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A PASSION FOR HISTORY

JON VANDAGRIFF'S VERACITY FOR THE PAST
ENSURES HIS OWN MARK IN LOCAL HISTORY

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What an incredible academic year we just completed at Weatherford College! We experienced record enrollment in both the fall and spring semesters and are currently on pace for record high enrollment again for the Fall 2019 semester. We started the lengthy process of adding new academic programs like a veterinarian assistant program and a Bachelor of Science in nursing program. We collaborated with the city of Weatherford and Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas on new infrastructure projects. Several sesquicentennial celebration events have already successfully occurred, with more to come.

Fireworks have exploded in brilliant colors, beautiful music has filled the air, and our students have experienced success on multiple levels. It has been a fantastic year!

We all know that Weatherford College changes lives. However, many may not be fully aware of just how many high achievers Weatherford College has produced. WC has produced 23 Grammy Award winning artists. Dozens of former WC rodeo athletes have competed on the professional circuit and nine have qualified for the national finals. Twenty-nine former Coyotes have played or are currently playing professional baseball. WC has produced everything from military heroes like General William Hood Simpson and Medal of Honor recipient Jack Knight, to American Idol contestant Casey James. Successful business owners like Jerry and Vickie Durant, as well as bank presidents like Mark Riebe and Lin Bearden, are all accomplished WC alumni. Respected politicians like the 48th Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Jim Wright and State Representative Bill Coody also have WC ties. Those are just a tiny sample of the many success stories of Weatherford College.

These are incredibly exciting times at Weatherford College. We appreciate the important role that you play in the success of our noble institution and in the success of our students. Thanks to you, the brightest days of Weatherford College lie ahead!



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A PASSION FOR HISTORY

JON VANDAGRIFF'S VERACITY FOR THE PAST ENSURES HIS OWN MARK IN LOCAL HISTORY

by Crystal Woerly

Looking back at the beginning of his journey, it's hard to think there was a time when people took little notice of Weatherford historian Jon Vandagriff.

Over the decades, the once shy boy grew in confidence and made friends and business acquaintances with Texas Governor Preston Smith, Speaker of the House Jim Wright, US Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen, Fort Worth Cats manager Bobby Bragan, as well as local community leaders Roy Grogan, Nolan Queen, Harry Hopkins and Larry Fowler.

But when he was helping organize his 50th high school class reunion and contacted the class valedictorian he was recalled as the "little kid with the short hair."

And it's no wonder his classmates took little notice of him. Vandagriff spent much of his childhood taking care of his sick

mother or sick himself. He missed school the first week of October 1947 and passed the time listening to the World Series on the radio. That's when he became a New York Yankees fan.

While still in high school he was hired at the Weatherford Democrat to help cover local football games and the writing bug took hold. He had two years of employment at the Democrat when he came to Weatherford College in 1953, and college president Vernon Parrott called him to his office during the first week of class.

"For a freshman student, to have the president call you into his office you begin to wonder what's going on," Vandagriff said. "Well, I sat down. He was typing, and the room was very silent for a little bit. Then he turned around and said, 'Jon, are you working at the Democrat?' and I said, 'Yes, sir.' And he said, 'Would you like to

be the press representative for Weatherford College?' I said, 'Yes, sir!' And immediately he turned around and typed out a little press pass. It said: 'Jon Vandagriff, as press representative for Weatherford College, is entitled to attend any college event free of charge.' Better than that, it said I would have excused cuts from classes. How great an introduction to college is that?"

Sports and writing were Vandagriff's first two loves, but his third and greatest lifelong interest was introduced in Bill Raupe's history classroom.

"In class we had three walls of blackboard and he would start on a Civil War battle and go all the way around the room or a Texas battle and go all the way around," Vandagriff said. "And I realized then that's what I really wanted to do. I really wanted to know about history."

continues with VANDAGRIFF on page 5.

MEMORIES

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

James Ray Barber, 95, passed away February 16 in Longview.

Marvin Lee Blackwell, 85, of Weatherford, passed away February 18.

Gillis E. Brown, 81, passed away April 24 in Orange County, CA.

Agnes Maxine Hill Carter, 84, passed away April 22 in Weatherford.



2007 and was appointed again in 2017. He was board chairman from 2003 to 2005

Roger Dale Grizzard (1946 – 2019), a 22-year member of the WC Board of Trustees, lost his life in a tragic auto accident on May 25. Roger served on the board from 1987 to

and served with five college presidents during his 22 years.

Rev. John C. Johnson, 95, of Aledo, passed away May 21.

Myrtle Ruth Jenkins Narramore, 91, of Decatur, passed away March 27.

Paula June Watson, 66, of Weatherford, passed away March 20.

WC HONORS OUTSTANDING ALUMNI



Weatherford College recognized three former students during the annual Alumni Awards Luncheon in April.

The college honored Dr. Molly Harris and Keith Loftis as Distinguished Alumni Award recipients, and Jon Vandagriff was named the 2019 Alumnus of the Year.

Vandagriff is a 1955 graduate of WC, an award-winning journalist, a former college faculty member and celebrated author (see cover story for more information).

Harris is a 1998 graduate of WC and is currently assistant to the president at Grayson College and adjunct speech instructor at WC. She reflected on her time as a Coyote and how people like Mike Endy and Dr. Jim Boyd set her on her path – Boyd by inspiring her to pursue higher education leadership and Endy who pushed her to move on in her academic career after accumulating 110 credit hours at WC.

“Had it not been for those two moments in my life I may still be a student at Weatherford College, 575 hours later,” she joked. “I don’t know what would have happened, but I needed that kick out of the nest. And because of that I have kicked several students out of the nest.”

Loftis, a 1992 WC alumnus and professional saxophone player, is currently an instructor for the United States Jazz Reach Program in New York and teaches film scoring. He reflected on his introduction to WC while he was a senior in high school who was recruited to fill an open slot in the WC Jazz Band’s performance at the national jazz convention in San Diego.

“What really touched me was the family that continues to be here at Weatherford College,” he said. “I have so many stories I wish I could tell them all. It is truly a blessing and honor to be able to come home and receive this award.”

EX-STUDENTS ASSOCIATION



The Weatherford College Ex-Students Association meets for lunch at noon on the second Monday of each month in the Allene Strain Room located in the Doss Student Center. Come join us. Reminisce with former classmates and meet other Coyotes who attended WC from as far back as the 1940s.



Vandagriff graduated from WC in 1955 and continued his education at Howard Payne University in Brownwood where he also worked as the assistant sports editor at the Brownwood Bulletin and was a member of the college annual staff.

At Howard Payne, Vandagriff met Dr. Tom Havins who was known as an authority on Texas history. Vandagriff would ask Havins about local places in Parker County by describing the surroundings and Havins would respond with the name and historical significance of the location. That sealed Vandagriff's fate as a historian.

After completing his bachelor's degree at HPU, Vandagriff returned to Weatherford and went back to work at the Democrat working his way up to managing editor.

It was at this point he made the transition from journalist to teacher. He started at Weatherford Middle School teaching social studies and reading before moving on to Tarrant County College as the director of publications and instructor of Texas history.

Now working in higher education, Vandagriff decided he needed to return to school to earn his master's degree in order to secure his position. He completed his master's in journalism from the University of North Texas where he wrote his thesis on the history of the Weatherford Democrat. Vandagriff worked in a variety of offices at Tarrant County College including the district office where he helped set up booths for events like May Fest and the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo.

"I was walking around one day at the rodeo and I noticed the Weatherford College booth," Vandagriff said. "There were a couple of young girls there, and I walked up and said, 'I graduated from Weatherford College before you were born!' They laughed and we talked a little bit. One of them said, 'Do you have a Weatherford College belt buckle? Would you wear it if we gave you one?'"

The girls gifted Vandagriff a WC belt buckle which he has worn nearly every day since.



After 16 years as a journalist and 34 years in education, Vandagriff retired, joined the WC Ex-Students organization and became a self-proclaimed ambassador for the college.

"I think Weatherford College has one of the finest faculties you can find anyplace," he said. "The one thing that sets Weatherford College's faculty apart from anywhere else is their interest in students."

He frequently travels and takes along a collection of WC shirts and hats which he wears to start conversations with people near and far about the college, and he's always on the lookout for prospective WC students. He also leaves behind WC pens wherever he goes.

"At Bellingham [International Airport in Washington state] I saw a group of tall girls from Canada headed to a basketball tournament in Las Vegas," he said. "Dottie (his wife) started talking to one of the girl's mom and my wheels began to spin. I got their contact info and sent them information about the school when they got home. You never know."

Vandagriff's latest project in support of his alma mater was spending two years writing

"Weatherford College: The First 150 Years" released at the start of the college's sesquicentennial year. He and his wife, Dottie, also created a \$10,000 scholarship fund for history students to kick off the 150th year of WC.

For all of these reasons and so many more, Vandagriff was recognized in April as the 2019 WC Alumnus of the Year.

"Timing is everything," said Brent Baker, WC's vice president of institutional advancement when he introduced Vandagriff during the April awards luncheon. "Could there have been a better time for Jon Vandagriff to win this award? In our sesquicentennial year as we look back on the history and heritage of this institution, could the selection committee have chosen anyone but the man known as Parker County's historian?" 📖

Vandagriff's book, "Weatherford College: The First 150 years," can be purchased at wc150.com/books.

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE AROUND CAMPUS



1. Nineteen students and instructors explored Iceland for seven days in May. Their adventure included learning to axe throw, a dip in a geothermal lagoon, a visit to the Oxarafoss waterfall where scenes from “Game of Thrones” were filmed, a glacier hike, whale watching and a visit to the rift zone where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates meet.

2. Two Weatherford College graduation ceremonies were held on May 11 in the Durant Auditorium at Weatherford High School. With August graduation petitions pending, the total number of degrees earned and certificates completed for the 2018-19 academic year are estimated at 949.

3. Dr. Tod Allen Farmer, president of Weatherford College, and Dr. Eric I. Bruntmyer, president of Hardin-Simmons University, signed

an articulation agreement between the two institutions on May 28. This agreement will make it easier for students to retain course credit when they move from one institution to the other.

4. Asana Michelle Onishi took home the top prize in the collegiate division of the inaugural WC International Piano Competition held April 27 in the Alkek Fine Arts Center. Onishi, a student at Northwestern University in Illinois, performed a piece by Joseph Hayden and another by Robert Schumann to take top honors. WC pianist Dr. Hyeyoung Song, who organized the piano competition, was named “Master Pianist” by Dr. Tod Allen Farmer, WC president, following her April 11 concert with violinist Swang Lin in the Alkek Fine Arts Center. Song has instructed piano at WC as artist-in-residence since 2007.



5. The WC Business Building was renamed the I.B. Hand Building during a ceremony on April 15. The WC Board of Trustees voted to name the building after Hand, a 1936 graduate of Weatherford College. As one of Weatherford's most prominent attorneys, Hand directed millions of dollars in donations to the college. Pictured are Bob and Carol Hand Ritter and Myrlan and Jim Coleman.

6. WC held its first advanced teen musical theatre camp in June, and after only two weeks of rehearsal the cast and crew of more than 40 youngsters produced a fantastic production of Disney's "Frozen Jr." in the Alkek Fine Arts Center.

7. President Farmer participated in the recent presidential inauguration of Dr. Mark A. Hussey at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Farmer was one of three presidential delegates to the inauguration, participating in multiple facets of the event, including a processional through the

heart of the campus. Hussey is the 20th president in TAMUK's history, while Farmer is the 20th president in WC's history.

8. Coyote basketball coaches mentored approximately 100 aspiring athletes the week of June 10 in a co-ed camp in the Graber Athletic Center. Kindergarten through sixth graders participated in a fundamentals camp while those in seventh through 12th grade were part of a player development camp.

9. Weatherford College's Respiratory Care Program has received the Distinguished RRT Credentialing Success Award from the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care for the fifth year in a row. There are more than 400 respiratory care programs in the United States, with an average of 75 programs receiving this distinction each year. Pictured are Christel Brenner, director of clinical education; Tonya Edwards, program director; and Jennifer Crocker, instructor.



MARCH, APRIL & MAY SESQUICENTENNIAL EVENTS



In April, the college hosted a reception honoring WC retirees in the Alkek Fine Arts Center. After some reminiscing, members of the group attended the “It’s All About the Music” concert. Pictured are 1. Nancy Edwards, Ralph Willingham, Joyce Benthall, Arthur Stockstill and Patty Boyette. 2. Betty Jo Graber and Merle Singleton. 3. Linda Bagwell, Dr. Shirley Chenault and Brent Baker. 4. John Fields, Fred Bruton, Dr. Rickey Harman and Myrna Fields.

5. The Human Services Provider/Substance Abuse Counseling Program held a reunion in March. Suzy Jary, Joe Reed, Kathy Boswell and Eddie White.

6. Weatherford Mayor Paul Paschall and members of the city council presented Dr. Tod Allen Farmer, WC president, with a proclamation declaring May 28 as Weatherford College Day in honor of the college’s sesquicentennial celebration.

7. The celebration continued at WC’s campuses in Granbury, Mineral Wells and Wise County with birthday parties and cookouts to celebrate 150 years of changing lives.

8. Fireworks lit up the night sky on April 27 following a baseball doubleheader at Williams Ballpark. The show was presented by the Coyote Baseball Booster Club and was sponsored by Clark Real Estate Group, D-Bat of Weatherford and Lightfoot Mechanical, Inc.

THANK YOU

to the following donors who gave recent gifts to the WC Foundation (as of June 11, 2019)

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WC Basketball Booster Club
WC Physical Sciences Department
WC Student Services Department
Weatherford Noon Lions Club
Jo Ellen Welborn
Dr. Lisa Welch
Tom Wells
WHS Class of 1953
Joe and Karen Wilkinson
Kiki Williams
Kathy Williams
Joy Wilson
Gail Wright

CLASS NOTES

Robert Boone ('15) graduated cum laude from the University of North Texas with a bachelor's degree in mechanical and energy engineering in May. After his team won first place in an international design project competition, Robert was hired by Lockheed Martin as a systems engineer.

Rhett Butler ('15) graduated from Texas Tech University in May with a bachelor's degree in construction engineering. After winning the Outstanding Student Award in the Whitacre College of Engineering, Rhett began working for Muckleroy & Falls as an assistant superintendent.

Sergeant Anne Carbone and **Corporal Clarissa Wolfe** were promoted to their current ranks with the Willow Park Police Department in a May ceremony. Both graduated from the WC Law Enforcement Academy—Anne in 1993 and Clarissa in 2016.

Hart Hering ('04), Head Baseball Coach at Brock High School, won his 100th victory as a head coach in March. Hart pitched for WC, Texas A&M and in the Cleveland Indians organization before entering the field of coaching.

Kelsey Moore ('12) earned a Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Communication and Information in May. In August, Dr. Moore will begin teaching at Texas Tech University's Department of Communication.

Morgan Rackle ('17) signed a professional softball contract with the Canadian Wild of Southern Illinois, a member of the National Pro Fastpitch League, in May. Morgan is the first former Coyote to sign with the NPFL. In her senior season at Austin Peay State University, she earned All-Region honors and was named to the

Google Cloud Academic All-America Division I Softball First Team.

Tammy Sronce graduated summa cum laude from Colorado State University in May with a bachelor's degree in communications. She is now seeking a master's degree in organizational leadership, also at CSU. Tammy was the first recipient of the Dixie Harrison Scholarship at WC.

Ron and Phelba Gilbert Wecas ('65) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 8.

Bob ('71) and **Sammie Gay Williams** ('70) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 20.

John and Barbara Young ('70) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 7.

DR. TARNOWIECKYI, FACULTY MEMBER OF THE YEAR



Dr. Scott Tarnowiecki, a Weatherford College history and social sciences instructor, was announced as the 2019 Faculty Member of the Year during the recent WC commencement ceremony.

“Our recipient demonstrates leadership, promotes scholarship and champions students and fellow faculty members,” said Suzie Jary, last year’s award recipient, as she introduced Tarnowiecki. “They have the capability to get the job done seamlessly and smoothly with respect and fun.”

Tarnowiecki has 20 years’ experience teaching in higher education, 10 of these at WC. He founded the Interdisciplinary Academic Conference and organizes the Distinguished Kent Miller and Quinton Reeves Lecture Series held each semester.

“When one looks at the list of previous recipients, being in that group is quite the honor,” Tarnowiecki said. “Thinking about my fellow faculty, many of whom were equally deserving of such recognition, being selected by them is quite humbling.

“While I like to think that my success at Weatherford College has been mine alone, I know that it is actually an expression of the great faculty, staff, and administrators who have helped me to be successful whether in the classroom or through other activities like the inaugural Interdisciplinary Academic Conference we held in the spring semester. It is also gratifying to know that the WC Foundation is so supportive of the faculty that they set aside a monetary award to demonstrate that support. I cannot thank them enough.”

GLENN TAKES ON VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISING ROLE AT WC



After 56 years as a local lender, Bob Glenn is moving into investments — helping donors invest in the lives of students.

Glenn, president of the Weatherford College Foundation, has retired from his position as executive vice president of Plains Capital Bank. In May he moved into his new office on the second floor of WC’s E.W. Mince Administration Building where he will spend two or three days each week volunteering as

a fundraiser for the foundation.

“Total retirement is not something I desire,” Glenn said. “So, after 56 years in Weatherford banking I wanted a new phase in my remaining years. As a native of Weatherford and Parker County, I wanted to give back to the community that has been so good to me. What better way than to be a part of Weatherford College to ensure that students who desire to gain an education have that opportunity.”

Glenn is a 1963 WC graduate and was named Alumnus of the

Year in 1997. He has served on the WC Foundation Board of Directors for 12 years and as president since 2014. He chaired the Foundation’s successful “The Time is Now for Your College” capital campaign from 2011 to 2013, which raised \$2.4 million on a goal of \$2 million.

“I am very excited that Mr. Glenn has joined our institutional advancement team,” said Dr. Tod Allen Farmer, president of Weatherford College. “He was a hometown bank executive for decades. He has the contacts and capacity to raise money and change the lives of both current and future WC students. I have deeply respected him for many years and consider it a great honor to serve with him.”

Brent Baker, vice president of institutional advancement, compared Glenn to another iconic WC fundraiser, Carlos Hartnett.

“The first development officer in our college’s history, Mr. Hartnett, was also a volunteer retiree,” Baker said. “Bob, like Carlos, is a force of nature in this community. There’s no better person to help us reach out into the community for the sake of our students.”

“I am truly excited to be a part of this great institution,” Glenn said. “I hope to assist in celebrating WC’s 150 years as the window and lighthouse of Weatherford and Parker County!”



Weatherford College: The First 150 Years by Jon Vandagriff

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ATHLETICS

YEAR IN REVIEW

The WC rodeo team enjoyed one of their most successful seasons to date, sending seven competitors--a school record--to the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming.

Three team members left Casper as national top 10 finishers: Leighton Berry (fifth in bareback riding), Bristan Kennedy (sixth in barrel racing) and Kasen Brennisse (seventh in tie down roping).

Women's teams fared well in National Junior College Athletic Association play, with basketball and softball qualifying for the postseason again.

The Lady Coyote basketball team advanced to the Region V Tournament after finishing third in the Northern Texas Junior College Athletic Conference. Their final record was 19-8.

The WC softball team hosted the Region V North Tournament, believed to be the first regional tournament ever hosted by the college. The Coyotes fared well at Stuart Field, advancing to the semifinals with a 34-21 overall record.

The baseball team finished at 31-23 overall and saw two former Coyotes selected in the Major League Baseball Draft in June: Jake Lyons of Oklahoma State (22nd round, Baltimore Orioles) and Mitchell Walters of Wichita State (35th round, Tampa Bay Rays).

The men's basketball team posted a 13-16 overall record with a roster of nine freshmen and three sophomores. Head coach Mark Osina was named to the NTJCAC Hall of Fame for his 22 years of coaching and 400-plus victories at WC.





UPCOMING 150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

PIONEER WEEK

October 5, 2019, Doss Heritage and Culture Center
October 8 & 9, 2019, Weatherford College

WC ALUMNI RODEO & REUNION

October 19, 2019, Sheriff's Posse Grounds

BELL RINGERS BALL

November 9, 2019, Ridglea Country Club

COYOTE CHASE RACE

November 16, 2019, Weatherford College

For more information, go to WC150.com