

HARDIN-SIMMONS UNIVERSITY

Range RIDER

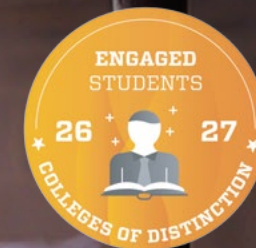
FALL 2026



BUILDING WHAT MATTERS,
Growing What Lasts.

Where Excellence Takes Shape

Through hands-on learning, personal mentorship, and a Christ-centered education, Hardin-Simmons continues to earn national recognition as a College of Distinction, including honors for academic excellence, career development, affordability, business, education, and nursing.



in this magazine:



10
ENGINEERING
A LEGACY



14
THE FONDEST
OF FAREWELLS



24
CALLED TO CARE



30
FULL SMILE,
FULL CIRCLE FAITH

Range Rider is the official publication of Hardin-Simmons University for its alumni, staff, and friends, and is published biannually as a joint effort between HSU's Offices of University Marketing, Engagement and Advancement, Athletics, and the President's Office. Postage paid at Abilene, Texas, and additional mailing offices. Opinions expressed in *Range Rider* are those of the individual authors and subjects and do not necessarily reflect the views of the university administration, faculty, staff, or students. No portion of this magazine may be reprinted without express written consent from the editor at rangerider@hsutx.edu. If you have any questions or concerns, please call: (325) 670-1317.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AROUND THE FORTY ACRES

- 6 Building What Matters, Growing What Lasts
- 10 Engineering a Legacy
- 14 The Fondest of Farewells

ATHLETICS GREAT ARE THY VICTORIES

- 18 Top 10 Cowboy Countdown
- 22 Women's Basketball Season Recap
- 24 Called to Care

ALUMNI CONNECTED FOR LIFE

- 30 Full Smile, Full Circle Faith
- 34 Cowboys Build Businesses
- 36 Homecoming
- 38 Alumni Awards
- 42 Family News

ADVANCEMENT LONG LIVE THY NOBLE CAUSE

- 50 speakLIFE Campaign
- 54 Your Impact, Their Future
- 58 Heritage Society & Pace Setters

ALL YOUR PRAISES TRUE

- 60 Traveling Range Riders
- 62 Strategic Plan
- 64 Devotional & Chapel Updates

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! Find them on pages 28 and 48.



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.

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PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

Hardin-Simmons University enters this academic year with tremendous momentum and an even greater vision for the future. Sound financial stewardship, expanding academic programs, and continued campus improvements position the university for sustained growth. These accomplishments are not the destination but the foundation for fulfilling our mission of providing excellence in education enlightened by Christian faith and values. As we look ahead, we do so with confidence that God has prepared even greater opportunities for His university.

The future of Hardin-Simmons will always be built through people. Every student who graduates has been shaped by professors, coaches, mentors, and staff who faithfully invest in their lives. By supporting our employees, expanding innovative academic programs, and preparing students for meaningful careers and Christ-centered leadership, we are equipping the next generation to make a lasting impact in their communities, professions, and churches.

Our strategic plans and future fundraising efforts reflect a commitment to building for generations yet to come. By investing in student success through scholarships, technology, new facilities, and campus renovations, Hardin-Simmons is strengthening its ability to serve more students while preserving the distinctive Christian education that has defined the university for more than a century. Financial strength is not an end in itself — it is a resource that enables greater Kingdom impact.

Hardin-Simmons is also embracing opportunities to lead beyond our campus. Through initiatives like the Fletcher Lecture Series and the Technology and Energy Summit, we are bringing together leaders from business, technology, government, and ministry to prepare students to engage the challenges of tomorrow with wisdom, integrity, and Christian conviction. At the same time, partnerships with alumni, churches, donors, and the Abilene community continue to expand the university’s influence far beyond its campus.

As we prepare for the future, our commitment remains steadfast: continuous improvement, faithful stewardship, and unwavering devotion to Christ. While programs, facilities, and opportunities will continue to grow, our purpose will not change. We will continue pursuing excellence, developing Christian leaders, and investing in future generations so that Hardin-Simmons University remains a place where students are transformed, lives are changed, and God is glorified for many years to come.

EBT

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



BUILDING WHAT MATTERS, GROWING WHAT LASTS

LOOK CLOSE!

Think you know the Forty Acres inside and out? Guess the full image from a small detail as you revisit just a few of the many milestones from the past decade in celebration of President Bruntmyer's 10 years at HSU.

1



2



6



3



7



4



5



8



ANSWERS
ON THE
NEXT PAGE!



1

THE COWGIRL OF THE WEST

Since 2016, we've invested in the student experience by constructing four new apartment buildings, a new residence hall, a state-of-the-art fitness facility, and major renovations to the Cafeteria and Lange Hall. These eight projects have enhanced campus life, strengthened community, and created spaces where future Christian leaders thrive.



5

MABEE TROPHY CASE

We've transformed the HSU athletic experience through significant facility enhancements, including new locker rooms, lights, stands, scoreboards, a videoboard, hitting facilities, and upgraded weight rooms. These investments have fueled remarkable success on the field and court, where our student-athletes have captured 27 conference championships.

2

ENGINEERING MAKER'S LAB

Over the past decade, we've expanded our academic offerings with seven new degree programs, along with numerous programs and certificates designed to meet emerging workforce needs. Many of these additions have focused on healthcare-related fields, equipping students to serve the growing needs of our community and state.



6

NURSING SCHOOL LAB

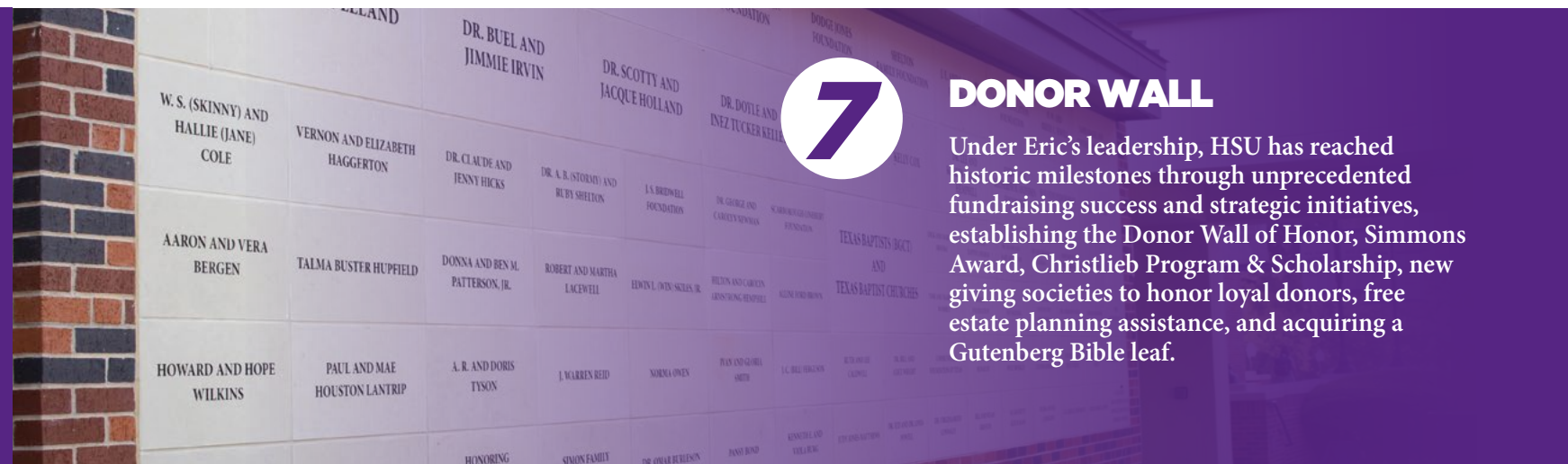
During this time, we've obtained approval of 16 academic and institutional standards from accreditors outside our community. Most recently, our School of Nursing earned CCNE accreditation, a historic milestone that validates the quality of our program and our commitment to preparing future Christian nurse leaders to the highest standards.



3

ALUMNI WALL

We've connected with alumni and communities across Texas, the nation, and around the world through meaningful engagement, expanded communications, and shared experiences that celebrate God's faithfulness. By telling the stories of our students and university, we have worked to keep the HSU family informed, connected, and inspired.



7

DONOR WALL

Under Eric's leadership, HSU has reached historic milestones through unprecedented fundraising success and strategic initiatives, establishing the Donor Wall of Honor, Simmons Award, Christlieb Program & Scholarship, new giving societies to honor loyal donors, free estate planning assistance, and acquiring a Gutenberg Bible leaf.

4

CAMPUS TRIANGLE

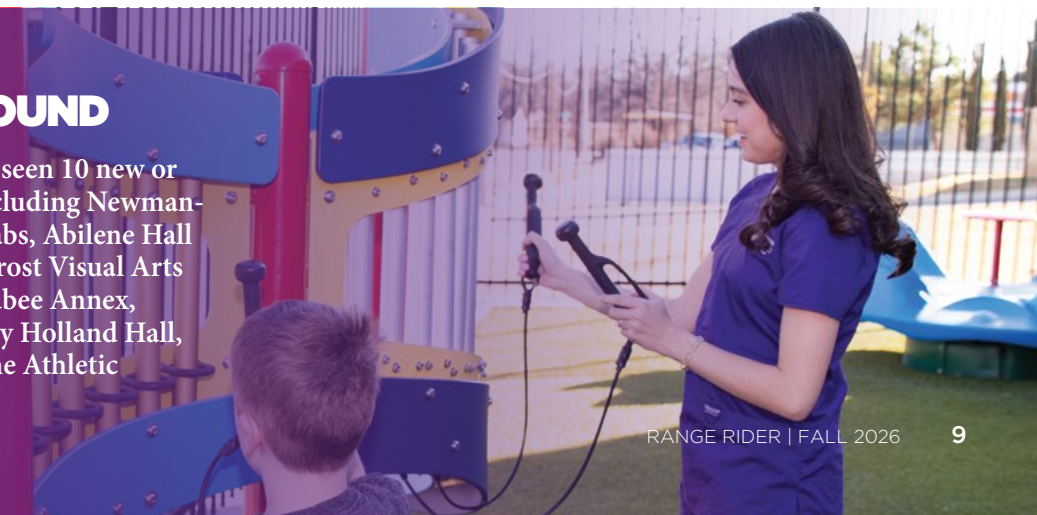
We've worked to preserve and celebrate HSU's rich heritage, including the designation of the Founders Cemetery as a Historic Texas Cemetery in 2018. This recognition honors the visionary leaders and early pioneers who helped establish Hardin-Simmons and ensures that their legacy will continue to inspire future generations of students and alumni.



8

THE HLC PLAYGROUND

In 10 years, the Forty Acres has seen 10 new or remodeled academic spaces, including Newman-Richardson Science Building Labs, Abilene Hall for Engineering and Nursing, Frost Visual Arts Building, Johnson Building, Mabee Annex, Marston Gym, Jacque and Scotty Holland Hall, Houston-Lantrip Center, and the Athletic Training facility.





ENGINEERING A LEGACY

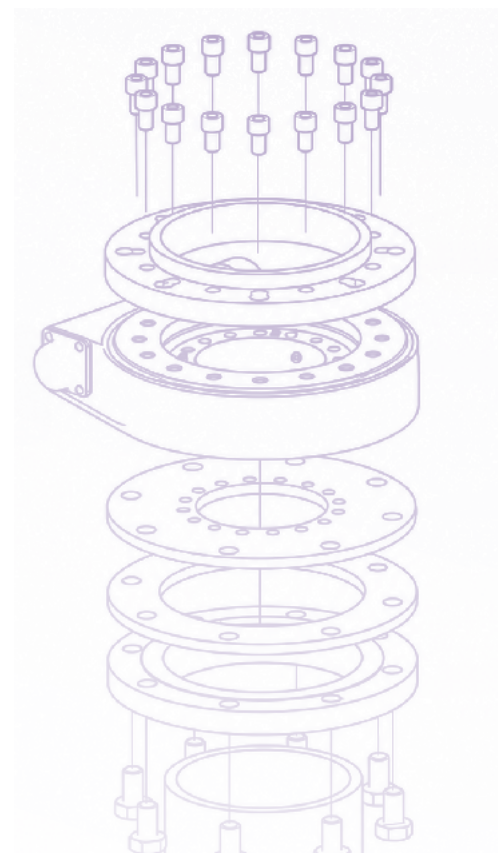
HSU's first mechanical engineering graduates leave behind more than a capstone project.

As the spring semester came to a close, three Hardin-Simmons University seniors stood before faculty, industry leaders, classmates, and guests to present the result of nearly a year of work.

The project itself was impressive: a custom-designed patient lift created to expand opportunities within HSU's Hippotherapy program.

But what stood behind the project told an even bigger story.

For Jorge Perales-Garcia '26, Jeremiah Richard '26, and Brandon Still '26, the presentation marked the final chapter of a journey that began with a leap of faith. They joined HSU's new mechanical engineering program before it had produced a single graduate. There were no capstone projects lining the walls, no engineering alumni to look up to, and no accreditation history to point toward.



There was simply a vision.

Now, as the first graduates of Hardin-Simmons University's mechanical engineering program, the three seniors leave behind something far greater than a piece of equipment. They leave behind a foundation for future students, a project that will continue serving others, and a lasting example of what engineering at HSU can be.

Building Something Bigger

The idea for the capstone project began with a need identified by faculty in the Physical Therapy program.

Dr. Wendy Anemaet and Dr. Allison Robinson had seen similar lift systems while attending hippotherapy training courses across the country. They knew a lift could expand access for patients with severe mobility limitations while supporting the future growth of HSU's program.

"When the engineering department put out their call for projects, it seemed like an awesome fit," Anemaet said.

Hippotherapy uses the movement of horses as part of physical therapy treatment to improve balance, coordination, strength, and mobility. As the program continues to grow, faculty recognized the need for a lift that would safely serve more patients while remaining portable enough to move with the program in the future.

The challenge was clear: design a lift that was safe, durable, portable, and built to meet the unique needs of both patients and therapists.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

What followed was far more than a typical classroom assignment.

Over two semesters, the students worked alongside physical therapy faculty to design, build, and test the lift while navigating safety standards, client expectations, and real-world engineering challenges.

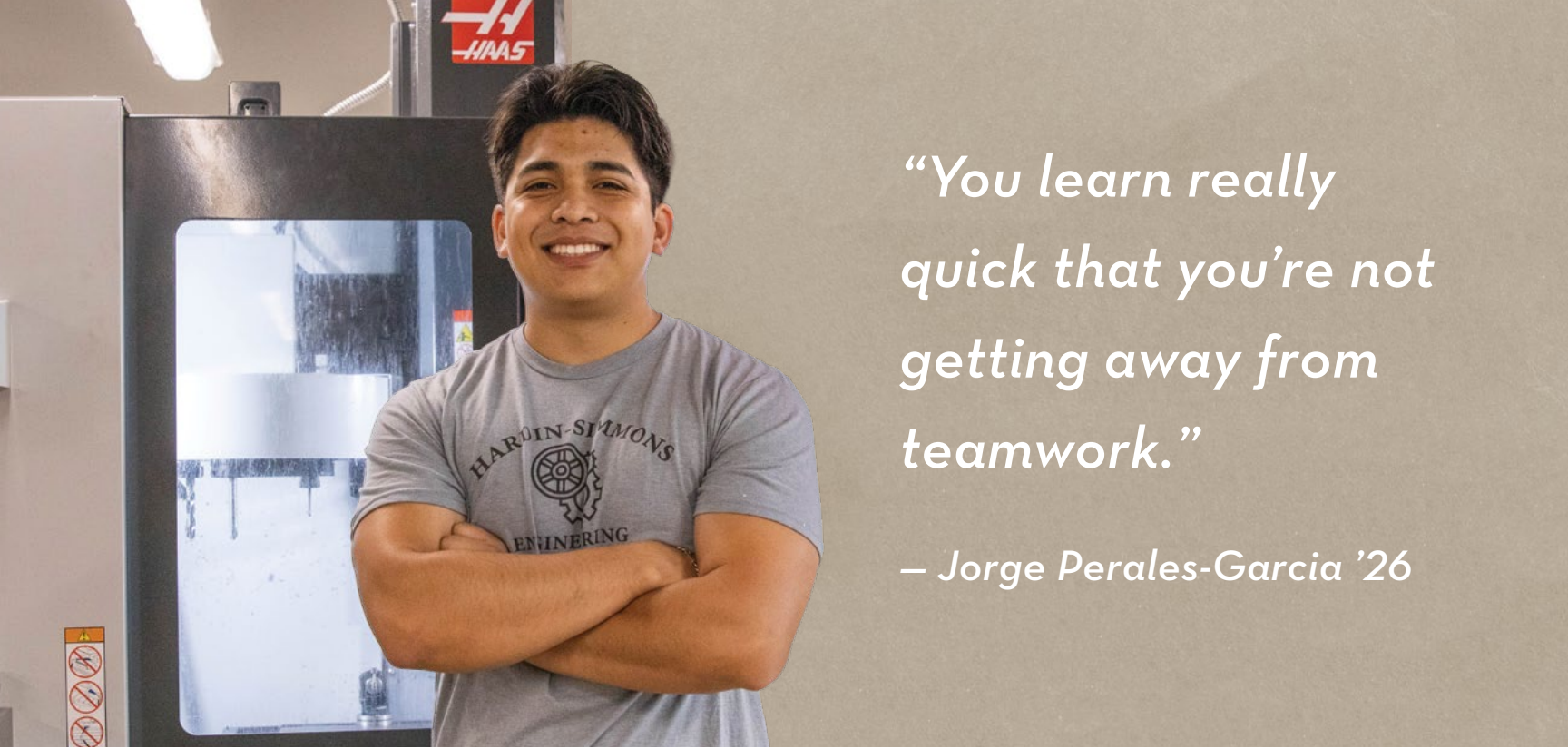
The project stretched beyond technical skills. It required the students to bridge two very different disciplines, learning to communicate engineering concepts with healthcare professionals while designing around real clinical needs.

"It was a lot of fun just trying to figure out how those meet in the middle," Anemaet said. "We'd say we needed something, and they would work and work at it. They'd come back and say, 'What about this? How about that?' It was very collaborative."



"To be able to say we pioneered the way for the start of the engineering program, it's awesome."

— Jeremiah Richard '26



“You learn really quick that you’re not getting away from teamwork.”

— Jorge Perales-Garcia '26

Each student walked away with something different. Richard taught himself to operate a computer numerical control (CNC) machine to manufacture custom parts. Still watched an idea evolve from sketches on an iPad into a fully functioning structure. For Perales-Garcia, the project reinforced the importance of communication and collaboration.

The hands-on experience extended all the way through testing. Before the lift could ever be used with patients, the students stepped into the harness themselves, experiencing firsthand the system they had spent months designing and building.

Robinson, who worked alongside the students throughout the year, said watching them develop professionally became one of the most rewarding parts of the experience.

“There were twists and turns throughout the process, but they did a great job managing them,” Robinson said. “It was exciting to watch their growth and maturity throughout the project.”

A Program Built on Trust

The students joined HSU’s engineering program before it had produced graduates, choosing to invest in a vision rather than an established reputation.

“They came on a promise,” said Dr. Matt Jackson, dean of the Holland School of Sciences and Mathematics. “They believed in what Hardin-Simmons was building.”

That trust has paid off.

All three graduates will continue their education this fall, an uncommon achievement for a first engineering cohort. Perales-Garcia will pursue graduate studies in mechanical engineering at Texas Tech University. Richard will attend Northwestern University to study robotics after being selected for one of the nation’s most competitive master’s programs. Still will continue his work with TxDOT while pursuing a master’s degree in civil engineering at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

For Mrs. Gabby Guajardo, director of engineering research and

professor, the accomplishments of the first cohort extend well beyond academics.

“I could not think of three finer young men to graduate,” Guajardo said. “Each brought something unique to the program and watching them grow into engineers has been incredibly rewarding.”

The capstone project also marks an important milestone as HSU continues the ABET accreditation

ABOUT THE THE LIFT

Height: 12 ft mast

Reach: 7 ft boom

Rotation: 360 degrees

**Foundation:
4 ft x 4 ft x 4 ft
concrete block**

**Strength:
Holds up to 625 lbs**

process, demonstrating the program’s commitment to hands-on learning and real-world problem solving.

For Jackson, however, the project represents something even greater.

“We’re not just making engineers,” Jackson said. “We want to develop competent, capable engineers who make an impact on the Kingdom.”

Growing What Lasts

Today, the lift stands ready for its next chapter.

Before patients use the system, physical therapy faculty will spend time helping the therapy horses become familiar with its movement and operation. Once that process is complete, the lift will expand opportunities for individuals who may otherwise never have the chance to participate in hippotherapy.

“It just opens it up to so many more people,” Anemaet said.

For many participants, hippotherapy offers more than physical progress. It builds confidence, independence, and the opportunity to experience something many never thought possible.

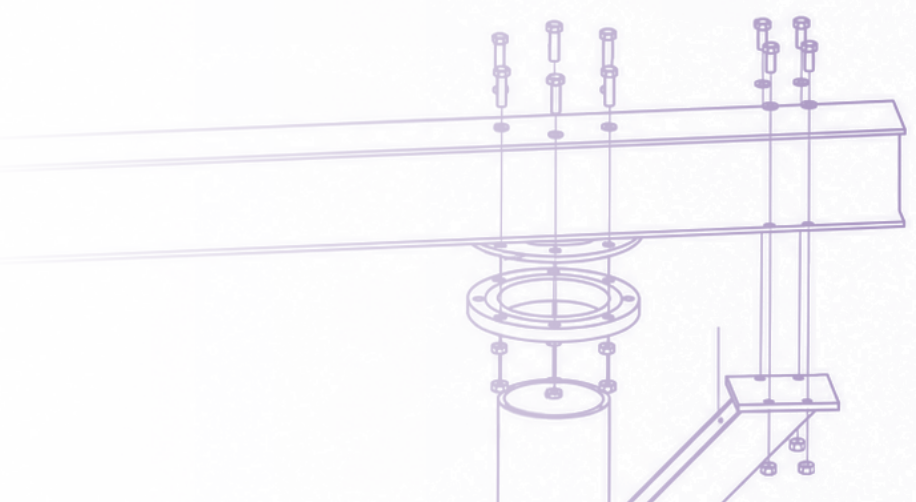
“Someone who is differently abled and typically can’t do the things other people are doing now gets the opportunity to ride a horse,” Anemaet said. “That’s really phenomenal.”

The lift standing at the horse barn is more than a senior project.

It is a reminder that the best engineering solutions are not measured solely by calculations, materials, or technical specifications. They are measured by the lives they impact.

Long after commencement has ended and graduate school begins, the work of HSU’s first engineering graduates will remain.

Serving patients.
Creating opportunities.
And engineering a legacy.



“Seeing it go from ideas that we just drew up on our iPads to a real structure that we built was a great experience.”

— Brandon Still '26

“When you’re in the classroom, that’s heaven.”



The Fondest of Farewells:

DR. LARRY MCGRAW

After more than four decades in the classroom, Dr. McGraw is learning what it means to step into something new.

“It does feel odd to be something now that is different than what you were for the last 44 years,” he said.

And yet, even in retirement, his voice will not be absent from Hardin-Simmons University. It will still echo across gym floors and stadium seats, steady and familiar, calling names, marking moments, and sharing memories for HSU Athletics.

He is leaving the classroom, but not this place.

Trusting God’s Plan

Long before Hardin-Simmons, Dr. McGraw’s path began taking shape.

He always loved school. In seminary, that love became something deeper, a sense of direction that would not let go. In a field education class, he was asked to write about his calling.

“I wrote mine as why I want to be a professor,” he said.

The response from his supervisor was realistic. Few people, he was told, ever become professors.

“Thanks for the encouragement,” he said with a grin. Still, he simply trusted.

"I just remember waiting and trusting the Lord and going through the doors that he opened and not banging my head against the doors that he had closed," he said.

One of those doors led to Hardin-Simmons and a lifetime of teaching Scripture.

In the fall of 1982, Dr. McGraw arrived on campus, not as a finished product, but as an instructor still completing his dissertation. He did not come with the certainty of a long career ahead. He came with gratitude for the opportunity.

"I was just glad to find a spot to get involved and to be connected to Baptist educational life," he said.

He laughs now when he recalls he was not the first, or even second, choice for the position. "I was about number six or seven," he admitted. "I was just glad that all those other ones before me turned it down

so that I could at least get my foot in the door."

He stepped through that door, and generations of HSU students were shaped because of it.

Building a Community

For Dr. McGraw, the classroom was never confined to information alone. It was a space where faith, learning, and community met, what he describes as a triangle among education, the church, and students.

"It's not just being a teacher," he said. "It's fulfilling your calling."

He taught Bible, grounding students in historical context and careful reading. But what he hoped they carried with them extended far beyond exams or lectures.

"Mainly what you hoped is that they would see the importance of having a relationship with Jesus, no matter what they did," he said.

That was the goal, not just knowledge, but transformation.

Ask former students about Dr. McGraw, and two words surface again and again.

"I was fun and hard," he said. "That was the reputation."

His classes were filled with knowledge, but also with laughter. He brought humor naturally, but also intentionally built something deeper, encouraging students to see one another, to form connections that outlasted the semester.

"We always talked about building friends and family," he said.

Not just a class. A community. Something Dr. McGraw modeled on campus.

Over time, the university itself became part of his formation. He arrived at 29 years old and grew under the influence of mentors like his first dean, H.K. Neely, and a long list of colleagues who shaped his path.

"It's been mainly the rest of the HSU family who've shaped my life the best," he said.

And while buildings, programs, and faces have changed over 40 years, the heart of the community never did.

Continuing the Call

Then there is the other voice. The one behind the microphone.

Long before football returned to campus, Dr. McGraw could be found at basketball games, not as an announcer, just as a fan. When the opportunity came to step in as a public address announcer, it felt almost inevitable.

"They knew I could talk," he said with a smile.

His first game featured players from Czechoslovakia, names that brought laughter each time he tried to pronounce them. It was, in many ways, the perfect beginning.

From there, the role grew. From basketball to football to volleyball, his voice became a constant presence across HSU athletics. Basketball remains his favorite.

"You're right down there on the floor," he said. "You get to hear everything, see everything."

But it isn't the final scores that stay with him.

"I don't remember so much the games as much as I do the players."

Names once announced over loudspeakers now belong to coaches, leaders, and alumni.

A rare day passed without him speaking into a microphone.

He taught in classrooms, preached in churches, hosted a local radio show, and announced games.

"I've received two microphone awards from Hardin-Simmons," he said, still amused by the idea.

It fits.

Because whether in a lecture hall or an arena, his work has always been about connection, about communicating something meaningful to the people in front of him.

Traveling the Road Ahead

Now, one of his familiar spaces is going quiet — the classroom.

And while he will not miss everything about being a professor, the classroom is harder to leave.

"When you're in the classroom, that's heaven," he said. That is what he will miss.

Still, the story is not ending.

He will continue announcing games, something he describes simply as "recess," the joy-filled counterpart to a lifetime of teaching. He will travel with his wife of 52 years, spend time with family, including his grandchildren, and remain active in church.

Across 44 years on the 40 Acres, Dr. McGraw has seen thousands of students pass through his classroom. Many now serve in ministry, leadership, and communities across the country.

If he could speak to them all again, his message would be steady and clear.

"There will be many changes in your life," he said. "But the one thing that should never change is your relationship with the Lord."

Everything else may shift. That does not.

In the end, he remains quietly humble about it all.



"I couldn't imagine doing anything else for these past decades," he said.

Hardin-Simmons can't quite imagine it either.

But even as he steps away from the classroom, his voice, in more ways than one, will remain.



From left: Dr. McGraw's voice has long been a familiar part of HSU Athletics, where he continues to serve as a public address announcer; Dr. McGraw with his wife, Sandy; Dr. Larry and Sandy McGraw's grandchildren, Christmas 2023. Above: Dr. McGraw's Golden Microphone Awards honor a lifetime of teaching, connection, and a voice that still leads.

TOP 10

COWBOY COUNTDOWN

From championships to classroom excellence, Hardin-Simmons athletics delivered a year to remember in 2025-26.

The Cowboys and Cowgirls captured conference titles, earned national recognition, and celebrated historic milestones that showcased the strength of HSU across every arena. Here's a look back at the top moments, milestones, and people who defined an unforgettable year for the purple and gold.



#10

Cheers for HSU

The Hardin-Simmons cheerleaders won a national championship in the Spirit Showdown All-Girl Game Day Division at the College Classic competition in Orlando on April 11-12, 2026. It was the team's first time competing nationally in over 25 years. Their victory marked a historic achievement for HSU cheer, reestablishing the program at a competitive national level.



#8



Hooyah Sports Podcast

Hardin-Simmons athletics debuted a new podcast this year called the Hooyah podcast and had coaches and player guests from each sport. Football player Cole Burk and Associate AD Chad Grubbs are the hosts. It comes out on Wednesdays during the school year and can be found on all popular podcast apps.

#9



FLOSPORTS

New Era with Flo Sports

We're excited to join FloSports for athletic broadcasts beginning in 2026-27 as part of a conference-wide initiative. While live events will no longer be available free of charge, fans can still watch all broadcasts free 24 hours after the event.

For live access, ASC fans can subscribe for \$19.99 per month or \$107.99 annually, with the yearly plan saving nearly \$50 over the course of the year.

FloSports brings several benefits, including access to a wide range of Division III events, a smart TV app that makes viewing easier than ever, and enhanced production standards across the conference. While our broadcasts already meet a high standard, fans can expect an improved viewing experience when following our teams on the road as well.



#7

ARTHUR GARZA



AUSTIN GUEST



DARIN KOENIG



SHELBI KEITH



New Roles

HSU has some new faces leading programs. Arthur Garza is the new strength and conditioning coach. Austin Guest will be in his first season leading the men's soccer program, and Darin Koenig is the inaugural coach for women's flag football. Shelbi (Stevens) Keith '17/'23 was promoted to Head Athletic Trainer in the spring after serving most of the last year as the interim director.

#6

Baseball's Banner Year

Hardin-Simmons baseball team won 26 games this year in the second season under head coach Mitch Wilson. The 26 wins were the most in a season for HSU since 2016. The Cowboys advanced to the ASC Championship game. HSU set the school records for batting average (.346) and on-base percentage (.422).



#5



Conference Titles

Hardin-Simmons came away with five American Southwest Conference titles in the 2025-26 school year with wins in women's basketball and soccer, men's soccer, cross country, and football. Hardin-Simmons is the all-time leader in ASC Championships with 98.



#4

Right On Track

Three individuals in four events and a relay team qualified for the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Wisconsin. Senior Gunner Helm made his third trip to nationals and finished eighth overall to claim a first-team All-American nod. Davare Payne went in both the triple and long jump and was a second-team All-American in the long jump. Jahymeer Larkins placed ninth in the discus and also earned second-team All-American nods. The 4x100 relay team of Donovan Simmons, Derrick Crump, Jah'Shon Williams and Gray Albrecht qualified and all but Simmons are freshmen. Payne also made a trip to the indoor NCAA Championships, placing eleventh in the triple jump.

#2

Student-Athletes

HSU student-athletes had over a 3.00 GPA for the school year and had 269 named to the ASC academic all-conference team. HSU also had seven distinguished scholar athletes of the year in their sports in the conference. HSU had 13 players win either CSC Academic All-American honors or academic awards through coaches' associations and 48 were named to the CSC academic all-district teams. The CSC awards are based on athletic and academic achievement.

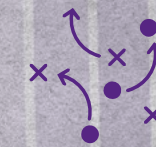
#1

Dubs for Grubbs

Associate Athletic Director for External Relations Chad Grubbs '03 was honored with the 25-year award by the College Sports Communicators at the annual convention in Las Vegas. He has served over 26 years promoting the Hardin-Simmons athletic programs. He and student assistant Mark Denison '24 placed second in Division III in the annual Game Notes contest.



#3



All-Americans

HSU had 11 athletes named All-American in the 2025-26 season. Hayden Philpot was named a consensus All-American in football, landing honors from the Walter Camp Football Foundation, American Football Coaches Association, the Associated Press, D3football.com, and was also named to the Dave Campbell's All-Texas team. Kaiden Roden, Noah Garcia, and Harrison Foster were on at least one All-American team this fall. The four track athletes (listed in #4) and the four football players were joined by: Abbi Allen (volleyball), Jacqueline Berry (basketball) and Catcher Ridings (baseball) as All-Americans.





WBB SEASON RECAP

Hardin-Simmons women's basketball team has traditionally been the best women's basketball program in the American Southwest Conference, and this year the Cowgirls claimed their 10th ASC title and third in five seasons.

The Cowgirls were able to accomplish the feat at the Mabey Complex for the second time in three years in front of their boisterous crowd.

HSU beat Mary Hardin-Baylor 69-55 and then topped Howard Payne 73-46 in the championship game. The 27-point win was the largest margin of victory in conference final history, surpassing the 2003 team's margin. Coincidentally, current head coach Kendra (Anderson) Whitehead '03 was the MVP of that 2003 tournament.

This year's MVP was Jacqueline Berry. The sophomore standout was also the ASC player of the year and earned All-American honors. Seniors Abbie Crowe and Caroline Croft were also named to the all-tournament team.

After earning the ASC title, the Cowgirls were selected to host the first and second rounds of the NCAA Tournament. HSU won both games, defeating Austin College 73-51 and Whitman College 56-35. HSU advanced to the Sweet 16, before falling to New York University. It was the ninth time in school history for the Cowgirls to make it to the round of 16.



"This was a special season because of the incredible group of young women on our team," Coach Whitehead said. "Like every season, we faced challenges both on and off the court, but this group consistently found a way to overcome them."

- Kendra (Anderson) Whitehead '03, Head Women's Basketball Coach



UNMATCHED 20-Year Cowgirl Reunion

On January 31, 2026, before the senior day home game, HSU honored its 2005-06 women's basketball team, which made a historic run to the NCAA Division III Final Four, the deepest postseason finish in program history. Twenty years later, that team was recognized during the 2025-2026 season as a benchmark of excellence for the Cowgirls program and a defining moment in its legacy. The reunion celebration brought former players back to campus, highlighting their lasting impact and inspiring current athletes to pursue similar success.

CALLLED TO CARE

Shelbi (Stevens) Keith
'17 B.B.S./'23 M.B.A., LAT, ATC
and the Athletic Trainer's
Heart Behind the Game



On fall Saturdays, long before the crowd fills Shelton Stadium and long after the final whistle blows, Shelbi (Stevens) Keith '17/'23 is hard at work.

While fans focus on the action under the lights, Keith is often found just beyond the spotlight, taping ankles, evaluating injuries, and helping student-athletes return to the sport they love. As Hardin-Simmons University's head athletic trainer, her work rarely makes the highlight reel, but its impact is felt across the football field, baseball diamond, golf course, and beyond.

For Keith, the path to athletic training began not with a clear plan, but with a simple mindset: she wanted to help athletes.

"I want to be a physical therapist," she once told her freshman advisor, "but like on the field with the athletes."

That desire led her to HSU's Intro to Athletic Training course with Associate Professor of Athletic Training David Stuckey and ultimately to her calling.

Finding a Calling at HSU

Growing up in a small town, she had never heard of athletic training before college. But after just one semester observing HSU's program, everything changed.

"I knew I was headed down the path the Lord had laid out for me," she said.

Through HSU's athletic training program, Keith gained more than 1,000 hours of hands-on clinical experience as a student, working directly alongside staff and athletes in real-time situations.

"Not only did I develop a passion for athletic training through this process," Keith said, "but a deep love for Hardin-Simmons University and an appreciation for the doors it had opened for me."

By the time she graduated in 2017, she had a clear goal: return to HSU and give back.

Today, she's doing exactly that.

From Student to Leader

Keith's journey back to Hardin-Simmons unfolded steadily from graduate assistant at East Texas Baptist University to full-time staff member at HSU, to interim head athletic trainer, to her appointment as head athletic trainer nearly ten years after graduation.

But for Keith, the title matters far less than the mission.

"The most rewarding moments in my career come from seeing my athletes succeed after sustaining significant injuries," she said. "Seeing them return to the sport they love, that's what it's all about."

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Behind the Scenes

To those outside athletics, the role of an athletic trainer can be difficult to fully grasp.

Keith describes it simply, borrowing a phrase from Stuckey: “Each day is different, but the weeks are the same.”

During the football season, athletic trainers often work seven days a week, with days stretching well beyond 10 hours. Mornings are spent managing medical logistics, rehabilitation sessions, and administrative duties. Afternoons shift to pre-practice taping, practice coverage, and post-practice evaluations. Game days stretch even longer.

And when athletes are away from home, trainers don’t clock out.

“They’re also on call for athletes’ medical needs any

time after work hours,” Keith explained. “Athletics doesn’t run on the standard campus calendar.”

Behind every recovery, every return, and every victory, there’s often someone like Shelbi Keith, steady on the sideline, ready when it matters most.

More Than Medicine

While injury prevention and rehabilitation are at the core of the job, Keith sees her role extending well beyond physical care.

“The science behind my work impacts their performance daily,” she said. “But the care behind that work impacts them on a deeper level.”

In the college environment, where athletes are navigating independence,

identity, and pressure, athletic trainers often become trusted confidants. They are present in moments of vulnerability: after setbacks, during darker days, and in quiet spaces few others see.

Keith takes that responsibility seriously.

“It is my prayer that each of my athletes see God’s love for them through the work we do,” she said.

A Foundation of Support

Keith is quick to credit the people who helped shape her journey, starting with David Stuckey, the HSU professor who first introduced her to athletic training.

“I would have never become an athletic trainer if it weren’t for him,” she said.

“His mentorship has been the cornerstone of my career.”

She also points to the support of HSU’s athletic leadership, especially head football coach Jesse Burleson ’00/’17, as a defining factor in her success.

“The respect, trust, and collaboration I receive from this staff is what has anchored me to Hardin-Simmons,” she said.

That culture of alignment between coaches, administrators, and trainers is not universal in athletics, but it’s one Keith believes sets HSU apart.

“I am grateful every day to be an HSU Cowboy. The people here are unmatched anywhere else,” she said. “This is home.”

HARD AT WORK

From high schools to professional sports to the U.S. military and beyond, their routines are fast-paced and relationship-driven, balancing early mornings, long competition days, and ongoing communication with coworkers and patients to optimize performance and health.

HSU alumni athletic trainers continue a legacy across the country, carrying forward a tradition of excellence, service, and quiet leadership that defines the profession.



Aaron Hajart ’01 B.B.S., MS, ATC, FACHE

President & Chief Executive Officer, Community Medical Center, an RWJBarnabas Health Facility

“HSU and the Athletic Training program taught me to be creative at problem solving. The faculty and students I matriculated with were well known for thinking about creative solutions, and I have used that skill, learned at HSU, daily.”



Dr. Vanessa (Morales) Smith ’07 B.B.S., Ed.D, LAT

Athletic Trainer at Samuel V. Champion High School, Boerne ISD

“HSU strengthened my faith and shaped me both personally and professionally. Because of that foundation, I entered my career prepared to serve others, overcome challenges, and make a positive impact on the athletes and communities I serve.”



Katie Kuykendall ’13 B.B.S., PT, DPT, ATC, SCS, SMTC

Physical Therapist and First Assistant Athletic Trainer, Real Salt Lake Soccer Team

“One day I was asked why I don’t take my competitive spirit from playing soccer and apply it to my academic life, and that was absolutely a turning point for me. It helped me realize that I needed to lock in and prepare myself for life after college.”



Kimberly Aguilar ’16 B.B.S./’17 M.Ed, LAT, ATC

Tactical Athletic Trainer, U.S. Air Force F22 Raptor Pilots

“HSU challenged me to grow in all facets, providing me the opportunity and space to apply what I was learning in the classroom directly to the field and to explore different paths and opportunities set before me. This has set me up for a rewarding career in Athletic Training.”



Shakir Iga ’25 M.A.T., PT, DPT, ATC, OCS, CSCS

Head Athletic Trainer/Physical Therapist, Denver Nuggets NGA G League Affiliate team, Grand Rapids Gold

“HSU reinforced that passion drives excellence in athletic training. While clinical knowledge is essential, it’s the passion for helping others that pushes you to keep growing through the challenges of the profession.”



Elizabeth Waters ’21 B.S.H.S./’23 M.S., LAT, ATC

Associate Athletic Trainer, Milwaukee Brewers Double A Affiliate Team, Biloxi Shuckers

“During my time at HSU, I was introduced to Biomechanics with athletic training as well as the Kinesiology Department, and I found my passion. HSU professors encouraged me to strive for my dreams, to not chase them, but to put forth actions to make them a reality.”



Who made HSU feel like home?

Every May and December, graduates cross the stage and step into the world as Cowboys and Cowgirls for life — but few make it there alone. Along the way, there's often a professor, coach, or staff member who believed in them, challenged them, and helped shape who they became.

Tell us about the HSU faculty or staff member who made a difference in your story. Email your response to alumni@hsutx.edu or scan the QR code to share your story.





"I continually tell myself how thankful I am that the Lord put me at Hardin-Simmons. The relationships that I made there really do continue to impact my life."

A childhood dream, a Hardin-Simmons education, and a remarkable return to the practice where it all began.

As a 9-year-old sitting in an orthodontist's chair in Keller, Texas, Dr. Kyle Gopffarth '16 experienced a moment that would shape not only his smile, but the rest of his life.

Looking around the office, he saw more than braces and bright smiles. He saw people whose lives were being changed and a doctor who honored God through his work. And he knew exactly what he wanted to do.

"I sat there and thought, 'I want to do this,'" Gopffarth recalled.

Years later, Dr. Kyle Gopffarth, is living that dream as the owner of Gopffarth Orthodontics, the very same practice where he was once a young patient. It's a full-circle story he describes as nothing short of a God-sized miracle.

But between that childhood calling and the realization of his dream stood an important chapter: Hardin-Simmons University.

A Vision — and a Plan

Unlike many college freshmen still exploring career possibilities, Gopffarth arrived at Hardin-Simmons with a clear destination in mind. He knew he wanted to become an orthodontist, and he knew he eventually wanted to have his own practice.

That goal shaped the conversations he had before he even stepped onto campus.

"I really wanted to get some business education along with all of the requirements that I would need for dental school," he said.

When he shared that vision with former Honors Program Director Dr. Tom Copeland, he found immediate encouragement.

"He was the first person to encourage me that doing this whole business and pre-dental thing was a good idea and basically said, 'Let me help you figure out how to do it.'"

What followed was a uniquely Hardin-Simmons experience. Gopffarth worked alongside multiple advisors who helped him navigate a rigorous combination of business coursework, honors classes, and dental school prerequisites.

The personalized guidance would become one of the defining features of his HSU experience.

The Meeting That Changed Everything

One story still stands out over a decade later.

As a freshman, Gopffarth was pursuing a specific business degree track when he walked into Dr. John Hill's microeconomics class for the first day of the semester. After class, Hill stopped him.

Dr. Hill said, “Kyle Gopffarth, you should reconsider your major.”

Intrigued, Gopffarth followed Dr. Hill’s invitation to stop by his office. What he found waiting for him was unexpected.

Dr. Hill had already gathered two other business professors.

The three faculty members sat down with him and essentially staged an intervention, not because he was struggling, but because they recognized his potential and wanted to ensure he was equipped for the future he envisioned.

They basically said, “We want you to do economics, finance, or accounting. Pick one.”

The professors carefully walked him through the strengths of each discipline and explained why they believed those programs would better prepare him for business ownership.

For Gopffarth, the experience left a lasting impression.

“I thought that was so incredible, so unique and so special,” he said. “The first day of my semester with him — I had never met this man before — but he’d already had conversations with the other professors and pulled me aside to mentor me.”

He ultimately switched to accounting, a decision that would later prove invaluable.

Today, as the owner of a thriving orthodontic practice, Gopffarth regularly draws upon the principles he learned in HSU’s business program.

“It helped me learn how to ask the right questions,” he said. “I didn’t go into school to be an accounting professional, but now I know how to talk to my accounting professionals without feeling like a deer in the headlights.”

From reading profit-and-loss statements to understanding balance sheets and tax considerations, the business foundation he gained at Hardin-Simmons continues to shape his day-to-day leadership.

People Who Cheered Him On

The influence of Hardin-Simmons extended far beyond academics.

Gopffarth credits several faculty members with helping him navigate the demanding path to dental school.

His pre-dental advisor, Dr. Jennifer Hennigan, became one of his biggest champions. He still remembers seeing her shortly after taking the Dental Admission Test (DAT) and sharing his score.

“I don’t know if there was anyone else happier for me other than my parents,” he said. “It was really sweet to have her in my corner cheering me on.”

Combined with the mentorship of Dr. Hill, Dr. Copeland, and others, those relationships created a support system that helped confirm he was exactly where he needed to be.

“I continually tell myself how thankful I am that the Lord put me at Hardin-Simmons,” he said. “The relationships that I made there really do continue to impact my life.”

A Miracle, Years in the Making

After graduating from Hardin-Simmons, completing dental school, and finishing an orthodontic residency, Gopffarth returned home in



“I got lucky enough and blessed enough to actually take over that very same practice.”

2022 to work alongside the orthodontist who had first inspired him as a child.

The two had already discussed a future transition. Still, the reality of what happened next feels remarkable.

For two and a half years, Gopffarth worked alongside his mentor, learning the practice and preparing for ownership. Then, on January 1, 2025, he officially took over.

The office where he once sat as a nervous 9-year-old patient became his own.

The orthodontist who helped shape his calling handed him the keys.

The result is a story that came full circle in a way few people ever experience — a boy who dreamed of becoming an orthodontist now leading the very practice that first inspired his dream.

“I got lucky enough and blessed enough to actually take over that very same practice,” he said.

Honoring God Through Work

Today, Gopffarth strives to run his practice with the same faith-centered approach that first drew him to orthodontics.

Each morning, he reminds his team that every role matters and that their work is ultimately an opportunity to honor God.

Whether they’re answering phones, taking X-rays, adjusting braces, or greeting patients, he encourages them to view their work as service to the Lord.

That philosophy shapes the culture of the practice and reflects values he strengthened during his years at Hardin-Simmons.

For Gopffarth, success isn’t simply measured by running a business or creating beautiful smiles — it’s found in helping people feel seen, valued, and loved.

And it all traces back to a dream, a calling, and a university community that invested deeply in his future.

Hardin-Simmons didn’t just prepare Kyle Gopffarth for a career. It helped prepare him for a calling and, ultimately, for a full-circle moment only God could have written.

Gopffarth HSU Legacy

Grandmother, Beverly (Geisendorff) Kingsley ’52; mom and dad, Karon (Kingsley) Gopffarth ’88 and Robert Gopffarth ’91; aunt and uncle, Cherie (Cromeans) Gopffarth ’93 and Greg Gopffarth ’93; wife, Danice (Butts) Gopffarth ’17; and brothers, Kamron ’21 and Karson ’22/’25 Gopffarth

COWBOYS BUILD BUSINESSES

Hardin-Simmons University has earned national recognition as the No. 1 university in the United States for producing small business owners. A recent study of LinkedIn data found that approximately 3.68% of HSU graduates currently own or co-own a small business, the highest graduate-to-small-business-owner rate among colleges and universities nationwide.

From the classroom to the boardroom, HSU continues to equip graduates with the character and confidence to turn big ideas into successful ventures. Across Texas and beyond, Cowboy alumni are launching businesses, creating jobs, and making a lasting impact in their communities.

** Comments featured are community responses from HSU's social media.*



Scan to discover Cowboy-owned businesses or add your own.



ALISON (HODGIN) SIMS '96/'99

Jon Michael Sims '96 started **Abilene Blinds** in 2003! It's a long ways from a PE major, but lessons learned at Hardin-Simmons helped develop the character and spirit needed to own a small business.



SARAH (PIERDOLLA) RABEL '15

HSU '15! My husband and I own **Rabel's Roadhaus BBQ** going on 8 years, and we will be opening a new business venture in April.



BOBBY E. COX '84

I am proud to be an alum of the HSU Class of 1984 and a Managing Member of **Burchell, Denson & Morrison, LLC**, an Abilene-based CPA firm!

We Are Cowboys!



ANDREW HARLOW '13

HSU Class of 2013, I co-own **Denton Creek Investments**. We buy minerals and royalties across Texas and the U.S. If anyone would like to sell you producing or non-producing minerals or like an appraisal let me know!



NATHAN LOWRY '09

Misty Lowry '09 Go Cowboys! **Big Country Title**



MATT CAUDLE '11

My wife **Nikki Caudle 'x** and I run **Red Dirt Drones** here in Abilene.



CHARLES SAMS III '14

This is amazing yet not surprising! My time at Hardin-Simmons University was transformative as a student (Class 2014) and a blast as an athlete (Cowboy Basketball).

I have been a small business owner for 10 years and credit much of what I learned at HSU as a strong foundation in successful business ownership **PPP Performance & Physical Therapy**.



SARAH PALMA '22/'24

Palma's Yard & Fence Service, owned by my parents, **Christina Palma '98**. 15 years strong in Abilene!



BECKI BRANDENBURG '95

Class of '95 here. Retired police officer and now I own two small businesses. Go Cowboys!

Turbo Tint Hurst

Children's Art Classes-Grapevine



BUBBA WECKWERTH '12

Class of 2012! **Vintage Marketplace** here in Abilene! Open 11 years this month!



BRODY POWELL '12/'15/'16

I'm proud to be a Cowboy ('12, '15, and '16) and own a small business where I use my counseling experience to help decrease suicides for schools and increase wellness for organizations!



ERIC BRUNTMYER

So proud of our alumni!! That Cowboy spirit of grit, resiliency, and determination pays off!!

HARDIN-SIMMONS UNIVERSITY

HOMECOMING



Turning Student Ideas into Homecoming Spirit

For the first time, the official Homecoming 2026 T-shirt was selected through a student design competition hosted by the College of Arts & Media. The competition gave students the opportunity to showcase their creativity while contributing to a project that will be seen and worn by alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the University.

Students were invited to submit original concepts that captured the spirit and pride of Hardin-Simmons University. The winning design was created by Mandi Young, an HSU art major. Her sketch served as the inspiration for the final artwork, which was refined by the University's marketing design team to ensure it met production specifications while preserving the essence of her original vision.

EXCLUSIVE T-SHIRT

Get yours at
www.hsutx.edu/homecoming
 Deadline Sept. 21



OCT 15-18 / 2026

Get updates at www.hsutx.edu/homecoming

THURSDAY NIGHT, OCT. 15

Alumni Awards Banquet

FRIDAY NIGHT, OCT. 16

Homecoming Festival
 Live music, food trucks, inflatables,
 Homecoming pep rally, fireworks, and more.

Alumni Vendor Market (New!)

40 Acres Trivia Night (New!)

Athletics Hall of Fame Banquet

Late Night Pancake Breakfast

SATURDAY, OCT. 17

Parents-Only Breakfast

Departmental Guided Tours &
 Updates

Student Organization Reunions

Alumni Choir Concert

HSU Kids Corral

Tailgate and Football Game

HSU Cowboys vs. ETBU Tigers

SATURDAY NIGHT, OCT. 17

All-School SING!

SUNDAY, OCT. 18

HSU Family Worship Service

Alumni AWARDS

John J. Keeter Jr. Alumni Service Award

The Alumni Service Award is the highest alumni honor HSU can bestow. Since 1943, this award has been presented to alumni who have contributed the most in their field of endeavor toward the betterment of HSU, or who has rendered the greatest service to the University.



JANE (DENNIS) HAGER '67 B.S.

Mrs. Jane (Dennis) Hager has spent more than 50 years serving Hardin-Simmons University with quiet, behind-the-scenes hospitality. A 1967 graduate with a double major in Physical Education and Business Education, Jane taught for decades in Crosbyton and Abilene ISD, earning Teacher of the Year honors at both Lee Elementary and Madison Middle School. She married the late Lawson Hager '67, HSU's longtime Director of Bands and Dean of the School of Music and Fine Arts, and together they became beloved fixtures of campus life,

known to generations of Cowboy Band and School of Music students simply as Boss and Mom.

For decades, Jane served as an integral member of HSU Round Table, hosting and catering countless receptions, dinners, and parties for the School of Music, the Cowboy Band, and other campus groups. She served three terms on the HSU Alumni Association Board of Directors and, in 2019, received the Peggy Pattillo Student Advocacy Award from the School of Music and Fine Arts in recognition of her many selfless years

of volunteer service. In retirement, she delivers Meals on Wheels and remains a devoted supporter of HSU students, faculty, and athletics.

Jane's family ties include younger sisters Peggy (White Dennis) Neyland '74 B.S. and Kelly (Dennis) Randles '80 B.S., daughter, Heather (Hager) Baker '92 B.M., and son-in-law, Cory Baker '05 B.B.S., daughter, Emily (Hager) Clancy '95 B.B.S., daughter, Holly (Hager) Soben '96x, nephew, Thomas "Ben" White '00 B.A., and granddaughter, Elizabeth Clancy '24 B.B.A.

Distinguished Alumni Awards

This award, given since 1970, is presented to alumni whose personal and professional accomplishments are exemplary of the ideals and aims of the University and thus bring honor to HSU.



BENNIE KNIFFEN '72 B.B.A.

Bennie Kniffen is a retired energy industry executive who spent more than four decades in accounting, finance, and corporate leadership. He is a native of Abilene and received a B.B.A. in accounting in 1972 from Hardin-Simmons University and a M.B.A. in 1973 from the University of North Texas. Kniffen began his career with Arthur Andersen before joining Southland Royalty Company, where he served as a manager of auditing and reporting.

In 1986, Kniffen joined XTO Energy, serving as Senior Vice President and Controller throughout the company's remarkable growth from a regional independent producer into one of the nation's largest natural gas producers. During his tenure, he provided accounting and financial leadership through years of expansion, acquisitions, and public company reporting. XTO was acquired by ExxonMobil in 2010.

As a distinguished Hardin-Simmons alumnus, his career reflects the values of disciplined stewardship, professional excellence, and leadership, making him a valued voice on topics of corporate governance, energy finance and accounting, and the American energy sector.



MELVIN MARTIN '76 B.S.

A dedicated public servant from the start, Chief Melvin Martin served two years in the U.S. Army before joining the Abilene Police Department in 1969, beginning a lifetime of service to his hometown. While serving, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from HSU in 1976. Over his 40-year career, he built a first-class department through improved training, staffing, and support programs, co-authored legislation establishing the Texas Center for Missing Children and Missing Persons, and served on juvenile justice and homeland security committees under four Texas governors. He founded the nonprofit Friends of Safety City, Inc., leading a capital campaign that funded a new Fire Safety House and Police Education Center. Upon his 2009 retirement, the City of Abilene renamed the facility the Melvin Martin Center for Children's Safety in his honor.

Martin credits HSU professors Dr. Julian Bridges and Dr. Rod Canady, who became lifelong friends, with shaping how he understood community needs and human behavior throughout his career. He remains active in Abilene, volunteering with the Kiwanis Club, the Cedar Creek Waterway Development board, and in his local church.



DR. COURTNEY QUEEN '97 B.B.S.

Dr. Courtney M. Queen earned a Bachelor of Behavioral Science in History from Hardin-Simmons University in 1997 before completing a Master of Science and Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of North Texas. She serves as Associate Dean for Strategic Partnerships, Interim Chair of Public Health, and tenured Associate Professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center's Julia Jones Matthews School of Population and Public Health.

A Fulbright Scholar to Latvia and former Peace Corps volunteer, she has spent nearly two decades researching early detection of Buruli ulcer, a neglected tropical disease, along with melanoma detection and healthy aging, earning the Chancellor's Award of Excellence in Research from the Texas Tech University System in 2024. She now serves on national task forces guiding responsible AI use in public health.

As an HSU student, Courtney belonged to Phi Alpha Theta and Gamma Beta Phi and took part in oral history projects preserving stories of World War II veterans. She credits HSU faculty and staff with shaping the path that led her to Peace Corps service, a Fulbright scholarship, and a career in higher education leadership.

FOR COMPLETE DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL HONOREES,
visit us at www.hsutx.edu/alumni/alumni-awards



HSU ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

The Athletics Hall of Fame recognizes individuals for their extraordinary contributions on behalf of the Hardin-Simmons University Athletics Department or their professional record of achievement in their area.

MYCHAL CARRILLO '08

Football (2005–2008)

A versatile offensive threat, Carrillo earned three All-ASC honors and First Team All-American recognition as a senior while helping lead the Cowboys to two NCAA playoff appearances. He finished his career with 3,292 receiving yards, 265 receptions and 38 touchdown catches, ranking among the program's all-time leaders in each category.

TYLER BRUNNEMANN '13

Baseball (2010–2013)

Brunnemann finished as HSU's career strikeout leader with 186 and became the only player of the non-scholarship era to be drafted, reaching Triple-A in the Houston Astros organization. A four-time All-ASC selection, he posted a 13-4 record, 16 saves and a 2.12 ERA, including a school-record 10 saves as a senior.

WILL WAGNER '96

Football (1992–1995)

Wagner was a four-year starter and remains HSU's all-time leader in career interceptions with 23, earning All-American honors and two all-conference selections. He helped lead every team he played on to the NAIA playoffs and later enjoyed successful coaching careers at Northwest Missouri State and Angelo State.

RACHEL (GOOLD) QUESADA '05

Women's Soccer (2001–2004)

Goold helped establish HSU women's soccer as a national contender, starting four years in goal and compiling a remarkable 61-8-3 record. A four-time All-ASC selection, she allowed just 28 goals in more than 6,200 career minutes and helped lead the Cowgirls to three conference championships.

ALUMNI AWARDS

Each year, Hardin-Simmons honors standout alumni who are making a difference in their careers, communities, and on campus. Read more about this year's honorees and nominate a deserving Cowboy or Cowgirl by scanning the QR code.

Awards: John J. Keeter Jr. Alumni Service | Distinguished Alumni | Outstanding Young Alumni | Athletics Hall of Fame | Hall of Leaders



Family News

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



1960s

Evelyn (Meadows) McAnelly '67 B.S. recently experienced a meaningful reconnection after more than 40 years with lifelong friends from her HSU days. While attending a Singing Men of Texas South concert at Trinity Baptist Church in Kerrville on May 21, 2026, **Terry Jacobs '72 B.M.** noticed the name of his HSU roommate, **John McAnelly '69 B.M./'73 M.A.**, in the program. After the concert, the two men reunited along with their wives, **Suzanne (Sherman) Jacobs '71x** and Evelyn, rekindling a special friendship.

Terral Broxson '68 B.A. has published a new book, *The Governor's Trophy*, a historical novel about a college debate tournament featuring an HSU debate team in 1956. Available for purchase on Amazon.

1970s

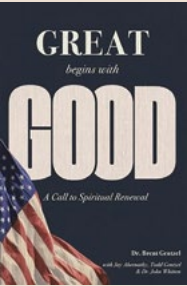
Sylvia (Gonzalez) Villareal '74 B.S. was ordained as a deacon on May 31, 2026, by Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas. She serves as pianist for the church's Spanish-speaking congregation while her husband, Ray, leads the singing. In addition, Sylvia serves on several church and Texas Baptist committees, currently chairs the Hispanic Education Council, and is a board member of Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas. She credits her years at HSU—including chapel, BSU (now BSM), and mission trips to Indiana—for helping her grow spiritually and develop her skills as a congregational pianist.



Michael Metcalf '79 B.B.S. retired at the end of 2025 from the Department of Veterans Affairs after serving 13 years as a Clinical Staff Chaplain, most recently as Coastal Clinics Chaplain serving facilities in Wilmington, Jacksonville, Goldsboro, and Brunswick County in North Carolina. Combined with his service in the Active Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard, he devoted 45 years to serving service members and veterans. He and his wife, Cathy, along with their miniature pinscher, Joy, look forward to spending more time at the beach near their home in North Topsail Beach, as well as traveling to visit their seven grandchildren in Ohio, Arizona, and western North Carolina, and fishing at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base.

1990s

David Tatum '90 B.M. has released his first book, *Intentional: Getting Past MultiGen Worship*, a deep exploration of the biblical foundations and practical implementation of intergenerational worship in the local church. He serves as Assistant Professor of Music and Worship Studies at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and has also served as Associate Pastor of Worship at First Baptist Church in Sherwood, Arkansas, since 2014. David's book is available on Amazon.



Dr. Brent Gentzel '91 B.A. published *Great Begins with Good* in May 2026. The book draws on history, faith, and culture to present a compelling case that the strength of a nation is rooted in the character of its people. The book is available on Amazon.



Dr. Kristi (Cargill) Kincheloe '99 B.S. has released her latest children's book, *Heaven-Bound Hound*, with Eckhartz Press. It is available for purchase at <https://eckhartzpress.com/shop/heaven-bound-hound/>

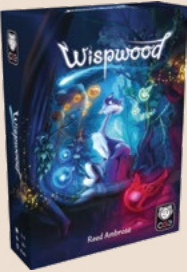
2000s

Dr. Vanessa (Morales) Smith '07 B.B.S. has been named Head Athletic Trainer for Champion High School in Boerne, Texas. She previously taught as a Health Science Instructor at Boerne High School.



2010s

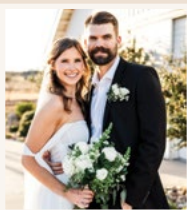
Madison (Miller) Young '17 B.B.S. married Gabe Young on May 31, 2026 at The Barn at Wolf Ridge Farm in Gainesville, Texas.



Reed Ambrose '18 M.A. designed the board game, *Wisewood*, published by Czech Games Edition (CGE) in October 2025 at Essen Spiel in Germany. For ages ten and up, one to four players place tetris-like shapes to create a magical forest, a grid filled with tiles of trees and lights. Printed in 10 different languages, the game is available on Amazon or at local board game stores.



Kelsie LeFlore '18 B.F.A. married Brady Odegaard-Burzette on December 12, 2025.



Kaytlynn (Lewis) Doege '18 B.B.A./'19 M.B.A. married **Trevor Doege '21 B.S./'25 M.P.A.S.** on January 17, 2026, in Abilene at Sabrina Cedars. The couple met at HSU, where Trevor played football, and Kaytlynn played volleyball.



2020s

Jeremyah Phillips '20 B.B.S./'22 D.P.T. married **Dr. Emily (Shaffer) Phillips '21 B.S.H.S./'23 D.P.T.** on June 27, 2026 at the Barn at Paradise Place.



Gabriella Loren (Zullo) Robinson '20 B.B.S. married **Tristen David Robinson '24 B.B.S.**, a Cowboy football alumnus, on February 28, 2026, in Miramar Beach, Florida.

Lucas Lopez '21 B.A. married Caitlin Hiscock on March 28, 2026, at Rocky's Lake Estate in Woodstock, Georgia.

Bethany (Soder) Alexander '22 B.F.A. married Elijah Alexander IV on March 16, 2026.



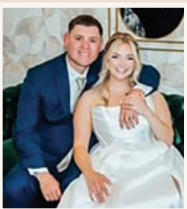
Aubrey (Blay) Corona '22 B.A. married Zachary Corona on January 1, 2026, in Abilene, surrounded by family and friends. She is currently in her final year at UNT-Dallas College of Law and works at a mid-sized firm in Dallas, focusing on estate and probate matters, where she finds fulfillment in helping families navigate difficult times. Zachary is training to become a commercial pilot, and together they look forward to this new chapter.



Regina (Stankiewicz) Hancock '23 B.S.H.S. married **Gideon Hancock '25 B.S.** on June 13, 2026, in New Braunfels, Texas.



Savanna (Stevens) Johnson '23 B.S. married Corey Johnson on January 31, 2026, in Hearne, Texas. Several of her bridesmaids were friends from HSU whom she met through the Honors Program. She earned her degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in May 2023.



Dr. Caitlin (Hudson) Soliz '23 B.S.H.S./'25 D.P.T. married Xavier Soliz on April 18, 2026.



Sydnee (Leverich) Judd '24 B.S. married **Evan Judd '23 B.B.A.** on June 21, 2025, in Buffalo Gap, Texas.

Mikayla (Ross) DeAnda '25 B.S.H.S. and **Matthew DeAnda '25 B.H.S.** were married on May 1, 2026, at Sabrina Cedars in Abilene. Matthew is beginning his teaching and coaching career at Cooper High School, and Mikayla will begin the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at HSU in August 2026.



Julie (Trowell) Chandler '25 B.B.S. married Lincoln Chandler on May 16, 2026, in Abilene, at Transformation Church on Vogel Street, followed by a honeymoon in Mexico. A proud HSU legacy, Julie's grandfather, **David Trowell '13 M.A.**, father, **Jeffrey Trowell '04 B.B.S.**, aunt, **Jeana Fikes '04 B.B.S.**, and grandmother, **Marilyn Simpson '93 A.S.N.**, are also alumni, and she shares a deep appreciation for the role HSU has played in shaping her life.



Alicia (Gonzalez) Luker '25 D.P.T. married Jordan Luker on March 12, 2026, at Morgan Creek Barn in Dripping Springs, Texas. Their officiants were **Dennis O'Connell '11 D.P.T.** and **Janelle O'Connell '97 D.P.T.**, from HSU's physical therapy department, who played a meaningful role in Alicia's education and career.

Kaye "Lanae" (Blankenship) Vinson '25 B.S.H.S. married Blake Vinson on February 28, 2026. She graduated from HSU in December 2025 and plans to begin the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at HSU in August 2026.



Nicole (Connors) Heiser '25 B.B.S. married Brandon Heiser on July 14, 2025, in Abilene, with the ceremony held at Logsdon Chapel and a reception at 201 Mesquite Event Center.



Hayden Waldrip '25 B.S.H.S. married **Avery (Hamrick) Waldrip '26** in January 2026. Hayden now serves as a teacher and coach at Wylie ISD. Avery plans to graduate in December 2026 with a degree in early childhood education and pursue a teaching career.



Jackson Dyer '26 B.S. married Amelia (Smith) Dyer on May 22, 2026, at Multnomah Falls, Oregon.



Faith (Murray) Reeves '26 B.B.S. graduated in May and four days later, on May 12, 2026, married Gage Reeves, who was born and raised in Abilene. Faith is especially thankful that three of her bridesmaids, Blair, Emma, and Kelsey, are friends she met at HSU through cheer and a random suitemate assignment, and she is so grateful for the lifelong friendships HSU gave her.

Submissions
received from
Jan. 14, 2026 -
July 7, 2026

Welcome to the Family

2000s

Jenae (Pharr) Lysinger '08 B.B.S. and husband, Bryan welcomed their daughter, Rowan, on July 8, 2025.



Carter Allen Grisham was born on February 12, 2026 to Jerrad Grisham '09 B.B.A. and Kelsey (Byars) Grisham '11 B.B.A. Jerrad currently serves on the HSU Board of Young Associates.

2010s

Duke Emery was born on April 23, 2026. He is the second son of Dustin Emery '13 B.B.S. and Jaclyn (von der Heide) Emery '15 B.B.S.

Derek Footer '15 B.B.S./'16 M.Ed. and wife, Sadie welcomed son, Jordan Footer on November 19, 2025.

Cambree Linn Fox, daughter of Jacie (Burnett) Fox '18 B.B.S. and Dillon Fox, was born on September 2, 2025.

Charlotte Kate Jonas was born May 4, 2026, to proud parents, Chloe (Stirling) Jonas '18 B.B.A./'20 M.B.A. and Austin Jonas.



Melissa (Taylor) McVay '18 B.B.S. and her husband, Christian, welcomed their son, Sutton Reeves McVay, on February 15, 2026, weighing 6 pounds, 1 ounce.



2020s

Sadie May Powers was born on December 11, 2026, to parents, Kolsen Powers '22 B.S.H.S. and Rachel (Bean) Powers '21 B.S. We are blessed to welcome a future cowgirl into our family!



Skylar (Bell Brenner) Lowry '22 B.B.S. and husband, Jack Lowry '22 B.S. welcomed their daughter, Margaret "Meg" Jean Lowry, on March 24, 2026.



Jude Evelyn Gonzales was born on February 18, 2026. She is the daughter of Adrian '24 B.S.H.S. and Raegan (White) Gonzales '23 B.F.A.

Family We'll Miss

Graduates

1940s

Mr. Billy "Bob" Lewis '48 B.M. 2/4/26

Mrs. Katy (Bassinger) Rowan '49 B.B.A. 4/10/26

1950s

Mrs. Jessie (Myers) Lawson '50 B.S. 5/21/26

Mr. Charles Layton '50 B.B.A. 5/30/26. Survived by son, Mark Layton '71x.

Mrs. Mary Ellen (James) Warren '50 B.S. 2/14/26

Mrs. Jimmie (Coke) Woodruff '51 B.S. 2/11/26

Mr. James Cox '54 B.S. 6/12/26

Mr. Jerry Grant '54 B.A. 5/11/26. Survived by wife, Carolyn (Chauvin) Grant 'x.

Mrs. Patsy "Pat" (Agnew) Kincaid '54 B.S. 2/21/26. Survived by husband, Don Kincaid '65x and daughter, Deneice Vance.

Mr. Don Posey '54 B.B.A. 6/2/26

Mrs. Martha (Ligon) Hodgins '56 B.S. 4/6/26

Dr. Dallas Lacy '57 B.A. 4/25/26

Mr. G. "Keith" Munnerlyn '57 B.S. 3/13/26

Col. Robert "Bob" Chancellor '58 B.B.A. 2/13/26. Survived by wife, Charlotte (Auer) Chancellor '61x.

Rev. William "Bill" Hindman '59 B.A. 3/25/26

Mrs. Florita (Young) Stafford '59 B.M. 3/2/26

Mrs. Carolyn (Virden) Brown '60 B.A. 1/27/26

Dr. Ronald Ensey '60 B.A. 2/3/26

1960s

Dr. Carolyn (Virden) Brown '60 B.A. 1/27/26



MR. GENE ADAMS '54 B.B.A./ '62 M.A.

March 1, 2026

For 65 years, Gene Darrell Adams built a career in Texas banking guided by faith, integrity, and an unshakable belief in service to others. His HSU roots carried him far — he went on to serve on the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas and advise Russian bankers on free-enterprise banking after the Soviet era, work that reflected his lifelong commitment to economic development and global financial cooperation.

Gene's connection to HSU ran deep. His extraordinary generosity and decades of leadership left a lasting mark on the university and the students it serves. He served on the Board of Trustees, Board of Development, School of Music Foundation, and Alumni Association Board of Directors. His devotion was recognized with the Keeter Alumni Service Award in 1991, induction into the Athletics Hall of Fame in 2003 as a member of the 1954 National Championship tennis team, the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2008, and induction into the Hall of Leaders in 2012."



MRS. CARLENE (HOLDER) SPICER '59 B.A./'91 M.A.

April 29, 2026

Carlene Spicer lived a life rooted in faith, family, and a deep love for Hardin-Simmons University. She graduated magna cum laude from HSU in 1959, majoring in Music and English, after being active in the A Cappella Choir, University Trio, Sigma Tau Delta and Alpha Chi honor societies, Baptist Student Union, and Brand staff. She later returned to earn her master's degree in English and joined the HSU faculty in 1992, teaching English until her retirement in 1999.

Carlene helped found the School of Music Foundation and served on its board for many years, along with the Academic Foundation and Alumni Association Board of Directors. She was also a Sigma Alpha Iota Patroness and an Ex-Cowgirl. She was honored with the Former Faculty Member of the Year award in 2010, the Altom Christian Service Award in 2016, and received the John J. Keeter Alumni Service Award in 2017.

Carlene is survived by daughters, Carrie Spicer 'x, Cynthia "Cindy" Spicer '82x, and Jayne "Connie" (Spicer) Earp '84 B.Ed/'91 M.Ed, and son, Chuck Spicer.

Mrs. Martha (Ueckert) McDaniel '60 B.A. 2/28/26. Survived by sister, Jan (Ueckert) Lofland '67 B.B.A.

Mr. Johnny Bradshaw '61 B.S. 1/19/26

Mrs. Janice (Robinson) Roark '61 B.S. 2/7/26

Mr. David "Dave" Timok '61 B.S. 6/7/26. Survived by wife, Rebecca "Becky" (Smith) Timok 'x.

Mrs. Celesta (Golden) Vaughan '62 B.A. 2/20/26

Mrs. Linda (Gustavus) Dunham '63 B.S. 2/28/26. Survived by husband, M. Duane Dunham '64 B.A.

Mr. Morris "Joe" Taylor '63 B.M. 5/24/26. Survived by wife, Mary (Hill) Taylor '64 B.S.

Mr. Bill Trainham '63 B.A. 2/8/26

Mr. Jerry Watts '63 B.A. 3/19/26

Dr. John Moline '64 B.A. 5/13/26

Mr. Kenneth Elliott '65 B.A. 3/19/26

Submissions received from Jan. 14, 2026 - July 7, 2026



Mrs. Mertie (Lewis) Wood '65 B.A., former trustee, 2/17/26. Survived by sister, **Voyce "LaDell" (Lewis) Lemmons '54x**, and brother, **John Lewis '66x**.

Lt. Col. Burl Magee '67 B.B.A. 5/31/26

Mr. Jack Townley '69 B.A. 4/25/26

1970s

Mr. Steve Cates '70 B.A. 3/12/26. Survived by wife, **Raye (Hamil) Cates '70 B.A.**

Ms. Glynda Vickers '70 B.S. 6/10/26

Mr. Gerald Linton '71 B.S. 3/23/26



Mrs. Nancy (Burton) Toliver '71 M.Ed. 3/28/26

Mr. John Best '73 B.M. 1/8/26. Survived by wife, **Kara "Jeannie" (Wilmeth) Best '73 B.M./'91 M.Ed**, brothers, **Mark Best '81 B.M.** and **Charles "Calvin" Best '89 B.Ed/'11 M.A.**, and niece, **Darcy (Best) Radcliffe '00 B.M.**

Ms. Jean (Woolsey) Curtis '73 B.S. 1/11/26

Mr. C. "Bill" Karr '73 B.A. 6/10/26. Survived by sister, **Donna (Karr) Hadlock '68 B.S.**, brother-in-law, **Dr. Eddie Hadlock '67 B.S.**, niece, **Dr. Heather Hadlock '97 B.B.S.**, and nephew, **David Hadlock '21 B.B.S.**

Mrs. Judy (Lemons) Davidson '74 M.A. 6/5/26

Mrs. Sally (Talbert Pringle) Ratliff '74 B.S. 2/4/26

Mrs. Nancy (Stevenson) Bumpass '75 B.S. 3/17/26

Mrs. Annie "Polly" (Rowland) Burt '77 B.B.A/'79 M.B.A. 2/1/26

Capt. Dennis White '77 M.B.A. 2/11/26

Mr. Bartlett Calcote '78 M.B.A. 2/23/26

Mrs. Nancy (Flint) Bloodworth '79 B.A. 1/24/26

Ms. Kristi Scoggin '79 B.S. 4/16/26

Ms. Joylyn (Haynie) Simpson '79 B.S. 6/29/26



MR. WILLIAM "TOM" WOMBLE '65 B.S.

June 14, 2026

Tom Womble left behind a legacy woven with faith, service, and a lifelong love for Hardin-Simmons. While at HSU, he was active in Tau Alpha Phi, Student Congress, and HSU ROTC. He went on to serve as a U.S. Army Captain, earning the Army Commendation Medal, before building a distinguished legal career, including founding the Houston firm Womble and Spain in 1988.

Tom's love for HSU never wavered. A faithful supporter of the university throughout his life, he generously gave of his time, leadership, and resources. He received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1995 and served faithfully on the Board of Trustees, Board of Development, and School of Music Foundation. In 2025, he was inducted into the HSU Hall of Leaders.

Tom is survived by his wife of 60 years, **Mary Jane (Horton) Womble '65 B.A.** as well as 3 children, multiple grandchildren, and a great grandson.



MR. RONNIE C. KIDD '81 B.B.A.

March 20, 2026

Ronnie C. Kidd built a career defined by service, from Abilene's city government to the community's food bank, always carrying his HSU roots with him. He graduated from Hardin-Simmons in 1981 with a bachelor's degree in accounting, where he was a member of Alpha Phi Omega. Ronnie went on to serve as Managing Director for the City of Abilene for 18 years before becoming CEO of The Food Bank of West Central Texas, leading a major capital renovation there.

A proud Cowboy, Ronnie served on the HSU Alumni Association Board and Board of Development, and established the Kidd Family Endowed Scholarship, continuing a legacy that spans four generations of family who have attended or graduated from HSU. Ronnie is survived by wife, Sheila Kidd, and son **Riley Kidd '12 B.B.A.**

1980s

Mr. Athol "Kent" Stallcup '87 B.B.S. 2/20/26. Survived by wife, **Tamara "Tammy" (White) Stallcup '83 B.M./'85 M.M.**

Rev. Jeffery "Jeff" Taylor '88 B.A. 5/3/26

Mr. John Carver '89 B.A. 3/20/26

1990s

Mrs. Modena (Rankin) Whorton '91 B.Ed. 5/29/26



2000s

Mr. Loran Hill '04 M.S. 4/14/26. Survived by wife, Dr. Carol Hill (former faculty).

2010s

Mr. Jacob Frost '16 B.S. 1/19/26. Survived by wife, Clarissa (Luna) Frost 'x

Mrs. Leslie (Henderson) Smith '16 B.B.S. 3/13/26

Former Students

Mrs. Sylvia (Brown) Beal 4/14/26

Mrs. Tommie (Newman) Bryant 6/5/26

Mrs. Pamela (Garrison) Buckley 4/17/26

Mrs. Joyce Carr 1/9/26

Mrs. Helen (Burroughs) Gabrel 4/12/26

Mrs. Wanda (Shaw-Sumpton) Hudson 3/3/26



Mr. Charles "Terry" Julian 3/4/26. Survived by wife Leona Julian and brother-in-law, **Richard Young '66 B.B.A./ '82 M.B.A.** and sister-in-law, **Carolyn (Althof) Young '67x**.

Mrs. Mary Ann (Jones) Kornegay 3/22/26

Mr. Dave Letz 5/16/26. Survived by wife **Debra "Debbie" (Riddle) Letz '78 B.M.**

Mrs. Sherry (Murphy) Lopez 5/18/26. Survived by husband, **Joseph Lopez '66 M.Ed.**

Mrs. Shirley (Nelson) Lovell 6/4/26

Mrs. Linda (Owen) Mitchell 1/18/26

Mrs. Shirley (Bassetti) Noe 6/24/26

Mr. William North 3/20/26

Mrs. Janice (Bryant) Payne 4/25/26. Survived by husband, **Chester "Mike" Payne '63 B.S.**, sister, **Ann (Bryant) Lindsey, '65 B.M.**, and brother-in-law, **Duane Lindsey '65 B.S.**

Dr. Rufus Roberts 1/29/26

Mrs. Wanda (Floyd Burgess) Rowe 4/16/26

Mr. Roy Simpson 3/16/26

Mrs. E. "Gaylene" (Schlittler) Storms 3/19/26

Mrs. Margaret (Trentham) Tankersley 3/22/26

Mrs. Beatrice Whiteside 5/29/26

Friends

Mr. Walter Bailey 3/16/26. Survived by wife, **Mary (Risser) Bailey '77 B.S./ '80 M.A./ '82 M.Ed.**

Mr. Edward Black 3/24/26. Survived by wife, **Nora (Jordan) Black '77 B.S.**

Mr. Claude "Duffey" Brown 5/2/26

Ms. Betty Burrow 2/24/26. Survived by brother, **Roy Graham '63 B.A.**, and sister-in-law, **Sharon (Smith) Graham '63 B.B.A.**, niece, **Darla Morrow '94x**, niece, **Andrea (Graham) Chapman '89 B.Ed**, husband, **Monty Chapman '87 B.Ed**, and nephew, **Mark Graham '92 B.B.S**, and wife, **Marian (Shelton) Graham '92 B.A.**

Mr. Joseph Croft Jr. 3/7/26. Survived by wife, **Libby (Stischer) Croft '90 M.Ed.**

Dr. Edwin "Ed" Hewett, former faculty, 4/13/26.



Mrs. Joyce (Tyler) Jones, former staff, 4/2/26. Survived by sons, **Rodney Jones '87 B.B.A.** and **Randy Jones, '82 B.S.**, and daughter-in-law, **Jammie (Campbell) Jones '81 B.Ed.**



DR. ROBERT B. SLOAN, JR.

July 4, 2026

Dr. Robert B. Sloan, Jr., a respected leader in Christian higher education, passed away, leaving behind a legacy of faithful service that touched students, colleagues, and institutions across the country. Raised in Abilene, Dr. Sloan began his academic career as an adjunct professor at Hardin-Simmons University before going on to serve as President of Baylor University and, most recently, as President of Houston Christian University. Throughout his career, he remained a steadfast advocate for the integration of faith and learning, shaping generations of students and strengthening the mission of Christian higher education.



DR. DELORES WASHBURN

April 12, 2026

Dr. Delores Washburn dedicated nearly three decades to teaching English at Hardin-Simmons University, joining the faculty in 1968 and retiring in 1995. In 1991, she was honored as Faculty Member of the Year, a recognition of her years of dedication to her students and her craft.

Delores is survived by her husband, **Paul Washburn '72 B.S.**, and daughter, **Gwen (Martin) Snyder '84 B.A.**

Mr. Jesus Lopez 1/22/26. Survived by wife, **Lydia (Garza) Lopez '81 B.B.S.**

Mrs. Billye (Littlepage) Proctor-Shaw 4/6/26. Survived by granddaughter, **Canon (Cleveland) Cavazos '09 B.B.S.**



Mrs. Elise Pryor-Harden 4/5/26. Survived by husband, **Leland Harden '84 B.B.A.**

Dr. Patricia Rash, former faculty, 2/21/26.

Mr. Scott Tompkins, former staff, 2/2/26.

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

Submissions received from Jan. 14, 2026 - July 7, 2026

What's your favorite Forty Acres snow day memory?

When West Texas weather turns campus into a winter wonderland, the Forty Acres takes on a different kind of magic. Snowball fights break out on Anderson Lawn, classes give way to impromptu adventures, and even the busiest days pause for a little joy in the snow.

Tell us about your favorite HSU snow day memory. Email your response to alumni@hsutx.edu or scan the QR code to share your story.





Thank you for helping us speakLIFE into HSU students! Your support for our speakLIFE campaign has been truly transformational for the Forty Acres and our students whose stories are still being written. Together, alumni, friends, faculty, staff, students, parents, and grandparents have made an extraordinary impact by enhancing programs, renovating and restoring beloved campus landmarks, and creating life-changing opportunities for the students who will carry our legacy forward.

For legacy student and Cowboy quarterback Keagan Ables '26, Hardin-Simmons University has been part of his story for as long as he can remember. Both of his parents were Cowboys, and he grew up cheering on HSU long before he ever wore the jersey himself. Now, as a student-athlete, Keagan carries with him the words of Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the LORD." He says he is deeply thankful to be a Cowboy and for the opportunity to represent HSU both on the field and in the classroom.

While Keagan shares that paying for school can feel overwhelming, scholarship support has allowed him

to spend more time working hard to succeed both academically and athletically. "Scholarships have been such a blessing to me," he says. "I am so thankful for the donors who choose to give to college students like me." A Finance major, Keagan hopes to spread the love of Christ through his future career. Having experienced so many people pour into his life here at HSU, he looks forward to pouring into others when he graduates and leaves the Forty Acres.

Stories like Keagan's are possible because of your faithful support. In celebration of the transformational conclusion of HSU's speakLIFE campaign, we extend our deepest thanks to you. Every gift, every connection, and every shared memory help shape our students into the trailblazers of tomorrow. If you would like to share your story or discuss your charitable dreams, we would love to connect with you.

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



"Scholarships have been such a blessing to me. I am so thankful for the donors who choose to give to college students like me."

—Keagan Ables '26

spea**k**  **LIFE**

Thank you for making an impact!

The speakLIFE campaign has made visible impact across Hardin-Simmons University. With an original goal of \$35 million and a challenge goal of \$45 million, the campaign has now raised more than \$56.7 million through the generosity of faithful donors. Scholarships have opened doors,

academic programs have grown, campus spaces have been renewed, and students have been better equipped for lives of service. In the following updates, campus leaders share how campaign support has strengthened HSU today while building toward the future.



Dr. Matt Jackson
Dean, Holland School of
Sciences and Mathematics

ABILENE HALL: ENGINEERING

"The engineering program's first graduating class achieved 100% placement in graduate school, thanks in part to the advanced fabrication equipment and learning spaces made possible through donor generosity. Students are using these resources to serve others through innovative projects, including a custom patient lift designed for HSU's Equine Assisted Services program, demonstrating how engineering can be used as the hands and feet of Christ."



NEWMAN-RICHARDSON SCIENCE CENTER

"Donor support through speakLIFE transformed Newman-Richardson's laboratory spaces, creating modern learning environments that provide hands-on experiences for more than 1,000 students each year through 60+ lab sections. These cutting-edge facilities help prepare students for success in graduate and professional programs at rates that exceed many peer institutions, equipping the next generation of scientists, healthcare professionals, and researchers."





Dr. Stacey Martin '96/'01/'23
Vice President for Student Life

BEHRENS RESIDENCE HALL

"For decades, Behrens Hall has been a catalyst for transformation. Having called Behrens Hall home myself 35 years ago, I know firsthand the lasting impact of its Christ-centered community. Students continue to integrate faith with daily life, grow as leaders, and develop a heart for service. Through the support of donors, that legacy will continue to shape lives for generations to come."



PRICHARD HALL

"Prichard Hall is more than student housing — it is a place of belonging, discipleship, and transformation. As the university's most highly occupied residence hall, it provides a welcoming environment where women are supported academically, spiritually, and relationally. Donor generosity has created a space where students discover community, deepen their faith, and prepare for lives of Christ-centered leadership."



Allison Goodwin '21
Vice President for Enrollment Management

CHRISTLIEB PROGRAM & SCHOLARSHIP

"The Christlieb Program removes financial barriers for students facing significant life challenges, opening doors that otherwise might remain closed. Beyond financial assistance, recipients gain access to a supportive Christian community where they can pursue God's calling, grow in their faith, and build a brighter future through higher education."



SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT

"Scholarship support changes lives by making a Hardin-Simmons education accessible to more students. Donor generosity relieves financial burdens, allowing students to focus on learning, personal growth, and spiritual development. Each scholarship represents an investment in future leaders who will carry Christ's influence into their professions, churches, and communities."



Dr. Sandra Welling
Associate Dean, College of Health Professions

ABILENE HALL: NURSING

"Abilene Hall has become home to a thriving nursing program where faith and healthcare intersect. Since welcoming its first cohort in 2025, the program has grown to serve 130 nursing and pre-nursing students, preparing future nurses to deliver compassionate, Christ-centered care while addressing critical healthcare needs across Texas and beyond."



Dr. Jill Jumper '08
Director of Physical Therapy Program

EQUINE-ASSISTED SERVICES

"The Equine-Assisted Services are transforming lives through interdisciplinary therapy that combines physical, speech, and equine-assisted care. Since May 2025, the program has provided nearly 300 therapeutic rides while giving students invaluable hands-on experience serving patients ages 3 to 85. Through compassionate service and collaboration, students learn to put faith into action while meeting real community needs."



Dr. Heather Hadlock '97
Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

BEHRENS CHAPEL AUDITORIUM

"Behrens Chapel Auditorium serves as the spiritual heartbeat of HSU, bringing together more than 500 students each week for worship, discipleship, and fellowship. Through chapel services, worship nights, and faith-centered events, students encounter Christ, grow in their faith, and develop as spiritual leaders. This renewed space not only unites the campus community but is producing eternal impact through lives transformed by the Gospel."



Dr. Chris McNair '84
Provost and Chief Academic Officer

FACULTY ENRICHMENT

"Faculty Enrichment funds strengthen the academic mission of HSU by investing in the people who invest in students. These resources help faculty pursue doctoral studies, conduct research, engage in professional development, and acquire specialized tools for innovative projects. By empowering faculty growth, donors are enhancing the educational experience and expanding opportunities for students across campus."



YOUR IMPACT, THEIR FUTURE:

Students Share How Scholarships Are Shaping Their Callings

The lives of Hardin-Simmons University students are shaped every day by the generosity of donors who believe in the power of Christian higher education. Through scholarship support, students are able to pursue their academic goals, answer God's calling on their lives, and prepare for futures marked by purpose and service.

Whether their paths lead to ministry, healthcare, education, technology, or family life, these students share a common gratitude for the individuals who have invested in their journeys. Their stories reflect not only the impact of financial assistance, but also the lasting difference that donor generosity makes in helping students grow, serve, and make a meaningful impact on the world around them.

MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

There are many ways to impact the story of a student at Hardin-Simmons University. One of the most meaningful ways to shape the future of a student is by starting a scholarship. To learn more about how you can start one or discover other ways to make an impact, scan the QR code.



**Aaron Pardue '26
with Dr. Omer Hancock**

For Aaron, his scholarship has made the Hardin-Simmons experience possible and opened doors for his future ministry. Because of the generosity of donor support, he will be able to graduate debt-free and will continue pursuing a Master of Divinity at Baylor University without the burden of student debt.

Called to serve the church, Aaron hopes to use his education to help others grow in their faith by making complex theological concepts understandable and relevant to everyday life. He is deeply grateful for the investment donors have made in his calling and future ministry.



**Avery McNatt '26
with Mrs. Mary (Duck)
Weaver '86**

Avery describes her scholarship as a tremendous blessing for her family during an especially meaningful season of life. With wedding plans underway and a new niece added to her family, scholarship support has eased financial pressures and allowed her and her fiancé to begin their marriage completely debt-free.

Avery looks forward to building a family while also pursuing the opportunities ahead. She is grateful for how her HSU education, professors, and lifelong friendships have prepared her for the next chapter of life, and she thanks donors for helping make both her education and future possible.

Brett Brittain '27
with Mrs. Gracie Carroll

Scholarship support has allowed Brett to focus fully on his education without the added stress of excessive student loans or maintaining an off-campus job. By easing the financial burden on both Brett and his family, scholarships have given him the opportunity to dedicate more time to his studies and make the most of his HSU experience as he prepares for his future career.

Brett hopes to use his education to advance technology and make innovative products more accessible to everyday consumers. He is thankful for the donors whose generosity has helped him pursue those ambitions.

Jackson Dyer '26
with Mrs. Libby Rankin
and Mrs. Linda (Metcalf)
Carter '99

For Jackson, scholarship support has reduced the financial burden on his family, allowing him to focus on preparing for a life of ministry and pursue his calling with confidence. With donor assistance, he has been able to invest more, embracing every aspect of his education, campus involvement, and service opportunities.

Jackson hopes to use his education to lead meaningful worship, encourage spiritual growth, and mentor future generations of worship leaders. He is grateful to the donors who chose to invest in his calling and his journey to serve the church.

Lauren Sincerney '28
with Dr. Loyd and
Mrs. Brenda Hawthorne

Lauren says scholarships are the reason she can attend college. Without donor support, higher education would require significant student loans or even the possibility of leaving school altogether. Scholarships have allowed her not only to pursue her studies but also to participate in opportunities that have enriched her college experience.

After graduation, Lauren hopes to become a choir director, combining her passion for teaching and music to inspire the next generation. She is deeply thankful for the generosity that has made her education possible.

Nicole Young '28
with Mrs. Carolyn
Newman

Nicole is grateful for the scholarship support that has helped reduce her financial burden, allowing her to continue pursuing her degree at Hardin-Simmons. The assistance has not only enabled her to continue her education but has also allowed her to help ease the responsibility carried by her parents, who have faithfully supported her academic journey.

As a Biology major on the pre-Physician Assistant track, Nicole hopes to continue into graduate school and ultimately serve patients through compassionate healthcare. Wherever God leads her, she hopes to be a light to those she serves and is thankful for the donors helping her pursue that calling.

New 2026 Members HERITAGE SOCIETY & PACE SETTERS

Celebrating generosity that fuels the mission of Hardin-Simmons University

The generosity of our donors is foundational to HSU's mission: preparing tomorrow's Christian leaders today. Through annual, recurring, and legacy gifts, supporters at every level help make this mission possible. We are proud to recognize new donors to these giving societies:

HERITAGE SOCIETY

Celebrating 20 years of faithful giving

The Heritage Society honors donors who have given consistently for 20 years or more, beginning with their first gift. These longtime supporters form the foundation of HSU's continued impact in Christian higher education.

Rev. Jimmy & Mrs. Jody Braswell	Mr. Mike & Dr. Mary Lou Garrett	Mr. Filemon & Mrs. Maria Elena Ortiz
Mrs. Lynne Bridgeman	Mr. Jim & Mrs. Louise Jones	Mr. Sean Von Muldau
Mr. Joe Ed Canon	Ms. Marilois Kirksey	

PACE SETTERS

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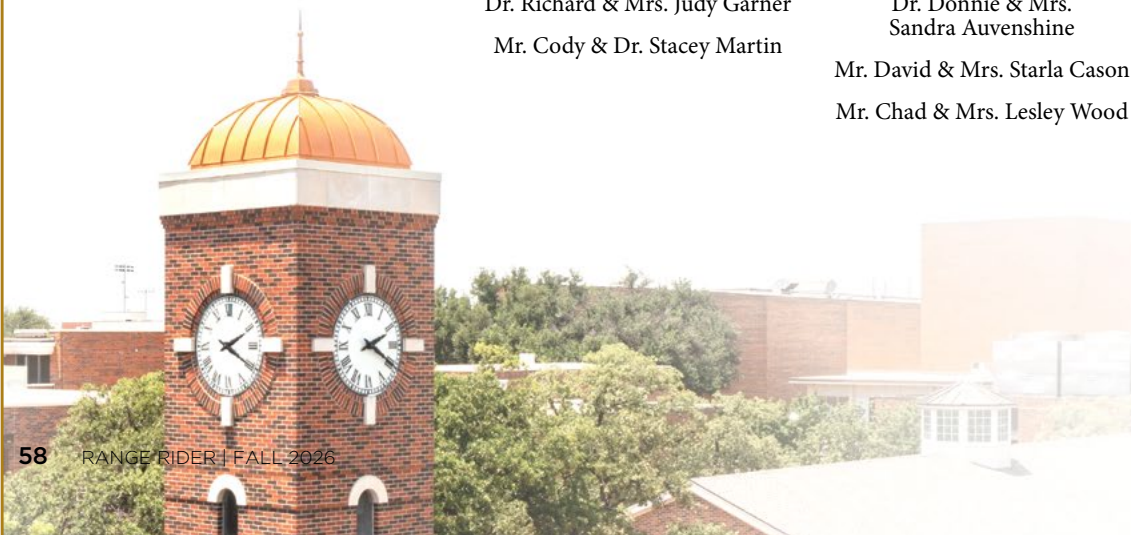
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Traveling Range Riders: More Than a Trip, It's a Community

For many Hardin-Simmons University alumni and friends, the Traveling Range Riders program, led by director Britt (Yates) Jones '84, offers an opportunity to see the world and creates meaningful connections that span destinations and generations.

For Daisy (Dominguez) Sanchez '86 and Javier Sanchez '89, Traveling Range Riders adventures have taken them from the stunning landscapes of Alaska's Inside Passage to the coastal beauty of Italy, France, and Spain. Their next adventure is already on the calendar: a city-stay experience in Florence, Italy, in April 2027.

Reflecting on their experiences, Daisy says the destinations are certainly unforgettable, but the relationships built along the way are what stand out most.

"The places we have been to are beautiful," she said. "We continue to be amazed by the beauty and diversity in the different regions of our world. Beyond the places we have visited, traveling with old and new friends has been so fun."

Those connections have extended far beyond the trips themselves. Through Traveling Range Riders, the Sanchezes have introduced friends with no ties to HSU to the program, while also developing friendships with fellow

alumni from different generations. One of Daisy's favorite outcomes has been watching one of her daughters and sons-in-law get to know her college friends.

"Because of our travels, our daughter and son-in-law have become friends with our college friends," she said. "How cool is that?"

Their daughter, Alex (Sanchez) Dyer '17, recently experienced that connection firsthand when she and her husband, Thomas, joined the Mediterranean Awakening cruise through Spain, France, Italy, and Monaco.

For Alex, the destinations were incredible, but the people made the experience special.

"The great company stands out most," she said. "Our group was small, so we spent lots of time together and were able to really connect with each other."

That sense of community is a common theme among Traveling Range Riders participants. Whether traveling with longtime friends, reconnecting with fellow alumni, or meeting new people for the first time, travelers often return home with much more than photos and souvenirs.

Both generations agree that one of the biggest advantages of Traveling Range Riders is the ease of traveling. Instead of

worrying about logistics, travelers can focus on enjoying the experience.

"There is no better way to travel than with HSU," Daisy said. "Everything is planned and so well executed."

Alex echoed that sentiment.

"It is the best way to see lots of places and enjoy excursions without the stress of trying to plan it all out on your own," she said. "The trip was so easy to navigate, excursions were easy to book, and the cruise ship was amazing."

The care and attention provided throughout the experience also leaves a lasting impression. When asked to describe the Traveling Range Riders experience in just a few words, Daisy offered a perspective that serves as both advice and inspiration.

"Life is short, health is precarious — take the trip," she said. "The world is filled with beautiful places and people. Go see the world and meet the people God placed there. Go enjoy the journey."

At its heart, the Traveling Range Riders program is about more than travel. It is about creating shared experiences, strengthening HSU connections, building lifelong friendships, and making memories that span generations. For families like the Sanchezes and the Dyers, the journeys continue long after the trip itself ends.



Traveling Range Riders

Ready, Set...Let's Go!

Panama Canal & Costa Rica	Jan. 8-Jan. 16, 2027
Australia & New Zealand	Feb. 20-March 10, 2027
Florence: The Serene Season	April 9- April 17, 2027
Scotland Highlands & Islands	May 29-June 7, 2027
Baltic Capitals & Nordic Shores Cruise	July 15-July 26, 2027
Lisbon to Casablanca & Andalusia Cruise	Oct. 5-Oct. 14, 2027
A Royal English Christmas*	Dec. 1-Dec. 9, 2027

* Single supplement waived or reduced for solo travelers (limited capacity)

Everyone's welcome!

DISCOVER the DETAILS
www.hsutx.edu/travel
or scan the QR code





Dear HSU Family & Friends,

For more than 135 years, Hardin-Simmons University has remained steadfast in its mission while continually adapting to meet the needs of each new generation. As we look toward the future, we recognize that the strongest path forward is one shaped by the voices of the people who know and love HSU.

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee, thank you to every alumnus, donor, faculty member, staff member, student, parent, and friend who participated in our strategic planning survey. More than 250 members of the HSU community shared thoughtful feedback, helping us better understand the strengths that define Hardin-Simmons University, identify opportunities for growth, and shape a shared vision for the future.

From that feedback, nine recurring priorities emerged, including student experience, academic quality, enrollment and recruitment, faith and Christian mission, infrastructure and facilities, financial resources, faculty and staff quality, regional partnerships, and innovation and technology. Together, these themes shaped the three strategic pillars that now provide a focused framework for the University's future.

While the process identified many important opportunities, one thing remained clear throughout every conversation: our community is deeply committed to the mission of Hardin-Simmons University and to preparing students for lives of Christian leadership and service. That shared commitment became the compass for every decision made throughout this planning process.

The Strategic Plan reflects a shared vision shaped by the HSU community and grounded in our mission and values. Thank you for investing your time, your perspective, and your prayers throughout this planning process. We look forward to faithfully pursuing the work God is calling Hardin-Simmons University to in the years ahead.

Dr. Heather Hadlock '97

Associate Vice President for
Strategic Initiatives

CALLED FOR MORE

Grounded in Hardin-Simmons University's mission, this Strategic Plan aligns priorities, guides decision-making, and strengthens the University for generations to come.

MISSION

The mission of Hardin-Simmons University is to be a community dedicated to providing excellence in education enlightened by Christian faith and values.

THREE STRATEGIC PILLARS



**CHRIST-CENTERED
FORMATION AND
COMMUNITY**

HSU cultivates a faith-integrated, relational learning environment where students, faculty, staff, and partners live out Christian values through mentorship, service, and community engagement.



**ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE AND
STUDENT SUCCESS**

HSU delivers rigorous academic programs supported by effective teaching, enrollment vitality, extracurricular activities, and innovative learning tools that prepare graduates for impactful lives, careers, and service.



**IMPACT AND
FINANCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY**

HSU responsibly stewards its financial, physical, and technological resources to ensure long-term sustainability, operational effectiveness, and faithful support of its mission.

University Goals & Initiatives ⇨ Department Action Plans ⇨ Assessment ⇨ Improvement ⇨ Alignment



*“His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one
that will never be destroyed.” —Daniel 7:14*

DEVOTIONAL BUILDING *His Eternal Kingdom*

by Shelli Presley, Director of Spiritual Formation

In a world that often celebrates what is temporary, God calls His people to invest in something eternal: His Kingdom. Every achievement, building, program, and accomplishment will one day fade, but the Kingdom of God will endure forever.

Because Christ's Kingdom is eternal, the work that matters most is building what advances His reign and growing what will last beyond our lifetime. Jesus gave His followers a clear mission to go and make disciples. The Great Commission is not merely about gathering crowds; it is about forming disciples who know and love Christ.

The Apostle Paul carried this same burden when he wrote, “We proclaim Him... so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). He labored and struggled for the spiritual maturity of others because he understood that transformed lives are the true measure of Kingdom impact.

There is great joy in this kind of sowing. When we invest in people, share the gospel,

teach God's Word, and walk alongside others in discipleship, we participate in a harvest that reaches into eternity. The disciples Jesus trained faithfully passed on what they received, and generation after generation the gospel has continued to spread. Today, we are part of that ongoing harvest because others invested in making disciples before us.

At Hardin-Simmons University, we care most deeply about loving God, advancing His Kingdom, and raising up disciples of Jesus Christ. This is Kingdom work. This is building what matters and growing what lasts.

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



HSU CHAPEL GROWING *Together in Christ*

Chapel at Hardin-Simmons University is a special time in the life of our campus community. Twice each week, we pause from the demands of a busy schedule and focus our hearts and minds on the Lord. At its core, chapel exists to honor God, unifying our campus around our shared mission of advancing the Kingdom of God.

In recent years, chapel has been held in Behrens Chapel Auditorium. Tuesdays have primarily featured speakers who teach God's Word through scripture-based messages and devotional reflections. Thursdays have focused on worship, prayer, and testimony, providing opportunities for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of HSU to share stories of God's faithfulness and work in their lives.

As we look toward the Fall 2026 semester, we are excited to introduce some meaningful changes while preserving the

essential elements that make chapel such a valuable part of campus life.

Beginning in Fall 2026, while Tuesday chapel gatherings will continue their same format in Behrens Chapel Auditorium, Thursday chapel will transition to Logsdon Chapel and surrounding classrooms with a new format.

This change creates an exciting opportunity to expand the ways students engage spiritually during chapel time. Each Thursday, Logsdon Chapel will remain open as a dedicated space for worship and prayer. Whether through quiet worship, contemplative practices, personal reflection, or receiving prayer, this space will provide ongoing opportunities for spiritual renewal and connection with God.

In addition, three small groups will be offered each Thursday. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for

a group that aligns with their interests and spiritual growth goals.

- One group will focus on an in-depth study of a book of the Bible, led by Logsdon Bible majors and faculty members.
- A second group will focus on anxiety, a challenge affecting people of all ages and backgrounds, particularly college students.
- The third group will focus on discipleship and Kingdom living with a variety of faith-based topics.

Our aim is to cultivate meaningful conversations rooted in Scripture that continue well beyond chapel gatherings. We hope these opportunities will inspire deeper discipleship, stronger relationships, and a campus culture that actively pursues Christ together as we seek to know and love God and others.



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SAVE THE DATE
Oct. 15-18, 2026

Come home to Hardin-Simmons University for Homecoming 2026, and reconnect with classmates, treasured traditions, and the HSU community.

See page 37 to see the schedule of events.

**Scan the QR code
for more information.**

