

# Sombrilla™

The University of Texas at San Antonio **MAGAZINE** Summer 2010  
Vol. 26, No. 2



THE GIFT OF HUMANITY





SUMMER 2010

# Sombrilla™

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A simple gift—an elephant charm—given from one prisoner to another in a Nazi concentration camp, offers lessons in what makes us human. See "The Gift of Humanity" on Page 22.

Photo by Kemp Davis Photography.

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The Applied Engineering and Technology Building is the newest addition to UTSA's campus. Photo by Mark McClendon.



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Moon Landings

Sitting in his house in India, listening live on his family's radio as man walked on the moon for the very first time, 10-year-old Mauli Agrawal had his a-ha moment. An epiphany. What he today calls his "moon-landing" moment.

If man could walk on the moon, it took an amazing feat of engineering to get him there. He wanted a piece of that. Alive for only a decade, he knew he was going to be an engineer.

My "moon-landing" moment happened when I was in eighth grade. A classmate had just been killed in a drive-by shooting, the victim of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. At her funeral, I watched as news reporters shoved microphones and recorders in the faces of the grieving, asking the inane question "How do you feel?" I felt angry. I felt violated. I knew her story needed to be told, and I knew there was a better, more compassionate way of telling it.

That's when I decided I would be a journalist. That tragedy was a defining moment and one that still guides me today.

The lucky among us have had similar moments where we just know what it is we want to do "when we grow up." Engineers. Teachers. Doctors. Musicians. Writers. Parents. Even luckier are those who get to pursue their dreams, even if it is only to stumble upon another completely different life plan.

With the help of passionate educators, Agrawal, who pursued his engineering dream and is now the dean of the College of Engineering, has created the Interactive Technology Experience Center. Its purpose is to help children find their life's path, ideally in the fields of engineering, science, math and technology. But really, they just want to provide a place to excite, educate and motivate. As they say, they hope to spark curiosity.

They want to create other "moon-landing" moments. Here's to yours.

Saludos,

*Lety Laurel*



## YOUR LETTERS



### FOCUS ON RECOVERY

I had goose bumps when I read the profile on Melanie Lane (Fall 2009 *Sombrilla*). Melanie is definitely one of my heroes and a fine example of how women can beat the disease of addiction and alcoholism.

We first met as clients in a substance abuse outpatient group in 1992, and then again in the summer of 1993, when I finally was convinced I needed treatment. I already knew that Melanie had returned to school (to become a licensed chemical dependency counselor), but was very pleasantly surprised to know she had been assigned as my outpatient counselor.

After my successful completion of the outpatient program, we became neighbors and even friends. Melanie, unselfishly and expecting nothing in return, listened for several hours to a

very arduous step in my recovery process, and completely without judgment. We drank a whole lot of coffee and at the time we both were smokers, and probably went through a few packs between us.

Melanie was there for me from the very beginning of my recovery, and just recently I celebrated 17 years of recovery. It is with the deepest gratitude to Melanie for being one of those awesome women who helped me get my start by offering me a hand up. What an awesome ride it has been, and now I celebrate her newest achievement with her new career with the Restoration Center at Haven for Hope! What an inspiration you have been and still are to me and many other women. God has great plans for you, and I am blessed that our paths have crossed many times. Keep up the good fight, my friend, and congratulations!

*Tracie A. Andrews '08*

*San Antonio*

### LOOKING BACK

There is a trite expression of something "bringing back fond memories," but wow! I was casually thumbing through *Sombrilla* and about to toss it when I

happened to see the back page. Talk about stopping in your tracks. Your picture of my beautiful wife, Glenda, giving me a congratulatory kiss for receiving my M.B.A. from UTSA had me laughing and crying at the same time. Laughing at my haircut and moustache, but crying over the wonderful picture and memories.



I was just getting out of the Air Force from Kelly Air Force Base and headed for California to start my career with Northrop with my brand new M.B.A. in hand. We had a new beginning.

Well, we are still married and recently celebrated our 41st anniversary, and she's still beautiful. Two kids and

three-and-a-half grandkids. I'm still with Northrop (now Northrop Grumman) where I am now the corporate vice president of finance. Guess the M.B.A. worked.

I'm very proud to have been in the first graduating class from UTSA. Congratulations on your 40th anniversary and keep up the good work.

*Gaston Kent, M.B.A. '74*  
*Palos Verdes Estates, Calif.*

### THE BIG PICTURE

I enrolled in UTSA in the fall of 1976. I believe it was the first semester that UTSA opened its doors to underclassmen. Back then, we had a library, gym and three other buildings to house science, humanities and the arts. UTSA has come a long way.

*Kurt F. Heitman '78*  
*Greenville, S.C.*

### WRITE BACK!

We welcome your letters pertaining to *Sombrilla's* content. Contact us at [sombrilla@utsa.edu](mailto:sombrilla@utsa.edu). Or mail your letters to *Sombrilla* editor, Office of University Publications, UTSA, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, Texas 78249. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

## ONLY ON SOMBRILLA ONLINE [www.utsa.edu/sombrilla](http://www.utsa.edu/sombrilla)



### Another Kind of Opus

Call it "Gary Mabry's Opus." A collection of current and former choral students, along with others the music professor and choral director has worked with throughout his career, gathered to perform for the first time together—at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

### Just a Pair of Normal Brothers

Barry Klinge '06, and his brother Brad are filming the second season of *Ghost Lab*, a Discovery Channel reality show. Get an update on the paranormal duo.

### Twisted

A team of UTSA engineers is studying arterial tortuosity, also known as artery twisting or curling.

### The Tejano Sacrifice

It's a little known fact that Tejanos fought for both sides during the Civil War. UTSA student James Vasquez explores the treatment of Tejano veterans for his Honors College thesis.

### Early Intervention

Brenda Hannon, assistant professor of psychology, is working on the ABCs of learning and reading. By understanding how pre-readers use cognitive thinking and word skills to understand spoken text, she hopes to identify early problems.

### What's a College For?

Column from Gage Paine, vice president for student affairs. She writes a regular column for the student affairs newsletter, [www.utsa.edu/students/sanews](http://www.utsa.edu/students/sanews).

### Mexico's highest point examined

A team of researchers is studying Pico de Orizaba's summit glacier to see how much has melted. Slideshow.





# IN THE LOOP



State Sen. Jeff Wentworth (from left), state Rep. Ruth Jones McClendon, state Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, UTSA President Ricardo Romo, state Sen. Judith Zaffirini, Bartell Zachry and UT System Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa join in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

## Classy digs

UTSA took another step on the road to national research university status in March when it dedicated its state-of-the-art Applied Engineering and Technology Building, designed to support world-class research and teaching in science and engineering.

The \$82.5 million, 147,127-square-foot facility includes 87 faculty offices, 36 laboratories, five classrooms and several collaborative study niches. The ground floor includes classroom and laboratory space. Faculty from the College of Engineering's departments of biomedical engineering, civil and environmental engineering, electrical and computer engineering, and mechanical engineering occupy laboratory and office space on the first and second floors. The College of Sciences' Department of Physics and Astronomy occupies the building's third floor.

Modern features characterize the four-story research building. In student study areas, whiteboards on wheels serve as privacy screens while enabling group discussions. Department meeting spaces are equipped with Internet-ready smart boards that can be hooked up to laptops and used to record and recall discussion notes. Classrooms feature glass fronts, contemporary furniture

and state-of-the-art digital equipment. Even the building's laboratory stools have been chosen because they provide the least amount of physical strain to researchers, who often work at laboratory benches for hours on end.

"The Applied Engineering and Technology Building is a dream come true for UTSA and our students," said UTSA President Ricardo Romo. "As UTSA continues to evolve into a Tier One research university, technologically advanced facilities like the AET Building are crucial in supporting collaboration between students and faculty in both the laboratory and the classroom."

The AET Building was designed by San Antonio architectural firm Garza-Bomberger, engineered by Austin-based HMG & Associates and constructed by general contractor Walbridge/Bartlett Cocke. UTSA alumni in engineering and architecture worked on the project, which was funded by Permanent University Funds and Tuition Revenue Bonds. In June, it was recognized by the *San Antonio Business Journal* for its interior design in the magazine's annual Best in Commercial Real Estate Awards.

—Christi Fish



## Bodenstedts score a field goal

Local franchise restaurant owners Jim Bodenstedt '96, a graduate of the College of Business, and spouse Cathy Bodenstedt, a current College of Liberal and Fine Arts undergraduate student, are the first private donors to write a million-dollar check to support the UTSA football program.

The Bodenstedts' gift will be used to fund scholarships for football student-athletes, the first monies allocated for fall 2010 early recruits. Football practice will begin in fall 2010 in preparation for the inaugural season of Roadrunner football in fall 2011.

"We are absolutely thrilled about the opportunities that Jim and Cathy's gift make possible for our students. They really stepped up, and we are so thankful," said Marjie French, vice president for university advancement.

In recognition of their gift, UTSA will rename the student athletic learning center, currently housed in the Multidisciplinary Studies Building on the Main Campus. The James and Catherine Bodenstedt Athletic Learning Center, as it will now be known, provides academic support and personal development services for more than 250 student-athletes.

—Marianne McBride Lewis

## Governor appoints UTSA professor as state demographer

Gov. Rick Perry named UTSA Professor Lloyd Potter director of the Texas State Data Center, the state demographer's office housed at The University of Texas at San Antonio.

"There are about 25 million reasons, among quite a few others, to be proud of Texas. Our people are our greatest asset," said Potter. "As the Texas state demographer, I am thankful to have the opportunity to support state and local policy makers in their efforts to improve the lives of our people by providing them with objective information about the composition, characteristics and distribution of the people of our state."

With a high-profile Latino population, experts say San Antonio is an excellent location for the Texas State Data Center because the city's demographics are predictive of the national demographic trend in coming decades. The center distributes census information for the state as well as Texas population estimates and projections, and information from federal, state and other government sources.

"UTSA is proud to be the home of the Texas state demographer—the third from our university," said President Ricardo Romo. "The governor chose an outstanding researcher who will provide high-quality information and analysis to business and community leaders."

Potter is director of the UTSA Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research, professor of demography and interim chair of the Department of Demography and Organization Studies. His work focuses on understanding and communicating demographic processes in Texas, training doctoral-level applied demographers in public policy and health, and conducting demographic research on public policy and health-related topics.

Potter holds a Ph.D. in demography and sociology from the University of Texas at Austin, a master of public health degree from Emory University, an M.S. degree in education from the University of Houston at Clear Lake and a B.S. degree from Texas A&M University.

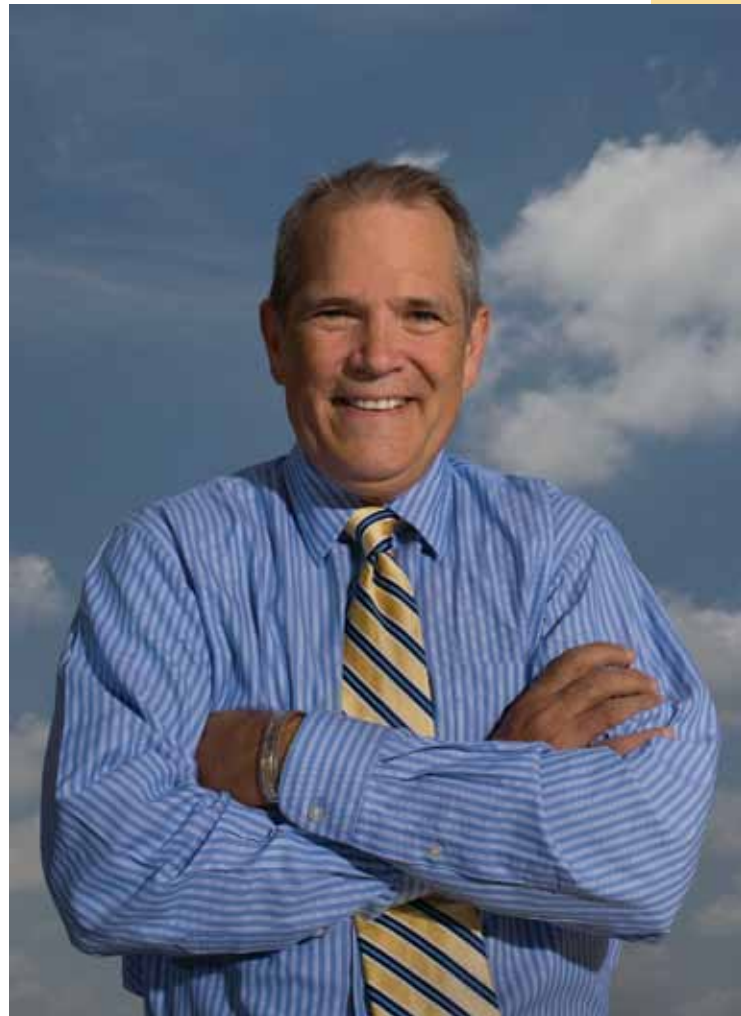
Before coming to UTSA, he served as director of the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration while working at the Education Development Center Inc. (EDC) in Newton, Mass. At EDC, he was director of the Children's Safety Network funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Previously, Potter managed youth violence and suicide prevention efforts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

—Tim Brownlee



Potter





Les Shephard holds the USAA Robert F. McDermott Distinguished Chair in Engineering and is the director of the Texas Sustainable Energy Research Institute.

## New energy

UTSA has taken two giant leaps toward becoming a national leader in green technology research. In November, officials announced the hiring of Les Shephard, an internationally renowned expert on energy policy who joined UTSA after a long career at Sandia National Laboratories. And in June, UTSA, the City of San Antonio and CPS Energy's Board of Trustees announced a 10-year, \$50-million investment in the university to research and develop renewable energy.

The effort will come under the auspices of the Texas Sustainable Energy Research Institute at UTSA, formerly known as the Institute for Conventional, Alternative and Renewable Energy. Shephard will lead the institute.

San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro called the agreement a "game-changing partnership" between a university and a city-owned utility that is unlike any other in the country.

"This is a bold step," said Castro. "Ratepayers will get a more efficient utility, the city will get the economic development value of robust research and development in San Antonio, and the university will spiral ever more quickly to Tier One status."

CPS Energy officials hailed the agreement as a strategic move that will help the utility invest ratepayer money wisely at a time when utilities across the country are working to implement sustainable technologies.

"We welcome this partnership with CPS Energy as it will not only make San Antonio one of the nation's leaders in sustainable energy innovation, but also provide a significant boost to UTSA in its steady growth toward a research intensive university of Tier One status," said UTSA President Ricardo Romo.

Shephard said all the pieces are in place for a nationally recognized institute in San Antonio. The city has two utilities—the San Antonio Water System, which has a long track record in the area of conservation, and CPS Energy, whose energy-efficiency efforts are newer—as well as an active military with specific energy needs.

Also, the area has a strong foundation of academic and research entities with robust green programs including Southwest Research Institute as well as the Mission Verde Center, a city partnership that includes the Alamo Colleges and Texas A&M University's Texas Engineering Experiment Station.

"In the last two years UTSA has been aggressively hiring experts in the area of green energy research and this new agreement will accelerate the acquisition of top quality talent to San Antonio," said Mauli Agrawal, dean of the UTSA College of Engineering, who was instrumental in persuading Shephard to join UTSA.

Shephard added that the wealth of energy resources present in Texas makes San Antonio an ideal place for energy-related research and development and attractive to experts from around the nation.

The agreement calls for CPS Energy to invest up to \$50 million over 10 years in the institute. The first two years' investment will be \$3.5 million from funds currently allocated to research and development. Future funding will be developed by the scope of the projects defined by the partnership and subject to annual approval by the CPS Energy Board of Trustees.

—Christi Fish

## Reaccreditation expected after QEP review

After a two-year process, UTSA's Quality Enhancement Plan, known as the QEP, was reviewed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) in March.

"UTSA hosted the SACS review team March 23–25 for a successful visit," said Nancy Martin, associate vice provost for core curriculum and QEP. "The visit went very well and we expect reaccreditation in December."

Every 10 years, universities must reaffirm their accreditation and meet criteria established by SACS-COC and the U.S. Department of Education. Reaccreditation involves two components—preparation of a compliance certification report and development of a QEP.

In January, UTSA President Ricardo Romo selected the topic "Quantitative Scholarship: From Literacy to Mastery" for the QEP. The QEP was developed by a committee including professors Nandini Kannan, Kay Robbins and David Senseman, and Martin and Joleen Reynolds, director of testing services. Kannan will serve as the QEP project director.

Its primary goal is modifying curricula in core classes so that students will understand the role of quantitative data in their professional and personal lives. The hope is that graduates will have strong problem-solving, critical-thinking and analytical skills, using numbers and data to make decisions. Ultimately, the QEP will prepare them to pursue advanced degrees and excel in the fast-paced, numbers-oriented, global business environment.

Implementation of the plan will last five years beginning in 2011.

—Tim Brownlee



## Smithsonian Institution

### ITC enters national arena

The UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures moved toward national prominence when it was accepted into the Smithsonian Affiliations program in January.

As a Smithsonian Affiliate, the ITC has access to artifacts, performing arts programs, expert speakers, teacher workshops and other resources from the national institution.

"The Smithsonian has a long and proud relationship with the ITC, going back to 1972 during the first Texas Folklife Festival and continuing right up to the present," said Harold Closter, director of Smithsonian Affiliations.

"We are confident that the affiliate relationship will enhance the work that both of our organizations are doing to understand, interpret and display the wonderful and diverse traditions of the American people."

This summer, staff members from the institute will attend the Smithsonian Affiliations National Conference in Washington, D.C. It will be an opportunity to review traveling exhibits and artifacts available to bring to San Antonio. At any given time, there are about 1,000 Smithsonian artifacts on display at affiliate

museums. There are 168 Smithsonian Affiliates in 41 states, the District of Columbia, Panama and Puerto Rico.

"As UTSA moves toward becoming a national research university, this affiliation helps propel the Institute of Texan Cultures onto the national stage as well," said UTSA President Ricardo Romo. "With the opportunity to host traveling Smithsonian exhibits, the institute will make the rich Smithsonian cultural experience available to many people who otherwise may never have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C."

The Smithsonian Affiliations program shares the knowledge of the Smithsonian Institution with a broader audience. The program aspires to create experiences and opportunities to broaden perspectives on science, history, world cultures and the arts.

"I had the good fortune of establishing Smithsonian Affiliations at the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Dallas Museum of Natural History," said Tim Gette, ITC executive director. "The partnership impacted both museums in a very positive way."

—James Benavides



## Alumnus in chief

Jim Mickey '78, who spent 30 years in the telecommunications industry, was named associate vice president for alumni programs and marketing in July. He supervises alumni programs, marketing and creative services for the university.

Mickey joined UTSA after working for AT&T (Southwestern Bell), followed by positions at Sprint and then at Pocket Communications, where he was chief operating officer.

"I am thrilled to join UTSA at this time to help our team shape the future for Alumni Programs," Mickey said. "It is an honor to be selected by my alma mater. I look forward to the challenge and to using the business experience I've gained over my career. It feels great to be back at UTSA."

He said his immediate priority is "growing alumni membership, as well as increasing participation and involvement in UTSA by more of our alums."

A strong alumni association, he added, is necessary to achieve Tier One status.

With 81,000 alumni and only 4,000 association members, there's a lot of room for growth.

"We need to better understand the needs and value that our alums are looking for so we can meet or exceed those needs," Mickey said. "By doing this we can grow and retain membership. We need to better understand through what medium they want to be communicated with and with what frequency. We'll need to do some research, talk to as many alums as possible and do some quick e-mail surveys to best determine where we are meeting expectations and [where we are] falling short."

A new initiative targeted May graduates. "Each graduate who joins the association will be entered for a chance to win an iPad," Mickey said. "A membership costs \$40 annually, but new grads can become members for \$10 and second-year grads are \$20 annually. We are sensitive to the finances of a new grad."

Mickey has been involved with the UTSA Alumni Association, first as a volunteer and, since 1991, as a board member. In 2007, he was honored as Alumnus of the Year.

In spite of a busy family and professional life, Mickey has always found time for UTSA, and some say he virtually invented Roadrunner



Mickey

Pride. When he was a student in the late 1970s, the Student Government Association held an election to name the university mascot. The two leading choices were the Armadillos and the Conquistadors. With approximately 10 days to go until the election, Mickey and a group of friends formed a campaign to get students behind the idea that UTSA's mascot should be the Roadrunner.

According to Mickey, Ron Hare, one of the leaders of the group, thought it would be a great idea to use the Warner Bros. roadrunner cartoon character. Perhaps naively, they wrote a letter to Warner Bros. to ask for permission

to use the cartoon image—and their bold move paid off when permission was granted. The rest is history.

Now, Mickey will devote his energy to strengthening UTSA's alumni base.

"The more alums we can engage in becoming members of the alumni association, the stronger our voice will be: on campus, in the city and at the state capitol," he said.

"By having more alums involved in the association I believe we can help connect them to UTSA for the rest of their lives."

—Joe Michael Feist and  
Marianne McBride Lewis



## Air Force ROTC recognized as best in nation

Air Force Detachment 842 recently was awarded the Air Force ROTC Right of Line Award, the most prestigious award for AFROTC detachments. The award recognizes the UTSA detachment as the best overall large unit in the nation.

UTSA competed against some of the largest detachments in the country, including Texas A&M, Purdue, Embry-Riddle Daytona Beach, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Washington and The Ohio State University.

In the last decade, Detachment 842 cadet enrollment has grown steadily from 142 to 226 cadets. Most of the 59 percent growth came under the leadership of Col. Lisa Firmin, who took command in 2006.

"We are excited about the growth in our program and, more importantly, in developing quality leaders for the Air Force," said Firmin. "Our ability to compete and outshine our colleagues is due to the leadership of our staff and the willingness of our cadets to be the best."

In 2009, UTSA was ranked first in the southwest region of 36 detachments for producing the most second lieutenants for the Air Force. At the national level, with 144 detachments, UTSA was ranked second along with Purdue University and was just behind Embry-Riddle Daytona Beach. UTSA is the largest Air Force ROTC among the six designated Hispanic-serving institutions in the country.

—Omar Hernandez

## Alum named UTSA police chief and director of public safety

Steve Barrera '82 was named chief of police and director of public safety for UTSA. Barrera recently retired from his position as deputy chief of service and support division commander for the San Antonio Police Department, where he reported directly to Police Chief William McManus. Barrera succeeds UTSA Police Chief David Hernandez, who resigned in July 2009.

"With over 30 years in law enforcement and many professional affiliations, Steve's education and experience will serve the university well, as he will be responsible for the leadership, planning, implementation, management and operation of the university police

department," said Kerry Kennedy, vice president for business affairs.

During his career with the San Antonio Police Department, Barrera advanced through the ranks, starting as a patrol officer in 1979. In addition to his executive-level administrative and operations credentials, Barrera also brings experience in major crimes investigations.

Barrera earned a B.A. in criminal justice at UTSA and a master of public administration degree from Southwest Texas State University in 1988. He is a former adjunct professor of criminal justice at UTSA and of public administration at Wayland Baptist University.

—Marianne McBride Lewis



Barrera



# Activity Does a Mind Good

By Amanda Beck

In both our professional and personal lives, many of us organize ourselves into clubs and associations. We join churches, bowling leagues and quilting clubs; we coach soccer teams and attend PTA meetings. Even our lives online are filled with social networking options. Belonging makes us feel good.

But more than just pleasant feelings are at stake. It turns out there is a real connection between active involvement in groups and good mental health.

For a while, literature has suggested a connection between religious involvement and mental health. Assistant Professor of Sociology Gabriel Acevedo wanted to know if involvement in civic activities yielded similar benefits. Thanks to a grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Acevedo conducted a study on this question, one of the first of its kind.

“We wanted to see if the positive impact that we see between religious involvement and mental health can also be attributed to other nonreligious engagement, such as involvement in PTA, hospital volunteering, coaching, etc.,” he said. “What we saw is that both have an impact.”

Acevedo, whose work focuses on the sociology of religion, social theory and social psychology, enlisted the help of sociology graduate student Kim Dalton to do background research on the link between religion and mental health. He also collaborated with Xiaohe Xu, professor of sociology and new member of the UTSA faculty. Xu is well known as a methodologist and a family sociologist.

Acevedo’s research was based on a survey of a random sample of Texas adults, a survey coordinated by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin. Questions targeted religious affiliation and mental health, as well as politics, behavioral and physical health. The survey data were made available to Acevedo through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, of which UTSA is a member. In addition to analyzing the survey data, Acevedo contacted the UT researchers to exchange ideas.

Even when the survey responses were controlled for race, education and income,



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Acevedo found, the results showed that people who were actively engaged in civic organizations were less likely to suffer from mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. The survey data, which included a large sampling of Hispanic adults, confirmed Acevedo’s theory that ethnic background was not a factor.

“Even if you take into account whether people are wealthy or poor, Hispanic or white, being engaged in both religious and secular [activity] leads to positive mental health,” he said. “People that exercise, people that run, people that go to health clubs regularly, we know they are healthier. What our research is starting to indicate is that people who are engaged may also be characterized by better mental health outcomes.”

But without further investigation, Acevedo cannot say whether involvement in groups is causing better mental health, or if people with better mental health are already predisposed to joining groups. What his results do show is the

connection between the two, adding another perspective on the research about religion and well being.

“We’re not debunking religious impact,” Acevedo said. “We’re saying that other forms of involvement also have a positive effect.”

Acevedo and Xu have co-authored a paper on the results and are preparing it for journal submission. Acevedo believes the findings open avenues for future research.

A future study could take place on campus with UTSA subjects, he said. During the first few weeks of their first semester, freshmen are bombarded with signs appealing to new students to join various groups and organizations.

“I think that’s anecdotally a way of saying what our findings say,” Acevedo said. He wants to know if he would see the same correlations between involvement and mental health if a cohort of incoming freshmen were tracked over the course of their four years.

## Flowering Work

For Wendy Leonard, spring in Texas brings the chance to complete her research.

Leonard, a park naturalist for the City of San Antonio and UTSA biology grad student, is studying the bracted twist-flower, a rare wildflower that only grows in Central Texas.

She has spent the past few years studying the flowers, both in their natural environment and in a greenhouse, trying to uncover the mysteries of the little plant with purple blooms. The bracted twist-flower is an annual that germinates late in the fall and blooms in April and May. It starts in a basal rosette, where its leaves are grouped from a central point in a circular shape. A tall bloom stalk rises from the center of the rosette and carries a number of buds that develop into purple flowers.

The bracted twist-flower is listed as very rare by the Nature Conservancy.

As part of her research, Leonard has performed numerous experiments on greenhouse flowers. And each week, she spends hours taking measurements on hundreds of plants in San Antonio’s Eisenhower Park. She notes their

locations, habitat, soil depth and soil moisture, number of flowers and number of seeds, all of which relate to plant size. Leonard measures the diameter of the rosette and length of the stalk to determine the health of the individual plants. Paired with the data on habitat and soil, these measurements provide information about the health of the overall population.

Leonard was recently awarded a graduate student research award from the Texas Academy of Science. Her proposal tied for a first place award of \$2,000, which will fund research for her master’s thesis. Adviser Bill Van Auken, professor of biology, believes Leonard’s research can have a major impact on local conservation efforts.

“Not only is her research important to her personal development as a scientist and conservation ecologist, but it shows UTSA’s connection to the city of San Antonio and our commitment and connection to conservation biology, ecology and natural resources. It should also allow us better understanding of a relatively rare species of our area,” said Van Auken.



Leonard

Data she gathers will help determine the best plan to help local populations thrive. Leonard’s ultimate goal for this research is to develop guidelines that parks can follow to maintain and increase the population of their plants.

—Amanda Beck



## Solar Panels Expected to Reduce Campus Utility Costs

UTSA will receive \$1.08 million in Department of Energy stimulus funds to install solar panels on two campus buildings and develop a wireless smart grid to monitor the technology’s energy and cost savings in real-time.

The project will be led by technical experts from the College of Engineering’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, including professors Brian Kelley, Mo Jamshidi and Hariharan Krishnaswami, as well as undergraduate Gerardo Trevino. Engineers and project managers from the Office of Facilities will support the effort.

Solar panels will be installed on the roofs of the University Center’s recent expansion and the Support Services Building, located on Main Campus. The panels on both buildings are expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 273,661 pounds annually, the equivalent of planting 37.2 acres of trees. They are also expected to generate 237 megawatt hours of energy, saving as much as \$64,000 per year.

“The introduction of this green technology fits into UTSA’s long-term energy plan by

reducing annual utility costs and providing a renewable source of electricity to power UTSA facilities, thereby saving scarce operating funds for other important purposes,” said Dave Riker, associate vice president for facilities.

CPS Energy is also participating in the solar initiative. To create opportunities for UTSA students to work on the project, it has pledged \$127,720 from its solar rebate program for student scholarships.

The solar energy grant is one of four that will enable solar panel installations in San Antonio. The City of San Antonio, St. Philip’s College and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio also received funding for solar initiatives.

“This is a big step forward for sustainability in San Antonio,” said Mayor Julián Castro. “With these grants, we will multiply our solar energy production by several times as well as make real the value of renewable sources of energy to the community.”

Officials expect the solar energy systems will be in operation by the end of next year.

—Christi Fish



# Senior Moment

## UTSA GUARD TAKES ON MENTORING ROLE AS THE ONLY RETURNING STARTER

By Pat Turner



Senior guard Devin Gibson shines on and off the court. He was named the Southland Conference Men's Basketball Student-Athlete of the Year.

There was a time when Devin Gibson knew nothing about UTSA. That all changed when Gibson started seeing UTSA men's coaches at his Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) games during the summer leading into his senior year at Cypress Falls High School in Houston.

It was clear the coaches had taken an interest in the guard with a sharp shooting touch and smooth ball-handling skills. Once the parties met, Gibson, in turn, took an interest in UTSA. Not only did he find a place to play college basketball and get an education, but he also found a home.

"Everyone made me feel comfortable when I came here for my visit," Gibson said. "I thought the campus was nice and I had a chance to meet some of the head people around the school. You don't get to do that on a lot of recruiting trips. I was impressed they took time out to meet with me."

And in his time at the school, he's happy with how much it has grown.

"When I first came here I remember talking to [Athletics Director] Lynn Hickey," he said. "She told me this was going to get done and that was going to get done. Now, we have a football team and the recreational center. Everything has grown."

During the past three years the 6-foot guard has also grown on the basketball court with his aggressive defense and offensive skills that have produced 1,104 points. Gibson was one of the Roadrunners' most consistent players during their recent 19-11 campaign, averaging 12.5 points and 4.5 rebounds with 34 assists and 57 steals.

Gibson has been equally impressive in the classroom with a 3.22 GPA. Recently, he was named Southland Conference Men's Basketball Student-Athlete of the Year and received honorable mention on the Division I-AAA Athletics Directors Association Scholar-Athlete Team.

That ability to shine in both areas was a major attraction for Head Coach Brooks Thompson and his staff.

"We saw great potential in Devin," Thompson said. "He was definitely the type of player we

wanted in our program because of his ability and character. He is a competitor. He loves to win and loves to work at improving his game."

Although Gibson was a standout in high school, it took a while for him to attract a great deal of college attention.

Rice University showed an early interest, and Gibson was strongly considering giving the Owls his verbal commitment.

Then Rice backed off on its recruiting. But after an impressive showing during the AAU season, college coaches started taking notice, especially UTSA and other schools in the Southland Conference.

The Roadrunners might not have had the tradition of programs such as Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston State, but for Gibson there were more important attractions.

"I remembered UTSA was really the first school that showed a lot of interest in me," said Gibson, who is majoring in infrastructure assurance and security with a minor in finance.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Men's tennis team wins conference championship

The UTSA men's tennis team captured the program's second Southland Conference Tournament Championship with a 4-0 win against top seed UT Arlington on April 25 in Corpus Christi. The Roadrunners earned the league's automatic berth to the NCAA Regional, the program's first appearance since 2002. The team lost in the regionals to No. 2 national seed Texas on May 14 in Austin.

### Football schedules taking shape

UTSA has its inaugural football season schedule lined up and has added series with NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) opponents in future years.

The Roadrunners 2011 schedule includes home games against Northeastern State (Sept. 3), McMurry (Sept. 10), Bacone College

(Sept. 24), South Alabama (Oct. 8), Georgia State (Oct. 29) and Minot State (Nov. 19). UTSA has road dates at Southern Utah (Sept. 17), Sam Houston State (Oct. 1), UC Davis (Oct. 15), Northwestern State (Oct. 22) and McNeese State (Nov. 12).

In 2012, Sam Houston State (Sept. 8), Southern Utah (Oct. 20), UC Davis (Oct. 27) and McNeese State (Nov. 10) all will return games at UTSA. UTSA will return games to South Alabama (Sept. 1) and Georgia State (Sept. 29) that same season. The Roadrunners also will play Northwestern Oklahoma State (Sept. 22) at the Alamodome and at Stephen F. Austin (Oct. 13) in their second campaign.

UTSA has also agreed to series later in the decade with Houston, Kansas State, Arizona, Arizona State, Baylor, Colorado State, Louisiana Tech and Virginia.

UTSA snapped a nine-game losing streak to Sam Houston with an 83-74 win in the opener and followed with a 57-55 victory over Nicholls State, before losing to Stephen F. Austin, 68-57, for the championship.

Last season the Roadrunners lost 78-66 to A&M-Corpus Christi in the first round. However, Gibson was still encouraged.

UTSA will begin play as an NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Independent in 2011. It then will notify the NCAA in June 2012 of its intent to advance to the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) by 2014. The Roadrunners will comply with FBS standards during the 2013 season, then will seek full FBS membership and bowl eligibility in 2014.

**Men's track and field squad captures fifth consecutive Southland crown**

The UTSA men's track and field team received winning performances from senior All-American Teddy Williams, junior Devon Bond, freshman Keith Benford and the distance medley relay team and the Roadrunners cruised to their fifth consecutive Southland Conference Indoor Championship on Feb. 27 in Norman, Okla.

Williams successfully defended

"We have gotten better every year," Gibson said. "A lot of that has to do with Coach Thompson. He works with us and knows how to handle certain situations. He played in college and the NBA. I think that is one of his strengths, because he knows how to relate to players. Players make coaches, but coaches develop players."

Next year, instead of being surrounded by experienced teammates, Gibson will share the court with several new players who are filling the roles vacated by graduating seniors. As the only returning starter, Gibson is taking more of a mentoring role.

"Now it's my turn to lead. I have to come out of my shell and get us to where we have to go and make sure everybody is learning quickly," he said.

"We have to be good to go when the season starts. I want a [conference championship] ring and then win a game in the NCAA Tournament. I have one more year to do it."

his titles in both the 60- and 200-meter dashes to become the first athlete in league history to win both crowns in consecutive years. Meanwhile, Bond skipped to a 52-1 ¾ (15.89m) measure in winning UTSA's first conference championship in the triple jump.

Benford won the program's third consecutive league title in the high jump with his leap of 6-10 ¾ (2.10m) and the distance medley relay foursome of juniors Brandon Chiuminetta and Canel Cole, senior Bryan Ugochukwu and sophomore Albert Cardenas circled the Mosier Indoor Facility track in 10:10.08 for the program's first title in the event in nine years.

UTSA scored 120 points to easily out-distance second-place Stephen F. Austin, which netted 99.5, and third-place Sam Houston State with 90 points.



# Cultural Mirrors

By Marianne McBride Lewis

If there ever were a match made in heaven between class and instructor, it's Course 5193 and Carmen Tafolla.

The course is Multicultural Literature for Children, in the College of Education and Human Development's Bilingual-Bicultural Studies program, and the instructor is one of the most acclaimed authors in the field.

This spring term, 12 graduate students and Tafolla together explored and analyzed culture and diversity in children's books.

Tafolla, who grew up on the West Side of San Antonio in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods, is an internationally acclaimed writer and award-winning author of children's literature. To date, she has published five books of poetry, eight children's picture books, seven television screenplays, two nonfiction volumes and a collection of short stories.

The course is described in the catalogue as "the study of representative children's literature for, and about, the many culture groups in the Americas, with emphasis on Latinos and Latinas." As it turns out, the course is a perfect platform from which Tafolla can share her knowledge with graduate students who are either already classroom teachers or are working toward that goal.

Tafolla loves teaching. "The best way to learn something is to teach it. In the process of explaining it, you discover dimensions you didn't know existed," said Tafolla, who was recently hired as a senior lecturer for the college. "This class is a collaborative learning experience. We learn from each other, challenge and question each other—we push the edge."

Omar Mendoza, a graduate student of Tafolla's, said he enjoys her class. "She teaches us ways to look at books differently and challenges you to find yourself in the books that you read."

Tafolla knows that literacy rates today are at a crisis level, particularly for minorities. "Children do not see themselves reflected in the literature. Many have different experiences than the ones that the traditional classroom has been set up to support. And, the less you see yourself, the less you want to be involved, the less school even makes sense."

One of the goals of the curriculum is to teach how to analyze books written for children and young adults. "This class looks at what is right with a book and also what is wrong," said Tafolla. "We learn to be very, very aware of all the implications a book, or a whole era of books, can transmit to young people."

In her class, one week the theme could be gender messages. Another week the focus might be diversity.

"We learn that diversity is always a positive—in nature, in science, in human *tesoros*," she said. "Diversity is more than the differences we have in ethnicity and language. Many students today are from nonstandard families, and to help a child see herself in the story, we must show respect for all individuals and all kinds of households, and this respect should have its cultural support structure in the books and media we use."

According to graduate student Dora Moreno, "Professor Tafolla makes you think about what you are reading. She challenges us to go beyond the words and figure out what is also going on in the background. And then, to figure out what the message is and ask the question: Is this an appropriate message?"

What advice would Tafolla give parents buying books for their own children?

"Parents should know that reading offers their child a window to the world, so they need to find literature that has 'windows'—by that I mean finding things that open up brand new experiences for their child," Tafolla said.

**"Children do not see themselves reflected in the literature. Many have different experiences than the ones that the traditional classroom has been set up to support. And, the less you see yourself, the less you want to be involved, the less school even makes sense."**

Just as important, said Tafolla, are stories that have mirrors. "If a child can find his own experiences reflected in the story, then that reflection will affirm and lead to a pride in the 'specialness of being me' and will connect them to the world of books."

And last but not least is passion, she said. "Find stories that your child will love to read, and if possible, stories that you yourself enjoy reading, because your children will pick up on your enthusiasm or lack of it. I read three stories a night to my 5-year-old, and sometimes it's the same book, read three times over because she loves it so much. I indulge that passion for a story, because then, emotionally, that story belongs to her."



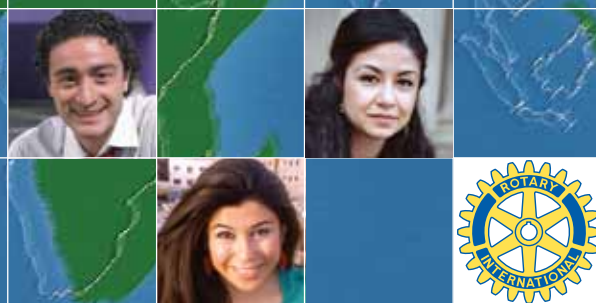
Carmen Tafolla, senior lecturer in the College of Education and Human Development, has won several prestigious writing awards for her book *What Can You Do with a Paleta?* They include the Charlotte Zolotow Award for Best Children's Picture Book from the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the 2010 Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, the 2010 International Latino Book Award for Best Children's Picture Book in English, and the Americas Award for Best Children's Picture Book.



# AMBASSADORS of goodwill

Rotary scholars travel  
the globe practicing  
'Service Above Self'

BY JOE MICHAEL FEIST



Part of UTSA's vision is to "prepare citizen leaders for the global environment."

Part of the vision of Rotary International, a worldwide service organization of more than 1.2 million members, is advancing world understanding and goodwill through its international scholarships.

Seems like a perfect match. And it pretty much has been.

UTSA has been highly successful in having many of its applicants—eight since 2004—chosen for the prestigious Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships. They have represented UTSA and the Rotary in Scotland, the Netherlands, Uganda, Botswana and Jordan, among other countries.

The Rotary Foundation, which administers the scholarships, is the world's largest private sponsor of university-level international scholarships. Since its establishment in 1947, nearly 38,000 men and women from about 100 nations have studied abroad under the auspices of Ambassadorial Scholarships. The awards include a flat grant valued at \$26,000 for transportation, tuition, and room and board.

"The focus is really on the word 'ambassadorial,'" said Jane Findling Burton, retired assistant vice president for alumni programs at UTSA and a San Antonio Rotarian. "Scholars are expected to be ambassadors of their country. They meet with Rotary clubs in their host countries, and when they return, they're expected to share their experiences with Rotary clubs here."

Applicants must be sponsored by a local Rotary club and have a connection to the organization. The competitive process moves to a district level and ultimately to Rotary International. If selected for the scholarships, students can study any subject of their choosing at a Rotary-approved university and country.

"The Rotary is interested in placing scholars not just in places like Europe, but in developing countries as well," Burton said. "They're interested in geographical and cultural diversity."

Once abroad, scholars continue their association with Rotary. Each scholar is assigned a sponsor and host Rotarian counselor to enable the student to get the most out of the cultural exchange.

"It's really a fantastic scholarship," Burton said, "and UTSA should be very proud of our students who have earned the honor."

Three of the more recent UTSA students to be named Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars, all graduates of the Honors College, are Rafael Veraza, Rawan Arar and Mitra Miri.

Ann Eisenberg, associate dean of the Honors College, encouraged all three to apply for the scholarship.

"I knew they would grow in new ways," Eisenberg said. "All three were outstanding students and wonderful public servants while they were studying at UTSA, but I thought the time abroad would broaden their understanding of the issues that concerned them. All of them truly became global citizens through the Rotary experience."

## Rafael Veraza

A native of Mexico City, Veraza had established himself as a humanitarian long before applying for the Rotary scholarship. As an undergraduate, he and other UTSA students spearheaded a campaign to raise

funds for medical treatment for a 7-year-old boy from Mexico who needed a heart transplant. Veraza was also a member of the Lancy Scholars program, a summer research program focusing on health disparities. His work there led to his being published in the *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science*.

As a pre-med biology student in the Honors College, Veraza's goal was to become a doctor and public health professional. When he heard about the Rotary scholarship, he was intrigued.

"The motto of Rotary, 'Service Above Self,' really caught my attention, and I felt very strong about what they believe as an organization," Veraza said. "And the humanitarian aspect of the scholarship, to be an 'ambassador of goodwill,' was something I found very appealing and something I always had enjoyed doing—serving others and volunteerism."

After graduating from the Honors College in 2008, Veraza traveled to Gaborone, the capital of Botswana in southern Africa, as a Rotary scholar. There he took public health courses at the University of Botswana, was involved in a research project that examined environmental health risks of mercury exposure, volunteered at an HIV pediatric clinic and became actively involved in local Rotary service projects.

"The most rewarding experience was getting to know people in Africa, my roommates, people in the streets, nurses, doctors, the cleaning lady, my host family," Veraza said. "Not only getting to know the Batswana [people from Botswana] but also learning about African culture and the beautiful way of enjoying life among Africans overall. Also getting to know and becoming friends with the different Rotarians who hosted me and helped me throughout my whole year there."

"Volunteering as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in an area of the world with an extremely high prevalence of HIV, and working directly with AIDS patients and HIV-infected people in southern Africa was an experience that made me a more humane person, it made me appreciate life more and it encouraged me to dedicate myself to a career in the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS."

Veraza visited numerous Rotary Clubs in Botswana, South Africa and Namibia. In each place, the same theme of service was prevalent, he said. "Clubs were always doing or planning activities to help others."

Today, at 23, Veraza is pursuing a master's in public health at Emory University School of Public Health in Atlanta. His goal is to eventually earn a joint M.D.-Ph.D. and devote his life to public health issues, specifically AIDS research. The Rotary scholarship, he said, especially the volunteer opportunities, expanded his understanding of public health, human dignity and service.



Veraza

Photo by Keith Dannemiller





Arar

Photo by Jayci Giaccone



Rawan Arar, a 2008 Honors College graduate with a degree in sociology, is now a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar studying and living in Amman, Jordan.

Her academic interests included women's and gender issues, as well as legal studies, and the Rotary

scholarship allowed her to continue those pursuits.

"I am in Jordan as a peace and conflict resolution scholar," said Arar, an Arab American of Jordanian descent who grew up in San Antonio. "I take classes in the international relations department at the University of Jordan, studying peace, diplomacy and Middle Eastern politics."

Arar, 24, is writing her graduate thesis on economic conditions among Iraqi refugee women living in Jordan, and she is shooting a corresponding film documentary.

As a Rotary scholar, Arar volunteers within the community, doing work in refugee camps, teaching English and working in a school for special-needs children.

"One of my most important jobs here in Jordan is to serve as an ambassador for Rotary, Texas and the United States," she said. "I'm here to help answer questions and combat unfounded stereotypes."

Arar credits her UTSA professors, especially Eisenberg of the Honors College, with sparking her interest in global issues. Prior to her Rotary involvement, she was awarded an Archer Fellowship and interned at the U.S. Supreme Court in the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice.

"Living in D.C.," she said, "I met people from all over the world, which motivated me to explore study-abroad options. After reading more about the Rotary Club, I was in awe of all the amazing things Rotary does for our local community and the world."

Upon her return to the United States this summer, Arar will continue work on her master's in women's and gender studies at the University of Texas at Austin. And she hopes to one day study law. "I believe that law can help change the world for the better," she said. "Law can give a voice to those who don't have a voice."

Until then, she added, she's gaining "the experiences of a lifetime" living and studying in Jordan.

"I am thankful every day I wake up and every day I go to bed," Arar said. "Rotary has given me a gift, an opportunity that will shape my life, ambition and outlook on the world forever."



Like Veraza and Arar, Austin native Mitra Miri was an academic star at UTSA. As an undergraduate, she spent one summer at Harvard, another summer with the Universidad

Nacional Autónoma de México's Instituto de Neurobiología in Querétaro, Mexico, and a third summer in Washington, D.C., engaging in political science studies as an Archer Fellow.

Armed with a biology degree from the Honors College, Miri left for Uganda as a Rotary scholar in summer 2008. Instead of a course-based curriculum at a university, however, her scholarship was converted to a research-oriented grant.

"Following some persistence and luck, I landed a position under the mentorship of the director of research at the Makerere Infectious Diseases Institute in Kampala," Miri said. "During my year there I worked with Ugandan doctors and students to evaluate and compare methods currently used to diagnose tuberculosis among immuno-compromised and septic patients. Additionally, I worked with the director to establish a [medical] research lab."

Miri used part of her Rotary scholarship money to donate the first piece of equipment to the lab, a much-needed ELISA reader, an instrument used mainly in immunology to detect the presence of an antibody or an antigen in a sample.

And like all Rotary scholars, she became active in service projects—from digging water wells to constructing community health centers—through her host club. Working with a fellow Rotary scholar, Miri helped establish a fund for insecticide-treated net distribution to two rural schools located in an area of Uganda particularly hard hit by malaria.

Miri lauded the benefits of that local connection.

"As a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, I was given a unique, valuable and immediate inroad to Ugandan culture and daily life," she said.

Her ties to Rotary and Uganda continued even after her ambassadorial year ended. In March, she returned to Uganda to work at a rural primary school and orphanage in Mpigi.

"Due to the hard work and planning of [a friend]," Miri said, "we were able to distribute over 300 laptops to students at the school. We held a weeklong introductory training session on computers for the teachers, most of whom had never seen a laptop."



Miri

Photo by Karen Lenz

Miri, now 25, is pursuing a doctorate in neurobiology at Yale University. She recently won a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship to fund her graduate studies for 2010–13.

But the Rotary scholarship and Uganda are never far from her heart.

"It's hard to capture in words what being a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar has done for me," Miri said. "Quite simply, Rotary gave me the chance to take a chance. They supported me in my quest to truly experience another culture, forge friendships, break down misconceptions and build bridges paved with an open mind and heart."★



# the Gift of Humanity

Marketing professor expands her research in consumer behavior to show how, even in the most extreme circumstances, giving and receiving gifts is part of what makes us human.

By Rebecca Luther

*Very often, the youngest to arrive at Auschwitz-Birkenau never passed the first selection for gas chambers on the transport platform.*

*On a cold January morning in 1943, prisoner Rena Kornreich was standing in the front row enduring another agonizingly long roll call before being sent off to a day's hard labor. So she had a clear view of the column of new arrivals—all children, hundreds of children (the Nazis had emptied a Jewish orphanage, other prisoners surmised)—as the SS guards marched them from the train through the camp and straight to the gas chambers.*

*Having arrived at Auschwitz on the first transport of Jewish women, Rena had grown accustomed to the horrors of the concentration camp. Still, the sight of so many young children being lead to their deaths stirred a rage inside of her—but like all the others who watched it happen, she stood silent, unable to stop it.*

*Days later, when a friend from their hometown of Tylicz, Poland, asked what was wrong, Rena told her about the children. A few days after that, the friend, whose job was sorting the belongings of incoming prisoners for shipment to Germany, met Rena in the latrine and slipped something small into her palm: a silver elephant charm.*

*“The charm looked as if it belonged to a child, and I thought of you,” her friend said. “Elephants are supposed to be good luck. I don’t want it to go to the Germans.” Rena embraced her friend and slipped the trinket into the hem of her skirt.*

*In her 1995 memoir, Rena’s Promise, Rena Kornreich Gelissen recounted the incident and what her friend’s gift meant to her: “The silver elephant is a reminder of the children I watched walk to their deaths. It is the only mark of their passing—a tiny gravestone in my hand. I place it under my tongue during selection so it can be spit into the dirt if I go to the gas or if I’m beaten to death. My commitment to this small child’s charm is that it should never get into Nazi hands, that even if I do not survive, it shall.”*

**T**ina Lowrey had only a general knowledge of the Holocaust. Although she saw *Schindler’s List* in the theaters after it was released in 1993, she never was assigned to read Anne Frank’s diary for any class in school. But Lowrey, a professor of marketing at UTSA, had always been interested in learning more about the subject. So when a colleague in the field of consumer behavior approached her about teaming up to write an analysis of gift-giving among prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps, she jumped at the chance.

In their research, Lowrey, an expert on the subject of gift-giving, and Jill Klein, of Melbourne Business School in Australia, found that prisoners did indeed give gifts to each other in the concentration camps. The pair described the findings in a 10,000-word paper, “Giving and Receiving Humanity: Gift-Giving Behavior in Extreme Settings.” In it, they theorize that, if the sharing of gifts and marking of birthdays and other milestones occurred in a setting as extreme as Auschwitz, then the act of gift-giving must be an intrinsic part of expressing one’s humanity.

Supporting their arguments are anecdotes culled from more than two dozen books penned by former concentration camp prisoners of Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian, Italian and French origin. The stories include mentions of tangible gifts fraught with meaning, such as the elephant

“The charm looked as if it belonged to a child, and I thought of you,” her friend said. “Elephants are supposed to be good luck. I don’t want it to go to the Germans.”



charm Rena Kornreich Gelissen received in acknowledgement of her sadness, as well as intangible gifts meant to help a fellow prisoner get through another day, such as making their bunk or propping them up during a long roll call. They include selfless gestures and more calculated ones—such as giving something to a Capo (fellow prisoners who worked as administrators in the camps) in hopes of a better work assignment, or to a cook, in hopes of getting a more generous ladle of soup at mealtime.

Most frequently, inmates gave gifts of food and clothing—things that are given in normal settings, Lowrey noted. In the concentration camps, however, these gifts had an entirely different meaning.

“My guess is the gift-giving continues to happen, and it’s because we have to do it.”



“It’s not buying someone’s favorite chocolates for their birthday; it’s smuggling out a smashed raspberry that someone was fortunate enough to find,” she said. “It’s not trying to find a sweater in the right color; it’s putting on three pairs of socks and smuggling them out so that your bunkmates have a new pair of socks.”

#### A personal pursuit

Lowrey never intended to pursue the subject of gift-giving as a research interest. But in 1990, as a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, she volunteered to help collect data for a study of consumers’ gift-buying habits. The project was so successful that researchers extended it over a decade. That project helped establish Lowrey as an expert in gift-giving and ritual behavior.

In 1999, a year before wrapping up that project, Lowrey co-chaired the European conference of the Association for Consumer Research. That’s where she met experimental social psychologist Jill Klein, who was at the conference to present her findings on the effectiveness of corporate responses to boycotts. At that time, Klein was on the faculty at the Fontainebleau campus of international graduate business school INSEAD.

But it was about a personal project that Klein approached Lowrey. Klein, an American-born Jew whose father survived the Holocaust, asked if Lowrey would want to collaborate on a paper that focused exclusively on gift-giving in concentration camps. The paper could have implications for other types of extreme settings and for people with limited means. Klein’s assertion was a compelling one.

“We’ve been missing a big part of the gift-giving literature,” she said, “because we focus on people who have resources.”

Klein’s father, Gene Klein, was still a teenager when his family was sent from Czechoslovakia to be interred in a series of concentration camps, including Auschwitz. In order to gain more insight and perspective on the stories her father shared with her, Klein started reading Holocaust memoirs on her own. Her professional interests as a business school professor were piqued when she noticed that all of the memoirs contained mentions of trading goods; in Auschwitz, there was a veritable black market that existed in the camp latrines, with a slice of bread as the basic unit of currency.

“The general thing that struck me was people who were very hungry were trading [food] for possessions that made them feel human,” Klein said. For instance, she cites one female memoirist who traded her bread ration for a needle and thread to fashion a headscarf from a ragged cloth to cover her shaved head—not to stay warm but perhaps as a reminder of normalcy.

From her readings, Klein gathered data for a paper on trading in the concentration camps (which eventually was published in the *Journal of Macromarketing* in 2008). But she noticed something else from her reading. While many prisoners did engage in trading, the memoirs contained other instances of sharing that essentially amounted to gift-giving: the sharing of food, the proffering of an extra pair of wool socks to help another prisoner stay warm, and, in one extreme case, the act of taking the place of an ailing prisoner in the selection line to spare him certain death.

#### Extreme giving

When she began collaborating with Klein, Lowrey started by reading every Holocaust memoir Klein had read. She treated it as work, sitting in her office and using paper clips to mark the pages of the library books, noting every instance that could possibly be construed as gift-giving. When she was done working for the day, she’d leave the memoirs behind in her office. Still, she wasn’t immune to the heart-rending stories.

The first time the colleagues were scheduled to present their research at a conference, at the Association for Consumer Research in 2006, Klein could not attend. Lowrey didn’t think anything of having to go it alone, having presented at numerous conferences before. But this one was different.

“When you’re presenting qualitative research, your data are your verbatims—your actual quotes. I could present the theory fine,” Lowrey said. “It was when I actually read the verbatims that I had some emotional difficulty.”

When she got to the verbatims—the stories taken straight from the memoirs that she and Klein were citing in their paper—Lowrey, a tenured professor with numerous publications and

presentations to her credit, began to choke up. She paused in her reading and looked out at her audience, and saw before her a roomful of colleagues and supporters who were wiping their own tears and nodding back at her to give her encouragement.

“I didn’t lose it,” Lowrey recalled. “It just wasn’t my normal, everyday conference presentation.”

The stories—almost all of which begin with a transport in an overcrowded cattle car to a concentration camp and often end with a death march across Europe as the Nazis retreated from the advancing Allied armies—are difficult to read. Because survival was always on the forefront of the prisoners’ minds, one would expect that every circumstance in those extreme settings would have pushed them toward protecting their own self-interests, Lowrey and Klein said. Yet instead, the researchers found exactly the opposite.

“Every force in the camp should have led people to extreme selfishness and animal-like behavior,” said Klein. “And people were sometimes selfish and they were sometimes animal-like, as the memoirists themselves say. But what we see a lot more prevalently is a lot of helpfulness and a lot of heroic, heroic behavior.”

In their paper, the authors quote one memoirist, Dutch-born Louis de Wijze, who makes the every-man-for-himself assertion in his 1997 book, *Only My Life*: “Everyone lives for himself. Our one and all-encompassing credo is: Survive! Between the outer limits of life and death, previous values and norms lose their meaning, and our spiritual baggage gradually erodes. The only norm that counts is ‘I’. All our senses, thoughts, and deeds are used only for our own benefit.”

But, Lowrey noted, de Wijze contradicted himself less than 20 pages later in his story. He recounts passing his second selection for the gas chamber at Monowitz, only to step back in line to take the place of an emaciated Czech prisoner, at risk of not only failing to pass the selection again but of being punished if his deceit had been caught: “[The Czech prisoner’s] face reads utter despair, and his eyes are almost popping out of their sockets. He is looking straight at me,” de Wijze wrote. “Then it happens, almost involuntarily. Like a zombie, I walk toward him, hand him my bundle of clothes, and unobtrusively push him out of the line.”

“That really piqued my interest,” Lowrey said. “Here’s the memoirist himself saying [life in the camps] was nothing but selfishness—and then contradicting himself and not even realizing it.”

The de Wijze example of being prepared to give one’s life to save another is atypical of the gift-giving they most often found in the memoirs, Lowrey said, but it helped the researchers form the thesis for their paper. If the concentration camp prisoners did only what was necessary for survival, Lowrey and Klein believe, then the many instances of gift-giving they found in their readings indicate that giving is essential.

“We’re saying that giving survived, so what remains in an extreme setting like the concentration camps is clearly an indicator of something that is essential for existence and essential for expressing one’s humanity,” said Lowrey.

“That’s our argument, that gift-giving clearly is essential to feeling human, expressing humanity and surviving through an extreme setting.”

#### Who we are as humans

For faculty such as Klein and Lowrey, the culmination of research is usually publication in a reputable academic journal. It’s an effort that requires patience. Klein and Lowrey have been at work on their concentration camp paper for several years, and “it’s still not done,” Lowrey said.

Currently, they are revising the paper to resubmit to the *Journal for Consumer Research*, which last year passed on their first draft. They are committed to getting their research published in the top-tier journal because, they said, this research tells a story of who we are as humans.

“This really is important behavior. It doesn’t seem that important in a middle-class setting where people with money can afford to spend \$200 on each other’s Christmas present,” Lowrey said. “This [the concentration camp] is an outrageously extreme setting, but it speaks to poverty and constrained circumstances of any kind—Hurricane Katrina, a tsunami, earthquakes. These are not the same kinds of extreme settings, but they are extreme.

“But my guess is the gift-giving continues to happen, and it’s because we have to do it.”

Her co-author agreed.

“A key point of our paper is that giving a gift is a fundamental human tendency. It makes us feel human, and it makes the recipient feel human,” Klein said. “And when we have very little choice in our life, but we have just enough wiggle room to help somebody else out, we’ll do it. People will do it. Not all the time, but people will do it.” ★



Tina Lowrey is a professor of marketing at UTSA.



Jill Klein is an experimental social psychologist and works at the Melbourne Business School in Australia.



# THE FUN FACTOR

The Interactive Technology Experience Center inspires students to pursue science, technology, engineering and math

By Lety Laurel

It was July 20, 1969. As Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon, 10-year-old Mauli Agrawal listened transfixed to his family's radio in India. He knew he was listening to history being made.

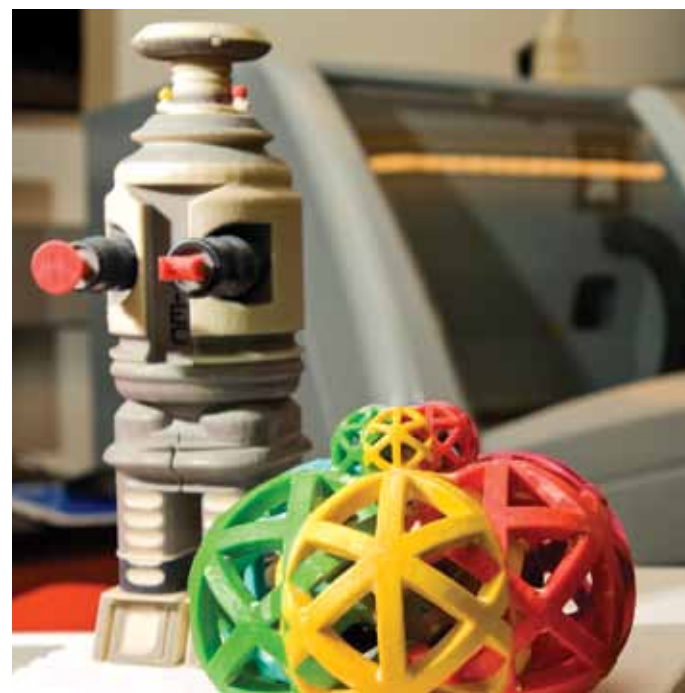
And that excitement lingered, eventually spurring him to become an engineer.

"I grew up on the other side of the world, and the excitement was there," said Agrawal, dean of the College of Engineering. "It wasn't just a U.S. thing, it was a human thing. We were going to the moon." He later collected magazine pictures of the moon landing that he converted into posters for his room.

Forty-one years later, another 10-year-old, Christian Castillo, expertly navigates a small robot with a bulky remote controller, similar to a remote-controlled car. He is in UTSA's Interactive Technology Experience Center, or iTEC, a showroom dedicated to students from kindergarten to 12th grade. The center was created under Agrawal's direction to inspire students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math, also called the STEM fields.

Agrawal, who holds the Peter Flawn Professorship in Biomedical Engineering and the David and Jennifer Spencer Distinguished Dean's Chair in Engineering, hopes that experiences with robots, a high-powered microscope and other technologies never before seen by these students will give them that "moon-landing" moment. And from the look of Christian, it's working.

"We want to create this excitement all across the city, especially in the population that we serve, which is a lot of first-generation and underrepresented students," Agrawal said. "And we need to get to them early in their lives to encourage them and to make them believe that they can be engineers. They can be inventors. It's not just for somebody else; all of them have the capability."



One of the features of the Interactive Technology Experience Center is a color 3-D printer that creates models (seen above) with powder one layer at a time.

The showroom is about the size of a one-room apartment, slightly less than 900 square feet, nestled on the first floor of the Applied Engineering and Technology (AET) Building. But inside is almost \$400,000 worth of equipment, making it look more like a Best Buy than a university classroom. Along three walls are 65-inch mounted flat-screen televisions. There are computer monitors on every table lining the walls, a rapid prototyping machine linked to a 3-D printer, and a high-powered electron microscope, powerful enough to see the eye of a fly magnified 10,000 times. A rugged floor mat, made to simulate Mars' terrain, lies in the back of the room, ready to be explored by a miniature Mars Rover.

And everything, though capable of aiding any faculty researcher, is just for kids.

"Researchers fight to use [the microscope], but we're keeping them at bay and we tell them, 'You cannot use it. It's only for the kids,'" Agrawal said.

In 2007, the AT&T Foundation gave \$1.5 million to UTSA to create iTEC. As part of a four-year project, faculty and staff develop programs and learning curriculums, give demonstrations and host robotics competitions and summer camps. Everything centers around robots, telecommunications, scanning electron microscope applications and design for manufacturing.

"AT&T has a lot of engineers that we utilize in our business," said Michelle Thomas, assistant vice president of external affairs for AT&T. "One of the things we had noticed was a trend in education. There were not as many people going into the fields of engineering and mathematics and science." Because of that, the company initiated AT&T Aspire, which will give \$100 million to programs like iTEC throughout the U.S.

The idea is simple: make science, technology, engineering and math fun. "We don't want them to think that engineering is a geek thing," said iTEC director Can Saygin.

In fact, this effort is critical to the country. The U.S. continues to lag far behind the rest of the world in the number of people trained in STEM fields. Simultaneously, developing countries are beefing up their interest in these areas. As America loses its competitive edge, a decline in the number of jobs available in the country follows. Along with that comes a drop in average household income.

"If you think of the long-term welfare of our country and how do we stay No. 1, it's because of the technology and ingenuity and inventorship that is here," Agrawal said. "The new big thing usually comes out of the U.S. If we don't have a pipeline of [students] going into these areas, that will dry up."

That pipeline is exactly what iTEC is helping to establish. The key to maintaining the nation's technological edge is to entice students into STEM fields when they're young. By keeping them interested—and properly educated—those students are more likely to enter into STEM careers. If educators wait until high school or college to appeal to them, it's already too late.

"It's harder for high school students to switch gears from fireman to engineer," said Moses Thompson, iTEC program manager.



A miniature Mars Rover, guided by remote control, explores a replica of Mars' terrain.

So iTEC managers have done what any parent, desperate to capture a child's interest, would do. They've learned to embrace the art of play.

In the center, there are Lego robots and sumo robots. There are blimps. There are bugs—flies, ants and anything else that can be caught—waiting for magnification. And there's that printer, which can build anything a child can imagine—from a soda can to a geodesic sphere—one colorful layer at a time.

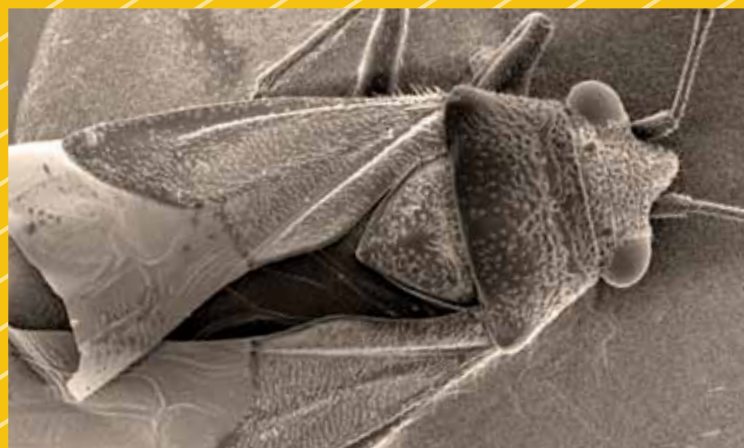
"Though iTEC stands for the Interactive Technology Experience Center, we have another name for it—involve, teach, excite and challenge," Saygin said. "So we get them involved, they get excited so we can teach them a little bit, and then we challenge them with competitions. This is our educational version of iTEC."

## Making a difference

When iTEC organizers decided to host their first summer robotics camp last year for students in third to eighth grade, they offered it for free. It was new and unknown to schools in the city. They needed experience running a camp. And most of all, they needed students.

Within 24 hours of posting the camp registration online, 372 students had signed up, with another 300 bumped to a waiting list. Organizers scurried to buy enough laptops, robot kits and food.





Students watch a demonstration of iTEC's high-powered electron microscope (pictured at right). It is capable of magnifying the eye of a fly by 10,000 times. Pictured above is the image of a fly as seen under the microscope.



"That was one of the most exciting weeks of my academic life," Saygin said.

So this year they've limited the number and are charging a small fee—\$70—to keep things manageable. But the unexpected response from last year speaks to the need for similar programming, said Mary Stowers, educational specialist for iTEC.

"In schools, the only kids for the most part that get access to robotics are the GT [Gifted and Talented] kids," she said. "There are a whole lot of smart kids out there that are not in GT programs. The late bloomers do not get a chance at something like this in the traditional school system. They can be bright, but for whatever reason they are not on the radar screen yet."

Having a chance to work with university researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, and high-tech equipment that costs more than some of their homes can be life-altering for the kids, iTEC managers said.

"We definitely changed some lives," Thompson said. "These are kids who would never have had an opportunity to do something like what we've offered here. They would never have stepped out of their comfort zone."

That was the case for one Dellview Elementary School student. Diagnosed with autism, he had never spoken to his

teachers in three years. He never made eye contact. Then, just two days before the end of the camp, he walked up to Thompson, looked him in the eyes and said, "Thank you for letting me do this."

"I witnessed it and it gave me goose bumps," Saygin said. "I said, 'Wow, that's how we make a difference.' It's amazing."

In addition to summer camps, iTEC also is the host of the Getting Excited About Robots (GEAR) competition, which this year featured nearly 600 third- through eighth-graders divided into 117 teams, making it the largest all-American robotics competition for children in the nation. Next year, iTEC is scheduled to host a regional FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics competition.

"It's fun," Agrawal said. "We wouldn't be doing all this if we weren't excited about it."

The fact that they do it at all surprises many parents, who assume a university is only for higher education and research. But a university, especially one on the trajectory of becoming a Tier One university, is exactly the place for reaching out to younger students, he said.

"If there is one common thing that all parents say, it's not about technology, it's not about iTEC. They say, 'I didn't know UTSA did all these things,'" Saygin said.

In 2009, UTSA was identified as one of seven contenders to be ranked a Tier One university in Texas, also known as a premier national research university. That lofty status is measured by research expenditures, faculty publications, research citations, patents, new technology development and the number of research-oriented faculty, doctoral programs and postdoctoral trainees. In the midst of the hotly contested race to Tier One, Agrawal, Saygin and their crew are devoting time, money and badly needed infrastructure toward the youngest of students. And this is precisely what a Tier One school does, they said.

"It's not just the classrooms, but it is the outreach into the community, the pipeline," Agrawal said. "These are the facilities that a Tier One [school] has. The fact that all the community can come here and witness that, I think, is a big plus."

#### Caught in the web

Thirty minutes after Christian Castillo picked up the remote control for one of the many robots on display in the iTEC showroom, his father, J.L. Castillo, finally managed to pull him away.

The Castillo boys, including 15-year-old Alberto, played hooky from school on a Friday in April so they could tour the new AET Building, talk to professors and learn about engineering.

"If I can get Legos and science together, I'm going to succeed in getting him into science and engineering one day," Christian's father said.

For the 10-year-old, engineering has always seemed so, well, boring. But after spending a morning playing with robots, he has another perspective.

"I didn't think that engineering was fun," he said. "I thought engineers built cars and stuff like that, but it is pretty fun. You can do a lot of stuff."

Stowers said hooking students like Christian when they're young is both the challenge and the joy of her job.

"The beauty of it is that you are out there," Stowers said. "You don't know whose life you're going to change. You don't know where you're going to make that impression, which means you have to go in 110 directions because you don't know who is going to be caught in the web. It's often the most unexpected child that's caught."

And even if some students don't end up attending UTSA, Thompson said their job is done as long as one thing is accomplished:

"Curiosity. I hope to spark curiosity." ★



**In the center, there are Lego robots and sumo robots. There are blimps. There are bugs—flies, ants and anything else that can be caught—waiting for magnification. And there's that printer, which can build anything a child can imagine—from a soda can to a geodesic sphere—one colorful layer at a time.**

iTEC is a showroom dedicated to students from kindergarten to 12th grade. The hope is to inspire them to pursue careers in science, engineering, math and technology.





# Alumni Gala to honor outstanding contributions

To honor alumni who reflect the past, present and future of UTSA, the 11th annual Alumni Reflections Gala will be Saturday, Aug. 28 in the grand ballroom of the Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade, 9821 Colonnade Blvd.

Michael Valdes '93 from KABB-Fox News will emcee the event, which begins with a reception and silent auction at 6:15 p.m. The highlight of the evening is the Alumni Association presentation of the Alumnus of the Year, this year given to Ingrid Barth Faris '83, and the Distinguished Service Award honoring Barbara Gentry, senior vice president of community affairs at USAA and president of The USAA Foundation, A Charitable Trust, and the USAA Educational Foundation.

Henry Brun and the Latin Playerz will provide musical entertainment.

Table sponsorships are available: the Diamond level for \$5,000, the Emerald level for \$3,500, and the Ruby level for \$2,500. These sponsors will have a student scholarship named for them for the 2011-2012 school year. The Sapphire level is \$1,500 and individual tickets are \$125. Each table seats eight.

Money raised at the gala is used for student scholarships and alumni programs and services.

Honorary chairs are Cathy and Clay Killinger '83. Clay is senior vice president and controller for Valero Energy Corp., and former board member, executive committee member, and officer of the UTSA Alumni Association.

Dress for the evening is black tie optional for men and cocktail attire for women. To make a reservation, go to [www.utsa.edu/alumni/gala](http://www.utsa.edu/alumni/gala) or call (210) 458-4133.



Gentry



Faris



**76 Emil Peña**, M.A. in environmental studies, is president and CEO of Generation Power Inc., a Houston-based energy consulting and development company. Emil previously served in the U.S. Department of Energy as the deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Natural Gas and Petroleum Technology, Office of Fossil Energy.

**77 Kathy Perales**, M.A. in education, is an artist and art educator. In January 2010, she was selected as artist of the month by the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library. Her work can be found in private collections from Washington to Florida and all over Texas.

**78 Jesse Treviño**, M.F.A. in art and design, is a nationally known, San Antonio-based painter and muralist. A retrospective devoted to his work was recently held at the Museo Alameda in San Antonio. Jesse is best known for his "photo realist" paintings of people and buildings on San Antonio's West Side.

His works are included in many public and private collections, including the Smithsonian's American Art Museum.

**79 Jorge Louis Aleman**, B.B.A. in management, has been a teacher for the past 25 years and currently teaches in the Fabian Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio. He also writes Jorge Aleman's Math Minute, published in the *San Antonio Express-News*.

**Rudy Bernal**, B.S. in health and physical education, was inducted into the Latinos in Action Sports Association Hall of Fame in October 2009. Rudy coached basketball for several schools in the San Antonio area but found his mark at Lanier High School on the city's West Side, where he coached the Voks to state playoff games in 2000 and 2001. The Latinos in Action Sports Association Inc. is a San Antonio-based nonprofit organization founded in 1992.

**J.D. Kennedy**, M.A. in education, is superintendent of schools in the McKinney, Texas, Independent School District.

J.D. has served in many roles in his 35 years in education, including superintendent of schools for Midlothian Independent School District and Decatur Independent School District. He received his doctorate in education administration from Texas A&M University-Commerce. **Patty Yznago Robertson**, B.A. in political science, and husband **Charles Robertson**, B.A. in political science '79, live in Dripping Springs, outside Austin. Patty is an assistant district attorney in the Travis County District Attorney's office. Charles is a network administrator for the IRS.

**80 Gloriana St. Clair**, M.B.A. in business, is dean of University Libraries at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and director of the University Library Digital Project. She was named the academic-research librarian of the year by the national Association of College Research Libraries in 2009. Gloriana also holds a master's degree in library science from the University of California

at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in literature from the University of Oklahoma.

**Randy C. Quiroz**, B.B.A. in accounting, Master of Public Accounting '85, is a certified public accountant in Manhattan Beach, Calif. His work experience includes 12 years as a field agent with the IRS.

**85 Barbara Thompson**, B.A. in sociology, is associate director of admissions and associate registrar at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi.

**86 Christina Camacho**, B.S. in physical education, is the girls basketball coach at Wagner High School in San Antonio. She has over 400 victories in her coaching career, which includes a 13-year stint with Holmes High School in San Antonio. Christina was a member of UTSA's first women's basketball team.

**Tom Lagleder**, B.B.A. in management, is an actor who's had roles in many network TV shows, including *Santa Barbara* and NBC's *Frasier*. Tom was recently cast in

## Pam Brunson '89

She's the real deal

Call, raise, fold, all-in. Now flop, and don't forget to hold 'em.

A lot of folks speak poker, but not many are fluent enough to make a living at it. Pam Brunson is one.

"I do think poker is in my genes," said Brunson. With her pedigree, it would be strange if it weren't.

Brunson, 45, is the daughter of poker legend and Texas native Doyle Brunson, who's been called the Arnold Palmer, Babe Ruth and Michael Jordan of his game. The elder Brunson, now 76 and going strong, has won 10 World Series of Poker bracelets and was the first person to win \$1 million playing poker. His book, *Super System*, published in 1978, revolutionized poker strategy, and his autobiography, *The Godfather of Poker*, is a link to the rough-and-tumble days of a bygone era.

Pam Brunson, who was born in Fort Worth, moved to Las Vegas when she was 9 with her poker-playing dad and her mom, Louise.

She remembers a normal childhood and, while poker was always in the background, it was never played at home. Other card games, yes, but not poker.

"My dad had a favorite saying," Brunson said. "He'd say, 'Does a taxi driver come home at night and drive cars?' He didn't want me playing poker or hanging out with poker players or dating poker players. Things have changed a lot since those days. It was a rougher crowd back then."

After high school, Brunson attended a series of colleges—the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Oral Roberts in Tulsa, Okla.; and the University of Texas at El Paso. Then in the late '80s, a friend from Oral Roberts moved to San Antonio. After a visit to the city and to UTSA, Brunson was hooked.

"I immediately fell in love with San Antonio," she said. "It has the best, most fun places to go country dancing. I love country dancing. And I love the people in Texas. I'd be there now if I didn't have family here [in Las Vegas]."

Brunson enrolled at UTSA as a sociology major with a psychology minor, and, after graduating with a B.A. in 1989, moved to California, where her poker genes kicked in. She and brother Todd, also now a professional player, started learning the ropes at the Oceanside Card Club, co-owned by her father and a couple of his friends.

Brunson then spent seven years in the assisted living industry, working her way up from receptionist to executive director of a facility, before moving back to Vegas in 2000 to invest in real estate and start her poker career in earnest.

She's done well, finishing in the money in many tournaments and winning several, and has played in the World Series of Poker. But perhaps she's most proud of being the "last Brunson out" in every tournament she's played with Todd and her dad, including three World Series of Poker main events.



©Kabik/Retna Ltd./Corbis

"Todd and I usually make a thousand-dollar 'last longer' bet, and I haven't lost a bet yet," Brunson said, laughing.

She said the psychology courses she took at UTSA "helped groom me to be successful on the felt."

"I think psychology is a huge part of poker," Brunson said. "Picking up on physical signs and body movements, planning strategies, reading people, using psychology and reverse psychology—trying to figure out what someone is thinking in a hand or thinks you are thinking—is very important."

And, she said, her parents "have come around" and fully support her career, partly because the game has changed.

"There are more women playing now, more professionals, college graduates, doctors and lawyers from mainstream society," Brunson said.

Earlier this year, Brunson joined her dad's poker empire when she became manager of the Brunson 10, a group of up-and-coming young poker professionals, on Doyle's popular online poker site, *Doylesroom.com*.

While she's as settled in Vegas as the last showdown hand, Texas will always be the ace in her heart.

"I'm proud to be a Texan," Brunson said, "and I really enjoyed going to UTSA and living in San Antonio."

—Joe Michael Feist



a movie by director Pablo Veliz in which he will play a police officer in the immigration-themed *Cartoneo y Nopalitos*. He has also completed the lead role of hero in a locally shot zombie thriller, *The Killing Strain*. **Oscar Tapia**, B.F.A. in art and design, is assistant superintendent for operations of the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District. Oscar previously spent 17 years with the Brownsville Independent School District in facilities management. In Harlingen he is responsible for the district's facilities, construction, maintenance, custodial support and transportation departments.

**89 Susan H. Campbell**, B.B.A. in management, M.B.A. '10, is vice president and director of American Funds Service Company. She was inducted into the Greater San Antonio Chamber Leadership Class for 2010.

**92 Lyle Flom**, B.B.A. in accounting, is vice president of development and commercial services for DPT Laboratories. Lyle, who joined DPT in 2001, previously was general manager for plant operations in San Antonio. In his new role, he will oversee product development activity as well as ongoing commercial production for customers of DPT. **Brian James**, B.A. in political science, M.P.A. in public administration '97, is the assistant director of the Center City Development Office with the City of San Antonio. Brian supervises the Fort Sam Houston Community Development Office and the implementation of the BRAC Growth Management Plan. Prior to joining the city, Brian worked for the city of McKinney, Texas, where he served as deputy director for development. He is currently completing his doctorate in public affairs at the University of Texas at Dallas. **Charlie Paulette**, B.B.A. in management, M.B.A. in business '01, is CEO of Dulce Vida Spirits, an Austin-based company that makes handcrafted tequila. Charlie was previously the marketing director for San Antonio's Gambrinus Company for 15 years.

**93 Darlene Schultz Cox**, M.A. in education, has retired after 38 years in the classroom. She taught at Hutchins Elementary in the South San Antonio Independent School District for 24 years. Darlene was honored by her district as its Teacher of the Year in 2008–2009. She was awarded the KENS-5 Excel Award and continued on to be recognized as one of the 20 Distinguished Educators for the 2009 Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching. Darlene is married to **Harvey G. Cox**, B.A. '78. **Toni Sykora**, B.B.A. in accounting, M.B.A. in business '94, was named to the board

of the Texas Youth Commission by Gov. Rick Perry in March. Toni is a certified public accountant and is controller for Koontz McCombs Development LLC. **David Vega**, B.B.A. in personnel/human resources, is vice president for underwriting and new business for Bankers Life and Casualty Company, a unit of Conseco Inc., in Chicago. David was previously senior director for operations.

**94 Joseph B. James**, B.B.A. in finance, is vice president of Money Managers Inc., a San Antonio financial planning and wealth management firm. Joe is also a board member of the Fisher House Inc., a temporary home for families of those being treated at Wilford Hall Medical Center. He and wife Teresa have one daughter. **Mark D. Semmes**, M.F.A. in art, is the owner of Mark Semmes Photography in San Antonio.

**95 Jane Goddard Thomas**, B.A. in sociology, works for Apple Specialty Advertising and is the chairwoman of the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

**96 Jim Bodensedt**, B.B.A. in accounting, and wife, Cathy, donated \$1 million to UTSA's football program in January 2010. The money will be used to fund football scholarships. The couple owns and operates MUY Brands LLC, a 117-unit franchise restaurant company. **Lori Jones**, M.B.A. in business, is chief financial officer of MDI Inc., a San Antonio-based global technology and electronic security provider. Lori founded JJM Consulting in April 2008, a financial consulting firm that provides clients with practical and immediate leadership in accounting and finance disciplines. She currently serves on the board of directors and as chairwoman of the Audit Committee of Axion International Holdings Inc. **Matt Proffitt**, B.A. in communication, is vice president and commercial division manager for Stewart Title in San Antonio. He serves on the Real Estate Council of San Antonio's Government Affairs and Program Committee and is a participant in its leadership program. In 2006, Matt started the San Antonio Young Real Estate Professionals, an organization for professionals in real estate and its ancillary professions.

**97 Chris Carter**, B.A. in criminal justice, is code enforcement officer in George West, Texas. Chris has been a peace officer since 2004, with an intermediate peace officer certificate.

**98 Jonathan C. Fristoe**, M.P.A. in public administration, is a

lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. He was recently recognized by Cambridge Who's Who for demonstrating dedication, leadership and excellence in operations management and leadership. Jonathan has served in a variety of medical units throughout the United States, Europe and Southwest Asia. He served in multiple combat operations, including Operation Desert Shield and Iraqi Freedom. He holds commercial aviation licenses in airplanes and helicopters and has flown Medevac in combat. **Miira McClure**, B.A. in psychology, M.A. in counseling '01, is an account executive with TakeCare. She was formerly a senior marketing representative for Applied Underwriters in San Francisco. Miira was the top-producing life insurance agent at Allstate and Sears Life Insurance Company.

**99 Tim McMeans**, B.F.A. in art, is an art teacher at East Central High School in San Antonio. His recent exhibit, "Crossing the Plains," at Bismarck Studios in San Antonio, consisted of 20 paintings drawn from nature. **Mauricio "Rico" Ripley**, B.A. in geography, works for the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) and is a member of the U.S. Army Reserve currently deployed in Kuwait. In San Antonio, Rico was part of the team that inspected food establishments, mobile vendors and temporary events to ensure food safety. In southern Kuwait, Chief Warrant Officer Ripley and nine other food inspectors he supervises are in charge of overseeing the food mission for U.S. troops.

**00 Allan T. Gullede**, Ph.D. in biology, is an assistant professor of physiology at Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire. After leaving UTSA, he conducted postdoctoral research at the Australian National University (2000–2005) as an NSF International Research Fellow, and at the National Institute for Physiological Sciences in Okazaki, Japan (2005–2007) as a JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow. He joined the faculty at Dartmouth in 2007. **Joseph "Jody" Weiss**, M.B.A. in business, is president of the Georgia Association of Personnel Services, Inc. He is a partner in a recent joint venture with TCHG Executive Search, a placement service in finance, technology and human resources.

**02 Kelly Heath**, M.P.A. in public administration, and husband **Sam Heath**, M.B.A. in information systems '02, live in Asheboro, N.C. Kelly works for Randolph Community College as director of occupational extension in the college's continuing education division. Sam is

a product manager at Rheem Sales in Randleman, N.C. **Marcia Marie Salazar**, B.A. in communication, and Virgil T. Thompson Jr. were married Oct. 3, 2009, at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral in Victoria, Texas. Marcia is employed by National Oilwell Varco in Houston as project manager. Her husband is employed by LCRA in LaGrange, Texas, as plant operator. The couple resides in Spring, Texas. **Matthew Frederic Smith**, B.A. in criminal justice, and Chelsea Lynn Beck were married Dec. 19, 2009, at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church in Boerne. Matthew is the vehicle acquisition supervisor for Enterprise Rent-A-Car in San Antonio. The couple resides in San Antonio.

**03 Sam Lerma**, B.A. in psychology, is a film production teacher at the Film School of San Antonio at Harlandale High School. His 3 ½-minute film, *Trash Day*, was screened at the South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin in March. **Terri Lyn O'Bryant**, B.S. in kinesiology, is a physical education and health teacher at Converse Elementary School. She was named the Elementary School Physical Educator of the Year in December by the Texas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. Terri also received a \$2,500 grant—one of 10 recipients nationwide—from the American Heart Association for her efforts on behalf of youth fitness.

**Melissa Pipkin Thomas**, B.A. in communication, is assistant director of learning assistance at the Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success at UTSA. She manages the graduate student learning assistance program, teaches a freshman seminar course each fall and assists with freshman orientations in the summer.

**04 Patrizia Gonzalez**, M.A. in counseling, is the program administrator in the Office of State and Federal Accountability for the Austin Independent School District. **Ian Moss**, B.A. in Spanish, is a J.D. candidate at the George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. Ian has written on a variety of topics concerning U.S. foreign policy and military affairs. His writings and commentary have been published in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Daily Star* in Beirut, among others. He is a graduate of the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., and served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Spanish and Albanian cryptologic linguist. He also holds a master's degree in comparative politics from Northeastern University.

**05 David Matiella**, B.S. in architecture, is a project manager at Marmon Mok Architecture. In a Jan.



## Mark Wohlfarth '94

Coming full circle

Mark Wohlfarth learned the value of hard work at an early age. "I started working as a stock boy at age 13 or 14, and continued to work all the way through high school and college," said the co-founder of Sabinal Group, a general contracting firm in San Antonio. "I literally dug ditches."

Wohlfarth earned his degree in architecture while working full time. It was a long seven-year journey, but ultimately the connections he made during college launched his career, he said. While still in school, he landed a job assisting local architects Joe Stubblefield and Jose Luis Hernandez, and soon discovered he had a knack for managing construction projects.

After spending four years establishing and managing a San Antonio satellite office of the Dallas-based firm Constructors & Associates, he decided in 2005 to launch his own firm with high school friend Danny Benavidez.

In its five-year existence, Sabinal Group has racked up a list of high-profile construction and renovation projects, including the Museo Alameda restoration, the Sullivan Carriage House at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, and a wide range of restaurants, shopping centers, corporate offices and university facilities.

10, 2010, article in the *San Antonio Express-News*, David suggested that San Antonio look to a 1961 treatise by Jane Jacobs, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities," as a guide in urban planning. Jacobs was a proponent of ideas such as mixed-use development, bottom-up community planning and high-density communities. **Patricia Ruiz-Healy**, M.A. in art history, is the owner of Ruiz-Healy Art Studio in San Antonio. The studio includes works from Fernando Botero, Leonel Maciel and Ray Smith. Patricia has been collecting primarily Latin American art for more than 20 years. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Latin American studies with a concentration in art history from the University of Texas at Austin.

**06 Christopher Allison**, B.B.A. in finance, is securities information manager at AllianceBernstein, a global investment management firm. He has worked for AllianceBernstein for three years. **Teddi Beam-Conroy**, M.A. in bicultural-bilingual studies, is the bilingual/ESL teacher-consultant to the Gifted and

Talented and Enrichment Program for Northside Independent School District in San Antonio. She is working on a doctorate in curriculum and instruction at the University of Texas at Austin. **George F. González Jr.**, M.S. in statistics, is director of research and institutional effectiveness for San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas. He was named "Boss of the Year" by the college's chapter of the Association of Educational Office Professionals (AEOP). He also holds a bachelor's degree in statistics from Rice University. George and his wife, Susana, live in Pearland, Texas. **Mimi Kato**, M.F.A. in art, is an internationally known artist who incorporates theater in much of her work. In "Four Seasons," a recent exhibit in Dallas, Mimi was actor, choreographer, costume designer and director of each scene. She's had solo shows in San Antonio, Roswell, N.M., and Ballina, Ireland. Her list of group shows includes galleries from Spain to Miami to Houston. **Jimmy Kuehnle**, M.F.A. in art, is the Philip C. Curtis Artist in Residence at Albion College in Albion, Mich. Jimmy recently served as juror at the annual juried

student art show at Hope College in Holland, Mich. The competitive exhibition is an annual fixture in the college's DePree Art Center. In 2008, Jimmy researched public art and worked in the studio as a Fulbright Graduate Research Fellow and artist in Japan. In 2009 he was a resident artist at Atelje Stundars in Vaasa, Finland. **Sally Odion**, B.B.A. in finance, is a district manager for Aldi Foods in Denton, Texas. She was recently recognized by Cambridge Who's Who for demonstrating dedication, leadership and excellence in retail operations. **Chad Van Delden**, B.A. in communication, is an estimator and organizes the installation crews for Van Delden Onsite Wastewater Systems, a San Antonio company founded by his great-grandfather in 1937.

**07 Eric Cortez**, B.S. in kinesiology, is the boys basketball coach at Austwell-Tivoli High School, south of Victoria, Texas. His teams have gone to the playoffs the past three years. **Adam C. Pate**, B.S. in kinesiology, and Megan L. Hickl, of Bay City, Texas, were married April 18, 2009, at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Blessing, Texas.

Wohlfarth's architectural background and a lifelong interest in historic preservation have drawn him to some special projects over the course of his career, such as managing the construction of the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and overseeing the excavation and restoration of the historic south grounds of the Texas State Capitol.

"We found old whiskey bottles from the 1880s buried in the state capitol lawn," he said. "It was like getting a glimpse into the Wild West."

Wohlfarth's affinity for history lent itself perfectly to a recent construction project at his alma mater. The firm constructed a stylish reading room and a state-of-the-art climate-controlled storage room on the fourth floor of the John Peace Library. The 2,700-square-foot space will house and protect a portion of UTSA's growing collection of rare books and historical documents, as well as the university archives.

From his vantage point as an architectural preservation buff, Wohlfarth easily summed up the importance of the work done with the Special Collections department.

"You can't lose your past," he said. "These are precious documents."

—Anne Peters

Adam is a PE coach at Bay City Junior High, where Megan, a graduate of the University of Houston–Victoria, is an eighth-grade math teacher. **Victoria Tijerina**, B.F.A. in art, is a sixth-grade art teacher at Travis Middle School in Calhoun County Independent School District in Port Lavaca, Texas. **Greg Winters**, M.P.A. in public administration, is a licensed paramedic and an EMS instructor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. He has over 22 years experience in EMS and has worked in ground and air medical transport, fire-based service and the tactical environment. He is the immediate past president of the International Association of Flight Paramedics.

**08 Stephanie Granados**, B.A. in communication, and Chad Hays were married Jan. 23, 2010, in San Antonio. Stephanie is a freelance writer for *The Macon Telegraph*. Chad is a graduate of the University of Alabama and works for Frito-Lay. The couple resides in Warner Robins, Ga. **Joshua Silva**, B.B.A. in management, is a lieutenant in the Texas Army National



Guard, currently serving in Afghanistan. Joshua is a member of the Texas Agribusiness Development Team 3, a unit helping to revive farming in Ghazni province. **Ed Zapata**, M.B.A. in business, is an independent broker doing business as Hill Country Real Estate HUB.

**09** **Shanelle Slaughter**, B.A. in communication, is manager of special operations in the Minor League Baseball organization in St. Petersburg, Fla. Shanelle is responsible for various elements surrounding the Baseball Winter Meetings and the Minor League Baseball Promotional Seminar, including the preparation and design of publication materials, sponsor relations and event programming. She also works with the Baseball Operations Department on projects as needed. **Ronald L. Youngblood**, B.A. in sociology, graduated from the Army ROTC Leader Development and Assessment Course, also known as “Operation Warrior Forge,” at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Wash.

IN MEMORIAM

**78** **Lawrence “Larry” Alton Martin**, M.A. in education, died Jan. 28, 2010, at age 61. After graduating from Texas A&M University in 1971, he began his career in education by teaching biology and coaching at Alamo Heights High School for eight years. During that time he obtained his master’s from UTSA.

He then began work at San Antonio’s Northside Independent School District in 1980 as a coach and teacher at Clark High School. He became an administrator in 1982 and continued to serve Northside ISD until he retired due to cancer in November 2009. During his career, he worked at Clark High School, Stinson Middle School and Zachary Middle School, and completed his career as principal at O’Connor High School.

**79** **Gene M. Colvin**, B.S. in health and physical education, died Nov. 27, 2009, in Augusta, Ga., at age 74. Gene served 20 years in the Air Force before retiring in 1976. After graduating from UTSA he began a teaching/coaching career in the San Antonio Independent School District. Upon moving to Georgia, he began teaching for Richmond County School District, from which he retired in 2008. Gene loved the outdoors and nature and was active in animal rescue organizations. He was buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio.

**82** **Rebecca Searcy Daughtrey**, B.B.A. in accounting, died Jan. 6, 2010, at the age of 60. She was an accountant. She earned her CPA license shortly after graduating, being one of only six individuals in her graduating class to pass the exam on the first attempt.

**84** **Marina Hesles O’Con Monroy**, M.A. in education with a

concentration in counseling, died Jan. 1, 2010, at age 76. She taught for the San Antonio Independent School District and later became an elementary school counselor. She was also a curriculum writer for SAISD’s bilingual program.

**91** **Mary Virginia Payne**, M.A. in English, died March 9, 2010, at age 62. She was the children’s librarian at Landa Branch of the San Antonio Public Library. She was an avid reader, a published poet and a musician. **Todd Tidmore**, M.B.A. in business, died Feb. 22, 2010, at age 57. Todd was born in Midland, Texas, and graduated from Baylor University before receiving his M.B.A. from UTSA. He was a CPA and later the founder and owner of MedCapital Group.

**95** **Margaret “Peggy” Carr Linane**, B.A. in political science, died Nov. 2, 2009, at age 41. Peggy was a native of San Antonio and graduated from Clark High School. Shortly after graduating from UTSA, she moved to Denver. She had battled rheumatoid arthritis for the past 13 years. **Shari Johnson Pruitt**, M.A. in education, died Nov. 2, 2009, at the age of 55. Shari grew up in San Antonio and graduated from MacArthur High School. She was a former journalism teacher and yearbook adviser at Judson High School and later served as food/kitchen director at Christ Episcopal Church and the San Antonio Academy.

**96** **John Michael Gorman Sr.**, B.B.A. in marketing, died Jan. 1, 2010, at the age of 57. From a young age John wrote music and played guitar.

**97** **Michael S. McLane**, M.B.A. in international business, died March 9, 2010, at age 54. Michael was a project manager with UTSA’s Institute for Economic Development. He was employed by the Southwest Trade Adjustment Assistance Center, a component of the economic development institute. He also taught classes in the UTSA College of Business.

**98** **Terrance (Terry) Lee Jennings**, B.S. in electrical engineering, died Feb. 19, 2010, at age 55. Terry was an aviation enthusiast and was working toward his FAA private pilot’s license.

**99** **Kathryn Elizabeth Pelech**, B.A. in English, died Sept. 21, 2009, at the age of 60. She was known as an accomplished pianist and writer.

**00** **Michelle Renee Ratchman**, B.A. in interdisciplinary studies, died March 16, 2010, at age 55. She attended San Antonio College before completing her degree at UTSA. She was a teacher for the Head Start program and also mentored teachers.

**03** **Wallie James Perez**, B.A. in interdisciplinary studies, died Feb. 13, 2010, at age 47. He was dedicated to his students and was a passionate sports fan.

# Meet Chau Kha

## Recognizing academic achievement through endowed scholarships.

Chau Kha, an undergraduate chemistry major, waited nine years as a child before being reunited with her mother who had left Vietnam to pursue opportunities for a better life in the United States.

Inspired by her mother’s sacrifice and work ethic, Chau is dedicated to providing a better life for others through a career as a pharmacist. She is supported by the Dr. Budalur S. Thyagarajan Endowed Scholarship, which relieves financial stress and allows her to focus on achieving her academic goals.

**Your support** of merit scholarships rewards the perseverance and achievements of strong students like Chau Kha. For more information about investing in students through scholarships, visit [utsa.edu/give](http://utsa.edu/give).



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## Looking Back

You've got to hand it to 'em



Cheerleaders show the Roadrunner sign, Aug. 16, 1982.

It was a Thursday night at Wurstfest in New Braunfels, 1979, and there were signs, signs, everywhere a sign. Except a Roadrunner hand sign. And that didn't seem right to a group of pledge brothers from UTSA about to join Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

Charles Guerra '84, who was there that night, claims that was the birth of the Roadrunner hand sign as we know it today.

"It was some kind of college night," said Guerra, who earned a B.B.A. in finance and economics and is now a financial planner with Wells Fargo Advisors in San Antonio. "There were kids from colleges all over Texas. And they all started doing their hand signals—the gig 'em from the Aggies, hook 'em from the Longhorns, the Baylor claw.

"And somebody asked where we were from and what our mascot was," Guerra said. "UTSA wasn't very well known then. We said 'Roadrunners,' and they asked what our hand sign was and we realized we didn't have one."

Fueled by a few cold beverages, a "creative spirit" took hold of the group, Guerra recalled.

Eddie Rios '85 (B.B.A. in marketing) was another pledge brother at Wurstfest that night. "We all started talking about school spirit and traditions, and just began trying out different signals with our hands."

Soon, he said, "We started throwing out the thumb and the pinkie and yelling beep-beep like the roadrunner cartoon."

It seemed to fit, Guerra remembered. "Somebody said the thumb is the beak and the little finger is the tail."

The pledge brothers took their creation back to campus where, Guerra added, there weren't many opportunities to flash the sign. There were no intercollegiate sports at the time; basketball wouldn't start for another two years. But the hand signal survived, ultimately thrived and became, at least for UTSA, the sign of the times.

Beep-beep.

—Joe Michael Feist

*Office of University Communications Photographs Collection, Special Collections, UTSA Library*