 9 seed despite a No.

5 ranking in the final national poll. WC headed to Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, for their second straight nationals appearance.

After losing their opening match to No. 8 Utah State University in four sets, WC swept both Eastern Wyoming College and Trinity Valley Community College, setting up a final match with Odessa College, the fourth meeting of the two teams for the season. In a two-and-a-half hour match, the Coyotes outlasted the Wranglers in five sets to take ninth place in the nation.

WC finished the year at 32-8 overall. Urbanska earned second team NJCAA All-America honors and Gabriella Maldonado was a third team All-American after making the All-Tournament team at nationals.

And the bad news for opponents? This team was made up of 10 freshmen and just seven sophomores. The future is bright for WC volleyball!

Bottom left: The Coyotes competed in the NJCAA National Tournament in Clarksville, TN. Bottom right: Sophomore team members were recognized at the final home game of the season.



BRASIER PITCHES HIS WAY TO SECOND WORLD SERIES TITLE

by Brent Baker

Ryan Brasier makes his living as a major league pitcher. His arm has led him to two World Series titles and many other accomplishments. But when he came to Weatherford College in 2006, he was known primarily as a catcher, not a pitcher.

“I went all through high school catching, pitched a few times, and when I came to Weatherford I caught all fall, and only threw a few innings,” the Wichita Falls native said.

WC head coach Jeff Lightfoot said the talented freshman was being noticed for something other than his ability to catch.

“He obviously had a cannon for an arm,” Lightfoot said. “So we started using him as both a starter and a reliever.”

Suddenly, the more he pitched, the more attention he garnered from NCAA and professional scouts.

“A bunch of scouts were pretty much telling me that I needed to put down my catcher’s gear and pick up a pitcher’s glove because that was probably the easiest way that I was going to get drafted,” said Brasier. “So, I pitched.”

That switch paid off in a big way, as he was drafted in the sixth round (out of 50) by the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in 2007. For six years, he worked his way up the minor leagues, reaching Triple-A and waiting for his chance—which came in 2013.

“I think we were on the road in Albuquerque,” Brasier said about the night he was called up to the big leagues for the first time. “We had a game the night before and I didn’t even hear about it (getting called up) until about two o’clock in the morning, so the first day was kind of a blur. I didn’t pitch the first day, I just kind

of sat in the bullpen and took it all in. The next day, we played at home and I got my first real (major league) appearance.”

Fast-forward to 2018, when he was picked up by the Boston Red Sox. Attending a game at Boston’s historic Fenway Park is on most sports fans’ bucket lists, but suiting up to play in Fenway in front of the loudest fans in baseball is on another level altogether.

“The first time you’re walking out, you see the Green Monster (Fenway’s iconic 37-foot-tall left field wall),” he said. “And they sell out almost every single game. It was unreal.”

He thrived in Boston, finishing that first season with a 1.60 ERA in 34 appearances out of the bullpen, earning the Lou Gorman Award for demonstrating dedication and perseverance while working his way to the majors. Best of all, he made the postseason roster, making nine playoff appearances and helping the Red Sox to the 2018 World Series title.

Brasier stayed in Boston until 2023, when he signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers. After an early playoff exit in 2023, the stacked Dodgers won it all in 2024, giving the former Coyote another World Series championship, beating the New York Yankees four games to one and clinching the series in Game 5 at Yankee Stadium. Brasier was an even larger factor in his team’s success this time around, pitching successfully in each playoff round.

“You play for so long to have an opportunity, and then a few years later to get the opportunity again, and be fortunate enough to win it again, I definitely didn’t have that in the cards when I was in Weatherford.”

continues with Brasier on page 14

A KNIGHT'S TALE

WC THEATRE ALUMNUS FINDS SUCCESS AT MEDIEVAL TIMES

by Misty Browning

Twenty-seven-year-old WC alumnus Tyelaken Gage knew at a young age that he wanted to be an actor.

Gage was born in Odessa but moved around a lot as a child due to his father's occupation as a pastor. Homeschooled his entire academic career, he caught the acting bug while attending summer camp as a young adult.

"Growing up, I attended summer camps as a teen counselor, and one of the things that we would do is perform skits for the kids," Gage said. "I fell in love with performing and bringing joy to the people in the audience. Those small skits started it, and I enjoy bringing happiness through performing."

Gage furthered his love of performing by studying theatre and acting at Weatherford College. As a matter of fact, WC's theatre program was the main reason he decided to become a Coyote, with the location being a close second.

"We lived all over Texas before we settled first in Palo Pinto and then Mineral Wells," he said. "I wanted to be an actor my whole life and saw this as a great stepping stone to fulfill that dream."

Gage loved his time at WC, especially working with James Brownlee, theatre director. He said he's used the skills learned from Brownlee to navigate through some unique obstacles in his acting career, including being a dyslexic actor.

"James Brownlee is an awesome teacher and theater instructor," he said. "James brought out a confidence in my acting. Him being patient and working with me to learn my lines was really encouraging."

After Weatherford College, Gage was cast as Satan in "The Promise" in Glen Rose. He was then cast in a few background roles in "Washington's Armor," Taylor Sheridan's "1883" and "1883: Bass Reeves." While working in "Washington's Armor", he would scroll the internet looking for casting calls, and in 2021, he came across a casting call for Medieval Times in Dallas.

"I remembered going to Medieval Times as a kid and thinking how cool it would be to work there," Gage said. "I looked up their careers and saw a call for the Lord Chancellor position and applied. Unfortunately, they had already found someone for that role, but they wanted to keep me, so they sent me over to the knights and squires department, and the rest is history."



New hires at Medieval Times begin their journey as a squire, first learning how to work with the horses. After mastering that, Gage moved on to arming his knight and setting up the arena. After a couple of months, Gage started training as a knight.

The first step of knight training is passing a timed combat evaluation test. Once he passed that, Gage became an apprentice knight and was taught how to ride the horses and fight in the show. He rose through the different levels of knighthood to his current position as the "senior knight speaking role," the highest one can go in the show.

"Senior knight speaking role means that I am qualified to do every knight spot in the show and most recently the speaking role as the Lord Marshall," Gage said. "There is a difference between the actors and the knights. The acting department deals with the speaking roles, and the knights are considered stuntmen."

He added that playing a knight over the past four years has been a blast. As a self-proclaimed nerd and lover of history, dressing up and pretending to be a knight in the show has been the perfect job for him. But his favorite part to play is the villain.

"Everyone loves a villain, and that is the part I do the most," Gage said. "The bad guy is the only knight with a speaking part in the show. When you come to the show, there is an 85 percent chance

continues with Knight on page 15

FOUNDATION UPDATE



MacKenzies join President's Circle

Dr. Tom and Nancy MacKenzie became the newest members of WC's President's Circle with a very generous gift to the WC Foundation in November. The President's Circle recognizes donors who have given \$100,000 or more to the foundation or the college in their lifetimes.



SCAN QR CODE FOR A LIST OF PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE DONORS



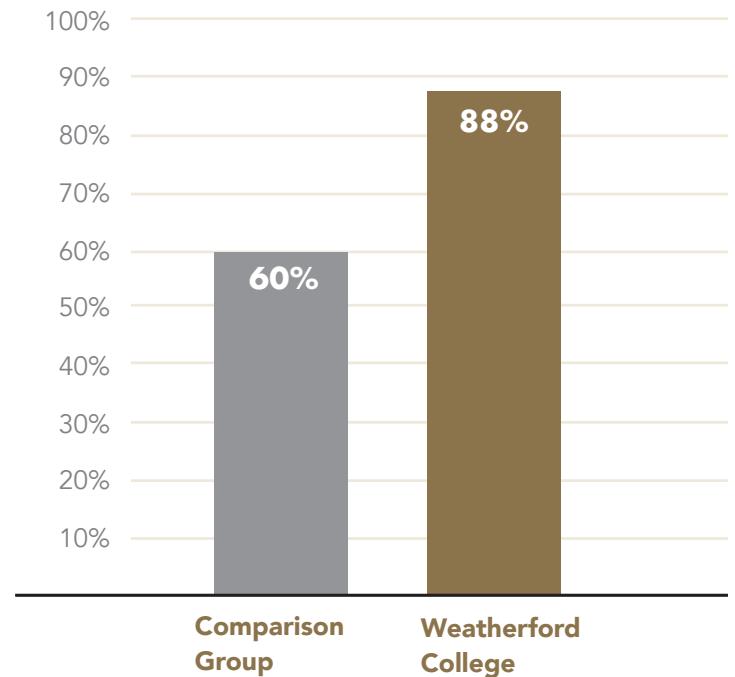
Smiths give two new endowments

Ron and Stephanie Smith have established two new permanent scholarship endowments with the WC Foundation: The Smith Family Scholarship and the Lynn Jones Scholarship; both are now part of the Bob Glenn Endowment Program. Pictured with President Farmer are Stephanie and Ron Smith and WC Foundation President Brent Gough.

STUDENT AID AT WC

88 percent of WC students received grant or scholarship aid, compared to 60 percent of students at similar institutions

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Based on degree/certificate-seeking students. Comparison group included 29 institutions from across the country with similar enrollments. From most recent IPEDS report (2023).





But it hasn't always been easy. Years in the minor leagues, season-ending Tommy John surgery on his elbow, playing a year in Japan and getting hit in the face with a line drive in 2021 have provided more than enough adversity.

"Ryan has always had a blue collar work ethic, that Texas toughness and is a heck of a competitor," Lightfoot said. "He has shown that on the field and when he has had to overcome injuries and setbacks. Ryan is a champion on and off the field and that's who I want my guys to strive to be every day."

Speaking of the Coyotes, Brasier stays connected with his alma mater, something Lightfoot enjoys.

"I got to watch Ryan play in high school, talked to him throughout the recruiting process and now follow his professional career. That's what it's all about," Lightfoot said. "It makes it extra special when a guy stays in contact with me and stays involved with WC. Ryan always answers when I reach out and has come back to see us from time to time. Ryan has always stayed true to his roots."



Brasier says his experience at WC helped him develop as a player and a person.

"It was awesome. I made friends I still talk to today. I still text back and forth with Coach Lightfoot. I really enjoyed my time in Weatherford.

"You get put in a spot where you have to grow up in a short time. Being at Weatherford taught me a lot about being on my own and how to go about things on my own."

Now 37 years old, he'll have to acclimate to new surroundings once again. The Dodgers traded Brasier to the Chicago Cubs in February of this year. His extensive playoff experience, 3.85 career ERA and overall veteran presence are said to be what the Cubs' front office wanted for their bullpen.

This season, he'll get to take in his first home game at another iconic stadium—Wrigley Field in Chicago. And Coyote fans will be there in spirit, cheering him on for possibly another chance at a title. 🍀

Photo credit: Jon SooHoo

CLASS NOTES

Elizabeth Baker was honored with the Athena Award by the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce.

Dan Carney ('73), WC Board of Trustees chair and Weatherford attorney, was honored with the Outstanding Citizen Award by the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce.

Samantha Grimsley, WC alumna and program coordinator for the WC

EMS program was named the 2024 Texas EMS Educator of the Year (see cover story).

Jason Hayes was promoted to interim chief of the Weatherford Police Department. Hayes has been with the WPD for 24 years.

Morgan Rackel ('17), former All-American WC softball player, was inducted into the Austin Peay State

University Athletic Hall of Fame. She is now a graduate assistant at Texas State University.

Melissa Schat has been re-appointed to the Texas Board of Nursing by Governor Greg Abbott.

Luke Williams ('15) was honored with the Rising Star Award by the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce.

THANK YOU

to the following donors who gave recent gifts to the WC Foundation (as of February 20, 2025)

Dr. Diann Ainsworth
Aledo Ex-Students Association
Debbie Alexander
Justin Allen
Dr. Arleen Atkins
GB, Arlene & Taylor Bailey
Elizabeth and Brent Baker
Charity Bankhead
Hamid Bateni
Lin and Tiffany Bearden
John and Marilyn Bedwell
Dr. Joe and Evelyn Birmingham
Kathy Boswell
Dr. Veleda Boyd
Elissa Braswell
Terry and Mickey Brooks
Marvin Browder
Sheryl Brown
Billy Bruce
Laurie Bruce
Dr. Noel Bryan
Melissa Butler
John and Dr. Andra Cantrell
Sue and David Casey
Challenge of Tarrant County
Mitchell Cochran
Community National
Bank and Trust
Sam and Lisa Coody
Jean Cook
Verna Coomer
Dr. Robert and Emily Cooper
Dr. Deborah Cregger
Jessica Cundiff
Carrie Cutaia
David and Becky Daniel
Mark and Jo-Alice Davis
Donna Dickinson
Derrick Duke

Duane and Anita Durrett
Stephanie Edwards
Dr. Nita Ellis
Duncan Ely
Thomas Farmer
President Tod Allen Farmer
Michael Feely
John and Myrna Fields
Wayne and Sharon Garrett
Garrett Wealth Advisory Group
Kevin Gaunt
Barbara and Wendell Gibson
Carolyn Glenn
Dale and JoAnn Glenn
Amanda Glidewell
Paul and Cassy Gray
Brenda Hagan
Ruel Hamilton
Dr. Rickey and Judy Harman
Heartsill Family Foundation
Ryan Heckart
Angela Henard
Herbert G. Feldman
Charitable Foundation
John and Karen Hinton
Chris Hlavinka
Jeanie Hobbs
Chris and Monica Hodges
Beverly Hogg
Don and Kim Hubbard
Imperial Construction
Suzie Jary
Cass Jenkins
Margaret Johnson
Marta Johnson
Dr. Catherine Johnson
Phil and Kathryn Jordan
JRJ Construction
Keith Bourland Family

Fred Krebs
Dr. Sumant and Sheela Kumar
Lonna Leach
Conor Lee
Henry Lim
Byron and Elaine Little
Ben and Dora Long
Dr. Tom and Nancy MacKenzie
Leland and Karin Malone
Troy Mars
Melinda Mayes
Ron and Tammy McBee
Dr. Laura McBride
Dr. Barbara and Jim McGregor
Nancy McVean
Medical City Weatherford
S. Dawn Miller
Roscoe and Jenny Miller
Casey Mitchell
Jonniece Montgomery
New Hope Baptist Church
Leah Newman
Pam Noland
Michelle Owens
William and Dana Parham
Parker County Master
Gardener Assoc.
Margaret Patison
Leon and Evelyn Payne
Weta Phillips
Dr. Robert Phillips
Donald and Francis Plumlee
Tom and Kathy Porter
Jane Pritchard
Stephen and Jerry Reid
Stephen Richardson
Dr. William and Paula Roddy
Rotary Club of Weatherford
Lanny and Melba Schultz

Debra Sears
Krysten Shavers
Cathy Simonds
Ron and Stephanie Smith
Kathy and Karen Smith
Gary and Linda Snow
Dr. Hyeyoung Song
Marilyn St. Clair
Lori Stalheber
Jared Stewart
Elizabeth Stewart
Marnita Stinnett
Shannon Stoker
Brenda Lee Stout-Powell
Mark and Brenda Tackett
Dr. Scott Tarnowiecky
Tarrant Construction
Services, LTD
Anita Tate
Beth Taylor
Dr. Steve and Vicki Thomas
Frances Trussell
Dr. Bishnu Twanabasu
Staci Tyler
Vic Verstraete
Weatherford College
Health Sciences
Nancy Wester
Bob andCarolynn White
Ben Whiteman
Laura and Bruce Wiggs
Joe and Karen Wilkinson
Billie Williams
Bob and Sammie Gay Williams
Joy Michelle Wilson
Lauren Wolf
Wanda Woodruff
Dinah Wren
Dr. Shannon Ydoyaga

KNIGHT *from page 12.*

that I'm doing the bad guy. I think that is because my bosses learned that I love to be on the mic more than the other knights."

In addition to helping him overcome dyslexia to learn his lines, Gage also credits Brownlee with helping him develop the skills needed for his role at Medieval Times.

"He taught me to trust my instincts whenever it comes to stage presence," he said. "I'm a large guy standing at 6'4 and 240 pounds. It's normal to be that size at Medieval Times, it is not normal to be that size on the stage.

"While I was at Weatherford College, I was shown how to use my presence and size to my advantage, which is helpful at Medieval Times. Also, one time during a matinee at Medieval Times, they

needed someone to fill a role that no one knew the lines to. I was able to memorize them in an hour."

Gage encourages people considering a career in acting to check out WC's theatre arts program. He said the environment created for the actors by Brownlee was nothing less than immaculate.

As for Brownlee, he is ecstatic that his former student has done well after graduation.

"Mr. Tye was one of my most hardworking and dedicated students in the time that he was here," Brownlee said. "As an actor, he was willing to take risks and try a variety of different roles, all of which pointed to his dedication to his craft. I am very proud of him in his current endeavor as an actor for Medieval Times. He is a WC drama success story!" 📺

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 25 Songwriters Showcase
March 28 Alumni Awards Luncheon

April 3 It's All About the Music
April 8 Summer & Fall 2025 Registration opens for
Current & Returning Students

April 10 WCJO Tribute to Jazz Composers
April 11-12 Philosophy of Religion and War Conference
April 11-12 "The 39 Steps" Drama Production
April 15 Taste of Parker County
April 17 Opera Workshop
April 26 Weatherford College International
Piano Competition Finals

April 29 Choir Concert
April 29 Summer & Fall 2025 Registration open
for New & Transfer Students

May 1 Bi-Annual Student Art Exhibition
Generations Concert
May 12 Summer hours begin
Mon. - Thur.: 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Closed Friday

May 19 Commencement Ceremony
at the Fort Worth Convention Center
June 2 Summer I classes begin



**SCAN QR CODE FOR
WC CALENDAR**

WC's calendar page is the best way to stay
up-to-date with all WC events.