

# THE HILLTOP

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Volume XVIII : Issue II

SUMMER 2018



## WC ALUMNUS SELECTED AS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

DR. TOD ALLEN FARMER WELCOMES THE CHANCE  
TO COME HOME AS THE 18TH PRESIDENT OF  
WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



When I first arrived on the Weatherford College campus as a college freshman in June of 1985, I never imaged that I would one day have the privilege of being named president. I was a simple minded Parker County boy who was about to have his life forever changed for the better. Upon my arrival, the exceptional faculty and

staff of Weatherford College were warm and welcoming. My instructors immediately challenged my way of thinking and stretched my mind with new ideas. Weatherford College was where I fell in love with learning for the very first time and where I first developed an insatiable appetite for life long learning. I am forever indebted to this great institution for giving me such a transformative educational experience.

My family and I are so very happy to be part of the Weatherford College team. I am both humbled and deeply honored to be named the 18th President of Weatherford College. It is especially exciting to be coming home to Weatherford College on the eve of our sesquicentennial celebration. Weatherford College has long been a great place. As we prepare to celebrate the first 150 years of Weatherford College history, I am very confident that the Weatherford College community will collaboratively make Weatherford College an even better place in the near future. Together we can shape the next chapter in the Weatherford College story.

Weatherford College is a great place to stay close and go far!

*Tod Allen Farmer*

Dr. Tod Allen Farmer  
President

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# WC ALUMNUS SELECTED AS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

DR. TOD ALLEN FARMER WELCOMES THE CHANCE TO COME HOME AS THE 18<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT OF WEATHERFORD COLLEGE



by Crystal Woerly

Taking the reigns as the 18<sup>th</sup> President of Weatherford College is a homecoming of sorts for Dr. Tod Allen Farmer.

Originally from Fort Worth, Farmer's family relocated to Weatherford when he was a teenager. He attended four years at Weatherford High School, graduating in 1985, before enrolling at Weatherford College.

"I couldn't afford to go off to a big university and Weatherford College was affordable so I took advantage of that option," Farmer said. "I got a great education at Weatherford College and had some fantastic instructors."

After completing his associate's degree in 1987, Farmer transferred to Tarleton State University where he completed a bachelor's degree in business administration in marketing in 1992, but his experience as a student ultimately encouraged him to change career paths.

"I had such a good experience as a student with educators who really transformed my life for the better, and I wanted to help do that for other people," he said.

Farmer then completed a master's degree in education in 1998 from Tarleton and a doctorate of education from the University of North Texas with a focus in educational administration in 2005.

He moved up the ranks in the Springtown ISD over the course of a decade working as an elementary teacher, before moving into the administrative side of education as a middle school assistant principal, intermediate school principal, high school principal, associate director of instructional technology and the director of student services.

He then took a position at Tarleton State University where he served as certification officer, head of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and as a graduate professor teaching courses in higher education leadership. His most recent role at Tarleton was as chief of staff to President Dr. Dominic Dottavio.

"As a Tarleton alumnus, Dr. Farmer advanced our educational leadership and policy studies program," Dottavio said. "He has been a chief of staff par excellence, serving as a liaison with state agencies and organizations. He understands the traditional and emerging challenges of higher education. As a graduate of Weatherford High School and Weatherford College, there is no doubt he will put his all into this next chapter of his career. We take great pride in Dr. Farmer's new role and look forward to strengthening our longstanding partnership with Weatherford College."

Dottavio also said Farmer's qualities and experiences across the field of education make him the right leader for WC.

"I have covered the gamut," Farmer said. "I have been extremely fortunate to have a wide perspective of education across the spectrum, and it's caused me to see education far more holistically. We are all on the same team trying to accomplish the same

objectives, and it's driven home the importance of collaboration across all spectrums of education."

During his 22 years working in Springtown and Stephenville, the Farmer family maintained their Hudson Oaks home. Farmer said he has never had the desire to move out of Parker County.

"For me, coming home to Weatherford College is a dream come true," he said. "There is literally no place on earth I would rather be. I'm 51 years old. I'm in my prime. And I intend to spend my

*continues with Dr. Farmer on page 8.*

**"FOR ME, COMING HOME TO WEATHERFORD COLLEGE IS A DREAM COME TRUE."**

**- DR. TOD ALLEN FARMER**

# MEMORIES



## DO YOU KNOW...

If you have any information about this photo, please send a note to Katie Edwards at 225 College Park Drive, Weatherford, TX, 76086, or an email to [kedwards@wc.edu](mailto:kedwards@wc.edu).

## LAST ISSUE'S DO YOU KNOW...

Sometime during the 1950s, students take a break from their studies to play in the snow in front of the gymnasium on South Main Street. Old Main can be seen in the background.



## FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

**Rebecca Allard**, 99, of Fort Worth, passed away December 15.

**Mary Justine Anderson**, 89, of Weatherford and Queens, NY, passed away January 7.

**Robert Albert Brashear**, 82, of Lubbock, passed away January 27.

**Cathy Burns**, 62, of Denton passed away January 5.

**Gary Don Elders**, 69, of Weatherford, passed away April 2.

**Dudley Grube**, 27, of Aledo, passed away April 1.

**Carole Fisher Smith Harrison**, 94, of Fort Worth, passed away February 22. Class of 1942.

**William Henry Harwell, Jr**, 84, of Houston, passed away November 12. Class of 1953.

**Bill Dean Hogan**, 86, of Terrell, passed away November 22.

**Erminia "Minnie" Jasso Magallan**, 62, of San Angelo, passed away January 27.

**Myrtle Lois Pearson Moran**, 97, of Woodstock, GA, passed away January 13.

**Glenda Ann Means Phillips**, 57, of San Angelo, passed away February 12.

**Imogene Hennig Phipps**, 97, of Kennedale, passed away January 11.

**Helen R. Tidwell**, 94, of Haines City, FL, passed away April 5. Class of 1943.

**William Orlo Townsend**, 73, of Lone Grove, OK, passed away May 2.

**Stephanie Varner**, 50, of Fort Polk, LA, passed away November 17.

**Virginia Craven Vogel**, 94, of Alexandria, VA, passed away September 25. Class of 1942.

# WC HONORS OUTSTANDING ALUMNI



## by Crystal Woerly

Weatherford College recognized three alumni during the annual Alumni Awards Luncheon this past April. Lynn Easley and Frederick Sanders were both recognized as Distinguished Alumni, and Mike Gilley was awarded the Alumnus of the Year Award.

Gilley is a 1969 graduate of WC and a native of Springtown who attended classes at both “Old Main” and the current campus, which he referred to as the “Hilltop Campus.”

“The thing I remember most about Weatherford College—Old Main—is it had an atmosphere that was unreal,” Gilley said. “It was family... and the best experience I had was meeting my wife outside social studies class on the Hilltop Campus.”

He credits the one-on-one teaching he received at WC as the foundation that ultimately led him into a career in education that spanned 45 years in Springtown ISD as a teacher and in administration where he served as principal of Watson Elementary,

principal of Springtown Middle School, principal of Springtown High School and, ultimately, as the district’s assistant superintendent.

Gilley was named the district’s High School Teacher of the Year in 1978 and received the Lamar Medal by the Springtown Masons in 2003 for his service to public education. He was also recognized by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 for his quick response and bravery during a campus fire.

“As an instructor and administrator in Springtown, I’ve had the opportunity to suggest Weatherford College to students,” Gilley said. “I tell them this is the best money you’ll ever spend.”

Sanders graduated from Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Arts in Dallas and attended WC on a music scholarship.

“Weatherford, for me, became a continuation of what my grandparents had established in my home,” Sanders said. “The music we would play had this

nostalgic integrity to it where it brought the community together. It allowed people to have a pace and learn to dance together.”

Sanders has performed and recorded with music greats including Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Norah Jones, David “Fathead” Newman, Erykah Badu and Doctor John.

Easley grew up in the Texas Pythian Home after his mother relinquished her parental rights in 1956. He received several teacher of the year awards during the ‘80s and ‘90s in the Kennedale ISD, including the title of Texas Vocational Teacher of the Year and National Trade and Industrial Teacher of the Year in 1996. He was named a Weatherford ISD distinguished alumnus in 2016.

“Weatherford College is a great institution,” Easley said. “There is a list of distinguished alumni in your program – to be in that category of folks is unbelievable. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

**Pictured left to right: Frederick Sanders, Mike Gilley and Lynn Easley.**

# WEATHERFORD COLLEGE AROUND CAMPUS



1. Weatherford College recognized 31 of the finest teachers from across the region at the annual Jack Harvey Academy of Exemplary Teachers celebration Jan. 26 at the Doss Heritage and Culture Center. Celebrating its 22nd year, the Harvey Academy honors exemplary teachers in the memory of Professor Emeritus Jack Harvey, who taught at WC for 23 years and was considered among his peers as a “master teacher.”

2. Students in the Weatherford College Upward Bound program partnered with Kids Against Hunger Parker County in March for a meal packing event at Grace First Presbyterian Church where more than 11,000 meals were packaged to feed starving children. More than 35 Upward Bound students assembled, sealed and packaged approximately 50 cases of meals during the event.

3. Rep. Phil King sported his WC golf shirt on a visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem in May. King and his wife, Terry, were a part of the U.S. delegation to the opening of the new embassy in Jerusalem. Also pictured are an Israeli soldier and State Senator Brandon Creighton.

4. Weatherford College freshman Hudson Flaherty was awarded an Honorable Mention at the 2018 Dallas Symphonic Festival on Saturday, Feb. 24. Flaherty has been playing the piano for about 14 years, and this was his first competition.

5. The Weatherford College Agriculture and Equine Department, Rodeo Team, WC students, alumni and volunteers helped to host the Mike Brown Memorial Horse Judging Contest as part of the Parker County Career Development Events in April at the Parker County Sheriff's Posse arena. It was a huge success with nearly 300 students from all across Texas judging eight equine classes. Photo courtesy of Dr. Ronnie Collins.



6. Weatherford College student Michael Hanson won the 12th annual Joe Tison Outstanding Public Speaking Competition on March 20. Hanson, a freshman from Bellevue, Texas, spoke about the FFA, the impact the organization has had on his life and how it led him to pursue becoming an agriculture teacher. Jessica Holanda, an international student from Brazil, was the runner up with her speech on missionary work in the Amazon.

7. At their regional convention in March, WC's Phi Theta Kappa chapter was named a top 20 chapter in the Texas Region, earned an award of merit for their college project which supports the development of a peer mentor program, the chapter's fundraising chair Cara Speicher won a Regional Distinguished Chapter Member Award and chapter president Mariah Pogue won a District 2 Hall of Honor Award. At the annual convention, the WC chapter was recognized as one of the top 100 chapters out of nearly 1,300 chapters worldwide, ranking them among the top eight percent of the entire society. Pictured is a moment from the honor society induction ceremony in May.

8. The 10th annual Taste of Parker County was held at Weatherford's Heritage Park on May 17. The new location provided additional space for vendors and patrons to enjoy the best eats and drinks offered in the area. The WC Jazz Band provided entertainment for the event.

9. Weatherford College student Alex Cook recently placed third at the National Association of Teachers of Singing competition.

10. Weatherford College TRIO programs celebrated first generation college students through a variety of events in March. First generation students are defined as any student who comes from a family where neither parent has completed a bachelor's degree. These students have access to three TRIO programs at WC including Student Support Services, Upward Bound and Talent Search.



**President Farmer meeting faculty, staff and community members at a reception in his honor on May 4.**

time in a worthy cause, and there is no place I'd rather do that than at Weatherford College."

Farmer's wife of 21 years, Kathleen, is also a former WC student, as were her siblings and father.

"Dad was the first in his family to attend college and then he wanted all four of us to go here because he felt it was such a great foundation," Kathleen said. "Weatherford College helped my dad get a full scholarship to SMU. He credits Weatherford College with changing our lives."

Kathleen has taught at Stuard Elementary School in Aledo for the past eight years and taught previously in the Fort Worth ISD. The farmers have three children—Madeleine, Alexandra and Benjamin—whom they expect to be the family's third generation of WC students.

The couple's life paths ran parallel to one another for many years before they finally met. Kathleen attended Aledo High School, WC and then Tarleton for her bachelor's degree. It wasn't until they entered the Tarleton graduate program that their paths finally crossed.

"We met and fell in love and found out we were both Parker County people, and it was a natural match for us," he said. "We both wanted to stay in Parker County and raise our family here."

The couple had already made plans for their children to attend WC, and Kathleen said her husband taking this position at the college makes her feel they have come full circle.

"We're both big believers in Weatherford College being a strong foundation," she said.

President Farmer said his experience as a WC student was one of the reasons he decided to apply for the presidency along with the college's reputation of a high quality faculty and staff. But ultimately it was the WC Board of Trustees that sealed the deal.

"Every single member of the board of trustees has a genuine motive and they all want the very best for Weatherford College," Farmer said. "They really want to help our students gain marketable skill sets and excel in their personal lives."

Farmer is believed to be the first WC alumnus to be selected as the college's president. As he takes on this leadership role, he said his goals include supporting the faculty and staff who have made WC great year after year. He also wants the college to prepare for the rapid changes that come with population explosion.

"I really believe in the next decade Weatherford College is going to be transformed in one way or another," Farmer said. "It's a goal to retain the excellence this institution is known for. It's truly, in my view, the greatest value in higher education. Weatherford College students earn a quality education at an affordable price. I want to retain that value and prepare for rapid growth so we can grow in a fiscally responsible way."

This growth will include advancing the college's technology infrastructure as the demand for hybrid and fully-online courses continues to increase.

"Technology will play a larger role than it does today, and we, as an educational institution, need to be prepared for the demand of higher technology," he said.

Farmer's start date also coincides with the preparation of WC's 150th anniversary celebration. A full calendar of events is in the works for 2019 to celebrate the college's long history.

"This is a huge opportunity for the entire Weatherford College community to share our story with a larger audience and talk about what an exceptional value this college has been, review the long storied past of the institution and start preparing for our immediate future," he said. "For Weatherford College to be celebrating 150 years is absolutely phenomenal." 📧

## CLASS NOTES

**Kay Alexander** (Springtown ISD), **Michelle Herndon** (Poolville ISD), **Amy Norwood** (Paradise ISD) and **Kayli Morris** (Granbury ISD) were honored as fellows of the Jack Harvey Academy of Teaching Excellence in January.

**Jeff Ford** was elected to the Weatherford Independent School District Board of Trustees in May.

**Gary Poynter** was named head baseball coach at River Oaks High School in Monroe, Louisiana, in January. The former Coyote baseball player previously served as the pitching coach at Abilene Christian University.

**Morgan Rackel**, a junior softball player at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee, was named Pitcher of the Year in the Ohio

Valley Conference in May. In the regular season, she went 19-6 with a 1.47 ERA and 185 strikeouts.

**Gregory Thomas** ('96) was named 2017-18 Teacher of the Year at Eastern Hills Elementary School in Fort Worth.

**Sara Barlow Tipton** ('96) was named 2017-18 Teacher of the Year at Leonard Middle School in Fort Worth.



Marvin Adams  
The Adams Family  
Dian Ainsworth  
Chief Deputy Russ Authier  
Brent and Elizabeth Baker  
Baker's Ribs  
Barbara Baker-Morrison  
Bill Beard  
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Carolene English  
EOG Resources  
Estate of Mary Zielinski  
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Joy Hudson  
Hudson Oaks Theater  
Darlyne Hughes  
Dr. Janie and Jerry Humphries  
Ruth Huse  
Imperial Construction  
Jacy Guynes State Farm Insurance  
Suzanne Jary  
Jerry's GM  
Pauline Jones  
Kelsey Jones  
Mark and Janet Jones  
Phil and Kathryn Jordan  
Lindsey Kennimer  
Marjorie Kimbrough Dome  
Rep. Phil King  
Dr. Sumant and Sheela Kumar  
Michelle LaGrone  
Marnita Langford  
Brenda Lee Stout Powell  
Lifecare EMS  
Dr. Sarah Lock  
Jenny London  
Lone Star Coaches, Inc.  
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Jo Ellen Welborn  
Dr. Lisa Welch  
Nancy Wester  
WHS Class of 1953  
Billie Williams  
Bob and Sammie Gay Williams  
Kathy Williams  
Melinda Wilson  
Dinah Wren

# ATHLETICS YEAR IN REVIEW

by Brent Baker

After surpassing the 900-win plateau in January, Bob McKinley received two other accolades this spring. WC's athletic director and head women's basketball coach was named Co-Coach of the Year by the North Texas Junior College Athletic Conference. Then, McKinley and former coach Betty Jo Graber were named to the NTJCAC's Hall of Fame.

The Lady Coyotes (20-9 overall, 11-3 conference) won a share of the NTJCAC title, the school's 15th in women's basketball. WC advanced to the second round of the Region 5 Tournament in Lubbock. Masha Vasilevko was named a third team All-American, averaging 18.3

points per game and shooting 44 percent from three-point range.

The Coyote basketball team finished the season with a 17-13 overall record, their third winning season in the last four years. Mark Osina picked up his 400th victory as the Coyotes' head coach in January.

Rodeo coach Johnny Emmons earned Coach of the Year honors in the Southwest Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association, his second such award in four years. WC's Kirby Blankenship and Lane Cooper won the regional championship in team roping and will represent their school at the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming, in June.

The Coyote softball team (35-16 overall, 23-9 NTJCAC) finished second in the conference standings. After back-to-back come from behind wins in the Region V-North Tournament, Weatherford was eliminated in the semifinals.

WC's baseball team ended the regular season one game shy of a regional tournament berth, finishing with a 27-27 overall record, 17-15 in conference play. The team has finished at or above .500 in 11 straight seasons. 📧

1. Masha Vasilevko
2. Stan Feaster, NTJCAC Commissioner, with Betty Jo Graber and Bob McKinley.
3. Johnny Emmons
4. 2017-2018 Coyote Softball Team

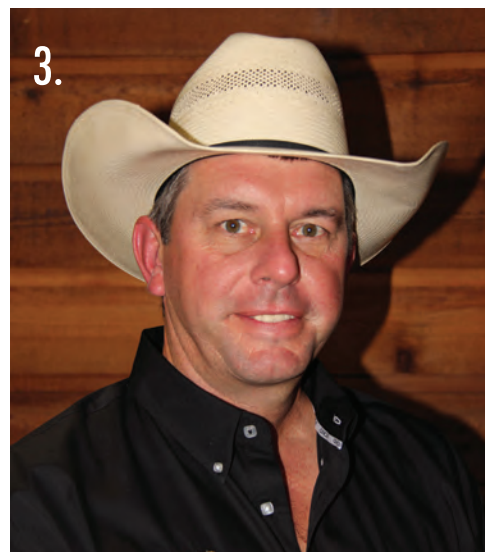
1.



2.



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# COMMENCEMENT 2018 - FACULTY MEMBER OF THE YEAR



by Crystal Woerly

Suzie Jary, a Weatherford College instructor in the Substance Abuse Counseling and Human Service Provider program, was announced as the 2018 Faculty Member of the Year during the May commencement ceremony.

Last year's winner, Nancy McVean, introduced Jary as the winner and it was her mention of Broadway that tipped Jary off that she was this year's winner as she had a previous career as a dancer on some of the famous New York stages.

"I felt so touched, honored and blessed to be chosen by my peers, colleagues and co-workers," Jary said. "The best part of working at WC is the friendly, hard-working manner of everyone connected with the college."

The title of Faculty Member of the Year comes with airfare for two to the U.S. destination of Jary's choice and the \$1,000 Gayle and Wanda Grant Award of Teaching Excellence, both provided by the Weatherford College Foundation. Jary said she is considering a trip to either San Francisco or New York during the winter break. ☑

## SCENES FROM COMMENCEMENT 2018



A total of 1,067 Weatherford College students graduated over the past academic year, and 298 of them walked the stage during the May commencement ceremony held at Weatherford High School's Jerry Durant Auditorium.



*Photo by S. Connor Lee*



*Photo by S. Connor Lee*



*Photo by S. Connor Lee*



*Photo by S. Connor Lee*



*Photo by S. Connor Lee*



**20**  
YEARS  
AT THE  
**ALKEK**

Weatherford College celebrated 20 years of the Alkek Fine Arts Center during the month of April. Special events hosted in the fine arts space included a concert of classic American standards featuring WC's Rob Laney, Rick Rainey, Dr. Hyeyoung Song and special guest Miss Sandra Kay and her band; the musical production "Into the Woods;" concerts by the N'awlins Gumbo Kings, Victor Cager and WC Jazz Band alumni; as well as "A Night of Mozart" performed by the Fort Worth Symphony Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Maestro John Giordano and featuring pianist Dr. Hyeyoung Song.