



# SOMBRILLA

**SPRING 2013** THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

## Pipeline of Hope





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**ON THE COVER:** In the small Peruvian town of Viña Vieja, the air is dry, the land is arid and clean water is a luxury most who live there can't afford.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA GEORGE

**ON THIS PAGE:** The villagers work hard to maintain their modest lifestyles. There is no municipal water source, so many get their water from a man-made canal system, sometimes trekking long and far to bring it home.

PHOTO BY ELEAZAR HERNÁNDEZ



# LETTERS

## Sombrilla Fall 2012

Thank you so much for the latest issue of *Sombrilla*. Every time I see this magazine in my mailbox, I rush inside to begin reading it—and I'm never disappointed. Not only is it a beautiful publication, but also the articles are always informative and well written, relevant and inspiring.

I'm always proud to be a Roadrunner, but I feel especially proud when I read stories about my university and the amazing work my peers and professors are doing.

Keep up the good work. Forever a Roadrunner,

VERONICA FERNANDEZ  
'05

I just received the hard copy of *Sombrilla* and read it from front to back. It has so many fascinating and diverse articles in it. I reminisced with editor Lety Laurel on "Oh, How I Miss College" and enjoyed the

article on former Roadrunners and on how much they have accomplished since teaching at UTSA.

The Community section was motivational for me. Many folks have passed through the doors of UTSA and have (and are) making an impact in our community.

But my favorite article was "The Lipstick Effect." Researcher Kristina Durante makes some interesting connections between a woman's ovulation time and her non-consciously motivating picks for a mate! Perhaps that's how it came to me.

Thank you for a very interesting read and update on my alma mater. Cheers.

M. SYBIL HOWELL  
M.B.A. '88

## I Miss College

I just read your piece on "the good ol' college days" and it really hit close to home. I taught a class (Freshman Seminar) for the first time this semester and

I couldn't help but laugh when I heard students talk about how they couldn't wait to graduate.

JESSICA AVALOS-ALVAREZ  
'07  
*Assistant director, Office of Orientation and Family Programs, UTSA*

## Forever Roadrunners

What a pleasure it was to read the article on UTSA's Retired Faculty Association. It's exciting to see how these remarkable individuals continue to benefit UTSA and the outside world. I'd like to add my thanks to all our retired faculty who have so generously given gifts to UTSA, but I'd also like to point out that since your publishing date we have received additional gifts or pledges of several hundred thousand dollars from this group. What an impact that will make on UTSA!

CAROLYN LOWERY  
*Director of Gift Planning, UTSA*

## Unraveling a Mystery

As a Ph.D. student of Kat Brown and Jason Yaeger, I have been working in Belize for the past few years and I wanted to thank you for the amazing article you ran in the last issue of *Sombrilla* about the Belize field school. The article did a great job summarizing the work done by UTSA faculty and students while highlighting the beauty of Belize and Maya culture. The photos used were also excellent choices. They were a great mix of the Belize environment, culture and archaeological investigation.

The article was a nice

tribute to the students who have worked on the projects in the past and to the professors who run the projects and strive to make this experience rewarding to each of their students. The article illustrated all facets of the learning experience beautifully. I was so impressed that I made sure to post the online version to the Legacy Program's Facebook page.

Thank you again for running this article and getting the word out about this unique opportunity available to UTSA students!

WHITNEY LYTLE  
*Legacy Program Coordinator, Center for Archaeological Research  
Doctoral student*

Great cover story in *Sombrilla's* latest edition! It made me want to go on one of their next trips. I have been to most of the pyramids in Mexico but never to Belize.

GINA MENDEZ  
*Director of Community Relations, UTSA*

Well done, *Sombrilla* team! I can't tell you how happy I was to read your story on the research conducted by Dr. Kat Brown and Dr. Jason Yaeger in Belize. As part of their research team, I find it incredibly rewarding to see that our research at the sites of Xunantunich and Buenavista is being noticed. As UTSA makes its way toward Tier One status, we need to continually highlight the amazing research that is happening at the university and around the world. Keep up the great work! I am eagerly awaiting the next issue.

ELEAZAR HERNANDEZ  
M.A. '12

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## Goosebumps

To be around truly selfless people is so inspiring, so moving, that it gives me goosebumps. And it seems that here, even in South Texas where winter days can reach into the 90s, I've always got them.

Goosebumps.

When I met with a group of students who had traveled to a struggling, earthquake-ravaged community in Peru, I had them. Here were four college guys, with a bond like that of brothers, who shouldn't be worried about much more than passing their next final. Instead, they spent almost two years trying to find a way to deliver clean water to villagers who drink the same water their livestock use to bathe.

It wasn't an assignment. It wasn't for class credit. It was simply to do the right thing for a community that so badly needed a little help.

I got goosebumps again when I spoke with a graduate student working at one of UTSA's newest centers, the Teacher Education Autism Model. With a small smile, she recalled sitting still while a preschooler punched her and spit in her face. Repeatedly, she'd try to redirect him. And repeatedly, she'd get hit.

Why do you do it? I asked her. The answer was immediate: "I want to make a difference," she said.

That is altruism to the core, and it's inspiring.

There are so many more goosebump-worthy moments, not just within the pages of this issue of *Sombrilla*, but throughout the hallways and classrooms of UTSA. And they happen all the time, even in the

middle of the night.

Like the group of students who stayed on their feet for 18 hours straight, through pain and exhaustion, dancing to raise money for children with cancer and to show them that they care about their struggle and will not give up the battle to find a cure.

Or like the world-renowned researcher who has dedicated his entire career, and most of his life, to trying to understand the disease that ravages the brain and steals people's memories, so that someday, maybe he can help stop it.

I hope that while you read these stories, you also get goosebumps, even in the midst of summer. And I hope it's not from the air conditioning.

Saludos,

## GO ONLINE!

Need more information? Check out these UTSA websites:

For back issues of  
*Sombrilla*, go to  
[utsa.edu/sombrilla](http://utsa.edu/sombrilla)

For campus news  
and events, visit  
[utsa.edu/today](http://utsa.edu/today)

For The Graduate  
School, go to  
[utsa.edu/graduate](http://utsa.edu/graduate)

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## Write Back!

We'd love to hear from you!

How do you think we're doing?

Have any comments about the  
stories you've seen here? Con-  
tact us at [sombrilla@utsa.edu](mailto:sombrilla@utsa.edu).

Or mail your letters to Som-  
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78249. Letters may be edited for  
length or clarity.

THE SOMBRILLA





# A TEAM Approach

Student teachers and children with autism both benefit from a new center

BY LETY LAUREL

THE PASEO  
A STROLL AROUND CAMPUS

**THE TEAM CENTER:**  
A fun place to learn

Graduate student Nadia Mishaddin works with 5-year-old Cambria Johnston, who has autism. Cambria is part of UTSA's first class of students participating in the Teacher Education Autism Model Center.

**AT RIGHT:**

Colorful murals adorn the walls of the TEAM Center.

PHOTOS BY MARK MCCLENDON

SARAH JOHNSTON'S HOUSEHOLD CAN sometimes feel like a war zone. Her 5-year-old daughter, Cambria, just happens to want everything that her 3-year-old sister, Ainsley, wants. So they fight, but Johnston says these aren't just any fights.

They are more like knock-down, drag-out battles.

Cambria, who will start kindergarten next year, has autism. "She gets really physical," said her mother. "I think right now they are similar in developmental age. For a while there, Ainsley was just like, 'whatever.' Then she decided to fight back over a year ago. And it's like a war."

Cambria already had a host of therapists to assist her, from speech to feeding therapy. Then social workers suggested that Cambria could also benefit from applied behavior analysis (ABA), which aims to modify negative behaviors by assessing the environmental causes for the behaviors and teaching alternative positive responses.

ABA, which is often used to teach children with autism, is not always covered by insurance, and with recommended treatment time of 20 to 25 hours per week at a typical cost of \$50 an hour, it would have been too expensive, Johnston said.

So when she heard about a pilot program at UTSA that pairs graduate students working on certification in ABA with children with autism from the San Antonio area, she quickly signed up. Cambria is now part of UTSA's first class of students at the Teacher Education Autism Model (TEAM) Center, which opened in January in the basement of the Durango Building at the Downtown Campus. The center works with four children aged five and younger. For one semester, each child receives six hours of therapy a week.

Designed to work like a teaching hospital, the center provides low-cost services while allowing graduate students the opportunity to hone their skills. It also serves as a research lab for determining effective teaching practices.

"It's been a blessing," Johnston said. "Cambria loves it here."

The TEAM Center is one large room with individual work stations set up around the edge, tables for groups of students in the middle and lots

**"The idea is just to make it a playful place."**

—LEE MASON, assistant professor of special education

of places for children to play. There's a small trampoline and a slide, but the most-loved item in the room is a wooden jungle gym that features a swinging sack that the children can use to spin and swing.

On one wall is a one-way mirror that allows parents and students to observe the sessions.

"The idea is just to make it a playful place where students can come in and hopefully be motivated by a variety of stimuli for engaging in whatever activities we're focusing on for those students," said Lee Mason, assistant professor of special education.

Graduate student therapists work with the children on play or social skills and verbal communication. They praise correct responses and ignore inappropriate ones. The children are frequently rewarded with playtime, which is interspersed with lessons. And through it all, the therapists are documenting what the child is doing, how many opportunities were given for the child to complete a task, how much assistance the child needed and how many times the child completed the task.

"The more things we have for [the children] to talk about and engage in, the better off we'll be in building communication skills and at the same time reducing problem behavior," Mason said.

Autism can affect one in 50 American children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While children with autism can range from low- to high-functioning, most display communication and social skills deficits, and restricted and repeated interests. As many as 25 percent never learn to talk but instead communicate through problem behavior.

"When a child throws a tantrum or engages in self-injury, what are they trying to tell us? A lot of time it is to gain access to a preferred item or to get attention from a parent or teacher," Mason said. "A lot of time it is just to escape demanding situations where we're asking them to perform a lot

of different activities. We often provoke problem behaviors that way."

The goal is to evaluate those behaviors, identify what function they might serve for the child, and then teach a more socially acceptable behavior. It's not easy work, he added.

In her first week at the center, Emelin Laynez, a graduate student in special education, worked with a 5-year-old boy who frequently threw temper tantrums that included spitting and hitting. Laynez realized the boy was trying to avoid having to complete an assigned task. So she ignored the behavior and continued prompting him to complete more tasks.

"To intervene in this behavior wasn't easy," Mason said. "Every time he slapped Emelin in the face or spit at her, she had to pretend like it didn't happen."

But the tactic worked. The next session, the boy did what he was asked. Laynez said the experience reinforced why the TEAM Center is an important place for her to be.

"We weren't sure how it would be when he came back for the next session, but when he did, he was just like a completely different person," she said. "He did the tasks as we asked him to. It blew my mind. There is a lot for me to learn."

Often, graduate students have studied special education but haven't applied their skills in a classroom. Working at the center is a crash course that quickly bridges the theoretical to the real with hands-on experience. When a child gets accepted into the program, the staff knows his or her name and age, but nothing more.

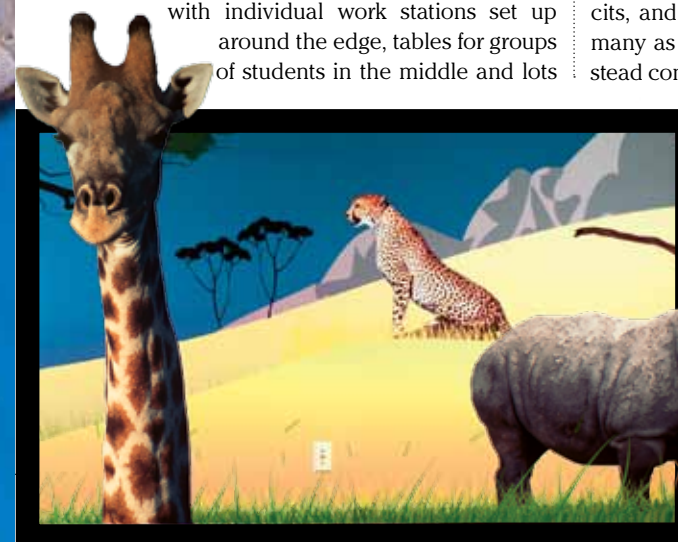
"We don't know the level of severity they are coming in with. We don't know communication skills or whether they are physically aggressive or engage in self-injury. We don't even know if they are toilet trained," Mason said. "So students have to be really prepared for almost anything in terms of who they are going to be working with."

But by the time the semester is over, the graduate students will have gained experience working in real-world situations, which will help them toward certification in applied behavior analysis. And the children also will benefit, Mason said.

"We have 15 weeks to work with families and their children," he said. "We will see progress."

Two weeks into her therapy, Cambria is doing well. But her mom said there is more work to do.

"I want her to improve how she acts and behaves and the amount of tantrums she throws," Johnston said, adding that she wants Cambria's therapist to provoke her daughter's bad behavior. "I told them to go for it. That's why we're here."







## Girl Power!

ITC EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS THE HISTORY OF THE GIRL SCOUTS

BY JAMES BENAVIDES

**I**N 1912, JULIETTE GORDON LOW SET FORTH the founding principles of Girl Scouting: that all girls should be given the opportunity to develop physically, mentally and spiritually. The program she conceived would help shape the lives of some 59 million young women and influence countless others as Girl Scouting continued into the 21st century.

In February, the Institute of Texan Cultures, in cooperation with Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas, opened "Girl Power!" an exhibit that looks back on a century of Girl Scouts and reaffirms its core principles as the program enters its next 100 years of service.

"The values Juliette Gordon Low established have remained consistent for a century," said Angelica Docog, executive director of the Institute of Texan Cultures and a Girl Scout alumna. "She laid the foundation for the nation's premier leadership program for young women."

At its core are three principles: engage, empower and experience. The exhibit explores and illustrates each of these themes with stories from local Girl Scout pioneers and artifacts from local and national Girl Scout programs.

The first artifact at the exhibit's entrance is one that many Texas girls and parents recognize—a replica of the Storybook Tree from Camp La Jita. Visitors can share their own stories about

The iconic merit badge sash is worn by Girl Scouts everywhere. This sash is from the mid-1950s and is on display at the Institute of Texan Cultures.

the impact Girl Scouts had on their lives by writing their memories on leaves and placing them on the tree.

Just behind the tree is a giant sash, replete with badges that call to mind shared experiences and achievements. The sash was originally created in 1972 for a Girl Scouting 60th anniversary celebration.

Among the other artifacts on display is an early Golden Eaglet award, Girl Scouts' highest honor, which evolved into the modern Gold Award. Anne Schelpher earned San Antonio's first Golden Eaglet in 1936.

"The Girl Scout Gold Award gives girls the opportunity to create sustainable change in their communities," said Rose González Pérez, M.A. '90 and CEO for Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas. "Our council is delighted to highlight this prestigious award in the exhibit and to bring more awareness to the organization's aim to challenge today's girls to make the world a better place."

Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas was chartered in 1924 and now serves 21 counties. Notable alumnae include state Senator Leticia Van de Putte, San Antonio City Manager Sheryl Sculley and a diverse roster of public officials, business owners, physicians, lawyers and executives.

"Girl Scouting has impacted so many lives," said Docog. "It is a commonality many cultures share and it is a unique culture unto itself, with its traditions and values passed from generation to generation. This is a wonderful opportunity for Girl Scouts to explore their heritage and for family and friends to learn about the institution that has molded girls of strong moral character for 100 years."



MARK MCLENDON

Students at San Antonio's John Jay High School prepare a petri dish as part of the school's medical microbiology class, which is mentored by UTSA graduate students and faculty.

## Infectious Future

POSTGRADS BRING MICROBIOLOGY TO HIGH SCHOOL

BY GUILLERMO GARCIA

**I**T WASN'T LONG AGO THAT BETTY Duran, a junior at San Antonio's John Jay High School, had no idea what microbiology was. But after a science fair project on the topic and a little help from some UTSA students, she has decided it may very well be her career pursuit.

The 17-year-old enrolled in her school's increasingly popular medical microbiology class, in which UTSA master's and doctoral students help high school students to study microscopic organisms and their role in human illnesses.

She was excited about being exposed to an area of biology that fascinates her but which she might not otherwise have come to learn about, she said.

The high school class is part of a five-year, \$4.6 million program that is funded by the Department of Defense and managed by UTSA's South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases. The center was established to focus state and national attention on the university's research in molecular microbiology, immunology, microbial genomics, biodefense and other areas of biological research. It leverages established faculty and utilizes their expertise in the various research areas through the recently created Center for Excellence in Infection Genomics.

Since fall 2012, the program has provided everything from texts and educational materials to microscopes, petri dishes and other laboratory supplies to Duran's school and another local high school, Edison. The program administrators create the curriculum that the high school teachers follow. Throughout the semester, UTSA students supplement that curriculum with guest lectures and lessons.

It is intended to expose more high school students to the laboratory experience and encourage them to pursue post-graduate microbiology degrees, said program administrator Raquel Shrager.

The program also provides grant and scholarship opportunities so that participating high school students' college education, from undergraduate to doctoral degree programs, can be totally financed.

UTSA students and faculty benefit, too. The program pays them to teach and mentor the high school students.

As part of the curriculum, the high school students are assigned a case history. During the course of the semester-long class, their job is to find the disease that is afflicting their theoretical patient and devise a treatment plan.

Through this exercise, the students get a hands-on feel for the kinds of research a professional microbiologist

conducts in the laboratory.

For another of the program's coordinators, Jesus Romo, the unique project was both a way to help him attain his Ph.D. and an avenue for providing career guidance to dozens of students.

"I am fascinated by how things work, and I try and transfer that to the students because they are the next wave of scientists, and all future discoveries will be in their hands," Romo said.

High school students are at a stage in their lives where they are naturally curious, he said.

"These students, the vast majority of whom are [racial] minorities, might not have otherwise been exposed to this new field of study, and it is exciting to see them getting so stimulated about what they are learning in class."

The popularity of the medical microbiology class has grown so much that John Jay administrators plan to double the number of students in the class next year, and university officials are planning to expand the program by offering the class to other area school districts, Shrager said.

"The more high school biology teachers we get involved and exposed to this microbiology project, the more students those teachers will be able to reach, which will mean that many more students get an opportunity to go to college," she said.

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 59

endowed faculty positions



### //IN BRIEF//

#### Together Everything's Better

In February, UTSA received the largest private matching gift in the university's history. The \$5 million, five-year commitment from H-E-B will support the recruitment of world-class faculty.

The H-E-B Faculty Research Excellence Fund matches other private gifts, providing a total of \$10 million for endowed professorships and chairs. The endowment will enable the university to attract and recruit leading scholars and researchers through financial support for their research and teaching.

"This is a watershed moment for UTSA," said President Ricardo Romo. "The generosity of H-E-B was the spark that ignited giving by others who saw matching gifts as a way to make their commitments even more impactful. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed so meaningfully to the advancement of faculty excellence."

The university recently renamed the University Center South as the H-E-B University Center in recognition of the gift.





//IN BRIEF//

**Early Success**

After sweeping past its initial \$120 million goal more than two years early, UTSA has announced a commitment to raise an additional \$55 million in its first-ever capital campaign, for a total of \$175 million.

The \$120 million goal in pledges and gifts was surpassed in less than one year after being publicly announced in April 2012.

To date, the campaign has supported 135 new scholarships, 26 new endowed faculty positions, and nine new research centers or institutes. Nearly 20,000 donors have contributed to the campaign, which continues through August 2015.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**812k**

YouTube views of President Ricardo Romo dancing the *Harlem Shake*

//IN BRIEF//

**New Postings**

College of Engineering Dean Mauli Agrawal is serving as interim vice president for research. Mehdi Shadaram, associate dean for student affairs and policies and holder of the Briscoe Distinguished Professorship in Electrical Engineering, is serving as the interim dean of the college.



# Beyond Expectations

BY STEPHANIE SANCHEZ

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE SANCHEZ

**L**ORA TOMPKINS WASN'T SUPPOSED TO RUN A MILE in first grade. She wasn't supposed to graduate from high school.

College was supposed to be impossible. Yet the history major, who is also a student worker with the UTSA Libraries' Special Collections, is expected to graduate in May.

Tompkins, 26, was born with cerebral palsy with spastic diplegia, a condition caused by trauma to the brain during fetal development. Some doctors didn't think she would survive more than 24 hours, and others thought she would spend her life in a vegetative state.

"I kind of knocked their expectations out of the park, which I like doing," Tompkins said with a giggle. "I don't fit the mold very well."

Throughout life, she continues to do things that shock

**"I can get around pretty well without him, but he's an extra layer of protection. I have balance issues as part of the [cerebral palsy] and I fall quite frequently."**

—LORA TOMPKINS

medical professionals, family and friends, such as her first-grade run. Although, she said, her body didn't take that milestone well.

Tompkins also broke the mold at the libraries. She is believed to be the first employee to use a service animal since the John Peace Library opened in 1976.

The animal, Loki, is a 3-year-old, 60-pound, purebred poodle. He has been Tompkins' pet since he was seven weeks old and recently started training as a service dog.

Service animals are specifically trained to perform certain tasks, and are working animals, not pets.

Loki, who was playfully named after the Nordic god of mischief, finishes his training in July, but already is accompanying Tompkins to campus and work.

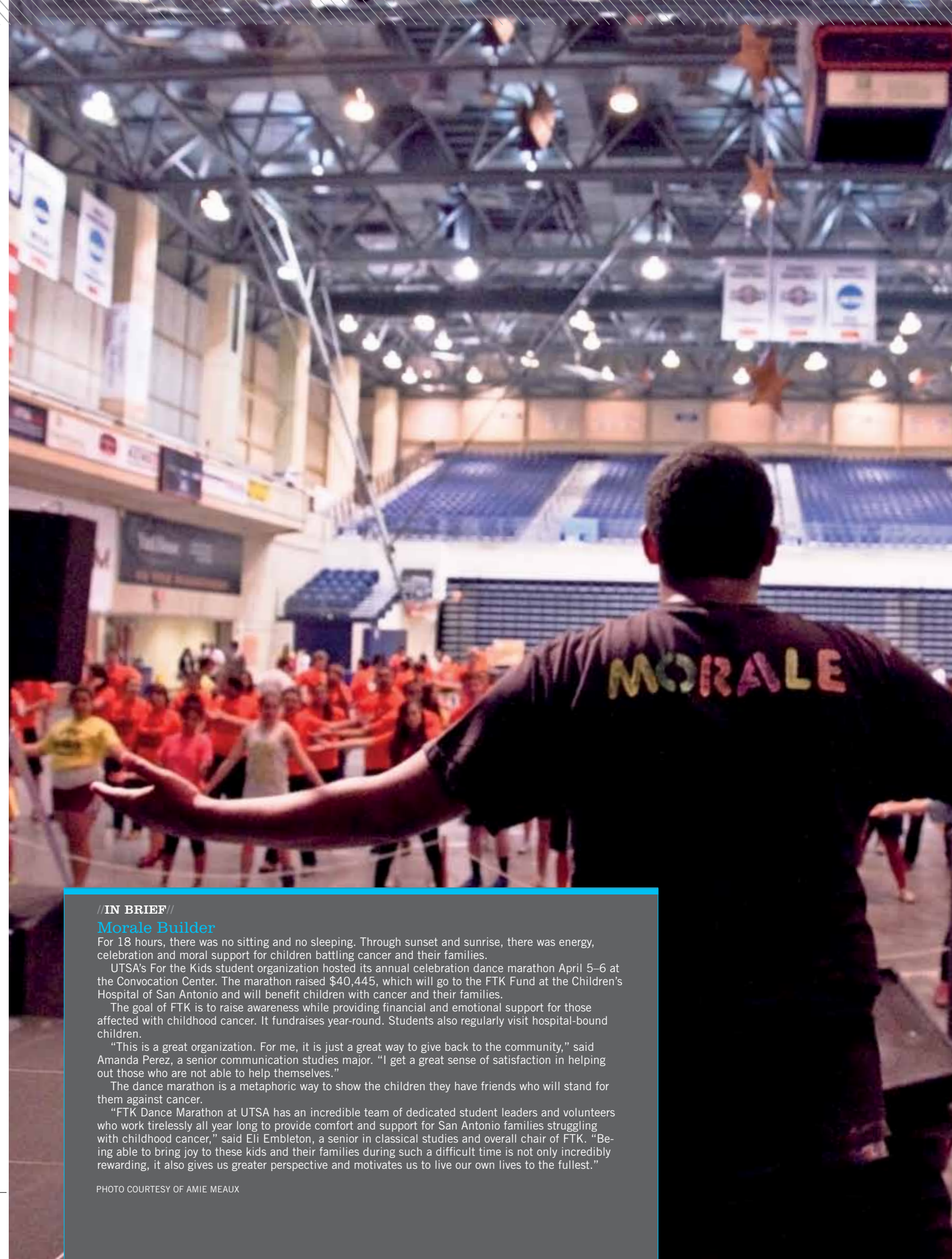
For Tompkins, whose disability causes balance problems and constant back pain, Loki provides security and assistance.

"I can get around pretty well without him, but he's an extra layer of protection," Tompkins said. "I have balance issues as part of the [cerebral palsy] and I fall quite frequently."

When Tompkins says, "Loki help," the dog lies down so she can steady her hands between his shoulder blades and lift herself up.

At home, she has the help of family. But after graduation, she plans to attend graduate school and will rely only on Loki. She hopes to get into the religious studies program at Yale or Rice.

"I try not to let my disability dictate who I am and what I can do, although reality says there are just plain things I can't do," Tompkins said. "But I've tried very hard to make it throughout life without the disability taking control." 🐾



//IN BRIEF//

**Morale Builder**

For 18 hours, there was no sitting and no sleeping. Through sunset and sunrise, there was energy, celebration and moral support for children battling cancer and their families.

UTSA's For the Kids student organization hosted its annual celebration dance marathon April 5–6 at the Convocation Center. The marathon raised \$40,445, which will go to the FTK Fund at the Children's Hospital of San Antonio and will benefit children with cancer and their families.

The goal of FTK is to raise awareness while providing financial and emotional support for those affected with childhood cancer. It fundraises year-round. Students also regularly visit hospital-bound children.

"This is a great organization. For me, it is just a great way to give back to the community," said Amanda Perez, a senior communication studies major. "I get a great sense of satisfaction in helping out those who are not able to help themselves."

The dance marathon is a metaphoric way to show the children they have friends who will stand for them against cancer.

"FTK Dance Marathon at UTSA has an incredible team of dedicated student leaders and volunteers who work tirelessly all year long to provide comfort and support for San Antonio families struggling with childhood cancer," said Eli Embleton, a senior in classical studies and overall chair of FTK. "Being able to bring joy to these kids and their families during such a difficult time is not only incredibly rewarding, it also gives us greater perspective and motivates us to live our own lives to the fullest."

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMIE MEAUX



! "This is something special for San Antonians who celebrate Fiesta every year and invest their memories and emotions in these small tokens."

—Diana Luis, CURATORIAL RESEARCHER AT THE INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES on the tradition of collecting Fiesta medals. She spoke at the April opening of the institute's exhibit showcasing the largest collection of medals commemorating the week-long event.

BY THE NUMBERS

**10th** anniversary of Campus Recreation

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

//IN BRIEF//

**A Gift of Paper**

Former U.S. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez's collection of constituent correspondence, speeches, taped interviews and other items was donated to the UTSA Libraries Special Collections in April.

Within the donation are legislative files relating to appropriations, energy, housing, labor, transportation and Social Security. The materials will be made available to congressional scholars, students and researchers interested in examining Gonzalez's impact during his 14 years in Congress.

## SPORTS BRIEFS



JEFF HUEHN, UTSA ATHLETICS

Senior Richard Garrett Jr., named WAC Field Athlete of the Year and a first team All-American, led the Roadrunners to their eighth straight indoor conference track and field title.

### MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Behind a school-record-tying six individual and relay titles, UTSA won its eighth consecutive indoor conference championship at February's WAC meet in Albuquerque, N.M. The Roadrunners, who claimed the first WAC crown in UTSA athletics history, scored a program-record 159 points to easily defeat runner-up UT Arlington. Head coach Aaron Fox was named the league's coach of the year. Richard Garrett Jr. also had a senior season to remember. The Garland native was chosen as WAC Field Athlete of the Year after winning his third consecutive conference shot put championship and placing fourth in the weight throw. He entered March's NCAA Indoor Championships with the nation's third-best shot put mark (65-9 1/2) and went on to match the best national finish—fourth—in program history. That was good for first-team All-America honors.

### WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD

UTSA accounted for 116 points at February's WAC Indoor Championships for its highest total in 17 years, and the Roadrunners just missed their first league title since 1994 with their runner-up showing. I-35 rival Texas State was able to hold off UTSA by just six points, but the second-place showing was the program's best in 16 years. Seniors Katie Bragg (weight throw) and Eboni Johnson (triple jump) both won individual gold medals for the Roadrunners.

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

UTSA pulled off the biggest upset by seed in the history of the WAC Tournament when the ninth-seeded Roadrunners toppled top seed and regu-

lar season co-champion Louisiana Tech, 73-67, in the quarterfinal round on March 14 in Las Vegas, Nev. UTSA saw its season come to an end against UT Arlington in the semifinals one night later. Individually, senior point guard Michael Hale III was named third-team All-WAC after averaging 15.6 points, 3.8 assists, 3.1 rebounds and 1.5 steals per game.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

UTSA finished the 2012-13 campaign with a 16-14 record, which gave the program its fifth winning mark in the last six seasons. After being picked to finish eighth and ninth by the media and coaches in the WAC preseason polls, the Roadrunners placed fourth with a 10-8 league record. Led by third-team all-conference selection Kamra King, the team doubled its win total from last season and led the league in scoring defense and field goal percentage defense.

### BASEBALL

UTSA, which tied the school record with a 5-0 start to the season, has shown its offensive prowess and led the WAC in several different

offensive categories. Additionally, the Birds took three of four games from Pac-12 Conference member Washington State, downed Big 12 Conference member Baylor for the second straight season and defeated all three of their opponents at the UTSA Classic—Penn State, Nebraska-Omaha and Stephen F. Austin—in March.



JEFF HUEHN, UTSA ATHLETICS

Senior pitcher Alyssa Vordenbaum winds up as she prepares to deliver a pitch against the San Jose State Spartans earlier this year.

### SOFTBALL

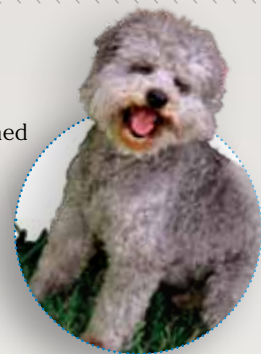
After a successful start to the season, UTSA opened WAC play March 22-23 with a three-game sweep of Texas State in San Marcos. It was the Roadrunners' first sweep of their I-35 rival since 2004 and the first in San Marcos since 1996.

Senior point guard Michael Hale III led the team to the biggest upset, by seed, in WAC Tournament history when the ninth-seeded UTSA team defeated top seed Louisiana Tech.

JEFF HUEHN, UTSA ATHLETICS



**HER HEART BELONGS TO:** A black poodle named after the Old Testament prophet Obadiah. "But he is turning gray because of his age."



### SPINADELIC Y'ALL!

McKenzie is relaxed and cool with her volleyball handling skill; spinning it freely on the tip of her finger while in the middle of conversation during our photo shoot.



### AMERICA:

She looks forward to getting to know a different part of the country. After having played in Mountain and Pacific time zones in the Southland Conference and WAC, she will now be playing in Central and East Coast time zones, where Conference USA schools are located.

## SPOTLIGHT

# McKenzie Adams

BY GUILLERMO GARCIA

**S**HE PREPS FOR EVERY match by following a strict routine, always putting on her left knee pad, ankle brace and shoe first while listening to Jason Aldean's country tunes or hip-hop and rap courtesy of Drake and Lil Wayne.

The superstitious ritual apparently works.

UTSA volleyball team member McKenzie Adams parlayed her unique pre-game routine into a 2012 American Volleyball Coaches Association All-American honorable mention as well as the title of Western Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

In doing so, she became the first Roadrunner in program history to win either award.

The six-foot, three-inch outside hitter also became only the third player in WAC history to be named conference player-of-the-week five times in one season—scoring 4.85 points and making 4.35 kills per set, the second best in the conference.

"Although one person is named the winner, I would not be getting the award but for my teammates passing the ball and setting me up" for the kill shot, she said. "It was a huge honor and I am so honored and blessed."

Now the challenge will be the competition in Conference USA.

"It will definitely be a step up in competition, for sure," she said, given that the team will regularly face the University of Tulsa, traditionally one of the top teams in the nation.

The 21-year-old Schertz, Texas, native remains grateful that she took her older sister's advice to transfer to UTSA, where she is on a full athletic scholarship, after a year at the University of Virginia. Plus she gets to live with her sister, Ashley, off-campus.

The junior is majoring in multidisciplinary studies, but she doesn't plan to stray far from the game she has played since taking up volleyball at age 10.

Her goal and dream is the USA national team, and she wants to coach at the collegiate level after playing professionally overseas.

MARK MCCLENDON





# A Tangle of Memories

BY GUILLERMO GARCIA

Although it strikes one in six Americans in their 60s—and one of every two in their 80s—fundamental aspects of Alzheimer’s disease remain unknown and in need of new avenues of research, says UTSA College of Sciences Dean George Perry.

A nationally recognized expert on the disease, which produces profound changes in the brain and is characterized by the loss of cognitive function, Perry refers to the complex, debilitating disorder as “the disease of our time.”

Great strides have been made over the past 30 years in understanding how the illness can rob otherwise healthy individuals of their mind and memory, he noted. But there is still much work to do. >>>

PHOTOS BY MARK MCLENDON





Having spent decades studying Alzheimer's, Perry hopes to add to the body of knowledge after being named to the newly created Patricia and Tom Semmes Endowed Chair in Neurobiology. The \$1 million is made possible by a Semmes Foundation gift of \$500,000, matched by the H-E-B Faculty Research Excellence Fund.

Such luminaries as Winston Churchill, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Ford, Norman Rockwell, Rita Hayward and James Doohan, best known as Scotty on television's *Star Trek*, have fallen victim to the illness, for which there is no known cure.

More recently, Pat Summitt, the University of Tennessee's legendary women's basketball coach who chalked up the most wins in any sport in collegiate history, stepped down after being diagnosed with it. As recently as last year, more than 1,000 clinical trials were launched to evaluate treatments, but it is not known if any of them are effective.

Current treatment focuses on the disease's symptoms, but nothing has yet been found that reverses its progression, which can sometimes be rapid. A common symptom, dementia, causes a person to lose his or her ability to think, recall and reason to such a severe extent that it interferes with daily function.

While it was once thought to be typically age-related, studies have shown that Alzheimer's is not a normal part of the aging process.

The theory is that over time, organisms age due to the damage done by free radicals, molecules with unpaired electrons in their shells, which leads to DNA mutations that are thought to speed up the aging process.

Cells damaged by free radicals have been associated not only with Alzheimer's but with other illnesses such as diabetes.

The Semmes endowment will help Perry—who is considered one of the top scientific investigators in the world in the area of free radicals—focus research efforts on the brain cells' response to free radicals and the damage they cause.

Perry said he hopes that this research will provide an

unprecedented opportunity for worldwide collaboration as well as stimulate and expand research into the debilitating affliction. The endowment will also support the coordination of research efforts at UTSA into more than 20 nervous system disorders, some of which are commonly associated with the dementia brought on by Alzheimer's, Perry said.

"George is one of the top 10 authorities on Alzheimer's in the world," said Provost John Frederick. "To have such an authority in our midst will provide a place where other experts in that and other areas will want to come and collaborate."

Perry, the editor in chief of the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, one of the leading research periodicals in the field, has published more than 900 studies on various aspects of the disease.

He noted that because the illness is so widespread, just about everyone knows someone who suffers from Alzheimer's.

Over the last several decades, what was once considered almost exclusively an "old person's" illness has been increasingly diagnosed in otherwise healthy individuals in their late 30s and early 40s.

While more than five million Americans have been diagnosed with various stages of Alzheimer's, whether early-onset or advanced, projections are that millions more will be affected as the baby boomer generation ages.

Early-onset Alzheimer's, the less-common form of the disease, can present symptoms early, but the person affected tends to worsen more rapidly. The most common form is late-onset, occurring in people in their mid-60s.

Studies have shown that once a person reaches age 65, the risk for getting Alzheimer's doubles, and the risk factor continues doubling every five years after that.

"The risk just doesn't stop, it increases as the person gets older, so that by the time people reach age 85, one of two people will have been diagnosed with some form of Alzheimer's," Perry said.

Some of the most feared components of the disease

"THE RISK JUST  
DOESN'T STOP...  
BY THE TIME PEOPLE  
REACH AGE 85, ONE  
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ALZHEIMER'S"

—George Perry, Dean, College of Sciences

are the mood changes, depression and confusion triggered by the onset of dementia, which impacts just about every aspect of the affected person's life.

Over the long term, Perry suspects that Alzheimer's will have a higher impact in Third World countries, especially in Latin America, because those nations have significantly higher birth rates than European and Far Eastern nations.

As people in those developing countries approach their older years, the incidence of Alzheimer's diagnoses is most likely to increase, Perry pointed out.

"The greater the number of people who live longer, the greater the problem of dealing with Alzheimer's patients and the greater the impact will be on the society that has to deal with a larger population which is aging and which is most susceptible" to being diagnosed with it, he said.

He notes that one facet of the disease that carries particular implications for South Texans—and which he hopes to explore further—relates to its apparent connection to other illnesses like Type 2 diabetes.

"There appears to be little doubt that the diet and lifestyle habits of Hispanics make them more susceptible to Type 2 diabetes," Perry said. "Consequently they suffer significantly higher rates of Alzheimer's than their Anglo counterparts."

He cited study results that noted that Hispanics over age 65 were diagnosed with Alzheimer's at a rate of 60 percent, in contrast to the 30 percent rate for Anglos. Other studies indicate that African Americans are also diagnosed at higher rates than Anglos.

Nancy Rheams, support assistant with the Alzheimer's Association San Antonio & South Texas Chapter, said its region of 44 counties sees a high prevalence of Type 2 diabetes among its large Hispanic population.

Because of that, she thinks Perry's expanded research will have significant implications for her chapter.

"Whatever the kind of...research Dr. Perry might be able to launch, to find answers to common problems of Alzheimer's could really make a difference," Rheams noted. "Locally, that kind of research could have a potentially huge impact for us." 🐸



# A "SMART" SOLUTION

BY GUILLERMO GARCIA

ILLUSTRATION BY GERARDO RAZO AND MARCELINO PEREZ

The interior design students' semester-long assignment seemed straightforward enough: utilize the latest in computer modeling, automation and prediction technology to redesign a house for a person living with Alzheimer's disease.

"Technology is cutting edge, and applying such innovations could do wonders to assist, and put at ease, not only the millions of people diagnosed with the debilitating, life-changing disease, but their families and caregivers as well," said Ela Poursani, assistant professor in the UTSA Department of Architecture.

An architect with a Ph.D. in urban theory, Poursani taught the out-of-the-box, research-heavy studio class in spring 2012.

The home environment can play an important role in managing treatment for this disease, since many older adults prefer staying home rather than in a hospital or other care setting, she said.

So the students set about designing a so-called "smart home," one that would technologically be able to meet the needs of a patient living alone.

The key design element is a "smart wall" peppered with sensors and interactive screens that could provide a direct audio and video link with doctors, clinics, hospitals and caregivers; monitor a patient's vital signs; and alert family members or caregivers when the resident goes out the front door at unscheduled times through remote sensors in the wall, in pillows and in shoes. Often, a person with Alzheimer's becomes disoriented, and, if unsupervised, can easily wander away from familiar, safe surroundings with sometimes-disastrous consequences.

While the wall and the rest of the technology-heavy residence remain in the design stage and have not been built or tested, "there are updates and tech innovations that today could make such a residence possible," Poursani said.

The class was offered as awareness of the disease's impact on society grows and as the 2012 federal allocation for Alzheimer's research increased by 25 percent, she noted.

Alzheimer's affects one in eight elderly Americans, and is the nation's sixth leading cause of death, according to federal statistics.

As more members of the baby-boomer generation reach and pass the critical age of 60, the costs associated with the disease will only increase. So the challenge for the students, all graduating seniors, went beyond applying function and design principles, Poursani said.

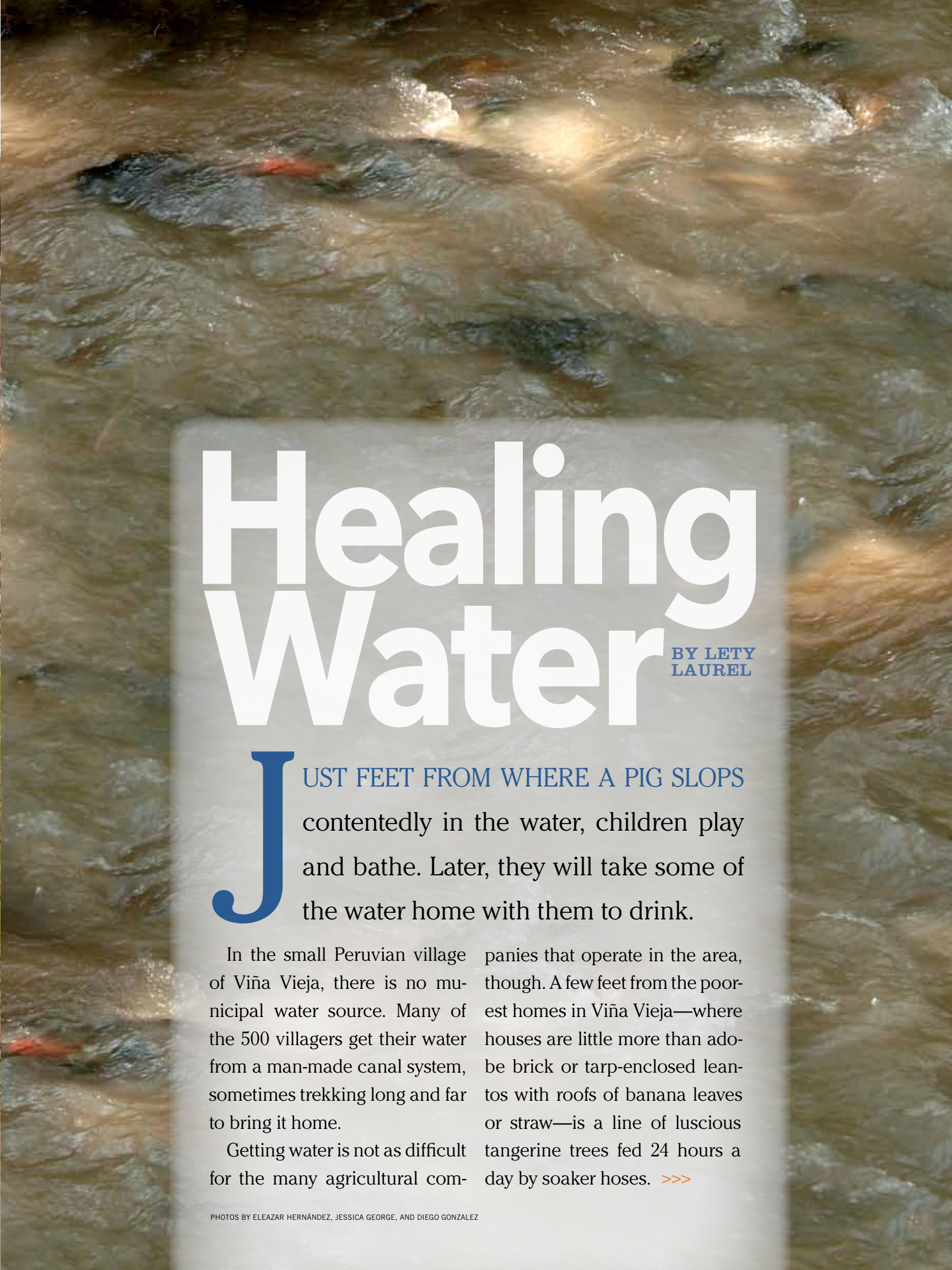
Statistics show that more than 20 million people in the United States live with the effects of Alzheimer's. This includes the five million who have been diagnosed with either early-onset or full-blown dementia—and the 15 million family members and unpaid caregivers "who are affected in one way or another by Alzheimer's," Poursani noted.

Poursani had the students undertake extensive research, not only on architectural innovations and trends, but also on aging and Alzheimer's. They met with aging specialists as well as experts from The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital and other facilities. They also met and interacted with senior citizens living at the Air Force Village in San Antonio, a retirement community for military officers or their widowed spouses.





Steven Byers, a senior civil engineering major and member of Engineers Without Borders, takes a water sample from a residential well in Viña Vieja. The water may look fine to drink, but every time the area floods, fecal matter from area livestock spills into the well and contaminates the water.



# Healing Water

BY LETY LAUREL

**J**UST FEET FROM WHERE A PIG SLOPS contentedly in the water, children play and bathe. Later, they will take some of the water home with them to drink.

In the small Peruvian village of Viña Vieja, there is no municipal water source. Many of the 500 villagers get their water from a man-made canal system, sometimes trekking long and far to bring it home.

Getting water is not as difficult for the many agricultural com-

panies that operate in the area, though. A few feet from the poorest homes in Viña Vieja—where houses are little more than adobe brick or tarp-enclosed lean-tos with roofs of banana leaves or straw—is a line of luscious tangerine trees fed 24 hours a day by soaker hoses. >>>



In Viña Vieja, a Peruvian village struggling to recover from repeated violent earthquakes, there is no municipal water source. Many of the 500 residents get their water from a nearby canal system, which is already contaminated with fecal bacteria from area livestock and residents. Soon, a local agricultural company will begin adding fertilizer to the water, poisoning what little water they have available.

PROBLEM:  
—LIVESTOCK  
CONTAMINATION

—FERTILIZERS

—DAMAGED  
INFRASTRUCTURE

“WE SAW PIGS  
SITTING IN THE WATER

and kids drinking it.

I know every time I’ve  
been down [there], I’ve

heard somebody has

passed away due to

problems that people

in the U.S. don’t

usually die from.”

—STEVEN BYERS, CIVIL ENGINEERING MAJOR

“Those trees are on soaker hoses, but the people living next to them can’t get water,” said Steven Byers, a UTSA senior civil engineering student. “It’s so close they can see it over their fence, yet it’s still not theirs. And the residents can’t do anything about it.”

But Byers is doing something about it.

Guided by John Joseph, a lecturer in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Byers traveled with three other UTSA students to Peru over Christmas break to begin the arduous process of building a water system that, once complete, could sustain the entire village with clean, naturally filtered water. They’re tapping into an existing well that once provided water to an agricultural company and was recently turned over to the residents. However, it lacks a storage and distribution system.

“The capacity can serve the entire community with ease,” Byers said. “We have tested the water quality and it is good. And if there [is] a problem in the future, they’ll be able to chlorinate. We plan on teaching them how to test the water when we’re not there.”

The 12-day excursion was the third trip that UTSA’s chapter of Engineers Without Borders made to the South American country. It’s a component of a larger effort to provide medical support and begin rebuilding the earthquake-stricken region, part of a five-year agreement with the tiny town in cooperation with Texas Partners of the Americas, a non-governmental organization.

Viña Vieja is an arid farming community about a three-

hour drive south of Peru’s capital of Lima. In 2007, the region was devastated by consecutive earthquakes, leaving residents without housing and further complicating the existing problem of obtaining potable water.

Some residents survive by drinking and using unfiltered canal water, rife with human and animal waste and trash. Others tap an artesian well, an uncovered pit about 40 feet deep.

“They basically drop a pipe in there, but anything can fall in there: Dead animals. People. It’s not only a danger in and of itself, but it’s also not an ideal source of drinking water,” said Timothy Hayes, a senior civil engineering major.

Once the water is collected, residents boil it, but each year a number of residents fall victim to amoebic dysentery, and there’s a high infant-mortality rate as a result.

“We saw pigs sitting in the water and kids drinking it,” Byers said. “I know every time I’ve been down [there], I’ve heard somebody has passed away due to problems that people in the U.S. don’t usually die from. There, diarrhea is serious. Infant mortality is serious.”

And soon, a local agricultural company will begin adding fertilizer to the canal system used for crop irrigation.

“They’re going to be getting fertilized water to drink. That’s a problem,” Byers said.

So the race is on. And the students feel the pressure.

DIGGING IN

Finding the solution to Viña Vieja’s water woes wasn’t easy

and didn’t happen overnight. When the students joined UTSA’s Engineers Without Borders chapter in 2011, it was already the organization’s target, but they didn’t yet know what the community most needed.

When they asked, the answer was as simple as it was unexpected: Water.

“We didn’t even think about that because we always have water. You take it for granted,” said civil engineering senior Diego Gonzalez. “You don’t realize that people really need access to safe, reliable water.”

For a year, the students compiled numerous reports, ranging from a list of Peruvian insects to avoid to implementation and sustainability plans. Then there were the mathematical calculations that needed approval by the national arm of Engineers Without Borders before any work could begin. While Byers tackled how to get the water from the tanks to the people and >>>

REMEDY:  
—COMMUNITY SUPPORT

—AWARENESS

—EDUCATION





Four UTSA civil engineering students, Steven Byers, Diego Gonzalez, Adam Bazar and Jessica George, traveled to Viña Vieja, Peru, to build a water system that could sustain the entire village of 500 with clean, naturally filtered water. They're tapping into an existing well that lacks a storage and distribution system.



the amount of water pressure that would be required, Hayes and civil engineering major Adam Bazar worked on engineering the earthquake-proof foundations for the tanks. "About 95 percent of what we do happens before we leave [the U.S.]," Hayes said. "All of these things that are actual practical design engineering calculations will eat up hours and hours of your life for months at a time."

Design setbacks took months to correct, and the students worked year-round to find solutions. Once in Peru, the challenges intensified. Their supply list wasn't received, so they spent much of the time working with a single shovel left behind from a previous trip. They depended on locals to provide them with the basics they needed for construction, scouring homesteads for a piece of rebar or wood. Hours were spent traveling to hardware stores, only to find that the simplest items, such as two-inch pipe, weren't available.

"The trip was frustrating," said Joseph, a licensed engineer. But instead of losing hope and giving up, the students did what they could to make progress on the water system. "It's easy to become hopeless when the plans start to unravel, but [the students] didn't. It was clear evidence that they weren't just down there for fun. They all just wanted to get things done for the people."

Viña Vieja residents could see that, too. By the end of the students' stay, dozens of townspeople regularly worked at the site, collectively putting in what Joseph estimates to be hundreds

of hours outside of their regular jobs digging a trench, sifting gravel and making and pouring concrete.

That's why the students put so much of their spare time into this project, Hayes said. It matters.

"It takes a very specific kind of personality to stick with it," he said. "There is no big payoff in the short term. There are a lot of late nights and tedious design work and calculations and frustration. But we're the kind of people who care about others. We are changing lives."

And their lives are being changed in the process, the students said.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

As seniors, this group will be graduating soon. Like all students, they will take away book knowledge from UTSA. But they now have the added bonus of experience.

Viña Vieja taught them patience and trial and error, and that not every solution is 100-percent correct. They became technically savvy, able to create and present reports to professional engineers. And they learned that any project should always start with water, something they never used to think about.

"This is something we're doing in school that we actually care about," Bazar said. "Assignments get graded and that's it. But this wasn't just an assignment. We actually used whatever extra time we have to create something for this community, and that memory will last our whole lives."

In an ironic twist, the students won't see the water project completed. They laid the groundwork that will ultimately lead to a water-starved community beginning the arduous task of rebuilding after several years of simply surviving. But graduation day will come first, so they're now doing what they can to pass on their knowledge to the Peruvian community and to the students who will walk in their footsteps over the coming years.

"We might not be able to see it finished, but we'll graduate knowing we did our best," Gonzalez said. "We made a commitment. It will be finished."



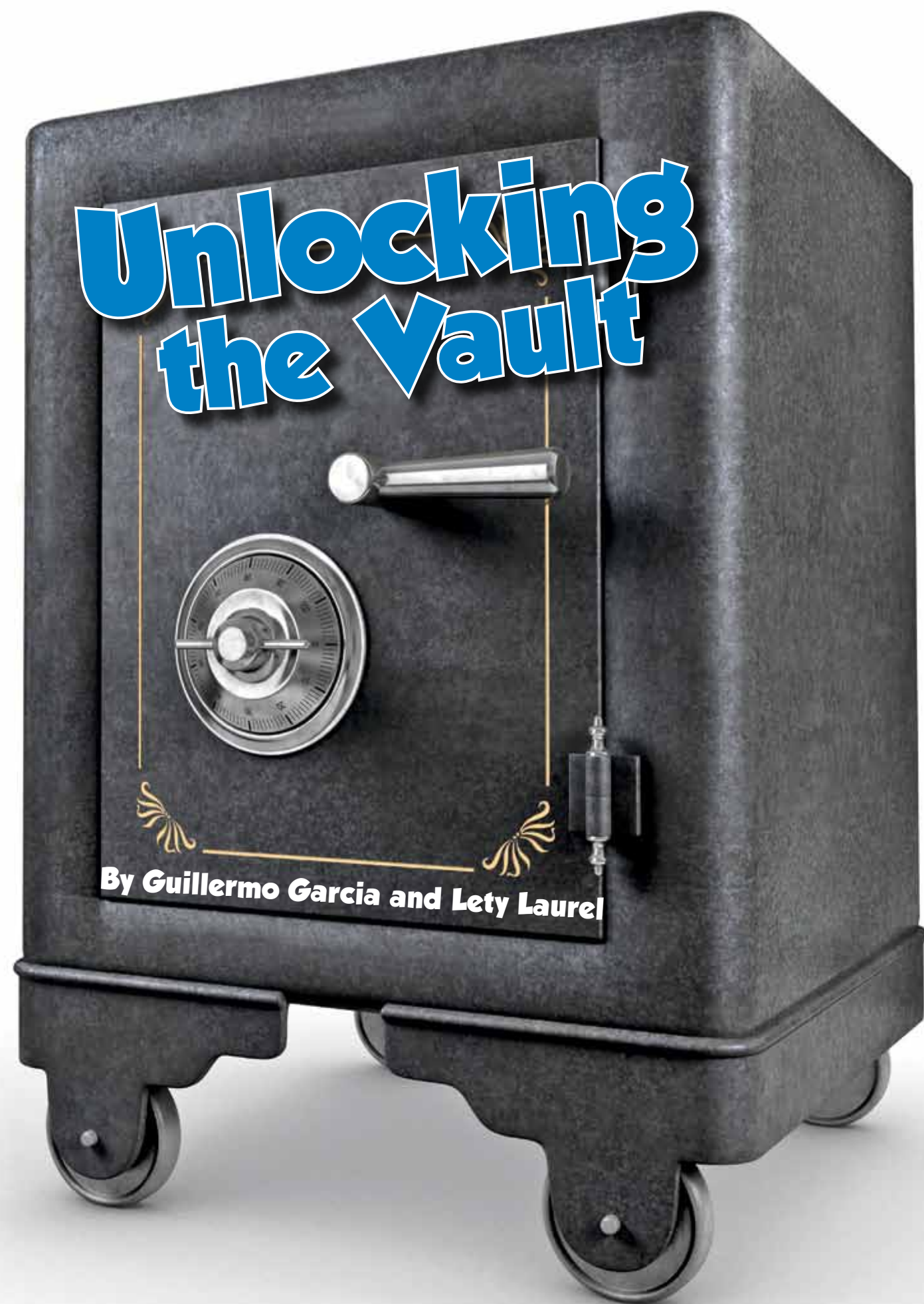
#### THE IMPACT: A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The students know that their work doesn't end when the water system is up and running. As part of their outreach, they are also working to educate the residents of Viña Vieja on how to maintain the well, test for bacteria and other pollutants and repair any problems the well might have. They are also teaching the residents about the importance of sanitation.

#### Web Extra:

Learn more about UTSA's Engineers Without Borders at [UTSA.EDU/SOMBRILLA](https://utsa.edu/sombrilla).





## Sometimes the most memorable gifts

a university receives are those with a highly symbolic or personal meaning, the type of gift where the dollar sign in front of a donation has less intrinsic value than the story behind it.

The very ground that UTSA sits on was a gift of rocks and Hill Country land and a confidence that from that donated earth, the Main Campus' buildings and Sombrilla would arise so that a higher education tradition could take root.

Through UTSA's four-plus decades of existence, the school has received gifts of stocks, sculptures and scriptures, as well as papers that range from the historical to the commonplace. There have been donations of food and water, theme park tickets and entire estates.

It's easy to think only of the dollar bills that sustain a university. But so much of what the university is and so much of the reason it has thrived is due in no small part to the rocks donated for future geologists to study; to the land given by a pioneering San Antonio restaurant family to bring public higher education to the heart of the city; to the decision of a woman who quit her pursuit of a master's degree at UTSA but who nonetheless donated her entire estate, including oil fields, to the university; and to the extensive Texana collection left by a philanthropist for future historians to pore over.

Those are the types of gifts that mean as much or more to a university's sense of wellbeing as cash. >>>



# “We treasure the gifts we receive,”

said Marjie French, vice president for external relations. “We’re talking about something as small as a book or Fiesta Texas passes for an auction, to lab equipment that students can utilize for their research. These gifts are very important. We value them.”

And then there are unique and quirky gifts that are, well, simply interesting.

Here’s a look at just some of the things that have helped build UTSA into the institution it has become and those that will continue to propel it toward what it strives to be:

## “The Original Fruitcake”

In 2009, Aline Carter’s family sifted through the attic of her 19th-century home only to uncover treasures hidden in dusty, moldy old trunks. They found the former Texas poet laureate’s special papers, unpublished poetry and written recollections, which they promptly donated to UTSA. An unexpected bonus? The decades-, perhaps centuries-, old fruitcake partially wrapped in a brown paper bag that her son, David Carter, jokingly dubbed “The Original Fruitcake” when it was donated.

“They don’t actually know how old the darn thing is, but it does give every appearance of being the original fruitcake,” said David Johnson, history professor. “It’s a great conversation piece, if nothing else.”

## “I Got a Rock”

More than a ton of rocks and minerals, all kinds of them, fill up six cabinets and about 50 drawers in the Science Building.

While the vast majority of the rocks received by the university—by folks giving up their collections or by rock firms going out of business—are neither famous nor infamous, they are available for faculty and students to use for teaching and as research tools. Also included with these gifts are books, journals and other reference materials, some dating back to the early 1900s.



## Location, Location, Location

In 1970, the UT System Board of Regents accepted a gift of 600 acres of land in northwest Bexar County in what was then deer country covered with trees and brush. That property, tucked between Loop 1604 and Interstate 10, was destined to become UTSA’s Main Campus.

The selection of the site, donated mostly by Mary Ann Smothers Bruni, whose parents once owned the largest textile service business in the Southwest, was influenced by the amount of acreage available for the university to eventually expand. Also influencing the Regents’ decision to pick the property, one of five contenders throughout the city, was the fact that the northwest quadrant of the city had

the largest college-age population.

Although it is unknown how much the land was worth back then, today it is valued at more than \$51 million.

### A SEPARATE GIFT BY BILL MILLER

Bar-B-Q Enterprises in 1993 gave birth to UTSA’s second campus, in downtown San Antonio. This donation of nine acres helped strengthen ties that had been weakening with the community, said Sonia Martinez, special assistant to President Ricardo Romo.

The decision to build the Main



Campus on the far northwest side caused concern among many San Antonio residents, who feared accessibility would be a hurdle for prospective students. So when the restaurateur offered to donate land downtown, it was a gift worth more than its \$1.2 million in land value.

“The Downtown Campus gift came at a time when UTSA really needed it,” Martinez said. Today, the land is valued at more than \$6 million.

### AND THEN THERE WAS THE RETIRED SCHOOLTEACHER

who was so angry at getting a C in her Chaucer class that she dropped out of UTSA. Decades later, she left her entire estate to the university.

Mary E. McKinney’s 2011 gift, which included personal property and a portfolio of stocks and bonds, also includes three ranch sites, all of which sit on the Eagle Ford Shale. The oilfield is expected to become the largest ever discovered in the United States in terms of hydrocarbon production.

And since UTSA now owns the rights to the minerals under the ground, the more oil and gas produced, the greater the income to the university.

The entire estate is valued at more than \$28 million, all of which will go toward student scholarships.

“This is a spectacular example of a gift in kind,” said Marjie French, vice president for external relations. “The scholarships that have already come from this gift are transforming UTSA students’ lives.”

## Take a Chair

Even before UTSA was to be located on 600 acres in northwest Bexar County, a 25-acre estate called Oak Court was given to the yet-to-be-developed university. The estate, owned by Lutchter and Emily Wells Brown, was donated to the UT System in 1965, then quickly turned over to UTSA after the school was established in 1969.

The proceeds from the sale of the property eventually netted UTSA \$7 million, which was divided to create seven endowed chairs, the first endowed positions for the university.

“This is what got us going for our first endowed positions. That was really key in the university’s starting to hire senior researchers,” said Sonia Martinez, special assistant to President Ricardo Romo. The Lutchter Brown Distinguished Chairs were then used as leverage to gain other large research gifts. “This was our first little gem of opportunity. We started using the chairs really wisely, and now those Lutchter chairs are prestigious.” >>>







## Bring on the Burritos

It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes food—lots of it—to sustain college students. Throughout the years, the university has been supplied with countless burritos, milkshakes, pizzas and even chuckwagon meals from local vendors. Often, the food is used to cater student organization meetings and events. That's one less meal the students have to pay for.



## Magical Music

A gift from Liberace's goddaughter sits tucked away in a practice room in the Arts Building. The red mahogany 1918 A-Series Steinway grand player piano is valued at \$25,000, and offers a rich, mellow sound that is rare in an instrument of that age.

"The piano is in amazing shape," said David Frego, the Roland K. Blumberg Endowed Professor in Music and chair of the music department. "It's done remarkably well throughout the years."

It sat in storage for 13 years before its owner, Robyn Hines, decided to give it to the university.

"It was a gift of love," Hines said of the piano, given to her by her father 30 years ago.

Hines never did learn how to make a piano

sing, she said. So when space became scarce, she stored it away. But she knew it needed to be played in order for it to last.

Now it gets played every day by students who love music as much as she does, but who are much more musically inclined.

"I'm thrilled that the students get to use it because it's a marvelous piece and I'm thrilled to death that it is getting used on a daily basis," she said. "To me, any piano should be. To sit as a beautiful piece of furniture is not what it's meant for."

An added bonus, she said, is that it is not too far away.

"I can still visit it," she said.



## Priceless Art

In 1970, a retired UTSA professor donated 15 original photographs by highly regarded Mexican photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Considered to be the main representative of Latin American photography in the early 20th century, Bravo's work extends from the revolutionary times of the late 1920s to the 1990s. His portraits of women and street signs of a Mexico of the past are valued at \$75,000.

"Bravo plays with lots of light, and is considered a master Mexican photographer," said Arturo Almeida, the university's art curator.

Some of the university's Bravo photographs are on display on the fourth floor of the John

Peace Library on the Main Campus.

The university also boasts a 26-print collection donated by comic and actor Cheech Marin that includes the works of well-known Chicano artists from San Antonio. Another nearly \$354,000 worth of art donated by AT&T also hangs throughout the library.

"The beauty of the art collection is there for everyone to see," said Marjie French, vice president for external relations. "It's fabulous."

The entire university art collection includes 1,600 pieces representing some 400 artists; given the collection's breadth and depth, Almeida noted, "We should already be an [art] museum."



## Super Tasty

Who doesn't like chocolate? Apparently, people are willing to bid good money for it. In 2012, UTSA staff member Andra E. Kiser, a part-time chocolatier, donated homemade chocolate candy for an Office of Student Affairs auction. The candy, along with other donated items, helped raise more than \$1,700 that will be used for student programming and staff development.

"I'm the weird chocolate lady," said Kiser, who plans to donate two pounds of chocolate candies for the next auction. "And I have to brag a little bit. I make the best dark chocolate fudge I've ever tasted."

## Peace, Man


John Peace, a San Antonio attorney and a former chair of the UT System Board of Regents, donated a collection of early Texas and Mexico history books and documents to the UTSA Library in December 1973.

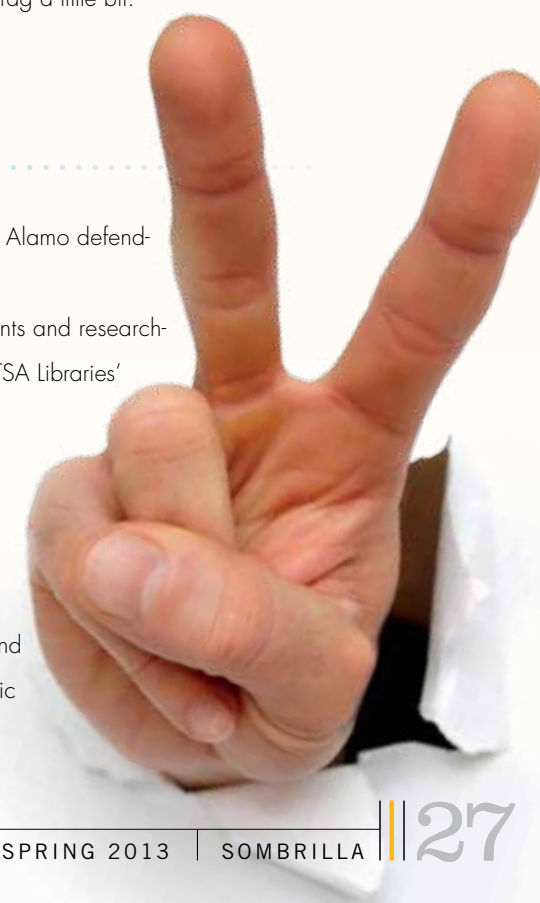
Peace, an avid collector of Texana, was a driving force in the effort to create the university, and the school's main library bears his name.

Peace's collection was the very first ever received by the university, and it was huge. The documents date back to the days before the Civil War and chart the creation of the Mexican government and the history of the Mexican Revolution. There are land grants and sets of correspondence, including that of

Santa Anna, whose forces defeated Alamo defenders during the Texas Revolution.

The papers are valuable for students and researchers, said Mark Shelstad, head of UTSA Libraries' Special Collections.

"Having a collection of primary resource material is a way for us to interact with students as well as for students to interact with documents and resources that can tell a story and provide new light on any sort of topic they might have," he said. 





# COMMUNITY

UNITING OUR ALUMNI



## A Roadrunner Experience

BY GUILLERMO GARCIA

**L**EAH AND ROLAND PASTRANO love UTSA's football tailgate festivities so much, they would not mind having the parties go on year round, instead of only during the handful of home games played at the Alamodome.

Having hosted their own tailgate fandango since the university initiated its football program in 2011, the couple is so involved with the pre-game tradition that they say it is out of the question to miss just one weekend's worth of action.

In fact, the pair of diehard Roadrunners even decided to buy a house in downtown San Antonio just to be close to the action on Saturday game days.

Joining the Alumni Association and participating in tailgate activities "has afforded us the opportunity to meet many fantastic people that are passionate about the university," said Leah, a Marquette University graduate. "The sense of pride, camaraderie and school spirit during tailgating season undoubtedly strengthens our community."

Despite the fact that she hails from another alma mater, she is a life member of the UTSA Alumni Association, as is her husband, who earned his B.A. in criminal justice at UTSA in 1999. Both now work for a federal agency.

"It is all part of a big social event," Roland said of the family's plans on football weekends. "Getting involved in Roadrunner Football is part of the fun and excitement and pageantry of Division I football. It is just a fantastic atmosphere that has been created downtown as a result of Roadrunner Football, and I hope that never changes."

On game mornings, things normally get underway for the Pastranos at their home, where they host friends and family for the first party of the day.

While a salmon is in the smoker, the couple puts up piñatas and other decorations in the backyard to welcome their guests. Roland then hustles across the street to help with last-minute preparations for the Alumni Association's tailgate event before the couple's party gets underway.

Later, after the salmon is eaten, the Pastranos and their guests cross the street to join the hundreds of Roadrunner fans, friends and family members at the Alumni

Association's food prepping and eating festivities prior to kickoff.

Fans such as the Pastranos add to the excitement already generated by the games, said UTSA President Ricardo Romo, who regularly attends the Alumni Association tailgate.

"I delight in how Roland and Leah and thousands of UTSA alumni have embraced the tailgating spirit," he said. "The UTSA Alumni Association tailgate makes game day something you never want to miss."

The Pastranos' decision to move to the Historic Gardens district across the street from the Alamodome is a testament to their devotion to UTSA Football, Roland said. It was also a matter of convenience.



Leah and Roland Pastrano '99 may have started a new UTSA tradition when they strolled with a group of mariachi players at Texas State before last year's season finale against the I-35 rival.

"We were so excited about the prospect of tailgating in our own backyard, and the access nearby of the Alumni Association tailgates, that we can hardly wait for [each] season to kick off" another round of Saturday parties, he noted.

The Pastranos even got a new tradition started that Roland hopes will continue. Before last year's season finale against I-35 rival Texas State, mariachi musicians played *El Rey* as they strolled with the Pastranos and their guests through the other university's stadium parking lot.

"It was definitely a Roadrunner-type experience," he said. 🐉



### //IN BRIEF// The Newest Tradition

Students at Texas State University run their class rings through river water during their ring presentation ceremony. Tarleton State ring holders dip theirs into purple dye and Texas A&M has the famous ring dance.

In its newest tradition, UTSA class rings now spend the night at the Alamo before being presented to their owners during the formal ring ceremony.

"We believe a way to capture the hearts of future alumni is to have a unique way to personify the rings in a way no other higher educational institution could do," said Anne Englert, director of alumni programs. "We believe having the UTSA rings sleep at the Alamo will add to UTSA's history and will help our students appreciate the Alamo's history even more."

More than 12,000 alumni have a UTSA ring. And every December and May, about 400 students, family members and friends attend the traditional ring ceremony at the Convocation Center at the Main Campus. Alumni, juniors and seniors who have completed 60 credit hours are eligible for a ring.

"The Alamo is well known near and far, and I'm a part of a select group of people that can say the ring that I wear every day stayed in the Alamo overnight before it was presented to me," said T.J. Hawley '12. "It's a tradition that only UTSA can have. It just gives me another reason to be proud to be a Roadrunner."



# THREE DECADES OF SERVICE

BY CINDY TUMIEL



**TOP RIGHT:**

These cadets made UTSA history in 1982, when they pinned on their gold bars and were commissioned as second lieutenants—the first ROTC graduates produced by the university.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:**

Thirty years after its first cadets were given their gold bars, UTSA's ROTC program is recognized as one of the most productive in the state.



MARK MCCLENDON

**T**HIRTY YEARS AGO, THEY WERE YOUNG RECRUITS trying to find their way along the path of career advancement. One played the baritone in the Army Band. Another found his calling in the computer room. A third was pursuing a dream seeded years earlier by uplifting recruiting films.

They all recognized that college degrees would open doors for them and that UTSA's new Reserve Officer Training Corps, ROTC, offered them unparalleled opportunities in the armed forces.

They probably did not pay much attention to it at the time, but the 19 men and women who went through that training made school history when in May 1982, they pinned on gold bars and were commissioned second lieutenants, the first ROTC graduates produced by UTSA.

But now, three decades have passed and the members of that inaugural ROTC class look back with satisfaction and perspective at the milestone they achieved, both for themselves as individuals and for their alma mater.

UTSA, meanwhile, has seen its officer preparation program prosper. About 30 aspiring career officers every year capitalize on scholarship offers and career assistance and earn their commissions. The ROTC program is recognized as one of the most productive in the state, said Lt. Col. Scott Sonsalla, professor of military science and director of

the university's ROTC program.

"We used to be the stepchild of St. Mary's [University]," said Sonsalla, reflecting on the earliest days of officer training in San Antonio, when UTSA's program was a detachment of the ROTC program at St. Mary's. "Now, we are the premiere ROTC program in South Texas."

Typically, UTSA has about 180 members in its ROTC battalion, and it nurtures hundreds more through its connections with Junior ROTC programs on about 50 high school campuses in the region, he said. His staff of 14 also offers instruction at regional community colleges.

Graduates from that first class said the ROTC program not only gave them financial assistance, but also provided a career path and instilled a patriotic pride that gave them a direction in life.

"The experience at UTSA shaped my life and career," said Michael Burns, a retired Army lieutenant who came to UTSA to pursue a criminal justice degree. "Without the guidance of the professors and mentors, I would not have accomplished so much in my life."

Burns met his wife, Karen, while finishing his degree, and together they embarked on a life of adventure that took them to stations around the U.S. and the Middle East.

Perhaps the most formative of these was an assignment to Alaska in 1987, where the avid outdoorsman fell in love

with the majestic scenery and the lifestyle. When he left the Army in 1994, Burns and his wife moved to that state, where he began a second career as a detective with the Anchorage Police Department.

William "Skip" Pope, a retired Army captain, earned a degree at UTSA in data systems management and then spent a career in military intelligence. He traveled the world to help soldiers who had stumbled into pay and promotion issues. He was assigned to the National Security Agency during Operation Desert Shield in Iraq.

"I've had an interesting life," he said. "Part of the reason I stayed in the Army is because you are always doing something different, and making a difference," Pope said. "When I signed up for ROTC in 1982, who would have known I would end up at the NSA?"

William Layden began as an enlisted recruit and a member of the Army Band in the late 1970s. He enrolled at UTSA to earn his education degree and then joined the National Guard.

"I always wanted to be a commissioned officer and fly in the Guard," he said.

With his ROTC commission, Layden was able to do just that. He attended flight school and spent 10 years on active duty with the Army, including service as the pilot of a medical evacuation helicopter during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

San Antonio native Gloria Hansmann remembers sharply dressed recruiters coming to Fox Tech High School in the mid-1970s with tales of an exciting life in the armed forces. The all-volunteer military was relatively new and there was a push to get women to join.

"The Air Force showed us a film of all the planes, and all the jobs we could have, and I thought, 'I want to do that,'" she said. But instead, she quit high school, took a civil service job and joined the Army reserve. Soon she ran into career roadblocks. "In both jobs, they required a degree to get any more promotions. I told my husband, 'I have to go back to school and finish this.'"

She remembers her ROTC training at UTSA as a time of self-discovery and commitment to the Army as a way of life. "I wanted more than what I had," she said. "I definitely gained military knowledge and definitely learned to be a leader."

Hansmann worked as a quartermaster and got to supervise Army installations around the world. She left in 1992, but after three years of missing the lifestyle, she rejoined the reserve, serving as an evaluator in a recruiting unit until 2010. The military has been the cornerstone of her life.

"Once you join, in your heart, you become part of the corps," she said. "You pledge your life to it. It is a thing you commit yourself to totally."

## //IN BRIEF//

### A New Journey

Gerry Sanders, professor of strategic management at Rice University, has been named dean and the holder of the Bodendstedt Chair for the College of Business. He will begin July 1.

A leading researcher in corporate governance, Sanders has been a faculty member at Rice University since 2008 and served as a department chair and faculty member at Brigham Young University for 12 years.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# \$89 b

estimated economic impact of the Eagle Ford Shale on Texas by 2022, according to a report by the UTSA Institute for Economic Development

## //IN BRIEF//

### Take a Bow

This spring, UTSA President Ricardo Romo received two honors: the 2013 Clark Kerr Award for Distinguished Leadership in Higher Education from the University of California, Berkeley, and the Wheaton College Otis Social Justice Award.

The Clark Kerr Award recognizes Romo for his success in promoting higher education and for his efforts in making UTSA a model for recently founded American universities, especially those serving minority communities.

The Otis Social Justice Award recognizes Romo for promoting social justice through education and public service.



# Building a Legacy

Alumni Association scholarship recipient aspires to impact the medical community and the world

BY LETY LAUREL



PHOTO BY MARK MCCLENDON

**A**SK ALEXIS AMOS HOW MANY ORGANIZATIONS she belongs to, and she loses track as she ticks them off on her fingers.

"It's a lot," she laughs.

Indeed, the sophomore biology major is a member of several student organizations, including Women of Honor and the Latin Dance Society, as well as others affiliated with her major. Then there's the marching band, to which she was recently named a drum major.

"I have really big goals for myself," she said. "With anything I do, I go above and beyond, and I give it my all. Every class and every organization gets every part of Alexis. I'm just trying to stand out some kind of way."

It's working. Amos was recently awarded an Alumni Association scholarship, which will pay \$2,000 each year for four years. She was one of 75 from more than 850 applicants.

"It's the only scholarship I have, and it makes me feel like I did something right," she said. "This scholarship means a lot to me and my family."

Amos's scholarship is from Cathy Starnes '92, CEO of the Employee Benefits Consulting and PEO Divisions at SWBC, and her husband, Troy Torres, a cadet and probationary training commander for the San Antonio Police Department Training Academy.

They said their decision to fund student scholarships stems from their passion about education and the opportunities it has given them.

"We hope that [scholarship recipients] have the same experience, that through their education and the opportunities at UTSA that they will get a well-rounded character, learn a lot, and ultimately have a great career

and give back to the city of San Antonio and give back to UTSA," Starnes said. "And, we hope that they do the same and pay it forward for the generations that come after them."

That's exactly what Amos plans to do.

She hopes to someday be a pediatrician. To get there, she knows she must work hard at UTSA, graduate at the top of her class, and excel in medical school. It's not an easy road, and as the first in her family to attend college, it's a path that she expects will be riddled with twists and challenges.

"Being a first-generation college student actually is a big deal for me and leaving some kind of legacy behind," she said. "I really just want to make an impact right now at UTSA and when I go on to medical school. And when I pursue my career, I want to [have] an impact on the health care system."

Once she's an established pediatrician, Amos plans to open her own practice, then travel to provide medical support in developing countries.

"I just have this compassion for people and a passion for helping others," she said. "I've always been that way."

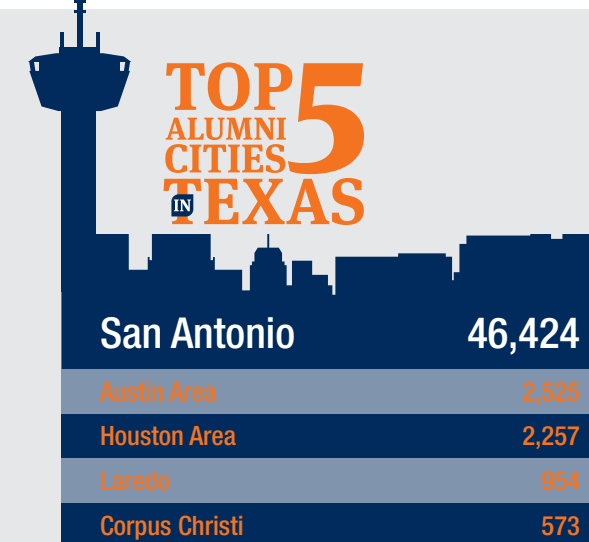
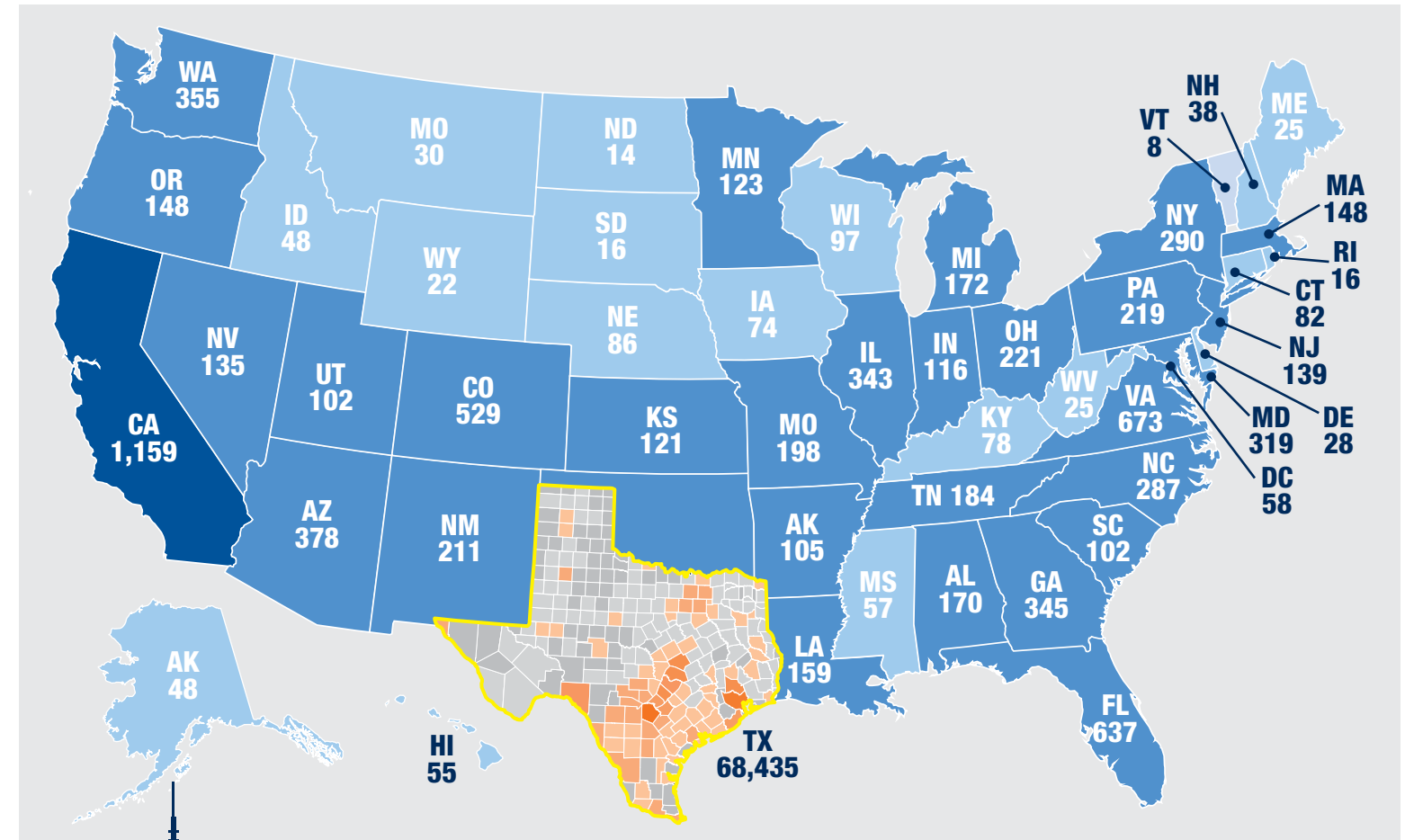
That compassion is focused first on her own family. Amos is the oldest of six siblings; her youngest brother is 3 years old. Her role as the trailblazer is one she takes seriously.

"In certain areas of my life, I didn't always have that good example to follow. It was something that I searched for and couldn't find," she said. "It means a lot to me that those that come up after me have an example to look to. If it's academics, if it's extracurricular activities, if it is life in general. They have an example of some of the major aspects of what they will go through in life."



Alumni Association Report

## Where Roadrunners Roost



## TOP 10 ALUMNI COUNTIES IN TEXAS



### //IN BRIEF// Cover Girl

Alexis Harris, a junior anthropology major, will appear as a CoverGirl model in an upcoming issue of *People* magazine.

Harris, 18, was selected over 20,000 others in a national search by comedienne and television host Ellen DeGeneres. In addition to the modeling gig, the Killeen native also won a check for \$20,000, part of which she plans to save. She also intends to donate a portion of the prize to charity. Harris is slated to receive her bachelor's next May, and hopes to pursue post-graduate study.





GILBERT C. (GIL) BARRERA

## NOT A HATCHLING ANYMORE

### ANTONIO GONZALEZ III '82

Before there was Rowdy, there was simply the Roadrunner.

And rallying the fans at UTSA's first basketball game in 1981 from inside the stuffy bird suit was Antonio Gonzalez III—UTSA's first mascot.

It happened quite by accident. A check of his business administration degree requirements during his senior year revealed that Gonzalez still needed one semester of PE to graduate.

"I decided to take gymnastics," the self-described class clown said. "I didn't know at the time, but our instructor was going to be in charge of the cheerleaders and the mascot. One day she called me over and said, 'I want you to try out for the mascot.'"

When Gonzalez asked what he would have to do, his instructor didn't mince words.

"She said, 'I just want you to behave on the basketball court the way you do in my class.'"

Gonzalez followed that advice at try-outs and won the mascot role over a handful of other hopefuls.

Today, more than 30 years after Gonzalez's first appearance as the Roadrunner, the operations manager for Lonestar Radiator Co. in San Antonio remembers the thrill of hatching out of an egg that he and cheerlead-

ers had built for that first game at HemisFair Arena against the University of Arkansas.

"I got in the egg before the game started," he recalled. "The pep band played, I believe it was [music from] 2001: A Space Odyssey. They dimmed the lights."

He remembers hoping he would pop out of the egg at the right time and how gratifying it was for fans to see their first game, complete with a mascot.

"It was hot," he said of the costume. "It took a little bit of time to get used to. But I was so excited about being out on the floor that it didn't really matter."

Among Gonzalez's favorite memories as the Roadrunner are roller-skating on the court, traveling to an away game at the University of Houston, and participating in a Fiesta parade. He also remembers having to figure out the boundaries of his antics. During one game he was hamming it up under the basket while a player from the opposing team attempted a free throw. The ref was not amused.

"If you don't get away from here you are going to cost your team a technical foul," he recalls the ref telling him.

It was decades ago that Gonzalez helped ignite the orange and blue spirit of game-day revelers. But his ties to the university continue to run deep. His wife, Sandra H. Gonzalez, received her degree in English from UTSA and teaches eighth-grade English. Their daughter is a junior at UTSA and plays piccolo in the marching band. UTSA is among the universities their son, a senior in high school, is considering.

And Gonzalez still enjoys watching Rowdy at games, which now occur on the field as well as on the court.

But for him, being a part of the university's first foray into college sports and the attendant school pride is something that he will never forget.

"You can do little things for the university and it's always a part of you," he said. "That's something that can't ever be taken away from you."

And if the opportunity arose for a reprise, would he suit up?

"I could put that thing back on in a heartbeat," he said. "It would be a blast." —KATE HUNGER

## CLASS NOTES

### 1977

\\ **GEORGE SHULER**, B.A. in history, was elected as Worshipful Master of Union Lodge No. 7 of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Grand Lodge of Kansas.

### 1988

\\ **BRYAN BUNN**, B.S. physical education, is a basketball coach at North Carolina University. He is also a former coach at Texas Lutheran University.

### 1990

\\ **WILLIAM BURWELL**, B.B.A. in management, is a regional sales manager for ExploreLearning.com and is a member of the Village Council of the Village of Pinckney in Livingston County, Michigan.

### 1991

\\ **JANA DUTY**, B.A. in English, is the district attorney for Texas' Williamson County. She and her political consulting firm, KC Strategies, were recognized with a Reed Award for excellence by *Campaigns & Elections* magazine.

### 1993

\\ **ELIZABETH GARCIA**, B.S. in biology, M.S. in biology '95, is UTSA's research concierge and serves as an on-call liaison, providing UTSA researchers with assistance in research administration.

### 1994

\\ **STEVE BARLOW**, B.S. in kinesiology, is a cross-country coach at Northside Independent School District's Holmes High School in San Antonio. Each year, he runs around the Holmes campus to raise money to purchase Thanksgiving baskets for families in need.

### 1995

\\ **ORLANDO RUMMANS**, B.A. in interdisciplinary studies, co-chaired the 29th annual UTSA Alumni Diploma Dash 5K San Antonio City Championship Run.

### 1996

\\ **JUANITA "JANIE" MARTINEZ-GONZALEZ**, B.A. in sociology, is founder of Webhead, a San Antonio-based website hosting company that offers cybersecurity support, e-commerce system design and a number of digital analysis and advisory services.

### 1981

\\ **MARILYN PETERSON**, M.A. in education, has been named a Fellow in the Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions. She is the director of continuing medical education at Texas Health Research & Education Institute, the research and continuing medical education arm of Texas Health Resources, one of the nation's largest faith-based, nonprofit health care systems.

### 1983

\\ **LINDA M. BOEHME**, B.B.A. in accounting, has been promoted to treasurer and assistant secretary at Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio.

### 1984

\\ **KEVIN M. MCGOWAN**, B.B.A. in accounting, is vice president, regulatory affairs, for Pepco Holdings, Inc.

### 1987

\\ **JOHN G. CLAMP**, B.B.A. in accounting, M.B.A. in finance '97, was named executive director of the San Antonio Hotel & Lodging Association. Clamp served on San Antonio's City Council from 2007 to 2011.

### 1997

\\ **ROB KILLEN**, B.A. in political science, was selected by the *San Antonio Business Journal* for the 2012 Outstanding Lawyer Awards. He is an attorney with Kaufman Killen, practicing in the areas of land use, economic development and government relations.

### 2002

\\ **MICHELLE BEADLE**, B.A. in communication, is now working at NBC's *Access Hollywood*. She is also cohost of *The Crossover with Beadle and Briggs* on the NBC Sports Network.

### 2003

\\ **SANTIAGO ALANIZ**, B.A. in criminal justice and political science, is an attorney with Fisher & Phillips' San Antonio office.

### 2006

\\ **JARED BROWN**, B.S. in mechanical engineering, and Pari (Ghaffari) Brown, B.A. in psychology '03, M.A. in education '07, had their second child, Carter, on Dec. 11, 2012.

\\ **ALEX GARNER**, B.B.A. in management with a concentration in small business and entrepreneurship, is the founder and CEO of YUMIX, an all-natural alternative to premixed alcoholic beverages.

### 2007

\\ **CATHERINE AUSTIN**, B.B.A. in finance, co-chaired the 29th annual UTSA Alumni Diploma Dash 5K San Antonio City Championship Run.

\\ **MONIQUE BROADNAX**, M.A. in education, is the owner of The Broadnax Place, a multi-use meeting room in San Antonio.

\\ **DALE G. SCHLUNDT**, B.B.A. in management, M.A. in adult learning and teaching '11,

is an adjunct professor at Palo Alto College in San Antonio.

\\ **JILL TARPEY**, B.A. in American studies, is owner of San Antonio-based Eat Well SA, and is a yoga instructor and certified nutrition coach.

### 2008

\\ **ANDREA ANWEI CHEN**, B.A. in communication, was the visual effects manager for the Oscar nominated film *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. The film earned a Sundance Film Festival award in 2012.

\\ **CHRISTIAN PORTER**, B.B.A. in management, is working in Malawi with the Peace Corps.

\\ **AJAY TEJWANI**, M.B.A., recently published *The Social Media Action Plan*, a guide for planning, implementing and measuring social media efforts. He is the owner of Social Media Sapiens, an online marketing company in San Antonio, which he founded in 2008.

### 2010

\\ **MICHAEL J. LEWIS**, Ph.D. in environmental science and engineering, has been promoted to executive director of Southwest Research Institute's Environmental, Safety and Quality Systems Program. He was previously director of the Environmental and Safety Systems Department.



"[UTSA] thought I could make a million-dollar donation. I started coughing and sputtering. After I came down off the ceiling, I began to look at my stuff. All that stuff I had collected over a lifetime of work... A million dollars was possible."

—Yvonne Katz '74, at the March 18 dedication of the Katz Alumni Center

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 2,929

Runners at the 29th annual UTSA Alumni Diploma Dash 5K San Antonio City Championship Run



# One of us.

**UTSA**  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
alumni.utsa.edu

### Birds of a feather...

...run together. Whether you're a Roadrunner alum or supporter, you can join the UTSA Alumni Association today and become a part of an organization dedicated to building pride and tradition and helping provide scholarships to deserving students.

Membership is your direct connection to nearly 100,000 UTSA alumni, plus you'll also receive special discounts available only to association members.

Join today and be a part of Building Pride and Tradition.





*"UTSA students work hard and dream big, just like we do at H-E-B."*

—Winell Herron, M.B.A. '00, H-E-B GROUP VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, at the April 9 dedication of the H-E-B University Center

//IN BRIEF//

**Benefits of Joining the UTSA Alumni Association**

- 2 Athletic Loyalty Points (a \$100 value)
- Free admission into Alumni tailgates (a \$120 value)
- 10% off shoputsa.com merchandise
- 10% off La Quinta stays nationwide
- Discounted admission to alumni events throughout the year
- Low cost auto and home insurance through Liberty Mutual
- Up to 70% on over 3,000 golf courses at Play it Forward Golf
- Delivery of *Sombrilla Magazine* to your home or office
- Use of the UTSA Library
- Discounted Alumni General Parking permit
- Option to purchase UTSA Recreation Center membership
- \$10 off membership to the Institute of Texan Cultures



PATRICK RAY DUNN

## CHANGING LIVES

**MARTI HATHORN, B.B.A. '03, M.S. '08**

Some people hate their jobs. Others merely tolerate them. But when Marti Hathorn discusses the life-changing work she does at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind as assistive technologies supervisor, the joy in her voice is unmistakable.

Hathorn and her team help people who are blind or visually impaired learn how to use technology to reach their goals in school, work and life. Some of the technology is handheld and magnifies small print. Then there are computers that speak words the user types as well as every typed command. Other technologies include a camera that captures print that is then spoken out loud, so users can hear what they cannot see.

Learning how to use the equipment means being able to read labels at the grocery store, to read or hear textbooks or to perform various job tasks.

"The technology itself is blow-your-mind amazing, but what is especially amazing is seeing how people use it and how it changes their lives," she said.

If the 39-year-old seems especially familiar with the many uses of these assistive technologies, it is because she has been using them since learning as a college student that she was legally blind.

It was 20 years ago that Hathorn was diagnosed with cone-rod dystrophy, an inherited progressive retinal degenerative disease. She

had planned on studying physical therapy and sports medicine and attending medical school.

But as Hathorn considered her prospects as a doctor whose vision loss would likely progress—and in fact, did to the point that today Hathorn has peripheral vision but no central vision—another path presented itself. In an effort to broaden her own skills, she signed up for a keyboarding class at the Lighthouse. She mastered touch-typing 30 words a minute in three weeks.

That led to a computer class where, while learning how to use a computer herself, Hathorn began helping other visually impaired classmates. That led to her first job as an assistive technology specialist and to a passion for computer programming.

Eventually, Hathorn enrolled at San Antonio College and then transferred to UTSA in the 2 Plus 2 program.

At SAC, Hathorn used her vision to read magnified text. But the larger workload at UTSA tired her eyes much faster, and so she transitioned to screen readers to get through her reading assignments and to take notes during class.

"Let's work together because I don't want shortcuts, I want equal education," she recalled telling her instructors at the start of each semester.

Hathorn received her B.B.A. with a concentration in informa-

tion systems in 2003. After graduation, she took a job at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind as an assistive technologies specialist and has worked there ever since.

She went back to graduate school at UTSA and earned her master's with a concentration in information systems in 2008.

It is increasingly common to find students with visual impairments on campus, said Dianne Hengst, director of Student Disability Services. But when Hathorn attended, assistive technologies and related resources were harder to come by.

"It is incredible what they have learned to do and how they learned to do it," Hengst said of Hathorn and others who were user-pioneers of assistive technology. "They were figuring out things as they were coming."

Today, Hengst's department refers students to the Lighthouse to figure out which technologies will help them. Hathorn has spoken on campus about diversity in the workplace and how that includes those with disabilities.

What makes Hathorn love her job is experiencing the joy of helping someone in a profound way, like the woman who bear-hugged her after Hathorn showed her how to use equipment to magnify small type in a phone book.

"She said, 'Are you kidding me? I can read that!'" Hathorn recalled. "It's those experiences, those moments, that make my job so gratifying and so awesome. From that moment, it changes your life." — KATE HUNGER

# Post Scripts

**Where is This?**

PHOTO BY MARK MCLENDON

### It Could Be Anywhere

Can you guess what this is? Hint: It represents science and is very important. We're positive about that.

Go to [utsa.edu/sombrilla](http://utsa.edu/sombrilla) to find out what and where it is.





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