The lyrics to “The Matador Song,” written by a Texas Tech student nearly a century ago, are timeless. While painting a picture of who we are and who we want to become – leaders who change the world for the better – the lyrics simultaneously remind us how interconnected we are with our past, present and future. Within the pioneers who founded this institution burned the same spirit that drives our faculty and researchers today, and our students, the innovators of tomorrow. Together, they encourage us to persist, never ceasing in that pursuit.
I SEE THINGS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

THE VICTORY BELLS
From high in the Administration Building’s east tower, they see all. And they’ll tell you there is much to celebrate.

RAISING OUR GLASS
Jean Bertonazzi came to Texas to help her brother. She stayed to carry on his legacy.

'RED RAIDERS COMING AT YOU’
Texas Tech’s unofficial anthem didn’t always enjoy the fan following it has now.

AIMING HIGH
Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. spends his days building relationships as chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force.

SETTING THE STAGE
Actress, singer-songwriter and businesswoman Lynda Kay Parker attributes her tenacity to Texas Tech.

MUD, METAL AND A MACH 1
Von Verhunzen can create art out of clay and cars alike.

ON THE COVER: ILLUSTRATION/DESIGN BY VERONICA MEDINA | PHOTO BY DANNY LIAO
EVERMORE

EDITOR
GLENYS YOUNG

ART DIRECTION/DESIGN
ARMANDO GODINEZ
VERONICA MEDINA

PHOTOGRAPHER
ASHLEY RODGERS

CONTRIBUTORS
AMANDA CASTRO-CRIST
STEPHEN SPILLMAN

RESEARCH
CHRIS COOK
GLENYS YOUNG

SPECIAL THANKS
ROB CODY
CHRIS COOK
DANNY MICALINDON
DOMENICA TREVOR
T.J. TUCKER

CHIEF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION OFFICER
MATT DEWEY

PRESIDENT
LAWRENCE SCHOVANEK

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evermore@ttu.edu
@texastech

Texas Tech University
2500 Broadway
Lubbock, Texas 79409
Box 42022

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Texas Tech University is a special part of our lives. We have a shared experience of the place, the people and the relationships that often last a lifetime. Through the pages of EVERMORE, we hope to capture the stories of grit and perseverance that exemplify what it means to be a Red Raider.

While some of these stories will be familiar, we also hope to delight you with the unexpected.

LAWRENCE SCHOVANEK,
PRESIDENT, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
The Victory Bells ring for our triumphs.

For 85 years, we have rung over Texas Tech University in times of celebration and remembrance, marking great athletic victories and memorializing friends from our community. We sing out in fair weather and amid gathering clouds, knowing Texas Tech will always shine through. That’s why we’re the Victory Bells.

We have witnessed and extolled plenty of highlights since 1936, but on a campus like ours, there are too many triumphs to clang over each one. Even over the past year, we couldn’t possibly have sounded out every single point of pride. Nevertheless, Evermore wants to take this opportunity to chime in on some of our community’s recent honors.
Texas Tech alumni and faculty members are indeed bearing our banners far and wide, even into space. Joseph Acaba, a graduate of the College of Education and a former science teacher, was among 18 astronauts selected to train for NASA’s Artemis Lunar Exploration Program. Siva Vanapalli, the Bryan Pearce Bagley Regents Chair in Engineering and a professor of chemical engineering, sent thousands of microscopic worms to the International Space Station as part of his research effort to slow, or even prevent, muscle loss among space crews.

Nearly 40 years ago, three international students met at Texas Tech, became best friends and launched successful careers. Now Ravi Budruk, a leader in technology education; Rashid Bashir, engineering dean at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and George Vasmatzis, a research program co-director with the Mayo Clinic, have established a scholarship that will enable the next generation of engineering students to follow in their footsteps.

When we reach new heights of victory.
In February, alumnus Trey Culver took the 2021 world lead in the high jump, clearing 7 feet, 7 3/4 inches. A handful of current and former Texas Tech athletes were in this summer’s Olympic Games. And a blast from our highlight reel past is expected to light up the football field. Sonny Cumbie, one of the top passers in Red Raider history, is back as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

As we define industries.
We’re also making a difference on the national stage and helping to shape the future. Haylee Young, a junior in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, was selected to join the Agriculture Future of America’s Student Advisory Team, serving as a student voice for the national professional development organization.

When we speak out for change.
Internationally recognized climate science expert Katharine Hayhoe, a Horn Distinguished Professor and Endowed Professor of Public Policy and Public Law in the Department of Political Science, has joined The Nature Conservancy as its chief scientist. She will lead the organization’s global climate advocacy and adaptation work.

As we contribute to a better future.
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As we make history.
Our people are making – and preserving – history. Monte Monroe, archivist for the university’s Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, was reappointed Texas state historian, helping to promote history and education throughout the state. He is the first archivist and first West Texan to be state historian, as well as the first from a Carnegie Tier One institution.

As we shoot for the stars.
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Jean Bertonazzi came to Texas to help her brother. She stayed to carry on his legacy.
EAN HODGKINS BERTONAZZI IS A MAGICIAN. She makes glass shimmer and ripple like water. In a matter of minutes, illuminated by the electric blue and neon orange glow of her torch, she transforms test tubes and flasks into practically anything a researcher can dream up. And even though she’s right-handed, she does it all with her left.

All this thanks to her brother, Donald. Without his influence, she wouldn’t be at Texas Tech, or even in Texas, and she certainly wouldn’t be a scientific glassblower – because he charted their shared course into all three.

Every morning, as Jean enters her laboratory, she flips on the light switches, takes a deep breath and tells herself, “OK, don’t do anything stupid and embarrass your brother.”

The Hodgkins siblings grew up in New Jersey. Donald, the oldest, was 11 years Jean’s senior. After Donald graduated from high school, he started at Salem County College in Carneys Point, New Jersey, where he earned his degree in scientific glassblowing technology.

“Most glassblowers actually come from New Jersey,” Jean explains, “because we have some of the best sand deposits in the world. The sand that comes out of them is pristine.”

Within the glassblowing field are two specialties: scientific and artistic glassblowing. Artistic, which most people are familiar with, involves creating art pieces by blowing melted and often colorful glass into whimsical shapes. Scientific glassblowing, on the other hand, uses the same techniques to create glass within precise specifications, often for use in technology or science.

Throughout the 1980s, Donald’s glassblowing career flourished. “He was amazing, like top-5-in-the-world amazing,” Jean remembers. “So, I told him I wanted to give it a try, and he was so excited.

“And for the first two years, I hated it,” she admits. “But he was so excited, I couldn’t stop. Eventually, I started getting pretty good at it.”

In 1994, Jean earned her degree in scientific glassblowing technology, but she still had a test to pass, at least as far as she was concerned. She wasn’t sure she had what it took to make a living as a scientific glassblower, so she asked for her brother’s expert opinion.

He brought her into his laboratory and instructed her to make a 5-liter flask, a standard piece at the time. Heart pounding, she stepped up to the lathe. Her torch in one hand,
Jean did the absolute best she could – she was determined to represent her brother well.

In February 2010, less than a year after his diagnosis, Donald died. Back home, Jean mourned the loss of a lifelong mentor and beloved older brother.

Not long after, Jean’s phone rang.

The chairman of Texas Tech’s chemistry department had been impressed with her work when she filled in for her brother. If she wanted it, he said, Donald’s position would be hers.

The prospect of leaving New Jersey and everyone she knew was daunting, but Jean accepted the offer and moved to Lubbock in September 2010. Looking back, she says the change allowed her the distance to grieve properly.

When she arrived in Lubbock, she found a lab that felt like a monument to her brother and his storied career. But the space also came with its own challenges. Donald was 6 feet tall and left-handed, and had set the lathe, tools and torches to his own measurements and specifications. Rather than rearrange her brother’s lab and recalibrate his instruments, Jean got a step stool and taught herself how to do her job left-handed.

And in the years since, Donald’s way has suited her fine. In her lab in the basement of the Chemistry Building, Jean designs and fabricates research equipment for all the wet labs on campus. Test tubes and vials are mostly prefabricated these days, so she focuses on more specialized pieces to meet the needs of the researchers seeking her help. Jean calls it the best job on campus.

“I have done some very intricate pieces, and with some of them, it actually feels like you just have to break physics all the way around to create it,” she laughs. “Those are such a challenge. One of the neatest things I made was a double-walled plasma cleaner that was used over in the Center for Pulsed Power and Power Electronics, and that was a lot of fun. It was difficult. I actually had to create a fixture to hold it while I made the part that I made. It took probably three weeks and a lot of tears.”

Those three-week pieces aren’t the norm, of course. With simple projects, Jean can make 120 items in a day. But the challenge of those more complex pieces makes her job fun.

“The people here are doing amazing things, and I get to have a hand in that,” she says. “I get to have my fingers in everyone’s science, and I really enjoy that the most. If I was a chemist or an engineer, I would be narrowed down to one discipline, but being the glassblower, I get to play in everyone’s world.”

“Everyone knows Thomas Edison invented the light bulb,” she adds, “but who made it?”
SUMMER 2021

EN. CHARLES Q. BROWN JR. arrived at Texas Tech ready to become an architect. Now, he spends his days building relationships as chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force.

As a military brat, Brown spent much of his early childhood in San Antonio before his father’s career took the family to Germany and then to Virginia. As his high school graduation approached, Brown knew it was likely his parents would move again before he finished college.

Wanting to return to Texas, he applied to three schools, two of which were in-state. Then an aspiring architect, Brown wanted a program that included an engineering focus. Texas Tech University was the only one of the three with an established program combining architecture and civil engineering.

“I arrived there for first-year orientation in the summer of 1980, sight unseen,” Brown says. “I was already committed to going to Texas Tech when I showed up.”

The plan was to complete his degree, serve four years in the Air Force and settle down in Texas. But an experience at summer camp with the Texas Tech Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) changed everything.

Brown geared up in a helmet, flight suit and oxygen mask and climbed into the two-seat cockpit of a Cessna T-37 Tweet. At just about 9 feet high and 29 feet long, the twin-engine jet was then the primary trainer for the Air Force. The cabin layout placed Brown almost shoulder-to-shoulder with the flight instructor in front of a shared instrument panel and his own set of controls. The jet roared off the runway and, with the sun shining through the aircraft’s clear canopy, Brown took control of the plane.

“I had flown on many commercial flights, but this was the first time I actually got to fly an airplane of any type,” Brown says. “I decided then I wanted to become a pilot.”

That experience, and his time at Texas Tech, would ultimately shape the opportunity for Brown to fly fighter jets.

TEXAS TECH ALUMNUS LEADS AIR FORCE INTO NEW ERA

BY AMANDA CASTRO-CRIST
ILLUSTRATION BY ARMANDO GODINEZ
BECOMING A RED RAIDER AND A LEADER

Brown’s interest in the subjects he would study at Texas Tech began in high school. A strong background in math, four years of mechanical drawing and time spent with friends poring over home design magazines sparked his interest in architecture. Brown’s father suggested adding engineering, telling his son it might make it easier to land a job after college.

At Texas Tech, Brown soon realized the value of that advice. First, he failed a freehand drawing course. Then, a low grade in a design course meant he’d have to retake that class, adding another year to his degree. Brown wasn’t interested in waiting.

“I dropped architecture and went straight into engineering,” he says.

The support Brown received from faculty and staff as he made the transition was crucial to his success. One faculty member, in particular, stood out.

“Dr. Ernst Kiesling was the chair of the civil engineering department, and he helped me figure out, once I dropped architecture, how I was going to take all the courses I had to get through, including my ROTC courses,” Brown says.

Brown and Kiesling have reconnected over the years, including during two visits to Texas Tech, when Brown was recognized as a distinguished alumnus of the civil engineering department in 2009 and as a distinguished alumnus of the university in 2012.

“I remember his discipline, his composure and that he always presented himself well,” Kiesling says.

Outside of the classroom, Brown built connections in various ways: playing year-round intramural sports, welcoming new students as part of the first-year orientation staff and joining the Eta Upsilon chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for Black men. In Gordon Hall, he worked as a resident adviser, serving his fellow Red Raiders much in the same way he’d later serve his fellow airmen.

“Some of my best friends were made there,” Brown says. “There is a camaraderie you build, speaking of shared experiences to each other. Being a resident adviser, it’s nice to get a little extra change in your pocket. But at the same time, you get to know and help some folks, like the underclassmen. They haven’t gone through the experiences, and it’s neat to watch them maturing and adjusting to college.”

As part of the ROTC’s Sabre Flight Drill Team, he participated in drill competitions, parades and color guards and served as the cadet corps commander his senior year. In 1984, Brown graduated with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and, as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program, was commissioned by the Air Force.
LEADING THROUGH SERVICE

In May 1985, Brown began the training that would get him back inside a cockpit, and by 1987, he was stationed as an F-16 pilot with what was then the 35th Tactical Fighter Squadron at the Kunsan Air Force Base in South Korea. He spent the next several years in the classroom, alternating between the roles of student and instructor.

“I really appreciated the chance to go to the United States Air Force Weapons School,” Brown says. “That’s probably the most challenging course we have within our Air Force; then I got selected to go back there as an instructor and eventually had an opportunity to command when I was a colonel.”

In October 1994, he was chosen as aide-de-camp to the 15th chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman. Brown spent the next year and a half by Fogleman’s side, gaining a deeper understanding of the role he would eventually fill more than 25 years later.

Subsequent leadership positions would define his career, including his time as executive action group director for both the 22nd secretary of the Air Force and the 19th chief of staff and as deputy director of the operations directorate within the U.S. Central Command. Brown also led U.S. air operations in the Indo-Pacific region as commander of the Pacific Air Forces at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii.

His service has taken him not only across the country but also around the world, with assignments at bases in Asia, Europe and Africa.

“I’ve been to every continent, including Antarctica, and to the South Pole,” Brown says.

His wife, Sharene, and his two sons, Sean and Ross, were alongside him for much of the journey, visiting him when he was stationed in Korea, going to Italy with him, and living in Germany and Qatar. They have made friends in almost every corner of the world.

“Our Christmas card list is pretty long,” Brown says.

During his service, Brown has earned the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star. He’s logged more than 2,000 flight hours, including 130 hours in combat.

“I flew over Iraq in no-fly zones for Operation Southern Watch and Operation Northern Watch,” Brown says. “I participated in a Libyan operation, then flew in Afghanistan for a bit as a deputy air component commander. I also got to be the air component commander for United States Central Command for the Defeat ISIS campaign from 2015 to 2016, at one of the critical times.

“So all that was exciting,” he adds.

MAKING HISTORY, CREATING THE FUTURE

In June 2020, Brown attained a remarkable personal achievement with his confirmation as the 22nd chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force. His promotion makes him responsible for organizing, training and equipping the Air Force’s almost 700,000 airmen. It was also a milestone for the U.S. military: Brown became the first Black chief to lead a military service branch, and the first Black officer in almost three decades to sit on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Brown says while his confirmation was a moment of triumph, it also carried the heavy burdens of immense expectations. At various times throughout his career, when he’s paused to look around the room he has found himself the only person of color among his colleagues. The pressure to make an impression is enormous not just for his own success, but also for those who will come after him.

“Do you throw in the towel, or use it as a motivator? I hardly ever throw in the towel and am often inspired by challenges,” Brown says. “Like all of our military members, I’ve always simply wanted a fair shot to compete for an opportunity. Like so many of our airmen, I have had some tough assignments or tough situations that caused me further reflection. Despite the challenges, I have a long-standing conviction that every day is a good day, just some days are better than others.”

What is important, he adds, is how a person responds when those challenges arise.

“I’ve had several opportunities where I was the ‘first African American to be …,’ he says. “No different than my current position, each of those opportunities includes added pressure to perform, so I’m not the ‘first and last African American’ or member of a diverse background to have this opportunity, and to prove my selection was due to the content of my character and my résumé of experience, not due to any perceived reduction in standards to ensure diversity.

“For me, the most difficult challenge, and it was the most difficult challenge of my career, was to sit in this chair and be confirmed. I believe that every day is a good day, just some days are better than others.”
prepare myself to make the most of every opportunity and see every challenge as an opportunity to take another path. My story isn’t a ‘one size fits all,’ though. That’s what makes diversity and inclusion important. There are many paths our airmen can take to success.”

Once again, he’s found that the work starts by opening channels for communication and building a foundation out of connections. With Brown, there’s no “meeting after the meeting” where some voices are excluded from the conversation. Instead, there is an intentional effort to engage all who may be affected by his decisions.

“I want an environment in the Air Force where all our airmen and their families can reach their full potential.”

“I’ve wanted to accelerate decision-making to better support our airmen and families,” he says. “I strongly believe in being open, transparent and engaged, and I expect the same of the leaders solving some of our hardest problems. Rather than being brief and told what others want me to hear, I’d much rather have an informed discussion to determine what we all need to know to turn challenges into opportunities.”

Out of these meetings have come changes that Brown hopes will increase diversity, equity and inclusion among the ranks, including an increase in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups to ensure a diverse workforce. Ongoing efforts focus on diversity and inclusion issues that will shape the future initiatives, procedures and culture of the Air Force.

The early changes under Brown’s leadership include the addition of 100 more full scholarships for students to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities through the ROTC program. The Air Force also has introduced the GO Inspire program, requiring general officers to regularly participate in recruiting activities in underrepresented communities. The program also promotes a review of policies and procedures that may create barriers or barriers for various groups within the service.

“A diverse and inclusive workforce breeds innovation, and we cannot imagine the future without that innovation,” he says. “We want the changes and progress we make to be meaningful and lasting, baked in rather than bolted on. Some of these changes only scratch the surface. The Air Force still has work to do, but we’re listening and taking action so we can make meaningful and lasting change.”

In his more than 35 years of service, one thing that hasn’t changed is Brown’s commitment to others. Though he arrived at Texas Tech intent on building structures, Brown says being a Red Raider ultimately prepared him for a career spent building relationships, creating global stability and making connections.

“If you’ll notice, in a number of my pictures online, when I’m not enjoying a Dr Pepper, I have a water bottle next to me with a Texas Tech sticker,” Brown says. “Texas Tech was the beginning of my professional career and played a big role in my early development as a leader. If I could do it all over again, I wouldn’t change a thing. I’m grateful for every minute of my experience as a Red Raider.”

As he looks to the future, Brown says he’s enjoyed seeing the innovative ways airmen have turned all the challenges of the past year into positive opportunities. He continues to be amazed and motivated by these service members and has high hopes for the ways he plans to serve them as they serve their country.

“I was recently asked what I wanted my legacy to be,” Brown says. “I have a responsibility to put the Air Force on a path to implementing its future force design that ensures these airmen have the capabilities to preserve our national security. Just as importantly, I want an environment in the Air Force where all our airmen and their families can reach their full potential. This means they live and work in a community where they feel valued and respected and there are few, if any, barriers to their success.

“Simply said, I want to be remembered for making a difference for those I’ve had the privilege to lead.”

WEST TEXAS GRIT

RED RAIDERS STEP UP WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

GLENYS YOUNG

The School of Veterinary Medicine

Congratulations to the 60 students selected for the inaugural class of the Texas Tech School of Veterinary Medicine. West Texas has always been known for its pioneering spirit, and these students show nothing less. They are making history as part of the first new veterinary school in Texas in more than a century. We are confident they will carve out their own paths to success, while remaining forever linked to the thousands of Red Raider trailblazers before them.

The Impacts of COVID-19

The past three semesters have presented challenges to academia and, indeed, to the entire world, on a scale no one could have imagined before it was actually upon us. Much has been said about Texas Tech’s research efforts related to COVID-19: how teams from across multiple campuses came together to create new personal protective equipment in the face of shortages, and how volunteers have supported the testing efforts at The Institute of Environmental & Human Health. But just as important to highlight are those whose efforts did not make headlines. Our faculty, staff and students pivoted their normal operations, in many cases nearly overnight, to ensure the safety of all in our community. We showed pure grit in adapting from in-person to online learning and back again. Along the way, we wore our masks and continued to social distance, even when it was inconvenient. After witnessing the ability of our community to change, put others’ needs first and work together to curb the spread of COVID-19, we are so proud to be Red Raiders.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RONY DIXON
Actress and musician Lynda Kay attributes her tenacity to Texas Tech.

BY GLENYS YOUNG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY LIAO AND RANDALL MICHELSON
“I used to make up talent shows where I was the only participant, then I would call my neighbors and invite them to watch,” she recalls. “My first talent show was an interpretive dance to Terry Jacks’ ‘Seasons in the Sun.’” She was only 5 years old at the time, and the audience consisted of her mother and Mrs. Hall, a neighbor whose garage she was borrowing for the performance “because ours was too full.”

“The lyrics to the song are things like, ‘We have joy, we have fun, we have seasons in the sun,’” she recalls. “I was a very joyful child, and very animated.” When she came to the line, “Goodbye, my friend, it’s hard to die,” the budding star waved to her mother and Mrs. Hall, then collapsed onto her makeshift stage. “I was very dramatic,” she says with a laugh. Perhaps it’s no surprise, then, that Lynda Kay Parker – or just Lynda Kay, as she’s better known – has since made a name for herself on much larger stages.

If you saw her performing – whether on Amazon Prime or at South by Southwest – you wouldn’t be surprised to learn that Kay is far from a one-trick performer. At Texas Tech, she earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and a juris doctorate, building a foundation for a long and diverse career. Her time at Texas Tech also came with hard lessons that would serve her on and off the stage during the many ups and downs to come.

THE PATH TO TEXAS TECH

The roots of Kay’s journey through Texas Tech were planted years before she arrived – in fact, years before she was even born. Her maternal grandmother, Ola Reeder, grew up in Lubbock and attended what was then Texas Technological College, earning her degree in mathematics in 1931. Reeder later married Lynn “Buck” Peveto, and they ran the Hot Shot Café in downtown Lubbock, near the jail and courthouse. Their daughter, Mary Lynn Peveto, passed through the university as well, earning her degree in business in 1961 and appearing multiple times in the “ Beauties” section of the university yearbook, La Ventana.

Kay’s father had attended Southern Methodist University, and by the time she was ready to go off to college herself, Kay knew she wanted to follow in one set of her parents’ footsteps. When her parents pointed out that a private university was more expensive and she’d have to live at home, the decision to follow the maternal line was easy.

She lived with friends in several campus residence halls – first Weeks, then Stangel and, finally, Doak her senior year.

“I really wanted to live in Doak because I loved the architecture, the old brown doors and the transoms up above the door,” she recalls. “I felt like I was living in an old detective agency from Sam Spade. I just loved it.”

It seemed appropriate for a budding lawyer. Although she had excelled in choir and dance
throughout her youth, Kay also had been raised on a steady diet of “Perry Mason,” the long-running courtroom drama. She was inspired to pursue public service, and decided early that she wanted to be either a civil litigation attorney, an FBI agent who worked undercover or a prosecutor in the district attorney’s office. “I don’t think I knew what lawyers really did,” she admits. “I think I thought it would be a lot of performing, not realizing that it was actually a great deal of reading and comprehension and evaluating.

“I loved Perry Mason as a child; I thought he was so cool, and I thought Della Street was an attorney, too, which is really what made me want to be an attorney. I didn’t understand that she was the secretary, because she was very involved – she was always there, and she would tip him off. She was a sharp lady. On top of that, I loved the hairstyles and the costumes. So I think all of that was a tremendous influence on me as a performer.”

Kay soon realized she missed performing, so she decided to minor in theater to fulfill her creative side. “I didn’t realize how drawn I would be to it,” she says. “I almost ended up with a second degree in theater; because I loved it so much, I was taking extra classes in it.”

Kay diligently maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average, knowing it would be critical for her acceptance into law school. Then a class unrelated to either her major or minor threatened to derail her GPA.

HARD LESSONS IN LUBBOCK

“I had a professor who gave me a grade that I really did not deserve, I felt,” Kay explains. The subject that destroyed Kay’s perfect 4.0 GPA? Bowling. She received a C in the class, despite showing up and doing her best every day. Kay ardently petitioned to have the grade changed, and she remembers the bitter struggle to this day. “I had to fight about that,” she says. “I fought hard, and I wasn’t successful – I was not able to get that grade changed, even though I felt like it was not warranted at all. “But what that taught me in that moment is something I have been able to carry with me the rest of my life. And that is, even if you are not successful in times that you believe you were wronged, you nevertheless have to pick up the pieces and move forward with grace and dignity, and know...
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was a big part of my connection to the city.” she was no longer there. It was sad to me because she admits. “It was hard for me after I graduated, and Lubbock Cemetery. Sept. 29, 1992, during Kay’s third semester of law school. She was laid to rest in the City of Lubbock, now Covenant Health System, where she worked. The Peve- 
os had sold the Hot Shot Café years earlier and her grandmother had died when Kay was in high school. Her grandmother now spent much of her time volunteering at Lubbock Memorial Hospital, now Lubbock Cemetery. 

“Her and I were very close. “She was my best friend when I lived there,” Kay recalls. “She was just such a cool lady, and she had the most endearing laugh imaginable.” Their relationship proved to be one of the few bright spots in an otherwise dark time in Kay’s life. “I’ve got to be honest, I did not enjoy law school; it was very hard for me,” she says. “I struggled greatly. I even remember my classmates openly laughing at me for some of the questions I would ask. I had never had any experience dealing with contracts or matters of litigation at all. “Lawyers are very much into arguing – that’s the whole concept of being a lawyer: you advocate and you argue for your client’s side, and I hate arguing. I’m more of a mediator-type person – I like for people to get along with each other – so it was a strange course of study for me.” 

Worse, her time with her grandmother came to a sudden end. Frances Ola Reeder Peveto died Sept. 29, 1992, during Kay’s third semester of law school. She was laid to rest in the City of Lubbock Cemetery. “I don’t think I have been back to Lubbock,” Kay admits. “It was hard for me after I graduated, and she was no longer there. It was sad to me because she was a big part of my connection to the city.”

“FREEDOM IN FAILURE  
Kay carried on at Texas Tech, later taking a clerkship at a law firm in Columbia, South Carolina, where her cousin was a partner. The firm had reached a standstill during mediation with another party, and she was instructed to observe and take notes only. “Nobody was talking – they were just staring at each other,” she recalls. “So, in my little Southern way, I just spoke up and said, ‘You know, I just don’t understand why we can’t all just get along.’ I got kicked so hard under the table by the partner, because he was like, ‘What are you doing?’ And, of course, what I was doing was trying to find a way to break the ice. And it actually did break the ice, but not in the way they wanted.” 

“It worked out fine, but I remember my cousin telling me, ‘You are not cut out for this.’ And, you know, I think down deep, I just knew it. I knew I wasn’t cut out for it.” After graduating in 1994, Kay admits she didn’t really try the first time she took the bar exam. Still, she failed by only 10 points. After berating herself for not giving it her best shot, she buckled down and studied like she had never studied before. The second time, she failed by 20 points. She had interviewed for a multitude of jobs that required passing the exam: an administrative judge with the Texas Department of Transportation, a position in the Dallas District Attorney’s Office, even a job with the FBI. When she failed the bar exam a second time, her reaction surprised her. “I really thought I was going to be devastated, and instead, I felt so free,” Kay says. “I was like, ‘Oh my God, I don’t have to be a lawyer now.’” 

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“TOTALLY WRONG FOR THE PART”  
After turning away from a future in law, Kay returned to her first love – acting. In 1997, she moved from Texas to Los Angeles to take advantage of two job opportunities. The first, ironically, was a bit part on the legal drama show “JAG,” which eventually spawned the “NCIS” series and spinoffs. The second was a recurring role as an operator in a series of commercials for Bell Telephone. “I really thought acting was going to be my path.” Kay says. “What I really wanted to be was a cool lady, and she had the most endearing laugh imaginable.” Their relationship proved to be one of the few bright spots in an otherwise dark time in Kay’s life. “It worked out fine, but I remember my cousin telling me, ‘You are not cut out for this.’ And, you know, I think down deep, I just knew it. I knew I wasn’t cut out for it.” After graduating in 1994, Kay admits she didn’t really try the first time she took the bar exam. Still, she failed by only 10 points. After berating herself for not giving it her best shot, she buckled down and studied like she had never studied before. The second time, she failed by 20 points. She had interviewed for a multitude of jobs that required passing the exam: an administrative judge with the Texas Department of Transportation, a position in the Dallas District Attorney’s Office, even a job with the FBI. When she failed the bar exam a second time, her reaction surprised her. “I really thought I was going to be devastated, and instead, I felt so free,” Kay says. “I was like, ‘Oh my God, I don’t have to be a lawyer now’.” 

She enrolled in acting classes to improve her skills. She went on at least 30 auditions a week. She became very accustomed to pouring her heart out before casting agents, only to hear an impersonal “Thank you, goodbye,” as she was dismissed. An audition for a musical altered her path yet again. Kay walked into the large audition room and found herself facing a panel of casting agents seated behind a long table. A pianist sat ready to accompany her. She walked to the middle of the room, each step echoing, then took a deep breath, nodded to the accompanist and launched into “Gimme a Pigfoot,” a brassy jazz song made famous by Bessie Smith in the 1930s. Kay has a deeper, mid-range voice known as a “con- trad,” most frequently associated with Patsy Cline and Karen Carpenter. For a moment after she finished, her voice reverberated throughout the room, then silence pressed in. She eyed the panel of casting agents, waiting to be dismissed. But as the seconds passed and the silence lengthened, she was suddenly afraid. “Oh my God, they hated it,” she thought, her breath catching in her throat. Finally, the woman in the middle of the table, who was obviously in charge, spoke up. “I’m going to be honest, you are totally wrong
“What I really wanted to be was like Carol Burnett or Lucille Ball, a high comedy actress, and I wanted to have my own variety show. But, no one was hiring for that.”
By day, she worked a full-time job at a law firm as Lynda Kay Parker. At night, she transformed into Lynda Kay, performer extraordinary.

But when the Atlas Supper Club closed, Kay quickly realized that smaller venues didn’t pay enough to cover herself and her band.

“It was a rude awakening for me,” she recalls. “I basically had to start over again, looking for new venues and new opportunities and expanding beyond my comfort zone.”

Kay went solo and began teaching herself how to play the guitar. After work and on weekends, she drove down to the Venice Beach boardwalk to play the guitar. After work and on weekends, she drove down to the Venice Beach boardwalk to play the guitar. After work and on weekends, she drove down to the Venice Beach boardwalk to play the guitar. After work and on weekends, she drove down to the Venice Beach boardwalk to play the guitar. After work and on weekends, she drove down to the Venice Beach boardwalk to play the guitar. After work and on weekends, she drove down to the Venice Beach boardwalk to play the guitar.

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I had no band, no songs – I just said I was a one-woman band,” she explains. “I did as many shows as I could, because I just never had that kind of reaction.” Kay explains. “And I thought, ‘Well, I guess my voice really is something that people are drawn to.’”

BEGINNING AGAIN

Jump-starting her music career, Kay interviewed with the manager of Los Angeles’ Atlas Supper Club, an elegant restaurant that offered a show to its diners. She charmed the manager with stories of her great band and their fantastic repertoire of music. There was just one problem.

“I had no band, no songs – I just said I was a one-woman band,” she laughs. “But he believed me!”

When he said the club had a residency spot available – a chance to be part of the club’s regular show – Kay jumped at the opportunity and promised to fill the venue.

“When I left, I thought, ‘Oh my gosh, how did I do that? And what am I going to do now?’” she says. “So I put together a band and a variety show with a bunch of different types of music. It was actually a really successful run – I had a residency there for almost four years.”

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For the part,” she said. Then she smiled. “But your voice is incredible. Would you mind singing us another song?”

“I really took that as a sign that I needed to be focused on my career in music, because I just never had that kind of reaction,” Kay explains. “And I thought, ‘Well, I guess my voice really is something that people are drawn to.’”

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“Whenever I was a little kid, so I started tap dancing while playing guitar on the Venice boardwalk,” she says. “And that was exhausting.”

To take advantage of the rhythm in her feet without wearing herself out, Kay eventually attached a wooden base to the bottom of an old suitcase and connected a kick drum pedal to it.

“I was a one-woman band,” she explains. “I did that, if you can believe it, for seven years.

“I was in impeccable shape,” she adds with a laugh.

MAKING A NAME

While dating now-husband Jonny Coffin – a well-known entity in the world of guitars – and as the newest endorsee of Gretsch – a highly respected brand of musical instruments dating back to 1883 – her guitar playing and singing were both in the spotlight.

“I was a very, very proud girl the day I got my Gretsch endorsement because they endorse very few people,” she explains. “To be recognized as a guitar player by this company was such a big deal for me.”

It was around this time that she became friends with actor, director and musician Billy Bob Thornton, a fan of her music who used his platform to promote her work. Thornton even appeared on her 2010 album, “Dream My Darling.”

“He did a duet with me, played drums on one of the songs and did some background vocals on the album,” Kay says. “He didn’t have to do any of that, but he loved my music, and he booked me on several shows to open for him. He is really a kind man.”

The night she finished recording “All I Ever Wanted,” her duet with Thornton, a chance encounter set the stage for another iconic pairing.

Longtime friend Lemmy Kilmister – the founder, lead singer and bassist for the British rock band Motorhead – heard the news of Kay’s duet with Thornton and asked, “Well, when are we gonna do a duet?”

Kay answered with the first word that came to mind: “Tonight!”

In truth, the song would take years to materialize. “The Mask” had been in Lemmy’s head since 1979, but it took the pairing with Kay to bring it to fruition. As they worked together and became better acquainted, Kay saw a side of Lemmy he didn’t show to many people.

“Lemmy loved being friends with girls,” she says. “He was friends with a lot of guys, don’t get me wrong, but he loved to be friends with girls, and I think it was because he had a real soft side to him, and he was allowed to express that around women.

“In his career he was known for being very tough – like, über masculine. And he was this every bit of the picture of a masculine man. But what also made him masculine was his kind heart. That, to me, is every bit as masculine as being tough and strong, because it’s hard to be sensitive.”

Kay notes he also was a strong advocate for giving women more opportunities in music because, as he said, women had it tough. Maybe that’s why he decided to finally share “The Mask” after 30 years. Together, they completed the Willie Nelson-style ballad that Rolling Stone later labeled “a rare, heart-on-sleeve love song.”

“He absolutely loved it and was very excited about it coming out,” she says. But Kilmister’s years of hard living had finally caught up with him. On Dec. 28, 2015, four days after his 70th birthday, he died.

“It was so sad and he didn’t get to see the song released and to know how much people would love to hear
him sing, because he very seldom would sing like this, and he had never sung like this on a recording, ever,” Kay says. “It was very revealing, and he sounds so vulnerable. “I feel like ‘The Mask’ is just a manifestation of who he is and who he was. He had this tough face that he had to put on with the public, but down deep, he was a very sensitive man.”

With permission from Kilmister’s estate, Kay was proud and honored to include “The Mask” on her 2019 album, “Black and Gold.”

FINALLY, FULLY HERSELF

Kay eventually began working alongside her husband and managing his company, Coffin Case. They ultimately joined their enterprises – his business and her music – under one umbrella. Kay now serves as the company’s chief financial officer.

“Of course, my law background is helpful when we enter into contracts for licensing or anything else,” she notes. “To me, the whole reason I went to law school was really to be able to help other people and to help ourselves with our business. It was really good to find a positive way to use my degree, because it’s a fantastic degree to have.”

Her Texas Tech degrees have supported her throughout the inevitable dips and downturns in her artistic life. She even uses her law degree to help celebrities do forensic accounting, making sure they are receiving the royalties and fees they’re supposed to be paid.

“I ended up using my degree in ways I felt would help other people,” she says, “and that has been very gratifying for me.”

And in an ironic twist of fate, after stepping away from law she once again found herself acting in law-themed TV shows. Kay has appeared as herself in FX’s “Justified” and in the Amazon original, “Goliath.”

“Typically, when you’re acting in a role, you are using elements of yourself, but you’re still playing the part of somebody else’s vision,” Kay says. “It was very exciting and quite an honor to be asked to just do what I do on stage, to not change a thing, to just be who I am as Lynda Kay on stage.”

After all, that’s who she’s always been – from the age of 5, dancing in her neighbor’s garage, to now, being recognized on a bigger stage. Along the way, she has held her head high and performed with dignity and grace, even in the face of adversity.

“Life isn’t always going to turn out the way you think it will or the way you think it should, but that is never a reason to give up or accept that it will always not go your way,” she says. “Rather, you have to push forward with dignity and conviction and purpose, and know, in your heart of hearts, as long as you do the best you can in life, that’s all that’s expected of you.

“If you have done your best, you can continue to move forward, regardless of the outcome, feeling proud of yourself and the way you handled that moment.”

Lynda Kay and Lemmy Kilmister – the late founder, lead singer and bassist for the British rock band Motörhead – worked together to complete his song “The Mask,” which he’d been writing for 30 years.

Lynda Kay’s double album “Black and Gold” crosses genres from mid-century jazz and classic Burt Bacharach pop to roots rock and Memphis soul. Listen at www.lyndakay.com
ON VENHUIZEN is clearly no stranger to working with his hands — the open, airy studio behind the artist’s South Lubbock home attests to that. Mixed in among the buckets of slips and glazes, bags of clay, throwing wheels and kilns he uses to create ceramics are tools and car and motorcycle parts. Scattered across the long center table are lists of chemical compounds for ceramic mixtures and ratchet heads. This Texas Tech University professor is consumed with metal and mud.

An established artist in ceramics and kiln building, Venhuizen creates molded and wheel-thrown pieces that meld mystery and familiarity. His works appear to be plucked from a spare-parts yard with their metallic tones, rivets and seemingly functional parts and qualities. But upon closer inspection, the function is unclear.

“The appearance on the outside may not tell the story within,” Venhuizen says.
"The appearance on the outside may not tell the story within."

To him, it’s about potential—what could be. The pieces aren’t actually made of metal, but instead from the soft and malleable clay found in the earth, a medium that’s pliable and workable, but with the addition of heat and time, converts itself into something rock-hard.

Because Venhuizen’s hands drive his creativity and earn his living, one might expect his hobbies would give them a break. Instead, his free time is consumed with working in a different medium—one much different than clay—one that’s firm and unyielding, and when exposed to heat, becomes soft and easier to work with, for a short time at least.

There in his backyard studio, among his ceramics and industrial parts, Venhuizen is restoring a 1971 Ford Mustang Mach 1. And like his clay creations, the car returning to life under his hands tells a story. “I’ve always been a car nut,” he laughs.
Venhuizen’s first car was a 1966 Mustang that he and his father worked on together during his high school years. When Venhuizen’s son reached that age and expressed an interest, Venhuizen searched for an older car they could work on together. He found the Mach 1.

Then, the pandemic hit. Unable to work in his studio at the university, and unable to exhibit his work as galleries and museums were shut down, his need to stay creative turned him toward the Mach 1. Originally a little body work, Venhuizen’s goal has now transformed into a full-blown restoration.

The project blends his artistry and mechanical skills in a way few others could. But, like all of his art, its appearance on the outside does not tell the full story within.

“As an artist, it is inevitable I see things in a different light than most other people,” Venhuizen says. “I have always had a fascination pertaining to things that are antiquated, heavy and industrial in nature. But my work is as much about what it ‘isn’t’ as what it ‘may be.’”

A lump of clay and an old car are the perfect vessels for him to tell that story, creating what could be from what is.
In a land filled with stories
In a land where legends thrive
And the heroes in all their glory
Are forever kept alive

The opening lines of Texas Tech University’s unofficial anthem, “Red Raider Coming At You,” are surprisingly apropos. Not only do they characterize the Masked Rider, whom the song describes, they also suit the song itself. “Red Raider Coming At You” carries a storied past. It’s the story of a thriving team of musicians, businessmen and fans uniting to add another chapter to the legacy of Texas Tech. It’s a story of renown, obscurity, rediscovery and a triumphant return to glory.

This is the story of how a Texas Tech legend was forged, forgotten and born anew.
A DUSTY STACK OF 45s

On an otherwise uneventful afternoon, Brad Walker was cleaning out the closet at the Red Raider Club’s building at Sixth Street and University Avenue. It was the early 2000s, and as the club’s new associate director, Walker was charged with sifting through decades of Texas Tech memorabilia. Among the heaps of scarlet and black, one item immediately caught his attention.

Walker picked up the phone and called his longtime friend, Mike Gustafson, then a computer lab manager in the College of Human Sciences.

“He said, ‘Hey, I just found a stack of 45s of “Red Raider Coming At You,”’” Gustafson recalls.

The song, which had been written for Texas Tech and debuted during the 1982 football season, was a relic of an era now decades past. Walker could hardly believe it still existed.

He gave Gustafson a few dozen copies of the record, which features Red Steagall and the Travis Brothers. Gustafson took one of the 45s home and recorded it to a cassette from his old record player. He then passed the recording on to their mutual friend Chris Snead, vice president of operations for the Texas Tech Alumni Association.

“When I heard it, I said, ‘That is so unbelievably awesome that you’ve got to play this again and again,’” Snead says. “I never even knew this song existed until then.”

Gustafson, on the other hand, was well familiar with the track.

“In the early ’80s, when this first came out, it was kind of novel,” he says. “They used to play it on the radio.”

A LEGEND BORN

“Red Raider Coming At You” wasn’t just on the radio - it was everywhere.

At the time, the Texas Tech Athletics Department issued promotional material for the football and basketball seasons, including posters and slogans. “In 1981, when we hired Jerry Moore as our new football coach, the slogan was ‘Moore Excitement,’” recalls Steve Locke, then the field director for the Red Raider Club. “Every year there was a theme.”

In 1982, someone had the idea to go a step further and commission a song, both to build enthusiasm for the teams and to raise money for the Red Raider Club’s scholarship fund. A member of the Red Raider Club board, Chester Harris, volunteered to underwrite the cost of recording.

The club chose Dallas-based composer Ken Sutherland to write the song. Sutherland had made a name for himself in songwriting circles by composing for various publishers, producers and artists in Los Angeles. He had written the theme song for President Richard Nixon’s 1972 presidential campaign and the United Way’s official theme song. By the early 1980s, he was actively building the largest independent commercial music production company in the Southwest.

Once he had finished writing “Red Raider Coming At You,” Sutherland recruited a close friend and fellow Texas musician to perform it: Red Steagall.

Steagall grew up in the small Panhandle town of Sanford, northeast of Amarillo. His passion for ranching heritage, Western values and working cowboy traditions had its roots there, in the Texas High Plains. He had intended to become a large-animal veterinarian, but he contracted polio at age 15 and he lost most of the muscle in his left shoulder, arm and hand. Thankfully, Steagall stumbled upon a greater destiny – guitar lessons strengthened his fingers and gave him a new lease on life.

Steagall found his first success as a songwriter in 1962 when his song “Here We Go Again” was recorded by Ray Charles. Other country hits followed and he was a Texas household name by 1982, when Sutherland recruited him for “Red Raider Coming At You.”

“We were doing some things together in the studio and he said, ‘I’ve got this project I need to do for Texas Tech. Would you sing it for me?’” Steagall recalls. “And I said, ‘Sure I will.’ I’ve always admired Texas Tech.”

The freshly cut record became a heavily marketed promotion for Texas Tech and an overnight hit with fans.

“They gave it out on 45s to everybody who bought season football tickets, and we gave them away at Red Raider Club luncheons,” recalls Locke, who retired in 2019 as assistant vice chancellor for Institutional Advancement with the Texas Tech University System.
The song was played in the stadium during football season and featured in highlight videos. Boxes of records were carted all across the state to be handed out on Red Raider Day.

“We used to give that record away to anyone who wanted one,” Locke says. “There were a lot of people who thought it was a fun song, and a lot of people who thought it was hokey. But it didn’t have an extended play life.”

At the end of the 1982 season the song was unofficially retired, and the leftover records went into a closet in the Red Raider Club offices.

“For many years, it just disappeared,” Locke says. “Nobody ever paid any attention, and you never heard it.”

### TIME TO RIDE AGAIN

Two decades later, after Walker found the lost 45s at the Red Raider Club, he handed them off to Snead and Gustafson to be auctioned at the First Pitch Luncheon, a benefit function for the Texas Tech baseball team.

“There were probably a couple dozen of them,” Gustafson says. “He said, ‘You guys will be able to do more with these than we will.’ I’m sure his thought was that they were going to put them in a closet and be forgotten about for another two decades. But we immediately started auctioning them.”

As it happened, Gustafson’s mother knew Steagall through her work at the National Ranching Heritage Center. Gustafson asked her if Steagall would be willing to sign the records, and she agreed to ask.

“They plopped a stack of these down and he grabbed a Sharpie and signed them,” Gustafson says. “He said, ‘You guys are going to put out any more 45s of this,’ and I think his signature made all the difference in their desirability.

“There’s a pretty finite, limited number of the original runs; I don’t know if anybody’s going to put out any more 45s of this,” Gustafson says. “You put them out at a silent auction and they do OK. You get a couple old Red Raiders fighting over it, you can get $100 for these things, which is kind of hilarious.”

Because the song was so catchy and the story of its rediscovery so compelling, Snead and Gustafson started sharing it among their friends. One of those friends worked as the sports information director for Texas Tech baseball.

“We had another song that played at baseball games – ‘A Gringo Like Me,’ an old spaghetti western song – that we had convinced them to play for pitching changes,” Snead says. “Well, it kind of got old at Texas Tech baseball because Texas Tech was pretty good, so there were a lot of pitching changes. We started thinking, ‘Hey, let’s get them to play ‘Red Raider Coming At You.’’”

Then, during one otherwise uneventful game, Snead and Gustafson suddenly heard those familiar opening chords. Gustafson noticed something else familiar: a grainy sound, almost as if the song were being played on a turntable.

“I walked out on the field with Spike while they played it. It was wonderful, exciting. I was humbled and honored.”

Today, the Red Steagall Endowed Scholarship, established within the Alumni Association by friends of Steagall, provides scholarships to undergraduate students majoring in the College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources.

“I’m very proud,” he says. “I’m proud of our scholarship fund; I get a lot of wonderful letters from young people in agricultural sciences, and my association with the National Ranching Heritage Center has been unbelievable.”

Steagall received the center’s biggest honor, the National Golden Spur Award, in 2018.

“It’s one of the greatest honors of my life,” he says. “I’m overwhelmed.”

“I think it helps that Red really identifies with West Texas and West Texans,” Gustafson says of the song’s success. “He does Western music and Western poetry, so all of that plays. I think it doesn’t hurt that he’s still associated with the National Ranching Heritage Center and still comes around.”

Gustafson, now the president and CEO of the College Baseball Foundation, compares the song to an old pair of bell bottoms: in style again, then out of style, and finally back in style again.

The song was played in the stadium during football season and featured in highlight videos. Boxes of records were carted all across the state to be handed out on Red Raider Day.

“Thanks to his childhood admiration for ranching culture, Steagall had become an integral part of Texas Tech’s National Ranching Heritage Center, which he served for more than 20 years. As he and Dykes walked onto the field, Steagall suddenly heard the echoes of another great song by Texas Tech: those opening chords followed by his own voice, recorded decades earlier.

“I was in shock,” he says. “I walked out on the field with Spike while they played it. It was wonderful, exciting. I was humbled and honored.”

Years later, Red Steagall found himself in Jones AT&T Stadium on a brisk, fall Saturday. As Texas Tech prepared to take the field against the University of Oklahoma, Steagall stood side by side with his friend, longtime Texas Tech football coach Spike Dykes.

“Red Raider coming at you, riding through the night

With the fury of the West Texas wind

Red Raider coming at you, what a beautiful sight

The Texas Tech Red Raider is riding again

Remember, thinking, ‘Hey, that’s that little cassette copy I made!’” he recalls with a laugh. Snead says he’s fairly certain Gustafson’s recording is the one still being played today.

“Then probably a year or two later, I’m sitting at a football game and it starts playing,” Gustafson recalls. “And I’m thinking, ‘Whoa, it’s getting serious now.’”

“You’re trying to get something that’s uniquely Texas Tech and here’s this 45 of this song that’s great, and it is absolutely ours. I take a lot of pride in the fact we resurrected it.”

### RED RIDES AGAIN

Red Steagall’s album cover of ‘Red Raider Coming At You’

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Both men were being recognized for their contributions to the university.

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“It’s one of the greatest honors of my life,” he says. “I’m overwhelmed.”

“I think it helps that Red really identifies with West Texas and West Texans,” Gustafson says of the song’s success. “He does Western music and Western poetry, so all of that plays. I think it doesn’t hurt that he’s still associated with the National Ranching Heritage Center and still comes around.”

Gustafson, now the president and CEO of the College Baseball Foundation, compares the song to an old pair of bell bottoms: in style again, then out of style, and finally back in style again.

“Let’s face it: the song, in the way it’s constructed, is going to appeal to older people,” he says. “There probably are not a lot of kids walking around campus with it on their MP3 players. But it plays well in that sense. People remember it from 40 years ago, and now it’s something that’s just ours.”

Snead says he believes one reason the Texas Tech community has so thoroughly embraced the song is that its secondary success was unpredictable.

“It was organic; it didn’t get forced on you,” he says. “There was no sort of how it was going to go. It just kind of happened.
When you hear it at a baseball game, our little section starts to go nuts. We’ve heard it a million times and yet, they’ll all line up to start singing the song.”

Snead also attributes the song’s appeal to the fact that Texas Tech fans can take ownership of it. “It resonates with us, and I get goose bumps just thinking about the song,” he says. “It’s campy, it’s kind of goofy, but it’s ours. It’s Texas Tech’s song; it’s a song written for Texas Tech. It wasn’t written for Baylor, it wasn’t written for TCU – it was written for Texas Tech.”

Locke agrees, saying it’s just fun. “I’ve always been big on tradition and all the great traditions Texas Tech has,” he says. “I don’t know that you could legitimately call this a tradition, but it was something that had been done in the past and it was fun to bring it back.”

For his part, Steagall says he’s gratified by the way things have turned out. “I was so proud the college used it, and I’m really proud they’re still using it,” he says. “I’m proud of any association I have with Texas Tech. Of course, I will always be an alumus of what is now West Texas A&M, but I have a very strong affection and attraction to Texas Tech.

“All my buddies who are Texas Tech graduates, I’m on your team.”
For W. Don Stull, entrepreneurship came naturally. At age 6, he was already making products and selling them at a profit—that is, he made a bow and arrow out of a stick and string and traded it to his neighbor for their Tonka truck (until Stull’s grandmother made him trade back).

As an adult, Stull has seen similar ups and downs in business. After building out wireless systems across the Southwest for an engineering firm, he and a partner formulated their own business plan and launched Alamosa PCS, which had a successful initial public offering on the NASDAQ stock exchange and, on day one, was worth a billion dollars.

Then the 2008 financial crisis hit, and Alamosa’s stock price fell from $40 per share to 18 cents. “We were worth less than a postage stamp at one point,” Stull laughed. But the stock price rebounded, and Sprint PCS ultimately bought the company for more than $4 billion, giving investors a significant return.

One of his investments bottomed out after the inventor he was working with lied to him. In another case, a scientist he was collaborating with suddenly backed out, claiming full ownership of the work they’d done jointly. But both successes and failures have been educational.

“You look back and say, ‘What could we have done differently?’ and ‘What can we learn?’” Stull said. “And you learn a lot, but the tuition is very expensive.”

Now, for more than a decade, his company MicroZap LLC has developed a technology first invented at Texas Tech that uses microwave radio frequencies to sterilize both fresh and processed foods without cooking them. The technology is now used by one of the world’s largest bakeries to extend the shelf life of their organic, preservative-free bread.

The lessons he’s learned along the way he imparts to students in the Jerry S. Rawls College of Business. He teaches them how to write a business plan, and several have taken those plans out into the real world and launched their own successful businesses.

To Stull, that’s the real measure of success. “In business, you look at success or failure a lot around money,” Stull said. “We look at, ‘OK, this gave a return to our investors; they made 58% per year on their money, so that’s a success.’ But there’s more to it than just that. ‘Look at what we’re doing with MicroZap: We’re making food safe to eat. We’re impacting food insecurity. We’re impacting the environment by reducing waste. The nice thing about this business is, we are actually making some difference besides just money. Most people don’t go into entrepreneurship to save the world, but I like that as a benefit.”

About Don Stull

Title: Instructor, Rawls College of Business; founder and managing member, ViVi LLC; president and director, MicroZap LLC; director and member of audit and compensation committees, Smartfield Inc.; and founder and managing member, AniDose LLC

Degrees: B.S. Civil Engineering, 1985; M.B.A., 1997

Achievements: Licensed professional engineer, inventor on four U.S. patents, senior chapter member of National Academy of Inventors

This business instructor is using his wins and losses to promote student success.
illian Hackett has something of a Cinderella story, except there was no fairy godmother—she makes her own ball gowns. The Texas Tech University sophomore apparel design major has always been a hard worker with an eye for detail, but growing up in the small North Texas town of Collinsville didn’t exactly lend itself to the career of her dreams. Still, Hackett participated in sewing competitions through 4-H and the State Fair of Texas, and she won a handful of awards for her garments along the way. With each success, she raised her personal bar a little bit higher.

During her senior year of high school, Hackett launched her own brand, Lillian Jenae Designs, and entered a dress design contest hosted by All The Rage, a Virginia Beach, Virginia-based formalwear boutique. After making it to the final round, she submitted the sketch of a gown inspired by the Texas sunset: shimmering magenta material with a fitted bodice, high slit in the skirt, and roping around the collar and sleeves.

After being named the winner in January 2020, Hackett was thrilled to learn her design would actually be mass produced and sold for the 2021 prom season. And even better, from her perspective, she would get to participate in the production process at each step, collaborating with brands like Faviana and SCALA to shape the gown’s progress.

It was about that time that her own brand caught the eye of Oxford Fashion Studios, a London-based company that helps launch the careers of independent fashion designers. They asked her to develop an eight-look collection, which will debut during a New York Fashion Week runway show in September.

So, when she arrived at Texas Tech last fall, the then 18-year-old was already an award-winning fashion designer with a bright future. Her favorite part about the university, she said then, was its motto: “From Here, It’s Possible!”—because it rang true for her.

“Not in a million years would I have expected this,” she said. “I used to tell people when I was 5 or 6, I’m going to be in fashion design.” But she never actually thought she would get this far this fast. “Always hoped I’d get to this point, but I thought, maybe by the time I was 35 I’d be showing at New York Fashion Week.”

Then, as with so many other plans of the past year, COVID-19 intervened. The meetings for her gown design were delayed from summer to winter, then to spring break, then canceled. Production paused in uncertainty about whether there would even be a 2021 prom season. Hackett was assured the gown would still be produced at some point, but that some point is still in question.

Of course, Hackett has never been one to give up. In the meantime, she’s releasing mini collections to help build her brand and create excitement ahead of New York Fashion Week.

“Texas Tech has really helped me in growing my network,” she said. “I have been able to meet and work with many people of similar interests, and my technical skills have improved so much since being here—that is so important!”

She’s hard at work on her New York Fashion Week collection, too, and since she doesn’t yet have a production team behind her, she’s putting in the work all on her own. Just like the motto she likes so much, with some good old West Texas grit, Hackett is making her dreams possible.
statistically, Angel Carroll should be in prison, on drugs or dead, the 26-year-old says matter-of-factly. Only 15% of foster care youth graduate high school and go on to college, and less than 2% complete a degree. But Carroll, a former foster child involved in the criminal justice system, is a Texas Tech University graduate. That makes her an outlier in statistical terms. And while she’s proud of her achievement, she’s also frustrated.

“I don’t think I should be an outlier,” she says. “I think everyone deserves the opportunity to get an education and enact change.”

Now she’s working to improve the very systems that made her the advocate she is.

“My mother decided she no longer wanted me,” she says. “I saw a lot of abuse—to myself and others—in a system where our voices were not listened to.”

She acted out, hoping to be kicked out, but ended up on probation instead, thanks to an attorney who understood the effects of trauma. In a moment of hopelessness, she vowed to herself, “If I can get out of this, I’ll change my life.” And she did. Carroll came to Texas Tech in 2016 to study social work.

“My life did a complete shift,” Carroll remembers. “All the staff and faculty I came into contact with, they just cared—and that was different. From the moment I arrived, it was like, this is where I’m meant to be.”

While in college, she used her experiences in the foster care and juvenile justice systems to help the Lone Star Justice Alliance design a program to encourage alternatives to incarceration for 17- to 24-year-olds with pending felony charges—putting them into community-based treatment instead of prison. She testified before the Texas Supreme Court about the importance of mental health education for judges. When the state subsequently created the Judicial Commission on Mental Health, she was appointed to its collaborative council. Then, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed Carroll to the Texas Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, which advises the Governor’s Criminal Justice Division on programs and prevention efforts and submits recommendations regarding federal compliance issues and disbursements.

“It was surreal,” she recalls. “There was a lot of pressure, a lot of self-doubt. It was like, I’m just a student.”

But a judge Carroll knew and respected gave her some valuable advice: “Angel, you are the expert.” She realized her expertise didn’t just come from what she learned in the classroom, but also from her own life experience.

“Whatever system you’re in, you can’t make real change without those who have been impacted by that system,” Carroll says. “So, that has been my guiding star: ‘No change without us.’”

In 2019, Carroll was offered her dream job: The Lone Star Justice Alliance was launching the very program she helped design, and she had the chance to implement it in Williamson County, her childhood home, and in Dallas County. Leaping at the opportunity, Carroll has done just that.

She’s training nonprofits and government entities on best practices when working with system-impacted individuals, with an emphasis on being trauma-informed. The efforts have been well received, she says, but more importantly, the community input is vital in making government work.

“If no one is bringing up problems and solutions,” she emphasizes, “things don’t get done.”

Title: Director of advocacy at MEASURE and strategic outreach coordinator for the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

Degree: B.A. Communication Studies, 2021

Services: Board member for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Grapevine; member of the Texas Juvenile Justice Advisory Board; and member of the Judicial Commission on Mental Health’s collaborative council. Previously served on the Texas Network of Youth Services’ Young Adults Leadership Council.

THIS ALUMNA IS WORKING TO BETTER THE FOSTER CARE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS THAT SHAPED HER EARLY LIFE.
Heidi Winkler isn’t the stereotypical librarian. For one thing, she’d rather be dancing than shushing people. And for another, she sees herself more as a matchmaker: helping people find what they need to fill the gaping holes in their lives – or at least in their scholarship.

“Things are only useful if they’re used, so if you’re not able to access the information you’re trying to access, then those things kind of die a little bit,” says Winkler, the digital services librarian for the Texas Tech University Libraries. “When you are able to match someone with the exact digital resource they didn’t even know they needed, it’s amazing how much easier you can make someone’s life. I think that resource enjoys being used, too – as much as an inanimate object can enjoy being used.”

Winkler has been bringing people and digital resources together since 2012. Initially, she dealt mostly with the digital preservation of library collections – campus yearbooks, historical materials in the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, etc. – but, after discovering a love of outreach, she has spent the last few years working to make students’ and faculty members’ research publications open access and freely available through the library. She taught workshops and tried to interest the campus community in the cause, she says, but many people were simply too busy to pay attention.

The past year, however, has shined an unexpected spotlight on the importance of her work. In a world upended by COVID-19, students, faculty and researchers alike found themselves suddenly unable to walk into the library to find what they needed. Faculty increasingly took the time to discuss making resources available to students at a distance and at inexpensively as possible. The change in circumstances allowed Winkler’s work to proliferate, which ensures the continuation of the information she’s preserving.

“It’s very exciting to have things available digitally, because it helps speed up the exchange of information,” Winkler says. “It allows scholars the opportunity to really increase their own research profile as others are able to access and cite their work. Our theses and dissertations, especially, are often accessed more around the world than even here in the US, so it really helps spread Texas Tech’s brand around the world.”

Outreach is a part of Winkler’s life even outside of work. In her free time, she enjoys dancing with Ballet Lubbock and performing with Lubbock Moonlight Musicals. That affable, outgoing part of her personality, which once made her question her career choice – simply because she’s not that stereotypical stodgy “librarian” – is the same part that lets her connect with the people she now helps.

“I like it when kids find out I’m a librarian, so they’re not afraid of the library,” she says. “I love it when people ask me questions about librarianship, because I like being the person they can come to. My personality doesn’t have to stop at the door.”
"Just a cook, y'all."

If you’re a barbecue fan—and what Texan isn’t—you probably know of Christopher B. Stubblefield Sr. Only you likely know him by his nickname: Stubb, of Stubb’s Bar-B-Q. But there’s more to Stubb’s story than just ribs and rubs.

Born in 1931, Stubb was one of 12 children. During the Great Depression his family moved to Lubbock, where Stubb’s father, a Baptist preacher, often served food to his congregation. The family earned their livelihood picking cotton, which Stubb did himself in addition to working in local restaurants and hotels.

Stubb eventually joined the U.S. Army and deployed to Korea as a gunner in the all-Black 96th Field Artillery Battalion. But after being wounded, he was assigned to food prep duties for his comrades. That job suited him fine: Stubb enjoyed cooking and playing music over the field radio to those in the trenches.

When he returned to Lubbock after the war, his path was clear. He learned everything he could from other barbecue aficionados, then bought a rundown shack on East Broadway and put a jukebox full of blues in the corner. Stubb’s Bar-B-Q was born.

Ironically, Stubb’s restaurant may have been just as famous for its entertainment as it was for its food—and Texas Tech alumni from the 1970s and ’80s likely remember both. After a fateful turn of events introduced Stubb to Lubbock musician Jesse “Guitar” Taylor, the little restaurant became a regular venue for some truly iconic musical performers.

Up-and-coming West Texas musicians like the Flatlanders—Joe Ely, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock—and Terry Allen flocked to Stubb’s. Many played their first gigs there, paid only in tips and heaping plates of food. As the restaurant’s fame grew, bigger names joined in: Stevie Ray Vaughan, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, George Thorogood, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris among them.

Stubb regularly took the stage himself to sing “Summertime.” Without fail, he’d wrap up with the one-liner, “Just a cook, y’all.”

In an age when segregation endured in much of the city, Stubb’s was a rare refuge where people of all backgrounds could come together for good food and good music. Taylor recalled the time a Hispanic man walked in, looked around at the Black customers and asked Stubb, “You serve Mexicans here?” Staring back straight-faced, Stubb responded, “No, we serve barbecue here.” Another day, two middle-aged white women politely asked if Stubb served “white folks” in his restaurant. “No, ma’am,” he said with a grin. “We can’t fit them on the plate.”

In 1986, Stubb moved his restaurant to Austin, where it thrives to this day. But his heart remained in Lubbock. After his death in 1995, he was buried in his hometown, and a memorial now stands at 108 E. Broadway. A bronze statue by fellow Lubbock native Terry Allen shows Stubb holding a platter of barbecue and welcoming patrons to his restaurant. It’s a fitting a tribute to a man who was so much more than “just a cook, y’all.”

By Glenys Young

Photograph by Ashley Rodgers
In launching Evermore, we’ve asked ourselves that question a lot over the past year. What’s possible, and what does “here” have to do with it? In a world of distance learning and international campuses, what does “here” even mean, and what is it about this place that enables Red Raiders’ boundless opportunities and ideas?

The magazine in your hands begins to answer these questions and more.

We have 40,000 students and 220,000 living alumni, plus the many thousands who’ve passed. Each has had their own challenges, their own struggles and, ultimately, their own successes; many have changed the world along the way. There’s so much to be proud of, and so many stories that need to be shared.

Evermore showcases our incredible community of talented people, from those conducting groundbreaking science and pushing the boundaries toward greater opportunities for all of us to those who play supporting roles – the parents, teachers and mentors; the assistants and staff members behind the scenes; even the storytellers bringing those works to life for you.

In this magazine, you will not find advertisements or long lists of names and dates. We pledge that this publication will be different. The stories you read here will be new and fresh, sometimes quirky and definitely not something you’ve heard before. We want them to make you think and, most of all, we want them to make you proud to count yourself as one of us.

We celebrate our people, the ones who have succeeded in their fields and the ones still striving, and the unique environment created by their coming together in this place for the last century. And as we launch this new endeavor, we eagerly anticipate the great things yet to come.

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