

RangeRIDER

SPRING 2026



PURPOSE
*Passion
and
People*

Read Mayor Lori (Merritt) Blong's '03 story on page 30



Opening Shot

Purpose. Passion. People.

What begins on the Forty Acres now echoes across the globe.

Since January 2025, the Cowboy Band has traveled 12,000 miles, performing for millions, and in May 2026, The World-Famous Cowboy Band will represent Texas at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C.

See the latest views from the Forty Acres:



www.instagram.com/hsutx

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SHARE YOUR HSU NEWS

From milestones to memorials, we want to honor and share the moments that matter to our HSU family. Submit your updates to be included in the next *Range Rider*.

Please note, HSU administration reserves the right to review and include, or reject, any submission made for publication in the Range Rider. Also, because of printing limitations and deadlines, inclusion of news and use of submitted photos cannot be assured for any date or particular issue.

HELP SHAPE THE NEXT ISSUE

Your memories and stories bring the Range Rider to life. Look for QR codes throughout the magazine to share your HSU moments — you might be featured in the next issue!

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

When I was an undergraduate student, I became friends with an international student from Japan. One afternoon, while visiting his room, I noticed an incredibly beautiful handkerchief neatly folded on his desk. I admired it and said, "I really like this."

The next day, I saw him again. He was holding a small, wrapped gift. He handed it to me and said simply, "This is for you."

Inside was the handkerchief.

I told him I couldn't accept it, but he explained, "In my culture, if someone admires something you own, you give it to them."

That moment stayed with me.

Years later — in the early 2000s — a student stopped me on campus and said, "I really like your tie." At first, I smiled, proud that someone had noticed my fashion choice. But then my mind returned to that earlier lesson and the generosity of a student who freely gave away something meaningful.

If you know me, you know I love ties. They're precious to me. But in that moment, I felt God working on my heart, prompting me to give the tie to the student.

What began as a single exchange has since become a tradition. Over the years, I've given away hundreds of ties. What started as a simple gesture has grown into something deeper — a reminder that purpose is often revealed through people, and that passion is most powerful when it's shared.

At Hardin-Simmons, we believe education is transformational because relationships are transformational. Purpose is discovered through calling. Passion is nurtured through faith and curiosity. And people — students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends — are always at the center of the story.

I believe it's important to always be giving something away.

As legendary Abilenian Jane Beard once said, "Your first goal in life is to find your gift, and your second is to give it away. Whether it's our time, our talents, our resources, our prayers, or our love — each of these is precious. And each of us has both the responsibility and the opportunity to give them freely."

Thank you for the many ways you continue to live out your purpose, share your passion, and invest in people through your support of Hardin-Simmons University. Your generosity strengthens this community and ensures that the mission we cherish continues to shape lives for generations to come.

Serving Him as President,



Eric I. Bruntmyer, J.D./M.B.A.



WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FORTY ACRES

the RETURN of the COWBOY CODERS

(L to R) Jonathan Durance, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Nicole Travers, Harare, Zimbabwe; and Sofia Glaus, Waitsburg, Washington.

After a brief hiatus, Cowboy Coders is back — reconnecting students with a passion for programming, technology, and problem-solving.

This fall, two HSU teams competed in the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) regional competition, earning first and second place in Division II at their site and finishing among the top teams in the South-Central region. The contest challenged students to solve complex programming problems under intense time constraints — mirroring the real-world demands of technical careers.

HSU ADDS WOMEN'S FLAG FOOTBALL

Hardin-Simmons University will launch women's flag football as a varsity sport, expanding opportunities for female student-athletes and continuing the university's commitment to access, growth, and competitive excellence.

The addition reflects a growing national movement in collegiate athletics and underscores HSU's investment in creating meaningful pathways for women to compete, lead, and thrive. The inaugural season is slated to begin Spring 2027.

HOYAH! PODCAST

Have you subscribed yet?

HOYAH! gives listeners an inside look at Cowboy and Cowgirl athletics — spotlighting student-athletes, coaches, and alumni who embody HSU's grit, faith, and tradition.

Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and all major streaming platforms.

Search "HSU HOYAH" to start listening.

QUOTED & NOTED

Hardin-Simmons University Presents

FLETCHER LECTURE SERIES

in partnership with the Abilene Chamber of Commerce



"One day, all of us are going to have to stand in front of our Creator, and our Creator will not ask how much money you made or how many material possessions you piled up. Instead, our Creator will ask what type of difference did you make. And that's why we're here — to make a difference. To make the world a better place for these people that aren't quite as fortunate as us."

— Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale
Speaking at Hardin-Simmons University's Fletcher Lecture Series

The Fletcher Lecture Series continues this spring.

Scan QR code to learn more.



Condley and Company, LLP & Browning Law Firm, PLLC

ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUCCESSES

MOOT COURT RETURNS and ADVANCES

HSU's Moot Court course returned this year, and both student teams advanced to the Sweet 16 at regional competition, marking a strong return for the group.

Competing against teams from across the country and state including UT, Baylor, and Texas A&M, HSU students demonstrated strong advocacy, preparation, and poise — early indicators of promising legal careers ahead.



(L to R) Malachi Daniels, Abilene, Texas; Klarissa Pinon, Graford, Texas; Taylor County Judge Phil Crowley '10; Hanna Kincheloe, San Angelo, Texas; Annabelle Heseman, Saratoga, Texas.



DYK?

Did you know that purple and gold became HSU's official colors in 1896 — beating out pink and white in a student vote?

LOOKING AHEAD

a STRATEGIC PLAN on THE HORIZON

Hardin-Simmons University is entering a season of discernment as work begins toward a new strategic plan. Rooted in HSU's Christian mission and shaped by campus and community voices, this process is grounded in prayerful listening — seeking wisdom and vision for the future of the Forty Acres.

We invite our alumni, families, and friends to join us in prayer:

*Lord, grant us wisdom as we discern the path ahead.
Help us to listen well, lead with humility, and act with courage.
May our decisions reflect Your purpose, serve our students faithfully, and strengthen this community for generations to come.
Amen.*

More details will be shared in the months ahead.

STUDENTS SHINE on STATE & NATIONAL STAGES



From national honor band selections to top finishes at Texas PlayFest, HSU students continue to earn recognition for their talent, discipline, and academic preparation.

These achievements reflect the depth of mentorship, opportunity, and formation happening across campus.

Read more stories online at hsutx.edu/about-hsu/news



AT THE FRONTIER:

PREPARING PRINCIPLED LEADERS FOR AN AI-DRIVEN FUTURE

Moving students from AI operators to AI architects through a liberal arts foundation

Not long ago, the land northwest of Abilene stretched uninterrupted beneath a wide Texas sky, open pasture shaped by wind, sun, and the steady rhythms of ranch life. Today, that same horizon tells a different story.

Rising from the once-quiet landscape are massive data center buildings made of steel and concrete, designed to house the computing power behind artificial intelligence technologies shaping industries around the world.

This transformation marks Abilene's emergence as a significant hub

for AI infrastructure. What was once open land is now part of a global technological ecosystem supporting advanced computing, cloud platforms, and AI-driven innovation.

Just minutes away, Hardin-Simmons University is responding.

As the closest four-year university to this rapidly evolving AI landscape, HSU sits at a rare intersection of place, purpose, and preparation. With the launch of its new AI in Business course in the Kelley College of Business and Professional Studies (KCOBPS), HSU is equipping students not simply to use emerging technology, but to lead thoughtfully and responsibly in an economy being reshaped by it.

Preparing Leaders for a Changing Economy

Artificial intelligence is no longer confined to tech firms or research labs. It is embedded in marketing strategies, financial analysis, banking, supply chains, human resources, and executive decision-making. Increasingly, employers expect graduates to understand how AI works, how to evaluate its outputs, and how to use it ethically and effectively.

"When you look at the pace at which AI is being integrated across industries, it's clear this isn't something that can be treated as a passing trend," said Dr. Doug McIntyre, dean of the Kelley College of Business and Professional Studies. "Just as professionals learned to adapt when new technologies like social media and data tools reshaped workplaces, students today will increasingly work alongside artificial intelligence, and higher education has a role in helping students navigate that future thoughtfully and responsibly."

For business majors, that expectation is immediate. Graduates entering fields such as banking, accounting, consulting, or enterprise technology must be prepared to hit the ground running, McIntyre said. Businesses expect employees not only to understand how AI tools function, but also how to use them responsibly, critically, and ethically.

"Employers are telling us directly, 'We need graduates who understand AI,'" he said. "Listening to alumni and industry partners has been a key driver in shaping this course."

From AI Operator to AI Architect

While many students arrive with some exposure to generative AI tools, Dr. Edward Sim, professor of information systems in the Kelley College of Business and Professional Studies, said most are initially using AI in what he calls "operator mode."

"Students are using AI like an advanced search engine or a copy-and-paste machine," Sim said. "That can create an illusion of knowledge. Students know where to find information, but they're not actually learning or thinking through it."

The goal of the course is to move students toward a different mindset: AI as a collaborative partner rather than a replacement for thinking.

"I'm not teaching students how to use a tool like you'd teach Excel," Sim said. "I'm trying to change how they think about AI, how they design tasks, evaluate outputs, and remain responsible for decisions made with AI support."

Sim describes this shift as moving from an AI operator to an AI architect. An AI architect is a leader who intentionally designs how AI supports reasoning, learning, and decision-making while keeping human judgment firmly in control.

"If students leave this course with that mindset," he said, "they'll have a collaborative partner throughout their careers. Not something that does the thinking for them, but something that helps them think better."

Why Liberal Arts and Data Belong Together

At Hardin-Simmons, the integration of AI into the business curriculum reflects more than workforce preparation. It reflects the Kelley College of Business and Professional Studies' emphasis on preparing leaders who pair technical fluency with human judgment.

For Sim, that distinction is essential because AI is never used in isolation.

"All applied technologies are social-technical systems," Sim said. "They're embedded within organizations that have values, ethical codes, and real consequences. If you only focus on what the tool can do, you miss the social factors and responsibilities that come with using it."

A liberal arts foundation, Sim explained, broadens students' cultural and social perspectives while sharpening critical thinking skills. Combined with the Christian values central to Hardin-Simmons, that foundation equips students to use AI responsibly, ethically, and with discernment shaped by faith.

From McIntyre's perspective, that alignment is central to the identity of the Kelley College of Business and Professional Studies.

"Our location, our relationships with regional workforce partners, and our Christian mission all converge here," McIntyre said. "We're preparing students not just to use powerful tools, but to use them ethically and thoughtfully."

Looking Ahead

As Abilene's physical landscape continues to evolve, so too does the educational landscape at Hardin-Simmons. The launch of the AI in Business course reflects the business school's forward-looking commitment, preparing students not just for today's jobs but for leadership in the decades ahead.

The course also represents the first step in the college's broader, strategic academic plan, one designed to thoughtfully expand AI education across disciplines while remaining grounded in the university's mission. Building on this momentum, KCOBPS is preparing additional enhancements, including an AI endorsement for undergraduate business students, exploration of an AI-focused minor in partnership with the computer science program in the Holland School of Sciences and Mathematics, and updates to management information systems. Together, these efforts reflect a measured, intentional approach to preparing students for leadership in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

"What gives me the most hope," McIntyre said, "is knowing our students will graduate ready to lead ethically while being prepared for the breadth of what AI can do for businesses, organizations, and communities."

The semester I...



Internships have a way of shaping a student long after the semester ends. For some, it's the work they complete. For others, it's the people they meet or the unexpected moments that shift their direction.

We asked Hardin-Simmons students and alumni to finish one simple phrase — “The semester I...” — and share the experience that changed, challenged, or clarified their calling.

...REALIZED ENGINEERING IS MINISTRY, TOO.

A moment she'll never forget: Every afternoon at 3:00 p.m., Halle and her supervisor would pause for tea — an unexpected ritual that quickly became the heart of her internship. She'd bring her questions from the day, and their conversations drifted from horse breeds to conspiracy theories to stories about his kids. What stayed with her most was his intentionality: the way he continually spoke life into her, reminding an 18-year-old intern that there is nothing she and God cannot walk through together. His encouragement reshaped how she hopes to lead and deepened her trust in the calling God has placed on her life.

How it shaped her calling: Halle has come to see engineering as something uniquely ordained by the Lord. While she doesn't yet know every step He has planned, she's confident He planted her in this field with purpose. Her internship revealed what engineering looks like day to day while also showing her how deeply she loves people — and how transformational meaningful leadership can be. Wherever God chooses to use her degree, she hopes it will be to show His love to others and share the Gospel.

Halle Bruntmyer

*Sophomore mechanical engineering major from Abilene, Texas
Texas Department of Transportation — Abilene*



...LEARNED WHAT EXCELLENCE IN CARE REALLY MEANS.

A moment she'll never forget: Sitting ringside during a main-card UFC fight, Kylee watched an athlete she had treated daily throughout her clinical rotation step into the octagon. From injury prevention and rehabilitation sessions to that defining fight-night moment, she had witnessed the full arc of care. After the bout, she assisted in clearing both athletes for post-fight treatment — an experience that underscored the intensity, responsibility, and trust placed in physical therapists working at the highest level of sport. Seeing the direct impact of her work, from treatment table to competition, was both humbling and unforgettable.

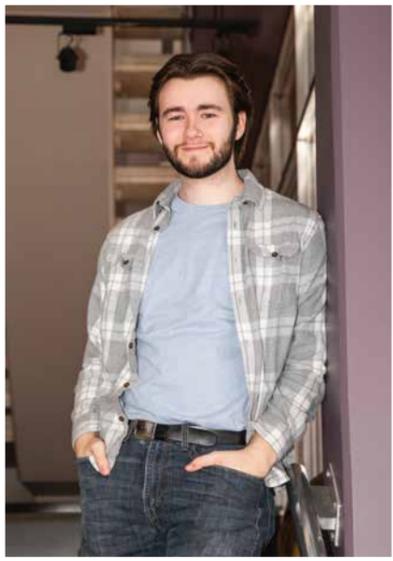
How it shaped her calling: During her eight-week internship at the UFC Performance Institute, Kylee served elite athletes across every phase of care — from prehabilitation and injury prevention to post-fight recovery. The experience revealed to her the power of consistency, precision, and individualized treatment, often with athletes being seen once or even twice daily. Mentorship from the head physical therapist, whose work extended beyond the UFC to NBA and NFL athletes, helped refine Kylee's professional goals and solidified her commitment to excellence in patient care.

Though Abilene may not host professional fight nights, Kylee returned with a renewed sense of purpose: to bring the same standard of thoughtful, high-level care to her local community. Whether working with athletes, older adults, post-operative patients, or individuals managing chronic pain, she is committed to serving others with the skill, discipline, and patient-centered approach shaped by this transformative semester.



Dr. Kylee (Kirk) O'Conner

*Doctor of Physical Therapy '24
UFC Performance Institute — Las Vegas, Nevada*



...DISCOVERED WHAT'S POSSIBLE.

A moment he'll never forget:

Opening night of Jersey Boys is etched into Colton's memory. When the curtain rose, the response was immediate — the roar of the crowd after each song, applause following every dance, and laughter rippling through the theatre. Taking the final bow felt surreal. In that moment, months of rehearsals, long days, and disciplined preparation came together, leaving him with a deep sense of accomplishment and the realization that the work had truly paid off.

How it shaped his calling:

Performing in New Hampshire broadened Colton's understanding of what a career in theatre can be. Submitting an audition felt like a leap of faith, but being selected affirmed that his talent belongs on professional stages far beyond one region. The experience strengthened his confidence and deepened his love for the craft, showing him that professional theatre opportunities exist across the country. Knowing that a company so far from home wanted to work with him expanded his horizons and affirmed his calling — this experience wasn't an endpoint, but the beginning of what lies ahead.

Colton Bosang

*Senior musical theatre major and Honors minor from Waco, Texas
North Country Center for the Arts at Jean's Playhouse — New Hampshire*

...LEARNED THAT SERVING PEOPLE IS AT THE HEART OF THE LAW.

A moment she'll never forget: Sitting in on mental health hearings was an experience Hanna didn't anticipate being so deeply affected by. Watching those proceedings unfold put faces and stories to the issues she had studied in class, revealing just how critical sustained support is for individuals navigating mental illness. For Hanna, those moments were sobering and formative — reminders that the justice system is not built solely on laws and procedures, but on people whose lives are shaped by its outcomes.

How it shaped her calling: Throughout the summer, Hanna followed Judge Crowley through both the public and behind-the-scenes responsibilities of his role. From court proceedings and County Commissioners meetings to community events and conversations with local leaders, the experience affirmed her desire to pursue a career in the justice system and clarified the kind of attorney she hopes to become. While the internship strengthened her understanding of legal processes, it also highlighted the importance of empathy, communication, and strong people skills. Engaging with professionals across the justice system gave Hanna confidence that law school — and a future spent advocating for others — is demanding, but entirely within reach.



Hanna Kincheloe

*Senior criminal justice major from San Angelo, Texas
Office of Taylor County Judge Phil Crowley '10*

Ethan Arias

*Junior Finance and Accounting Major and
Christian Studies minor from San Angelo, Texas
South Side Baptist Church - Abilene*



...DISCOVERED WHERE FAITH AND FINANCE INTERSECT.

A moment he'll never forget:

Each Tuesday afternoon, Ethan gathered with the college pastor and fellow interns for intentional conversation and prayer. Those meetings became a steady anchor during the semester — a place to name the highs and lows of life and to be guided back to Scripture. During one particularly difficult season, Ethan brought his struggles to his college pastor, who counseled him with God's Word and reminded him where true hope is found. Praying together for members of the church each week became a powerful reminder of the beauty and responsibility of walking alongside others in faith.

How it shaped his calling:

Before the internship, Ethan wasn't entirely certain that pastoral ministry was where God was leading him. By the end of the semester, it was difficult for him to imagine doing anything else. Immersed in Scripture and surrounded by faithful mentors, he discovered how deeply life-giving it is to walk with others through hardship and point them toward Christ. Seeing counseling rooted in God's truth — both in others' lives and his own — affirmed his desire to serve in ministry. Wherever his vocational path leads, Ethan knows his calling is grounded in helping people lean on the Lord with wisdom, compassion, and faith.

...PREPPED FOR THE REAL WORLD.

A moment she'll never forget:

From her first day in the office, Nina was struck by how intentionally she was welcomed. Rather than being treated like "just an intern," she was trusted, supported, and spoken to as a professional — someone whose ideas and perspective mattered. That culture of respect stood out immediately and stayed with her. Feeling genuinely valued gave her the confidence to step fully into her role and affirmed that she belonged in the professional world she was preparing to enter.

How it shaped her calling:

Throughout the semester, Nina worked in social media and marketing, creating content and helping promote agents and their work in thoughtful, creative ways. The experience reinforced what she had long believed — that her calling is rooted in working with people. Just as meaningful as the professional skills she gained was the workplace culture she experienced, one that prioritized family, faith, and balance alongside excellence. Seeing those values lived out day to day showed her that success and integrity are not mutually exclusive. As she looks toward life after graduation, Nina carries with her a clear vision of the kind of professional — and person — she hopes to be.



Nina Tarasovets

*Senior business administration major from Ukraine
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Stovall, REALTORS*

Raising Purpose

How a campus-wide partnership is training tomorrow's service dogs and shaping lives far beyond the classroom. Puppy raisers from across Hardin-Simmons University and Hendrick Health represent academic disciplines, offices, and clinical settings.

HSU's partnership with Canine Companions trains service dogs that are provided at no cost to individuals with disabilities — a \$60,000 value per dog that makes independence more accessible.



Through HSU's partnership with Hendrick Health, puppies rotate through real-world environments, from nursing units to offices, gaining early exposure to clinical settings and daily routines.



“

Every part of training and loving these dogs has a purpose. Getting to be part of something bigger while in school has been the best.”
— Hannah Bessent



By living, studying, and training alongside these pups, students learn firsthand how service animals support people with disabilities — long before graduation.

They arrive as eight-week-old bundles of energy, full of curiosity, motion, and endless potential. Within months, they're sitting quietly in lectures and offices, navigating coffee shops, and beginning to attune to the people and routines around them.

Since 2021, HSU's partnership with Canine Companions has grown from a single pilot class into a campus-wide initiative spanning Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, Nursing, and the Registrar's Office. Students, faculty, staff, and community members have opened their homes and schedules to puppies in training — guiding them through early socialization and basic obedience during the critical first 14 to 18 months that help determine whether a dog will become a certified service animal.

But while the puppy team works to teach the basics, the puppies

are teaching something deeper — patience, presence, and purpose.

We asked students what they've learned. Here's what they told us.

LEARNING TOGETHER

*Hannah Bessent, B.S. '24
Doctor of Physical Therapy*

"The coolest thing about these dogs is how smart they are. We're able to teach two-month-old puppies to wait for their food, sit, and shake before they've barely had time to grow. They learn how to read the body language of those taking care of them.

Waverly spent a week with me studying for finals. When I was feeling even a small bit of stress, she would get up from her blanket and ask for pets — or simply put her head on my feet. Age doesn't matter with these puppies and their level of care."



IT JUST CLICKED

*Riley Blackford,
Doctor of Physical Therapy*

"When we first had Fizzy, she really didn't like being in the classroom. She would bark during class and try to bite you if you didn't pay attention to her. We called it her 'teenager phase.'

The puppy team worked hard to break these habits with lots and lots of in-class training.

Fizzy just turned one, and she's learned so much about waiting still and calmly for people to pet her, doing countless commands, and paying attention to her handler. Seeing how much they grow into being a great service dog — that's the best part."

THE VEST MEANS EVERYTHING

*Kaylee Billstone,
Physician Assistant Studies*

"The most surprising thing is how quickly these dogs learn that their vest means work time. I was astonished by how Mister's behavior would calm, and his obedience would peak as soon as his vest was on — at only three or four months old! It really proves just how smart and amazing these dogs are.

I originally thought it would be difficult to find time with the high demands of PA school. But it turned out to fit right in. He goes to school with us and knows it's work time, then he comes home and knows he can get all his craziness out when his vest comes off."

Students help serve as volunteer puppy raisers for more than a year, providing daily care, structure, and early training that prepares dogs for advanced service work.



After their time in Abilene, puppies return to Canine Companions for advanced, specialized instruction.



Foundational training at HSU helps puppies build focus and adaptability before moving into advanced service preparation.

THE ZOOMIES ARE REAL

*Payton Lord,
Physician Assistant Studies*

"Whenever Mister is 'off work,' he immediately gets the zoomies. It's fun to watch him switch from being focused and well-trained while he's on the job to running and playing the moment that vest comes off. It's amazing how clearly he understands what the vest means.

Those silly little bursts of joy make the whole training process even more rewarding. It's a perfect reminder that even future service dogs get to just be dogs sometimes."

IMPACT BEYOND CAMPUS

What begins on the Forty Acres doesn't stay here.

After their time at HSU, the puppies return to Canine Companions for six months of advanced training, where they learn specialized tasks such as retrieving dropped items, opening doors, turning on lights, and providing stability for walking. Dogs who successfully complete training are then matched and given to individuals with disabilities completely free of charge — an investment valued at approximately \$60,000.

But the reach of the program is already visible.

Across campus and throughout the community, the presence of these dogs spark conversations, builds awareness, and reflects a mission rooted in service, dignity, and care.

For those who raise them, the takeaway is clear: purposeful care, practiced daily, shapes not only future service dogs, but the kind of professionals — and people — students are becoming.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Greer — Service Dog

Greer is partnered with a 10-year-old girl who uses a wheelchair in North Texas. Since their placement in August 2023, Greer has assisted with daily tasks such as dressing, picking up objects, and playing games — while also serving as a constant companion and best friend.



Sesame — Detection Dog

Sesame recently completed additional training and is now serving as an explosives detection dog in San Diego, Calif. Her highly specialized role is both demanding and impactful, and she has embraced the challenge with confidence.



Dion — Service Dog

Dion is partnered with a teenage girl with cerebral palsy in the Dallas area. Since November 2024, Dion has supported her handler's mobility and daily activities while encouraging participation in therapy and an active, engaged lifestyle.



Parlay — Breeder Dog

Parlay serves as a breeder-caretaker dog for Canine Companions and lives with George and Marianne Kobyluch, longtime volunteers whose daughter, Katie, has cerebral palsy and has partnered with two Canine Companions service dogs. Parlay will remain in their care through four litters before retiring and being adopted by her caretakers. As a breeder dog, Parlay plays a vital role in ensuring future generations of service dogs continue to support people with disabilities.



Serrano — Service Dog

Serrano retrieves out-of-reach items, opens doors and drawers, and provides calming lap work to ease muscle spasms, lifting his handler's spirit and joyfully supporting independence, confidence, and daily adventures in the community with Canine Companions family.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the time of production, Naan was in final team training, with graduation set for Feb. 13, 2026.



Freshman and transfer students celebrate the time-honored tradition of Beanie Capping during STAMPEDE in fall 2025. New student enrollment and persistence metrics show steady momentum as HSU continues advancing its mission.

What do you remember about your Beanie Capping?

First mentioned in *The Corral* in 1909, the freshman beanie has long marked the beginning of life on the Forty Acres. From bright “Slime Caps” to today’s purple and gold, the tradition has evolved, but the welcome remains the same.

Tell us about your Beanie Capping moment or the people who made you feel like a Cowboy from the start. Email your response to marketing@hsutx.edu or scan the QR code to share your story.



BUILT for THIS

How purpose, passion, and people shaped Brent '13 and Rebecca (Roth) Biggs '11x long before the river rose.

Brent Biggs '13, a tactical flight officer with Texas Game Warden Aviation, has faced storms before. Hurricanes, downbursts, and the kind of weather that tests even the most seasoned tactical flight officers. He knows what it means to push fear aside, rely on training, and offer a quiet prayer for steady hands.

But before dawn on July 4, 2025, the call that pulled him toward the hangar in Austin carried a different weight. Catastrophic flooding in the Hill Country. Communications down. And as his helicopter lifted into a sky swallowed by fog and thunder, the navigation system blinked out. Somewhere below, the Guadalupe

River was rising so fast that people were clinging to treetops in the dark.

"I told my pilot, 'Hey man, I know where we're going. Just follow these roads,'" Brent said. "My local knowledge of the area definitely helped."

Back in Kerrville, his wife, Rebecca (Roth) Biggs '11, woke to a single text — Stay home — and the sound of rain hammering the windows. Six months pregnant, she watched Brent's location move across her phone, knowing exactly what he was flying into and why.

"I knew he was out there operating in extremely dangerous conditions for people who needed help," she said. "And knowing we were about to

welcome a daughter made it all feel even more purposeful."

By 7:30 a.m., Brent's aircraft was the first on scene. As they flew low over the rapidly rising Guadalupe, boat crews pointed frantically to people trapped in the treetops.

Brent's crew and a Department of Public Safety helicopter each completed multiple hoist rescues, pulling individuals from the trees as the river surged below them. The conditions were unforgiving — low visibility, violent weather, and a razor-thin margin for error.

But stepping away from hard things has never been the Biggs' way. The roots of that resolve stretch farther than the storm.



Where It Started

Years before helicopter blades cut through thunderclouds, Brent and Rebecca sat across the aisle from each other in Dr. Garner's chemistry class — Brent a freshman, Rebecca a sophomore. He noticed her immediately. She didn't remember him at all.

A year later, a mutual friend reintroduced them. This time, it stuck.

Their academic paths overlapped in meaningful ways. Brent was completing pre-med coursework, while Rebecca was focused on finishing her pre-veterinary requirements. She studied at Hardin-Simmons from fall 2008 through spring 2012 before entering veterinary school.

"At the time, choosing a college, you don't always know why you're making certain decisions," Rebecca said. "You just take the next step."

For her, the next step led to the women's soccer program — a team that made school history. In 2010, the Cowgirls won the NCAA Division III National Championship.

"It really was some of the best years of my life," she said. "The camaraderie was incredible. And Woody made sure our faith was intertwined with our pursuit of excellence."

She still remembers the soccer classroom with its white cinderblock walls.

"I knew he was out there operating in extremely dangerous conditions for people who needed help," she said. "And knowing we were about to welcome a daughter made it all feel even more purposeful."

“Woody would say, ‘Look at those cinder blocks. If one brick represents four years, this is only one brick of your life.’ It kept everything in perspective,” said Rebecca.

That perspective stayed with her.

Brent’s calling emerged, too. A summer leadership program showed him he wasn’t meant for fluorescent lights and hospital hallways. An internship in Yellowstone confirmed it: he wanted a life outdoors, serving people in moments that mattered. That path led him to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Warden Division.

Both were shaped by mentors like Dr. Patterson, who taught them to refuse to take no for an answer, and by the community they found at church, friendships that still anchor them today.

A Life Built Together Miles Apart

A year and a half after they began dating, Rebecca left for veterinary school in Grenada while Brent finished his senior year. They built their relationship across airports, long drives, and the quiet rhythms of long-distance life.

“It wasn’t without its challenges,” Rebecca said. “But we were both pursuing what God created us to do.”

They married in Grenada during Rebecca’s third year of vet school. Even then, they lived apart — Brent stateside and Rebecca finishing clinicals at Texas A&M. When she returned to Texas, Brent entered the Game Warden Academy.

After Brent’s first assignment on the border in Zapata — followed by time in San Antonio, Rockport, and the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey — they finally settled in Kerrville. Rebecca launched her mobile veterinary practice. Brent later transitioned into Texas Game Warden Aviation as a tactical flight officer.

“We both get to work in careers we’re passionate about,” Brent said. “And when we finally get time together, it means something.”



“Looking back,” Rebecca said, “I can point to individual people at HSU who shifted my trajectory — one conversation, one class, one friendship. You don’t realize it at the time, but those small moments shape who you become.”

After the Storm

In the hours and days after the flood, Kerrville showed its heart.

“So many people lost everything,” Rebecca said. “And if you weren’t directly impacted, you knew someone who was. The whole community showed up.”

Their own home was out of harm’s way, but the devastation around them was impossible to ignore. Neighbors checked on neighbors. Churches opened their doors. Small businesses delivered meals long before state agencies arrived. Even local laundromats offered free services to families.



“Our pastor said it best,” Rebecca added. “These cypress trees will regrow, but not in our lifetime.”

The landscape changed. But it also deepened something in the Biggs family: gratitude. Gratitude for their community, their calling, and the foundation laid years earlier at Hardin-Simmons.

“Looking back,” Rebecca said, “I can point to individual people at HSU who shifted my trajectory — one conversation, one class, one friendship. You don’t realize it at the time, but those small moments shape who you become.”

Brent agrees. “For me, it was the relationships and the community. Those connections stay with you.”

Today, as the Hill Country continues its long recovery, Brent and Rebecca look at their daughter, their careers, and their community and see a story stitched together long before the floodwaters rose. What began in a chemistry classroom at Hardin-Simmons became a life marked by courage, calling, and compassion. And through every storm since, they’ve carried the same truth they learned on the Forty Acres: purpose grows in small moments, passion is forged through challenge, and people — always people — are God’s reminder that we never face the hard things alone.

HOW DID IT FEEL?

MEN'S SOCCER
Benny Lube
 Graduate Student
 Allen, TX



FOOTBALL
Bode Walters
 Senior
 Marion, TX

WOMAN'S SOCCER
Lexi Templin
 Junior
 San Angelo, TX

What does it feel like to score the goal that wins a championship? To lead a race knowing your teammates are counting on every step? To make history for your school?

This fall, Hardin-Simmons University made American Southwest Conference (ASC) history:

- **Women's Soccer:** 27th conference championship
- **Men's Soccer:** Back-to-back champions
- **Cross Country:** First championship in school history
- **Football:** Third consecutive conference title

We asked HSU student-athletes to take us back to those moments — the seconds that carried them into school history.

CROSS COUNTRY
Noah Bela
 Senior
 Abilene, TX

How Does It Feel to Make School History?

In the seconds before the start, everything around Noah Bela feels both noisy and still. Loud and quiet at the same time.

“The course had been flat all morning — four loops, all these turns into the woods,” says the senior business administration major from Abilene, Texas. “It almost felt like the race could just keep folding back on itself.”

“I’d never felt so prepared for a race,”

The air is cold, but the good kind of cold. And for once, the nerves Noah usually carries to the start line disappear.

“I’d never felt so prepared for a race,” he says.

When the gun goes off, he surges to the front and takes the lead almost immediately.

“I knew if I didn’t make it honest from the start, the whole race could get chaotic,” he explains.

The 2K loop brings the crowd back into view. The noise bounces off the flags — the only barrier keeping fans from spilling onto the course.

By 4K, everything narrows.

“I entered what I call ‘flow state,’” Noah says. “It felt like tunnel vision — the only clear things were my breathing and the rhythm of the turns. And the sense that someone was either too close or too far. That part was terrifying.”



At 6K, the fatigue finally shows up.

“My feet were starting to feel it,” he says, “but my cadence and heart rate were perfect. I knew I could finish first or second.”

Then comes the final kilometer.

The crowd sharpens. The women’s team screams things he can’t fully process. He crosses the finish line in 26:39 — second overall and first among all Cowboys — and stops his watch.

“There was this wave of pride that wasn’t just mine,” Noah recalls. “I remember looking back down the finish, hearing the guys finishing behind me, and thinking, ‘We can win this whole thing.’”

They do.

Noah’s second-place finish puts the Cowboys in position to take the title — and when the final results come in, Hardin-Simmons cross country makes history with its first-ever conference championship.

How Does It Feel to Score the Game-Winning Goal?

Ninety minutes of scoreless soccer in the humid November sun. Hardin-Simmons and rival University of Mary Hardin-Baylor were trading fouls, breaking up plays, and running on legs that had already given everything. As the peak afternoon sun settled in Belton, the ASC title and an automatic NCAA tournament berth hung in the balance.

Then overtime began.

Twenty-five seconds later, it was over.

“I hit the ball in the corner, and I thought, wait, that just happened,” says team captain Lexi Templin, a junior nursing major from San Angelo, Texas. “And I just took off toward the fans.”

The golden goal sealed a 1-0 victory — but for Templin, the moment was a surge of adrenaline through exhaustion, the kind of instinct that takes over when your body is spent but the game demands one more step.

The play unfolded fast. UMHB kicked off to start overtime, sending a long ball down the right side. Templin’s roommate and teammate, Rachel Bonnin, a junior from Lufkin, Texas, chased the ball and cleared it forward instead of letting it roll out. The ball found Presley Thiessen, a senior from Denton, Texas, on the right, who dribbled across the top of the box and fired her signature left-footed shot toward the back post.



The goalkeeper caught it. Then bobbled it.

“If she bobbles it, I’ll be there.”

“I just kept running,” Templin says. “I thought to myself, if she bobbles it, I’ll be there.”

She was.

The ball slid into the corner of the net — a blur of motion, disbelief, and relief all at once.

In the stands, Templin’s mother sprinted down the bleachers. Her best friend, an HSU alumna, grabbed the stadium fencing and shook it. Her teammates poured off the bench, chasing their captain across the field as she ran straight to the fans, fueled by adrenaline she didn’t know she still had.

Under the weight of exhaustion, expectation, and a season full of near-misses, the finish felt like release — sudden, overwhelming, unforgettable.

“I didn’t have 10 more minutes in me,” Templin says with a grin.

All she needed was 25 seconds.

How Does It Feel to Carry a Championship Legacy?

One hundred ten minutes of soccer. A 1-1 draw. And now it all came down to penalty kicks.

Benny Lube heard his name called fifth in the lineup — the spot that could decide everything. And in that moment, standing in line watching his teammates prepare to shoot, he had a feeling.

“Right then I had a feeling it was going to come down to my PK,” says Benny Lube, a graduate student in the Sports Business program from Allen, Texas, playing his final year of competitive soccer for the Cowboys.

The week leading up to the ASC championship final had been full of penalty kick practice. Some days Lube’s shots found the net. Other days, they didn’t. But now, with the tournament on the line, there was no room for doubt.

One by one, the first four Cowboys stepped up and buried their shots. Perfect. The score stood 4-3 as Lube jogged up to grab the ball.

The home crowd from Mary Hardin-Baylor roared, trying to break his focus. But Lube didn’t hear any of it.

“All I could feel was calm,” he said. “Like it was just me and the ball. I just kept telling myself: score, score, score.”



After nearly two hours of play, his heart was racing. His legs were exhausted. But as he took his deep breath and went through his routine, everything narrowed. He struck the ball into the opposite corner from where he normally aimed.

The keeper dove. The ball sailed past. Net.

“I just turned, screamed, and sprinted to the corner where the entire team was dogpiling in celebration,” Lube recalls.

“It was the cherry on top of my soccer career overall,”

For a player who had dedicated 21 years to soccer, chosen to take the fifth penalty kick in his final year of competitive play, the moment felt like the perfect ending.

“It was the cherry on top of my soccer career overall,” he said.

Back-to-back ASC champions. And Lube had delivered the final blow.

How Does It Feel to Win Three in a Row?

The offense took the field for the final snap.

For an offensive lineman, moments like that are built on trust. Trust that the man beside you will execute. Trust that your preparation will hold. Trust that the line will do what it has done all season — make the offense work when it matters most.

“I remember looking left and right down the line,” said Bode Walters, a senior social studies education major from Seguin, Texas. “When I look to my left and see Hayden Philpot mauling his man into the dirt, and I look to my right and see Jaxon Lunsford breaking another man’s will, I know we’ve got it won. And I just thought, this is it.”

The snap. The knee. The roar.

Three years. Three conference championships. And for the offensive line — men who pride themselves on doing their job play after play — the moment carried a weight only they could fully understand.

“Do your job to the highest standard, or the offense doesn’t work.”

“As an offensive lineman, your job is simple,” Walters explained. “Move a man against his will. Every single play. Do your job to the highest standard, or the offense doesn’t work.”

It’s a role built on repetition, discipline, and trust — on knowing that when the ball snaps, the man beside you



will execute just like you will. That shared responsibility is what makes a line. That’s what makes brothers.

“There was never a doubt in my mind that this offensive line was going to lead us to another championship,” Walters said.

They’d earned that confidence together.

As the trophy was lifted, gratitude set in — not just for teammates, but for coaches who poured everything they had into developing men, not just players.

“The coaches at Hardin-Simmons love us as men first,” Walters reflected. “That’s what makes this place special.”

Watching his teammates — his brothers — grind from the opening snap to the final knee is something no one can take away.

“The feeling of pride, honor, and confidence in that last game was immeasurable,” he says.

One line. One brotherhood.

And when the final seconds ticked to zero, they’d done exactly what offensive linemen do best — so the entire team could finish the job together.



What's your favorite HSU tradition?

First held in 1955, the annual Christmas Tree Lighting has brought the HSU community together for generations. This past December, the campus gathered on Anderson Lawn to celebrate the tradition's 70th anniversary — continuing a legacy of storytelling, carols, cocoa, and connection on the Forty Acres.

Tell us about your Christmas Tree Lighting memory or another tradition that made HSU feel like home. Email your response to marketing@hsutx.edu or scan the QR code to share your story.



Between **STRENGTH** and **GRACIOUSNESS**

How a psychology degree, a calling refined, and a commitment to community shaped the leadership of Midland, Texas, Mayor Lori (Merritt) Blong '03



“You have to have a strong personality to lead forward – but if you’re going to do that long term, you have to listen and work well with others.”

Leadership, Lori Blong has learned, rarely offers clean choices. More often, it requires holding tension — making decisions while remaining open to dialogue, standing firm while staying rooted in relationship.

For Blong, that posture did not begin in public office. It was shaped years earlier by an education grounded in understanding people, seasons of uncertainty that tested her assumptions about her calling, and a steady conviction that leadership, at its best, is both decisive and deeply human.

Long before she would help guide her hometown of Midland as its first female mayor, Blong was learning how people think — and why that matters — at Hardin-Simmons University.

Learning People Before Leading Them

Blong landed on the Forty Acres on a ministry scholarship, with a clear sense of direction.

“I came fully intending to go into ministry,” she said. “I was interested in developmental psychology, family ministry, education ministry — those traditional pathways.”

Like many undergraduates, Blong arrived with a plan that shifted once she encountered the classes that captivated her. Psychology courses, particularly those taught by Dr. Copeland, reshaped the direction she thought she was headed.

“I loved it,” she said. “Dr. Copeland was one of my favorite professors, and I ended up taking every class he taught.”

She said studying psychology, combined with education, gave her tools she still relies on.

“That background helped me perceive what makes people tick,” Blong said. “I use things I learned in those classes all the time, whether that’s in business, public service, or leadership.”





When the Plan Changed

As a senior, Blong believed she had found her direction and calling. She had enrolled in seminary and planned to continue the path that had first drawn her to Hardin-Simmons. During her final year on campus, she met the man who would later become her husband.

“By the time I was supposed to move to Fort Worth and start seminary, I realized I wanted to marry this man who lived in El Paso,” she said. “So, I changed my whole career path.”

After graduating in 2003, Blong married and followed her husband to El Paso. What followed, she said, was a season marked by uncertainty rather than clarity.

She began teaching high school social studies and psychology, a role she said she loved — particularly the relationships with students — even as her personal and professional life began to diverge from the path she had imagined.

“I really struggled for several years,” Blong said. “I believed the Lord had called me to ministry, and I wrestled with whether I had walked away from what He wanted for my life.”

That tension followed her through early motherhood, relocation, and seasons of uncertainty. In 2013, multiple pressures converged at once.

“My dad passed away. We lost three grandparents. We had just started our company. I had our third baby and experienced severe postpartum depression,” she said. “It was a lot, all at once.”

Calling Reframed

Blong said the turning point came several years later at an IF: Lead conference, where she heard Jill Briscoe speak.

“Jill said that your primary place of calling is right where you are — between your own two feet,” Blong recalled. “Not a future version of yourself. Not the vision you had when you were 18.”

Blong said the words reframed how she understood obedience.

“She also said that the courage to do the hard thing usually comes after you say yes,” she said.

In the months that followed, Blong said her perspective began to shift.

“That conference and what Jill said allowed me to see that I had been acting as though everything was mine to control and manage,” Blong said. “And that I was resentful when things didn’t turn out the way that I wanted.”

Blong said she eventually came to understand that she had not abandoned her calling, but that it had taken a different form than she expected.

That understanding led her to serve where she was in the moment — within schools, churches, community organizations, and the company, Octane Energy, that she co-founded with her husband, Jared. She said her background in psychology and education shaped

how she approached leadership in the business, and that her husband has been a steady, supportive partner throughout her career and calling.

“Working with people, building trust, motivating teams — that’s people work,” Blong said.

Choosing to Be Part of the Solution

Over time, Blong said her sense of responsibility toward her community sharpened, often shaped by conversations she shared with her husband about what it meant to belong to a place.

“We decided that if we were going to live here, we didn’t want to complain about our community,” she said. “We wanted to be part of the solution.”

Blong was elected to the Midland City Council in November 2019 and sworn in January 2020. Two months later, COVID-19 reshaped public life.

“The learning curve was fast,” she said. “You realize quickly that when you step into public service, people respond very personally to decisions.”

Some criticism came from people who had known her for years.

“I remember sitting with it and feeling really sad,” Blong said. “Because people who knew me well believed things about me that weren’t true. And I had to learn how to make the decision I believed was right, and still be willing to listen and stay in relationship with people who didn’t agree.”

Blong said navigating that tension became one of the most formative lessons of leadership.

“You have to have a strong personality to be able to lead forward,” she said. “But if you’re going to do that successfully long term, you have to be able to listen to people and work well with others.”

What She Hopes Remains

When asked what she hopes people will remember about her leadership, Blong did not begin with policies or titles.

“I hope people would say that I led with graciousness,” she said. “That I was willing to come to the table and work with people who had very different viewpoints.”

It’s the work she did not expect.

And the calling she has learned to live out, right where she stands.

Outstanding YOUNG ALUMNI



Mrs. Kayla (Willis) Dillman '14/'16
Dr. Juvenal Havyarimana '11
Mr. Geoffrey Turner '08

The impact of Hardin-Simmons University is measured not only in degrees earned but in lives lived with purpose. These Outstanding Young Alumni reflect the enduring formation of an HSU education grounded in faith, strengthened by mentorship, and expressed through service and leadership beyond the Forty Acres.



Q1:

What's a favorite memory from your time at HSU?

Q2:

Who at HSU invested in you, and how did they shape your journey?

Q3:

When you're not working... what brings you joy?

Q4:

What motivates you to stay connected to the HSU community?

Q5:

What HSU tradition do you love the most?

Mrs. Kayla Dillman, M.A., LPC-S

Professional Counselor and Co-Owner | GrowthPoint Counseling and Consulting

A1: Serving on the Six White Horse Team is one of my favorite memories from HSU. I rode all four years as an undergraduate and worked as a student employee caring for the horses. The camaraderie, school spirit, and honor of representing HSU — especially carrying the American flag in parades and rodeos — made those years unforgettable.

A2: Many HSU professors invested deeply in me, encouraging my growth both personally and professionally. Dr. Sue Lucas played a pivotal role by guiding me to add psychology as a second major, which ultimately led me to pursue graduate work in clinical counseling. Their mentorship showed me how to meet people with empathy and purpose.

A4: HSU's investment in my professional and spiritual development created a lasting sense of belonging. Every return to the Forty Acres feels like coming home. I stay connected through service, giving, and sharing HSU's story with others who are considering where to begin their college journey.

A5: Western Heritage Day is my favorite tradition. Seeing thousands of children experience HSU through horses, stories, and hands-on activities is a powerful reminder of the pride, hospitality, and Cowboy Spirit that define the university.

Dr. Juvenal Havyarimana, M.D., M.P.H.

Emergency Medicine Physician Staff | Multiple hospitals in Florida and Georgia

A1: My favorite memory was orientation week, where we started as total strangers and by week's end had formed lifelong friendships that remained strong. Those bonds shaped my entire HSU experience.

A2: I started at HSU with an end in mind — a career in healthcare as a physician — but without a concrete path to get there. The science department helped me clear that path. My science professors invested deeply in my academic and personal growth, spending countless hours mentoring me, challenging my critical thinking, and ensuring my future goals aligned with my academic progress. Their dedication and guidance are the foundation of where I am today.

A3: Spending time with my family brings me the greatest joy. Whether we're sharing meals, exploring new places, or simply enjoying prayer moments together, these connections remind me what truly matters and recharge my spirit for the work ahead.

A5: My most loved tradition is chapel. Those meaningful moments profoundly strengthened my faith and provided spiritual grounding during my college years. The lessons, worship, and community I experienced there shaped my spiritual journey and continue to guide my life today.

Mr. Geoffrey Turner

Lead Pastor | Beltway Park Church

A2: Dr. Joanne Roberts had a profound impact on my life. She is the reason I chose to pursue my undergraduate degree in sociology. Dr. Roberts taught me not only to think at a micro level but also at a macro level, to see the bigger picture. That way of thinking has stayed with me and continues to shape how I lead and make decisions today.

A3: Spending time with my family brings me the greatest joy. I have an incredible wife and two amazing daughters, and I love making memories with them. Whether we're hunting, fishing, going to the beach, or just being together, what matters most is that we're doing it as a family.

A4: I believe deeply in the next generation. I truly believe the Lord has incredible things He wants to do in them and through them, and I want to be a part of encouraging and supporting that future.

A5: Without a doubt, beanie capping. I will never forget walking around campus during my first week as a freshman with a beanie on my head.

Recipients of the Outstanding Young Alumni Award have achieved distinction in their field or made an extraordinary impact on the world, reflecting the excellence of Hardin-Simmons alumni. Honorees are graduates of the past 20 years and age 45 or younger at the time of selection. This year's recipients were honored at the Outstanding Young Alumni Dinner on Friday, Feb. 27, 2026.



To nominate someone for this award or to learn more about this year's recipients, scan the QR code.

Long may thy worth increase.



Established in 2001, the Hardin-Simmons University Hall of Leaders honors alumni and friends whose lives reflect distinguished achievement, character, and service. The Hall of Leaders is located in the Edwin L. Skiles Social Science Building. Learn more about current and past honorees at hsutx.edu/about-hsu/hall-of-leaders.



>>> A life of faith expressed through writing, teaching, and encouragement.

HALL of LEADERS

Leadership often begins quietly — shaped through faith, learning, and community, long before titles or recognition.



>>> A life shaped by discipline, service, and shared purpose.

At Hardin-Simmons University, purpose is not assigned — it is discovered, nurtured, and carried forward. For this year's Hall of Leaders recipients, those formative years helped shape lives defined by service, faith, and enduring impact. Though their callings unfolded in different arenas, both reflect the same foundation: a commitment to using their gifts in ways that serve others. Dr. Terry Treadwell '69 and Rebecca Barlow Jordan '66x exemplify what it means to live out purpose with passion — ensuring that the values first cultivated at HSU continue to grow through their lives and work.

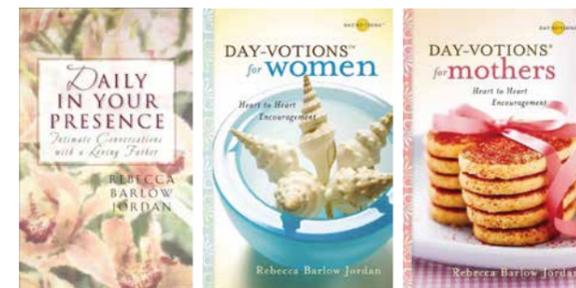


Mrs. Rebecca Barlow Jordan '66x

Attended Hardin-Simmons University
Active in campus worship and service
Distinguished Alumni Award (2008)

Purpose through faith, words, and encouragement

Rebecca Barlow Jordan's calling has always centered on helping others deepen their relationship with God. A bestselling inspirational author, devotional writer, and speaker, she has spent decades offering encouragement through books, articles, and daily reflections read by audiences around the world. Her work reflects a steady faithfulness — shaped early by her love of words, nurtured during her time at Hardin-Simmons, and sustained through a lifetime of learning, writing, and ministry. Rebecca's legacy is not measured only by publications but by the countless individuals who have found hope, clarity, and spiritual renewal through her words.



Selected works by Rebecca Barlow Jordan, whose devotional writing has encouraged readers for decades.



Dr. Terry Treadwell '69

B.A., Hardin-Simmons University
Athletics Hall of Fame inductee (1987)
Distinguished Alumni Award (2016)

Purpose through healing, service, and leadership

Dr. Terry Treadwell has devoted his career to healing — not only through medicine, but through education, mentorship, and service around the world. A surgeon, educator, and global leader in wound care, Treadwell's work has reached patients and practitioners across continents, particularly in under-resourced communities. His induction into the Hall of Leaders builds on a legacy previously recognized through the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Athletics Hall of Fame. At every stage of his career, Treadwell's work has reflected a belief that care should be compassionate, excellent, and rooted in service to others and a deep sense of calling.



Through decades of service, Dr. Terry Treadwell has lived out his calling by teaching, healing, and equipping others — from local communities to hospitals around the world.

WELCOME HOME COWBOYS



SAVE THE DATE

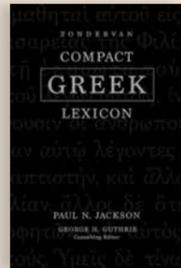
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Family News

YOUR CLASSMATES WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! EMAIL RANGERIDER@HSUTX.EDU



1950s

Don Biggerstaff '55x played in the Cowboy Band under Professor McClure. He later spent many years serving as a minister of music, including six years in Iran. While there, he worked with Bell Helicopter, served as minister of music for a local church, married, and ultimately fled the country during the 1979 revolution that overthrew the Shah. Don is currently a member of the Singing Men of Texas North Central and continues to work as an entertainer. He recently moved to Denton, Texas, where he is completing his senior year as a history major at the University of North Texas. His wife of 46 years, Bahieh, passed away in 2021. They have four sons and four daughters. One son is experiencing a recurrence of cancer, and prayers are appreciated. Don would love to hear from friends and classmates. He can be reached at 302 Fry St., Denton, TX 76201, or by phone at 817-726-5088.

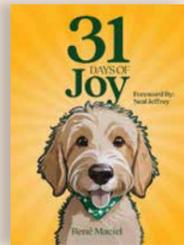
1980s



Paul Jackson '80 B.A. retired from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, in 2021 after nearly 30 years as professor of New Testament and Greek. He is teaching eighth-grade Algebra I at Jackson Careers and Technology Middle School. Zondervan published his Zondervan Compact Greek Lexicon on April 29, 2025. His Devotions on the Greek New Testament, Vol. 2, was published in 2017. He is working on a commentary on Matthew for the Kregel Academic Library. Paul and his wife, Janet Renee Jackson, will

celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary on Aug. 8. They have five children, 17 grandchildren, and a great-grandson due this summer. Paul is available for speaking engagements, Bible study seminars, and revivals.

René Maciel '81 B.B.S. has authored his first book, 31 Days of Joy, a devotional designed to guide readers on a month long journey to discover and live out the joy of Christ. Each day offers a thoughtful reflection, Scripture-based encouragement, and practical insights to help cultivate a deeper sense of spiritual joy in everyday life. This debut invites readers to embrace joy not just as a feeling, but as a way of life rooted in faith.



1990s

Steven K. Parker '98 B.B.S./'01 M.Div. announces the upcoming publication of his new book, Getting the Church Inside You: Balancing Faith and Action, released in late February 2026 through Kharis Publishing. Steven has served as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Weslaco, Texas, since 2008. He and his wife, **Lisa (Womble) Parker '98 B.B.S.**, are celebrating 30 years of marriage and enjoy watching their children, Morgan, Nathan, Casey, and Micah, continue to grow in their own callings.

2000s

Melanie Moore '05 B.B.S. published Chef Cherie's Café, the first book in the Adventures with Allie and Friends series, on Nov. 4, 2025. She would love for you to check it out. It is available for purchase on Amazon, bookshop.org, and Barnes & Noble.



Christina "Chrissy" (Adkins) Bashore '06 B.B.S. married Tom Bashore on Oct. 4, 2025, in Batavia, Ohio. They reside in Alexandria, Kentucky, until the Lord calls them to the mission field.

Britni Brown '07 B.B.S. was announced as the Better Business Bureau's new CEO and president in Abilene, Texas, serving the Big Country.

HSU Trustee Dr. Shanna A. Smith '08 B.A. graduated from the Air Force Logistics Officer School at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. She currently serves as a logistics readiness officer in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.



2010s

Tiffany (Van Hoose) Pitcock '18 B.B.S. married **Matt Pitcock '15 B.B.S./'20 M.B.A.** on April 26, 2025. Matt and Tiffany played on the soccer team, and Matt served as an assistant and associate head coach.



Tracy (Desrochers) Shows '18 B.B.S. and **Thomas Shows '22 M.A.** were married May 10, 2025, in Abilene, Texas, where they currently reside. Tracy teaches Algebra I for Abilene Wylie ISD, and Thomas is a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate with Daybreak, serving as a behavior support provider.



Claire (Shuler) Draper '19 married **Samuel Draper '19x** in Logsdon Chapel on Aug. 30, 2025. Samuel is the son of **David Draper '94 B.B.S./'15 M.Div.** and **Susan Draper 'x.**

2020s



Logan (Haller) Wills '21 B.B.A./'22 M.B.A. and **Austin Scott Wills '22 B.B.A./'23 M.B.A.** were married in Malibu, California, on Jan. 4, 2025. Austin completed his second season as assistant coach of the HSU men's soccer team. Logan began her law career at Baker McKenzie in September 2025.



Paige (Jennings) Grigsby '22 B.S. married **Karson Grigsby** on June 28, 2025, in Creede, Colorado.

Margaret "Maggie" (Coleman) Allen '23 B.B.S. and **Dylan Allen** celebrated their marriage on Dec. 20, 2025, in Gainesville, Texas.



Emily (Williamson) Harrel '23 B.B.S. married A.J. Harrel on June 28, 2025, in Amarillo, Texas. Several of her bridesmaids were friends from HSU whom she met in the Julius Olsen Honors Program. A.J. and Emily celebrated with family and friends who traveled from across the country to be with them on their special day.



Caidon Livingston '23 B.B.A./'24 M.B.A. and **Maci Livingston** were married Nov. 1, 2025, at Hard Rock Los Cabos in Mexico. Caidon earned degrees in finance and business administration and played baseball for three years at HSU.

Morgan (McDaniel) Turnbow '23 B.S. married **Gage Turnbow** on May 24, 2025. During her time at HSU, Morgan participated in Delta Women's Social Club and served as a resident assistant and tour guide. Gage earned a B.B.A. from Texas Tech. They are building a life together in Sweetwater, Texas, while Gage pursues his business goals.



Calli (Pesina) Stegge '24 B.B.S. and **Joshua Stegge** were married Oct. 25, 2025. Mr. and Mrs. Stegge are excited to start their life together.



Esther (Flowers) Carte '25 B.B.S. and **Alex Carte '25 B.S.H.S.** were married Nov. 20, 2025, at Chapel at Riverwalk in Flower Mound, Texas.



Corbin Keidl '25 B.S. and **Elizabeth "Liz" (Underwood) Keidl '26** were married on June 28, 2025. They celebrated the day with their church family and are thankful for the love HSU has shown them and for the grace and love of their Heavenly Father. They look forward to continuing to glorify the Lord together in their marriage.



Summer (Simmons) Killam '25 B.B.S. married **Zachary Killam** on June 7, 2025, in Buffalo Gap, Texas. Their photographer is also a Hardin-Simmons graduate, **Katelyn Rowan '25 B.A.**

Tara (Brazee) Morrison '25 B.S. and **Seth Morrison** met during their junior year of high school in a classroom — a moment Tara will never forget. She said, "I called out to him from across the room, and he looked around completely confused — especially since the only thing behind him was a fake skeleton. When he finally realized I was talking to him, we both laughed, and that was the beginning. We've had ups and downs, but through it all we kept choosing each other." They were married Oct. 12, 2025, at Barn 89 in Abilene, Texas.



Hailey (Lavan) Neely '25 B.B.S. married **Chance Neely** on June 14, 2025, at the 201 Mesquite Event Center in Abilene, Texas.

Emma (Rashall) Payne '25 B.S.N. and **Gavin Payne '25 B.B.A.** were married Jan. 1, 2026, in Dripping Springs, Texas.



Submissions received from **June 19, 2025 - Jan. 13, 2026**

Welcome to the Family



2000s

Proud parents **Scott '04 M.A.** and **Annika Drinkall** announce the birth of their son, **Sevdin Lyle**, born July 25, 2025.

Louis Allen McClurg was born to Kristina and Kyle McClurg on Sept. 23, 2025, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is the little brother of Henry. Louis' grandparents are **Toi (Wellington) Kiser '09 B.S.N.** and **Mark Kiser '97 B.B.A.**, and the great-grandson of **Dorothy (Houston) Kiser '65 B.S./'92 M.B.A.** and the late Allen Kiser.

Glenn Revell '09 and his wife, Lyddia, welcomed Reese Madison Revell at 11:38 a.m. July 2, 2025, at Brooke Army Medical Center on Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. She weighed 6 pounds, 9 ounces, and measured 19 inches long.



2010s

Kaylee (Burns) Channell '12 B.S. and husband, Bryce, adopted their daughter, **Brylee Kay Channell**, on March 25, 2025. Brylee's grandmother is **Anna (Porter) Channell '84 B.S.N.**

Bethany (Williams) Hale '13 B.S. welcomed daughter, **Leighton**, on April 17, 2025. She is the happiest baby and already so loved by her older siblings, Beckham and Austin. We feel truly blessed and thankful to God for this sweet little miracle in our lives.

Maci (Jensen) Edwards '17 B.S. and husband **Daniel Edwards '15 B.B.S./'17 M.A.**, welcomed their son, **Cade Ellis Edwards**, on Oct. 31, 2025.

Jarvis Green '15 B.F.A. and **Jordan Green** brought their daughter, **Lyndi Green**, into the world on June 20, 2025.

Alexa-Rae (Gist) Williams '16 B.B.S. and husband, **Blake**, are pleased to announce the birth of **Elle Jane Williams**. She was born on Nov. 30, 2025, measuring 20.5 inches long and weighing 8 pounds, 5 ounces.



Klarissa (Shafer) Myers '17 B.A. and husband, **Seth Myers, '21 B.B.S./'23 M.Ed.**, welcomed baby boy, **Shiloh Allelujah Myers**, on Feb. 1, 2025, at 6 pounds, 12 ounces. **Timothy Shafer '19 B.A.** and **Sarah (Baker) Shafer '17 B.B.S.** are Shiloh's uncle and aunt.

Estes Knox Young joined the world on Dec. 3, 2025. He was born to **Kaley (Turner) Young '17 B.B.A.** and **David "Austin" Young '19 B.M.** He is a perfect addition to our family! We are enjoying all the snuggles and being a family of five!



Andrew Robertson '18 B.B.A./ '19 M.B.A. and **Rebecca (Axelson) Robertson '19 B.B.S.** had their baby, **Archer Robertson**, on April 23, 2025.

Brinna (Davis) Kelley '19 B.S. and husband, **Caleb Kelley, 'x**, welcomed their son, **Callum Kelley**, on Nov. 4, 2025.

2020s

Tiffany (Mackin) McMurray '21 M.Ed. and **Ryan McMurray** welcomed their son, **Zeal Zion McMurray**, on Feb. 12, 2025.

Adjunct Professor **Michael "Ryan" Jobe '22 B.B.S./'23 M.S.** and his wife, **Danielle**, welcomed a new little girl to the family on July 15, 2025. **Caroline Tillie Jobe** is a future Cowboy!



Lauren (Fisher) Quinn '22 B.H.S. welcomed **Josiah Quinn** on June 1, 2025. My husband, **Jimmie**, my daughter, **Ariellea**, and I have been enjoying every moment with him. God has truly blessed us!



Rebecca "Becca" Shipp '23 B.S.N. and **Nicolis Shipp** had their baby girl, **Daisy Mae Shipp**, on July 9, 2025.



Maylena (Homer) Stevens '23 B.S.N. and her husband, **Michael**, welcomed their daughter, **Maya Jane**, on Oct. 15, 2025. She came a month early but has been doing really well. We enjoyed ALL the holiday snuggles.



Kallie (Lopez) Mitzelfelt '23 B.B.S. and husband **Grant Mitzelfelt '24 B.A.**, welcomed their daughter, **Harper Mitzelfelt**, on July 24, 2025. Proud grandparents are **Tricia (Thompson) Lopez '97 B.B.S.** and **Victor Lopez '97 B.A.**

Justin Contreras '25 B.S. welcomed his son, **Arturo Contreras**, on Nov. 10, 2025.

Family We'll Miss

Graduates 1940s

Mrs. Helen (Vletas) Andrews '43 B.A.
10/1/25

Mrs. Bettye (Duncan) Phillips '48 B.A.
10/23/24

Mrs. Beckye (Griggs) Dugan '49 B.S.
11/30/25

1950s

Mr. Fred Browning '50 B.B.A. 11/14/25.
Survived by wife **Mary (Little) Browning '49 B.B.A.**

Mrs. Mildred (Brown) Clark '50 B.A.
1/4/26

Mrs. R. Durelle (Stokes) Gorman '50 B.B.A. 7/25/25

Mrs. Tynell "Nell" (Thompson) Rosenquist '52 B.S. 10/16/25

Mrs. Nora (Fuller) Salmon '52 B.A./'53 M.Ed. 10/6/25

Mr. Bobby Smith '53 B.B.A. 1/3/26

Mrs. Nada (Wagley) Thogmartin '54 B.S. 7/23/25

Mrs. Patsy (Dodds) Davidson '55 B.S. 10/24/24. Survived by daughter **Patricia (Davidson) Schmidt '89 B.B.S.**

Mrs. Dorothy (Portwood) Caldwell '56 B.S. 7/21/25.
Survived by son **Tray Caldwell '89 B.B.A.** and daughter-in-law, **Coral (Bromley) Caldwell '90 B.Ed.**



Mr. Philip Stoval '56 B.A. 12/13/24

Mrs. Callie "Willene" (Johnson) Thomas '56 B.S.N. 8/27/25

Mr. Jerry Brumbelow '57 B.S. 4/17/25. Survived by wife **Billie (Ramsey) Brumbelow 'x.**

Mrs. J. Carolyn (McDonald) Cheek '57 B.M. 9/22/25

Ms. Charlotte (Austin) Jester '57 B.S. 1/6/25



MR. ROY CLOUD '58 B.B.A.

July 14, 2025

Roy Joe Cloud was born and raised in Abilene, Texas, and earned his degree from Hardin-Simmons University, where he was a member of the World-Famous Cowboy Band and participated in ROTC. He faithfully served in the United States Army and later spent more than 50 years as a respected real estate broker and part-owner of Cooksey and Cloud Realtors in Abilene. Roy remained deeply connected to HSU after graduation, serving on the Cowboy Band Foundation and participating in the HSU Fellowship. Roy was married to **Jeanette Cloud**, former HSU Supervisor of Library Acquisition, for 64 years before his passing.

Roy is also survived by son **Larry Cloud '92 B.B.A.**, daughter **Melinda Hawkins '87 B.Ed.**, grandson **Zachary Hawkins '15 B.B.A.**, granddaughter **Lauren (Hawkins) Martin '18 B.B.S.**, and grandson-in-law, **Anthony "AJ" Martin '18 B.B.A.**

Mr. William "Kenneth" West '57 B.B.A. 9/14/25



Ms. Barbara "Ann" (Bright) Arnhart '59 B.B.A. 12/23/25



1960s

Mr. Jim Tom Butler '60 B.B.A. 6/26/25



Mr. Robert Howell '60 B.B.A. 12/16/25

Mr. Jerry "Jack" Preston '60 B.B.A., former trustee, 10/25/25



Mr. William "Bill" Dockery '61 B.S. 12/13/25

Mr. Richard "Dick" Dudley '61 B.S. 1/6/26

Dr. Larry Heard '61 B.S. 6/1/25.
Survived by wife **Francis "Ann" (Bozeman) Heard '62 B.S.**

Rev. Jerry Spears '61 B.S. 12/10/25

Mr. Glynn Mathis '62 B.S. 11/8/25.
Survived by wife **Lana (Warford) Mathis 'x.**



Mr. Richard Nelson '62 B.S. 7/14/25

Mrs. Bettye (Davis) Porter '62 B.S. 12/5/25

Mrs. Patricia (Burkhalter) Frazor '64 B.S. 11/29/25

Mr. John "Keith" Fry '64 B.A. 8/19/25.
Survived by wife **Sandra (Grinstead) Fry '65 B.B.A.**

Mr. Michael Meriney '64 B.B.A. 1/6/25

Rev. James Walker '64 B.S. 7/15/25

Rev. Lee Pulliam '65 B.S. 8/22/25

Mr. Gary Snow '66 B.B.A. 6/20/25

Mrs. Judy (Slaughter) Thornton '66 B.A. 8/12/25. Survived by husband **Robert Thornton 'x.**

Mr. Wilman "Lee" Abernathy '67 B.A. 11/26/25

Dr. Garry Land '67 B.A. 6/14/25.
Survived by wife **Sandra (Yates) Land '68 B.S.** and brother **Dr. Michael Land '62 B.A.**

Mrs. Joy (Hancock) Vazquez '67 B.S. 11/5/25

YOUR CLASSMATES WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
EMAIL RANGERIDER@HSUTX.EDU

Mr. Charles Rappard '68 B.S.
10/24/25

Mr. Kenneth Scott '68 B.B.A. 5/10/25

Mr. Larry Justice '69 B.A. 6/30/25

Dr. Robert Meek '69 B.A. 8/12/25

1970s

Mr. Johnny Green '71 B.B.A. 8/28/25.
Survived by son John Green '97
B.B.S./'01 M.Ed.

Mrs. Beth (Kugler) Larner '71 B.S.
11/14/25. Survived by husband, Rev.
Thomas "Tommy" Larner '74 B.S.

MSgt. Terry Stubblefield '71 B.S.Ed.
12/12/25

Mrs. Melinda (Hinds) Galloway '72
B.S. 11/10/25

Dr. Tommy
Culwell '73 B.A.
6/15/25 survived
by daughters Laura
(Culwell) Anders
'x and Amanda
(Culwell) Wyatt '05
B.B.S., and son-in-
law Jerry Wyatt '05
B.B.S.



Rev. Fredrick "Glen" Emert '73 B.A.
5/25/25

Mr. John Lybrand '73 B.B.A. 6/2/25

Rev. Evens Olibrice '77 B.S. 12/13/25

Ms. Nancy Ashley '79 B.M./'81 M.M.
2/27/25

1980s

Dr. Carolyn (Scott)
Bray '81 M.Ed.,
former staff, 10/26/25



Mrs. Teresa (Wilcox) McCombs '83
B.B.A. 8/27/25

Mr. Charles "Chuck" Davis '84 B.M.
10/1/25. Survived by wife Elaine
(Martin) Davis '83 B.B.S.

Mrs. Pamela (Tisdale) Funderburg
'84 B.Ed. 10/4/25. Survived by
husband, Dr. Johnny Funderburg Jr.
'82 B.B.S.

Mr. Raymond Mitchell Sr. '85
B.B.A./'85 M.B.A. 7/24/25. Survived
by wife Barbara (Haynes) Mitchell
'91 B.B.A. and son Raymond Mitchell
Jr. 'x.

Mr. Kevin Orr '88
B.B.S. 11/24/25.
Survived by wife
Susan (Swindell)
Orr '88 B.B.S.



1990s

Mr. Manolo "Manny" Cabasal '90
M.B.A. 7/22/25

Mrs. Gretchen (Walker) Herman '93
B.F.A. 10/23/25

Mr. David McDonald '93 B.B.A.
10/10/25. Survived by son Liam
McDonald 'x.

Mr. Robert Marshall '94 M.Ed.
12/29/25

Mrs. Joni (Hall) Brake '96 A.S.N.
7/4/25

Mrs. Jacqueline "Jackie" (Moreno)
Solis '96 B.B.S. 7/4/25. Survived by
husband Jorge Solis '96 B.B.S.

Mrs. Shirley (McKee) Gossard '97
M.Ed. 7/7/25

Mrs. Wynell Williams '97 B.B.S.
4/9/25. Survived by daughter Janell
Williams '94 B.B.S.

Mr. Antonio Carrillo '99 B.B.S.
9/26/25

2000s

Mr. Dustin Williams '04 B.B.S.
10/9/25

Mr. James "Jimmy" Neeley '07 B.B.S.
7/29/25. Survived by wife Kathleen
"Kate" (Ehrie) Neeley '01 B.B.S.

Former Students

Mrs. Lola (Hill) Austin 12/23/25

Mrs. Donna (Hornbuckle) Babb
8/12/25. Survived by husband
Chaplain Erwin Babb '72 B.M.

Mr. Dewey Bohling
10/19/25



Mrs. Joyce Carr 1/9/26

Mrs. Dorothy (Dry) Carriker 8/11/25

Ms. Molly
(Caldwell) Cline
9/28/25. Survived
by her daughter,
Jeannette (Cline)
Black, and son-in-
law Josh Black '19
M.B.A.



Mrs. Sandra (Wold) Coalson 9/14/25

Mrs. Nova (Patterson) Cramer 9/3/25

Mrs. Annie (Stewart Legg) Davis
12/17/25

Mrs. Sharon (Blessing) Davis 8/13/25

Ms. Georganne Demotsets 9/6/25

Mr. William Fox III 9/12/25

Mrs. Elizabeth (Nash) Gorman
10/18/25

Mr. Kenneth Griffin 6/22/25

Mrs. Barbara (Speer) Habertur
12/18/25

Ms. Rose Irizarry 6/24/25

Mrs. Lois (Finley) Johnson 11/30/25

Mr. Pat Jones 11/29/25

Mrs. Doris (Hulme) Jones 5/30/25

Mrs. Bettye (Garrett) Lawlis 7/8/25

Ms. Patricia (Palmer) Leveridge
8/16/25. Survived by husband Ronald
Leveridge 'x.

Mr. Charles Lightfoot 12/2/25

Mrs. Sibyl "Gay" (Crenshaw) Pangle
9/13/25

Mr. Delbert Peterson 12/7/25

Mr. Steven "Steve" Pond 10/13/25.
Survived by wife Shelley "Kim"
(Watts) Pond '84 B.Ed.

Mr. William "Bill" Russell 11/30/25

Mrs. Dana (Horton) Schafer 7/30/25

Rev. Dorchie "Wayne" Shuffield Sr.
12/3/25. Survived by son Dr. D. Wayne
Shuffield '80 B.A. and daughter-in-law
Rebecca "Becky" (Holt) Shuffield '81
B.Ed.

Mr. Floyd "Ray" Smith 10/22/25

Mrs. Rose (Scott) Stubbs 7/5/25

Mr. Glenn Tallant 9/13/25

Mrs. Lillian "Janie" (Shelton) Taylor-
Corbett 9/23/25

Mrs. M. Sue (Williams) Waide
6/15/25

Mr. Jerry Wilson 7/30/25

Mr. Tommy Wimberley 12/1/25.
Survived by son Cody Wimberley '11 B.S.



CHARLOTTE BRIDGES

Dec. 27, 2025

Charlotte devoted her life to teaching and ministry. She served as an elementary teacher and taught English as a second language, and was actively involved in church and community service in Abilene, including City Light Ministries, HSU Roundtable, HSU Fellowship, and First Baptist Church.

Her husband, Dr. Julian Bridges, joined the Hardin-Simmons University faculty in 1973 as a professor of sociology and social work. He taught for 31 years, impacting more than 7,000 students before retiring in 2004. Together, Julian and Charlotte were devoted supporters of HSU and its students, and in 2001, they established the Dr. Julian and Charlotte Bridges Endowed Scholarship to continue their shared legacy of faith, education, and service at Hardin-Simmons University.

Charlotte is survived by her daughters, Rebecca "Becky" Bridges '78 B.S., Deborah (Bridges) Gil '80 B.S., and Marelyn (Bridges) Shedd.

Friends

Mr. Lorain Anderson 7/11/25.
Survived by wife Barbara (Terry)
Anderson 'x.

Mr. Perry Bolin 7/17/25. Survived
by wife Patsy (Rivers) Bolin '64
B.S., sister-in-law Loraine (Rivers)
Hendrix '00 M.Ed., and brother-in-
law Dr. Gene Hendrix '67 B.A.

Dr. Morris Chapman, former trustee,
10/20/25

Mrs. Gloria "Kay" Cockerell 8/25/25.
Survived by daughter Carolyn
(Cockerell) Dods '84 B.S.

Mrs. Eleanor (White) Davis 10/8/25

Mr. Harold Green 8/22/25. Survived by
wife Glenna (Moody) Green '72 M.Ed.

Dr. Carol Haire 10/28/25. Survived by
sister Barbara Haire '88 M.Ed.

Mrs. Laquita (Ross)
Culwell 9/11/25.
Survived by daughters
Laura (Culwell)
Anders 'x and
Amanda (Culwell)
Wyatt '05 B.B.S., and
son-in-law Jerry Wyatt
'05 B.B.S.



Mrs. Molyan "Molly" (Martin)
Haynes 9/14/25. Survived by son Jack
Haynes Jr. '75 B.B.A. and daughter
Cherie (Haynes) Speer '83 B.S.

Mrs. Sherry Hirsch,
former adjunct,
1/10/26. Survived by
son Victor "John"
Hirsch III '01 B.S.



Mr. Donald McDonald 11/21/25

Mrs. Sandra (Heiligman) Nichols
12/10/24. Survived by husband Edmund
"Ed" Nichols '53 B.M.

Mr. Donald "Don"
Jackson, former
trustee, 11/20/25.
Survived by daughter
Sheri (Jackson)
Wickman '89 B.B.S.,
and son-in-law Brad
Wickman '85 B.B.A.



Mr. Robert Qualls 8/4/25. Survived by
son Roddy Qualls '84 B.S.

Mr. Larry Rainey 9/18/25. Survived by
sister Roena (Rainey) Tandy.

Mr. Bill Senter
11/7/25. Survived
by granddaughter
Ashlee (McKinney)
Snider '07 B.A.



Mrs. Wanda Spurgin
10/9/2025. Survived
by daughter Debbie
(Spurgin) Owens
'79 B.S. and son-in-
law Dr. Tim Owens
'79 B.A., son Tony
Thetford '76 B.S.
and daughter-in-law
Martha "Jane" (Price)
Thetford 'x, daughter
Sherry (Brown-
Thetford) Rounsaville
'x. Tony established an
endowed scholarship
in honor of Wanda in
December 2025.



Mr. James "Jimmy" Tittle 6/22/25

Mrs. Cherrie Wells 4/28/25. Survived
by husband Billy Wells '53 B.S.

Mrs. Sue (Pundt) Williford 4/29/25

Editor's Note: All cities are in Texas
unless otherwise noted. Email
addresses are included when possible.

Acronyms:

AHOF-Athletics Hall of Fame
DAA-Distinguished Alumni Award
HOL-Hall of Leaders
HD-Honorary Doctorate Degree
KASA-Keeter Alumni Service Award
LDA-Logsdon Distinguished Alumni Award
OYA-Outstanding Young Alumni Award



DR. ROBERT "KEITH" PARKS

Aug. 26, 2025

Robert "Keith" Parks was born in Memphis, Texas, and devoted his life to Christian ministry and global missions leadership. He earned his academic degrees from North Texas State College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and was awarded an honorary doctor of letters from Hardin-Simmons University in 1976 for his distinguished service to faith and missions.

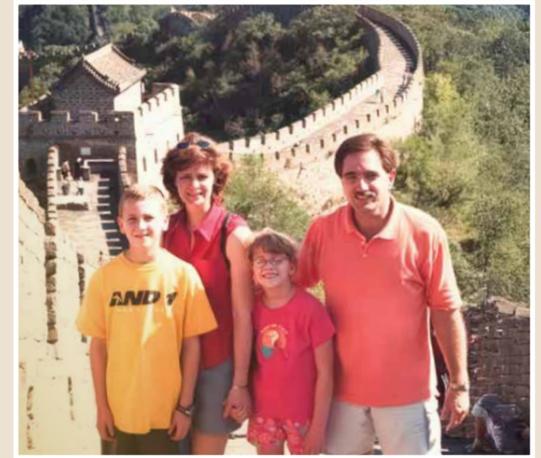
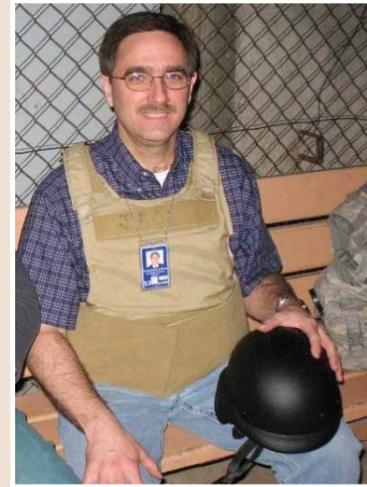
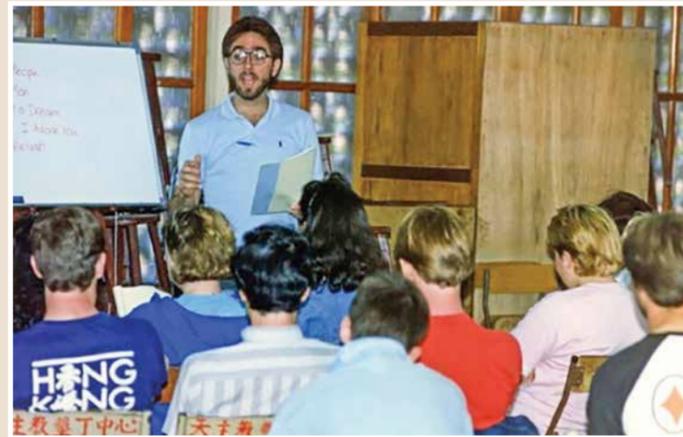
Keith and his late wife, Helen, served for 14 years as missionaries in Indonesia, where he pastored churches, taught in seminary, and served as president of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Indonesia. He later served as president of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1980 to 1992, guiding thousands of missionaries worldwide and advancing a vision of evangelism and church planting among unreached people groups.

Keith's legacy lives on through his brother, Dr. Jim Parks '56 B.A., his sons Dr. S. Kent Parks '79 B.A., Randall Parks '76 B.A., and Dr. Stanley "Stan" Parks '85 B.A., his granddaughters Katy (Parks) Leech '07 B.B.S., and Lindsay Parks '10 B.B.S., and his grandson Kaleb Parks '17 B.A.

Submissions
received from
June 19, 2025 -
Jan. 13, 2026

The Work of a Faithful Life

Remembering Charles “Chuck” Davis ’84 — a servant-leader whose purpose, passion, and love for people shaped lives across continents.



Charles “Chuck” William Davis ’84 lived the kind of life that doesn’t draw attention to itself yet quietly leaves the world changed. His calling took him across continents, into embassies and churches, through seasons of diplomacy, ministry, and leadership — but the thread running throughout was simple and unwavering: he loved God, and he loved people with purpose, passion, and sincerity.

Chuck passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack on Oct. 1, 2025, in McKinney, Texas. His impact continues to echo in the lives of those he served, mentored, taught, encouraged, prayed for, and faithfully led. Roles or titles did not define his life’s work, though he held many. It was defined by the way he consistently cared

for others, not just the employee or the administrator, but the person. Chuck valued all people and professionally delighted in rewarding hard work and excellence.

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and raised in Mississippi and Texas, Chuck discovered early on that music, faith, and people were central to who he was becoming. When he arrived at Hardin-Simmons University as a gifted tuba player, he found not only a place to refine those passions but a community that shaped his understanding of calling. He performed with the World-Famous Cowboy Band, including their 1984 European Tour, and stayed deeply involved through Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Alpha Chi, and Baptist Student Ministry (BSM). While a student, he served as a Texas BSM

summer missionary in Morocco as a youth director at an English-speaking church. Members of his congregation who worked at the U.S. Embassy introduced Chuck to the world of diplomatic service — a quiet seed planted through friendship and faith that, nearly 20 years later, inspired him to take the Foreign Service exams. Chuck graduated cum laude in 1984 with a Bachelor of Music.

It was also on the Forty Acres that he met Elaine Martin ’83, who became his wife and, in every sense of the word, his partner. Married in 1983, they built a life marked by a shared ministry of discipleship, hospitality, and adventure. From 1985-87, the Davises served as Missionary Journeymen in Taiwan for two years through the International Mission Board of the Southern

Baptist Convention. Chuck initially thought being a missionary was his calling, so he earned a Master of Divinity in Biblical Languages and Theology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1992. Little did he know the degree would become a tool God equipped him with to teach and preach in expatriate churches overseas, alongside his work with the U.S. Department of State.

The Davis children, Daniel and Allison, grew up in places like China, England, Singapore, and Israel — places their parents turned into homes by loving the people around them. Today, Daniel — a former speechwriter — recently became a pastor in Washington, D.C., and Allison continues the family’s HSU legacy as a graduate student.

Chuck’s early ministry years with the Baptist General Convention of Texas revealed his passion for investing in young adults and for stepping into roles others might overlook. He directed the Baptist Student Ministry at Southwestern Medical School, Houston Christian University, and the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston,

and coordinated medical mission projects across Mexico and Central America. Whether he was organizing relief trips or mentoring students facing the pressures of medical training, Chuck showed a steady compassion that made people feel seen and valued.

In 1999, he joined the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service officer, launching a 20-year diplomatic career that carried him to postings across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, where he ultimately retired following the onset of the COVID epidemic. His work spanned embassy leadership, humanitarian response, and crisis coordination. Chuck coordinated evacuations, assisted Americans after terrorist attacks, and organized presidential visits for Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. Though he received numerous commendations, his greatest joy was teaching, preaching, and discipling others.

In recognition of a life shaped by faith-filled leadership and service, Hardin-Simmons University honored him with its Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011. After

retiring from diplomatic service, Chuck returned to Hardin-Simmons in a new capacity — one that reflected his deep love for the institution that shaped him. He served as a trustee and was elected chair of the Board of Trustees for 2024 and 2025. Colleagues admired his humility, steadiness, and commitment to HSU’s mission. He helped guide important institutional work, approaching leadership with prayerful discernment and a heart for the people behind the decisions.

Beyond his roles and responsibilities, Chuck was known for the character that reflected a life well lived. He made his family a higher priority over job advancement. He valued friendships deeply, noticed when someone needed encouragement, quietly prayed for people, and believed kindness and decency mattered.

His life remains a testament to what happens when purpose is embraced, passion is offered freely, and people are loved well. It is the work of a faithful life, and Chuck Davis ’84 lived it beautifully.



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At Hardin-Simmons University, success is built on discipline, teamwork, and determination. Those same values carry over off the field, especially for Kaiden Roden.

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speak LIFE: Honor, Strengthen, Uplift.

A word from our vice president



As we kickoff 2026, we continue to “commit our plans to the Lord” as He promises to “establish our plans” (Psalms 37:5, Proverbs 16:3). As we do, we can rest in the assurance that faithful commitment leads to meaningful progress and lasting success. Thanks to God’s provision and the remarkable generosity of the Hardin-Simmons community, we surpassed our speakLIFE Capital Campaign goal in Fiscal Year 2025 - more than a year ahead of schedule.

In 2025, we continued to see the direct impact of the speakLIFE Campaign with the restoration and dedication of the Dr.

George and Carolyn Newman and Sid Richardson Science Center. This dedication included the new Blanton Academic Wing and Holland Laboratory Wing. The speakLIFE Campaign’s success is not just a measure of goals met but of lives uplifted and purpose advanced.

Vicki House

Dr. Vicki House '01/'10/'22,
Vice President for
Engagement and
Advancement

\$54,800,621

Campaign Total

42,666

Total Gifts

8,462

Total Givers

3,127

Alumni

5,244

First-Time Givers

301

Parents

168

Faculty Staff

Explore the Ongoing Impact

“As a mechanical engineering major, I rely heavily on the resources in the Newman-Richardson Science Center — especially the labs that allow for hands-on learning. Access to high-quality equipment has significantly strengthened my education. Studying there has helped me grow spiritually by being surrounded by people passionate about sharing God’s love. Thank you for your support. It is truly changing lives and creating meaningful learning opportunities for students.”

Jorge Perales-Garcia '26
Rotan, Texas
Mechanical Engineering
Chapel Worship Band Member
Undergraduate Research Assistant

Discover more stories

of how speakLIFE is shaping students, strengthening programs, and transforming campus through the 2025 Kingdom Impact Report by scanning the QR code.



How I impacted the FORTY ACRES

Every Cowboy has a story about how Hardin-Simmons shaped their life. These alumni turned that gratitude into action and discovered that giving back is just as transformative as receiving. From scholarships to service, mentorship to program support, here's how they're leaving their mark on the Forty Acres.

IMPACT THROUGH PROGRAM SUPPORT

Cindy (Parker) '68 and Jim Parker '73

For Cindy and Jim Parker, supporting Hardin-Simmons has never been about choosing just one program. It is about strengthening the full ecosystem that helps students discover who they are called to be.

"Each program we support is an integral part of HSU that has influenced us and is reaching so many diverse students," Cindy says. "At this age, students are trying to decide what area they want to major in to be an effective member of society."

The Parkers pay close attention to the life of the campus and the needs that arise. When they see opportunities, they step in. What keeps them invested is watching students show up, both on campus and in the community. Cindy recalls seeing HSU students mentoring in local schools, performing in community orchestras, and volunteering throughout Abilene.

One moment stands out. While attending a campus production of Cinderella, Cindy noticed a young girl in the audience, no more than three years old, turn to her mother and say, "I want to dance with the prince." That moment, Cindy says, captured the ripple effect of investing in programs and how one experience can spark imagination and possibility far beyond the stage.

For the Parkers, that sense of connection does not stop at the campus gates. On a drive home from Florida,

a stranger honked, rolled down their window, and struck up a conversation after spotting the Parkers' HSU sticker.

"There are so many ways an alum can get involved," Cindy says. "When you invest in students, you're investing in our future."



IMPACT THROUGH MENTORSHIP

Tori Flores '18

Tori Flores discovered the power of mentorship before she even graduated. As a senior, she served as one of the first student teachers for HSU's Freshman Year Seminar, helping new students navigate the transition to college life.

"I found being a mentor to others very rewarding," she says. "I remembered how meaningful it was when recent alumni shared their experiences with me."

After spending a few years away from Abilene, Tori returned and reconnected with faculty who invited her back into the classroom. This time, she came as a professional. During one visit, she handed out her business card and invited students to reach out if they wanted to talk further.

One student did. They met for coffee at Monks Coffee Shop, where the student asked thoughtful questions about careers and life after graduation. The conversation lasted more than an hour.

"She was trying to figure out her path," Tori recalls. "I got to share what I wish I had known when I was in her seat."

That moment reinforced why mentorship matters to her. Tori remembers how uncertain the transition out of college felt and how many graduates struggle to find the right fit simply because they have not had access to honest conversations about the working world.

"If I can help even one student feel more prepared, I'll take that opportunity," she says. "In mentorship, the impact doesn't stop with one person. It multiplies."





IMPACT THROUGH SERVICE

Nick Neppach '14

For Nick Neppach, service has been the most tangible way to stay connected to Hardin-Simmons. Since 2017, he has served through the Board of Young Associates, including his current role as vice president for the DFW region.

“BYA has been an incredibly meaningful way for me to stay connected to Hardin-Simmons in a very tangible way,” Nick says. “It’s more than just staying in touch — it’s being actively involved in helping move the university forward.”

Through that service, Nick gained something he did not expect: proximity. Serving alongside university leadership offered a behind-the-scenes view of priorities and long-term vision.

“It gave me a much broader understanding of how intentional HSU is about living out its mission,” he says. “You see how many people are working behind the scenes to support students.”

That closeness, Nick explains, creates space for dialogue and advocacy that go beyond financial giving alone.

“Service creates room for ideas, conversation, and leadership,” he says. “Each alumnus brings something different to the table, and those perspectives matter.”

His advice to fellow Cowboys is simple: show up. “Your experiences and insights help shape HSU’s future in ways only alumni can.”

IMPACT THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP CREATION

Dr. Shanna A. Smith '08

As a student, Dr. Shanna Smith experienced firsthand the difference scholarships can make. Sometimes they covered a single class; other times, they paid for textbooks.

“Every bit made a difference,” she says. “Receiving those scholarships reminded me that someone I had never met believed in my future.”

In November 2025, that gratitude came full circle when she established the Dr. Shanna A. Smith Endowed Scholarship. Inspired by her parents, Gerald and Lorna Smith, the gift reflects a legacy of faith, service, and generosity.

“My parents sacrificed tremendously to send me to HSU,” she shares. “They believed investing in education would pay lifelong dividends and consistently looked for ways to bless others. Completing this milestone, just months after my father’s passing, became a meaningful way to honor the values they instilled in me.”

Initially, creating an endowment felt out of reach. With guidance from HSU’s Advancement team, Dr. Smith built the fund gradually, strategically, and creatively through personal monthly giving and contributions from loved ones celebrating her doctoral graduation.

Dr. Smith designed the scholarship to reflect her HSU experience, promoting academic excellence, encouraging campus involvement, and supporting military-connected students — all while removing financial barriers.

“Endowing this scholarship was a step of faith and a way to give back. The process is far more flexible and attainable than most think,” she says. “If the scholarship helps students focus on their education, connect with mentors, and pursue their calling, then it has fulfilled its purpose.”



Write Your Own Impact Story

Whether you’re drawn to scholarships, program support, mentorship, or service, there’s a place for you in the Hardin-Simmons story. Explore the Giving Guide to discover how you can make your mark on the Forty Acres.



What's your Favorite Memory

from dorm life at HSU?

For a century, Ferguson Hall has marked the threshold between adolescence and adulthood for generations of Hardin-Simmons students. It's where independence takes root — where late-night study sessions stretch long past midnight, friendships are forged in shared spaces, and the ordinary rhythms of dorm life quietly shape who we become.

Sometimes those memories are simple: movie nights in the lobby, popcorn popping for anyone who wanted some, or tossing a baseball on the lawn after a long day. Other times, they arrive unexpectedly — sirens in the distance, adrenaline kicking in, and a group of students instinctively stepping up to care for one another in the middle of the night.

From the class of 1925 to the class of 2025, the details may change, but the experience of finding your place remains the same. These halls have always held more than beds and desks — they've held moments of responsibility, belonging, and friendship that last far beyond a first year on campus.

Alumni from across the decades share their most memorable moments from dorm life at HSU.



Laurie Harris '13,
Director of Alumni Engagement

In October 2012, I was an RA in Behrens Hall alongside Amber (Ediger) Kelley '14, Whitney (Milner) Wright '14, and Madeline Witzel-Schulle '15. Most evenings, if we were available, you could find us sitting in the lobby or working desk hours.

One night, Whitney and I were walking back from intramurals when we heard sirens in the distance. We looked at each other and started running. When we reached Behrens, we learned that the oven in the kitchen had caught fire.

Adrenaline took over. Madeline punched through the glass of the fire extinguisher case without hesitation. Amber opened the door and was immediately met with smoke, her glasses clouding as she began clearing girls from their rooms. Whitney and I jumped in as soon as we arrived, helping move students outside while firefighters worked to put out the fire and assess the damage.

Some of the girls — pulled from sleep or rushed out mid-shower — were less than thrilled to be standing outside in the middle of the night. But once the all-clear was given, what lingered wasn't frustration; it was gratitude.

Today, I'm thankful for the bonds formed in moments like that, whether in unexpected emergencies or during simple movie nights in the lobby. Hardin-Simmons gave us the gift of friendship, and I'm forever grateful.



Jane (Altom) Purtle '68

When I first moved into Hunter Hall, my sophomore year with Connie (Darter) Cox '68, my dad bought me a 20-pound bag of popcorn to take to the dorm. I had a little popcorn popper, and throughout the year, I used up that whole bag popping popcorn for whoever wanted any. Miss Cul was a wonderful dorm mother for freshmen girls in Behrens Hall, and I loved chapel in Behrens Chapel. I'm forever grateful for my time at HSU.



Anne (McHenry)
Blackburn '79

Studying late nights in the Behrens Hall basement study room with others after we'd vacated our own rooms when our roommates went to sleep. Buying matching red bedspreads and covering the tops of our chipped green WWII gun metal furniture with red gingham contact paper. Being excited when you received a phone call! Miss Culpepper sewing my Singers' outfit for me. Never waiting for a toilet or shower because we had a community bathroom, and never having bathroom-cleaning duty thanks to the housekeepers. The dorm banquet was that once-a-year, acceptably appropriate way for a girl to ask a guy for a date.



Brandon Barrett '07

One of the greatest times I had while living in Anderson Hall was when my roommate, Chris Bruce '07/'10, and I went out and threw the baseball on Anderson Lawn. We did this at least three or four times a week. Whenever either one of us was having a rough day, we would go throw, and it would make us feel so much better.

These halls have always held more than beds and desks. They've held the moments that shape who we become. Support the memories being made today — scan the QR code to give today!





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DEVOTIONAL

Purpose & Passion

by Shelli Presley,
Director of Spiritual Formation

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”

—Matthew 6:33

When our purpose is to know, honor, and bless the heart of God, we find ourselves listening to Him, obeying Him, being transformed, and fulfilling the things He has ordained in His Kingdom plan.

There is no life fuller than a life of following the Lord as we serve His Kingdom. Adventure, joy, peace, bearing fruit, and even suffering can all be part of what we experience as we grow as disciples and Christ’s ambassadors. The truth is, we discover deep and unshakable purpose when serving His Kingdom. Even when it is costly, it is worth every cost to see His Kingdom advance.

Passion ignites in all of us when the Spirit leads and guides us into serving God’s purpose with our personal time, gifts, and talents. The doors He opens for us to serve and give — and our obedience to walk through those doors with courage — allow our passion for Christ and the Kingdom to grow and increase. Consider Moses, Joseph, Deborah, Esther, Mary, and Paul. Have you ever seen a modern-day example of someone completely sold out to loving God and fulfilling His Kingdom on earth? Passion is vividly seen in one who is sold out to loving and obeying God. And there is great power in the church when we come together in unity to fulfill God’s Kingdom purpose.

As Christians, let us light the path, blaze the trail, and be living examples of people who are joyful in all circumstances, steadfast in Christlike character — even in trials and suffering — and willing to live sacrificially and serve others so they can experience Christ and come to know the Father’s love. Let us be willing to let go of the pleasures of this world, to be inconvenienced, interrupted, and called out of our comfort zones for the sake of Christ being made known.

In Christ, your purpose is set, your passion and joy are made whole, and the evidence of Christ transforms lives through you. Life in the Kingdom — there is no greater joy. Keep pressing on, beloved of God. Jesus Christ is worthy of our lives.

Let us know how we can pray for you:
www.hsutx.edu/pray



TEXAS BAPTISTS IN ABILENE

During the 140th Annual Texas Baptists Meeting, Hardin-Simmons students helped welcome more than 2,000 visitors to Abilene.

Students served in roles ranging from hospitality and worship leadership to digital media and theological engagement.

At the meeting, Hardin-Simmons alumnus Brent Gentzel '91, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Kaufman, shared how he helped launch a new church-to-church partnership between Texas Baptist congregations and Ukrainian Baptist churches — a collaboration formalized with the signing of a memorandum of understanding hosted on the HSU campus.

Scan the QR Code to learn more:



One last thing...

When she's not leading discussions on human behavior, social systems, or trauma-informed care, you might find **Dr. Lauren Cantrell '10/'23** on the mat perfecting kicks, stances, and the intentional discipline behind martial arts. A certified Green Belt, Cantrell first stepped into class *as a way to challenge herself and stay active* — and discovered a restorative outlet she now considers essential to her well-being.



"As social workers, we are trained to empower others, and I bring that commitment into my role as a professor, supporting students as they pursue their personal and professional goals. I discovered a new form of empowerment when I began training in Taekwondo. I first stepped onto the mat as a "mom on the mat," wanting to show my son that we can rise to meet difficult challenges, and to connect with other mothers and women training alongside me.

"Over time, this practice has helped me cultivate greater confidence, resilience, self-awareness, and balance. I'm learning to care for myself in a more intentional way, consistently pushing myself to "do hard things," even when they feel uncomfortable. I now draw on this experience as an additional tool to motivate my students, encouraging them to stretch beyond their comfort zones, try new challenges, and discover their own inner strength," said Cantrell.

Dr. Lauren Cantrell '10/'23
Department Head: Social Work and Sociology;
Associate Professor of Social Work
Cynthia Ann Parker College of Liberal Arts

Professor Tifani Smith
Assistant Professor of Social Work;
Practicum Education Director

And when she isn't teaching social work practice, **Tifani Smith** is dancing *en pointe*. Outside the classroom, Smith returns to a lifelong love — ballet. A trained ballerina, she still finds time for pliés, arabesques, and the quiet strength that ballet demands.

"Social Work is deeply rewarding but also emotionally and mentally demanding. I teach my students the importance of self-care, and dance is a true expression of that for me — a place where I can breathe, reset to center, and restore my balance," said Smith.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Hello! This is **Richard "Rick" Brown '81** and I am the 2026 President of the HSU Alumni Association Board of Directors. The HSU AAB is an alumni-run board with the primary goals of encouraging alumni engagement, assisting with alumni events such as Homecoming, and creating projects to benefit Hardin-Simmons, its current students, and alumni. The Board meets four times a year and volunteers at various events throughout the spring and fall semesters.

- Jaime (Higginbotham) Aleman '16**, Secretary
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