

THE HILLTOP

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Volume XV: Issue II

FALL 2015

FROM THE
HILLTOP
TO
**CAPITOL
HILL**



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It's hard to believe we have passed the half-way point for the fall semester. Each year I am amazed by how quickly the time passes but pleased by the wonderful things we continue to accomplish.

Several outstanding moments for the college are featured in this edition of *The Hilltop* including our Speaker Jim Wright Library dedication. A ceremony was held on campus Oct. 1 for the dedication, and among the attendees we were proud to welcome three of Jim's classmates – Mildred Beard, Wilda Sommer and David Robinson – from his time at WC from 1939 to 1941. We were also thrilled to have Speaker Wright's daughter, Ginger Wright McGuire, as an honored guest at this special event.

Our cover story features Clarin Gniffke, another WC alumna who has found her calling in politics. Gniffke has a history of obtaining her lofty goals in a short amount of time. At age 23, she has already completed her master's degree and works as a senior staff member for Congresswoman Kay Granger.

We also recognize another first for our Weatherford College athletic department. Former WC pitcher Jake Arrieta has already won 24 games this season, and is widely considered the best pitcher in Major League Baseball. His Chicago Cubs are now vying for a spot in the World Series, and Jake may very well be the difference-maker. We are proud of Jake and all of his accomplishments.

In closing, I continue to invite all those interested to visit WC for a tour of our beautiful campus. This is your college, and we look forward to the opportunity to share our accomplishments with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin J. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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FROM THE HILLTOP TO CAPITOL HILL

"THAT'S WHY WEATHERFORD WAS SO GREAT. IT WAS A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT. I COULD KNOCK OUT MY CORE CLASSES WITHOUT COMMITTING TO A FOUR YEAR DEGREE TRACK THAT I WASN'T SURE ABOUT."

- CLARIN GNIFFKE



by Crystal Brown

Clarin Gniffke is a senior staff member for U.S. Congresswoman Kay Granger, and she completed her master's degree last year – taking her final two courses overseas at Oxford University. And she's only 23.

Gniffke's education began on the road. Her father's job required him to travel frequently, so her parents, Cary and Carla Gniffke, decided to homeschool their two daughters.

"By the time I graduated high school I had been to Mexico and Canada and 47 of the states," Gniffke said. "It was really a unique experience to take school on the road and to find different places that we would be studying. We went to Mount St. Helens when we were talking about volcanoes. Stuff like that made it all come to life."

When they were home in Millsap, Gniffke and her sister, Cameron Baldus, would participate in co-op classes and their local 4H program.

"We were super involved in lots of extracurricular activities," Gniffke said. "It plugged me into the community more."

With only a 15 month age difference, Gniffke began taking classes at Weatherford College at the same time as her older sister in 2009.

"When I graduated high school I really didn't know what I wanted to do for college," she said. "That's why Weatherford was so great. It was a comfortable environment. I could knock out my core classes without committing to a four-year degree track that I wasn't sure about."

Gniffke quickly found she excelled at public speaking and won the Best Communicator Award for her speech class during her first semester at WC. She also stepped out of her comfort zone and tried classes like Nancy McVean's acting course.

"It was one of those off the wall things," she said. "I would have never wanted to step on stage, but I found I could do it. It was exciting and a huge confidence builder."

But it was her government class that sparked an intense interest, and in the summer of 2010, Gniffke was selected to an internship with Rep. Granger's office in Washington, D.C.

"That's what started my career path," she said. "My internship, not coming from a really politically involved background, gave me a jump in head first. You have to be aware of what votes are happening today. And suddenly you have to learn huge amounts of history to give capital tours, which I loved. I thrived in that environment."

Before leaving WC, Gniffke was selected as Miss Weatherford College and was contacted by Miss Texas Pageant organizers to participate in the state contest. She had never participated in a pageant, but she left the competition with a fitness award and the titles of Miss Congeniality and Back Stage Favorite.

Gniffke transferred from WC to Regent University in 2011. She lived on campus at the Virginia Beach private school and also attended Thomas Edison State College in New Jersey via online classes.

"I was trying to finish my bachelor's by May 2012, and to complete all of my classes I had to take on-campus full time and online full time," she said. "It was a rough year. I don't know why, but I had it
continues with Gniffke on page 10.

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.

LAST ISSUE'S DO YOU KNOW...

As many of our readers knew, this is Marjorie Black-Alkek, voted Best All-Around Girl in the 1944 Oak Leaf. Alkek is also the namesake of the Fine Arts Center.



FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Helen Blackwell Carter passed away July 22. She was 76 and worked at WC.

Reba Myrle Calhoun passed away Aug. 16. She was 21 days shy of her 98th birthday.

John "Buddy" Adron Elders of Weatherford passed away Sept. 8. He was 92.

Arlene Wossum Ford of Weatherford passed away Sept. 1. She was 91.

Barbara Smith Grogan of Irving passed away July 12. She was 93.

Gloria Joan Hendrix passed away Aug. 6. She was 76 and taught continuing education classes at WC.

Wandean Patton Kuhn of Little Rock, AR, passed away Aug. 20. She was 67.

Mattie Louise Maxwell passed away Aug. 7. She was 60.

Wendell L. Roy of Fort Collins, CO, passed away June 26, 2014.

Betty Jordan Smith of Parker County passed away Sept. 3. She was 83.

Howard Perkins Smith of Abilene passed away Aug. 16. He was 102.

Rhoda Pauline "Jackie" Herd Stockard of Denton passed away Sept. 16. She was 89.

WC DEDICATES SPEAKER JIM WRIGHT LIBRARY



WC President Dr. Kevin Eaton welcoming the large crowd. Alumni Wilda Sommer, David Robinson and Mildred Beard. Mayor Dennis Hooks, who presented a proclamation from the City of Weatherford. Ginger Wright McGuire and Jamie Bodiford Brinkley. Participants enjoying pieces of Jim Wright memorabilia.

Members of the community, current students and alumni gathered in front of the Weatherford College library Oct. 1, for the dedication of the building as the Speaker Jim Wright Library.

Wright, who passed away in May at age 92, graduated from WC in 1941 and was voted WC Alumnus of the Year in 1972. Three of his WC classmates attended the celebration: Mildred Beard, Wilda Sommer and David Robinson.

Wright's daughter, Ginger Wright McGuire was also present. She, along with Wright's long-time friend Jamie Bodiford-Brinkley, unveiled the plaque dedicating the building in Wright's name and listing several of his many achievements.

A display of Jim Wright memorabilia inside the library

catalogued Wright's life and career. While many of the items were on loan from TCU, the Doss Heritage and Culture Center, and Bill and Sue Coody, others are part of the WC permanent collection and will continue to be displayed in the library.

To honor his time as Speaker of the House, the dedication ceremony concluded with an audio clip from his final speech as Speaker of the House given May 31, 1989: "To be Speaker of the House of Representatives was the grandest opportunity that can come to any lawmaker anywhere in the western world ... I'm not a bitter man. The Lord has given me the privilege of serving this greatest institution on Earth a great many years. God bless this institution; God bless the United States." ❏

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE AROUND CAMPUS



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. & 2. New students participate in WC Live prior to the start of the fall semester to learn more about campus life, resources and opportunities at Weatherford College.

3. Weatherford College cheerleaders and basketball players visited Brookdale Senior Living Center in Weatherford for their family night event. The students are gearing up for WC's basketball season, which begins Saturday, Oct. 31.

4. Dr. Scott Tarnowiecky, WC Social Sciences Department Chair, published his journal entry in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical*

Society – “*Branded by the Lincolnites as Guerrillas*”: Adam Rankin Johnson, *Guerrilla Identity, and Irregular Warfare in the Lower Green River Valley in 1862*.

5. Weatherford College Foundation honored Dr. Shirley Chenault, retired WC Director of Resource Development and Kathy Boswell, WC's Dean of Health and Human Sciences, for their efforts in bringing the Title III Endowment to the foundation. At more than \$650,000, the endowment is now the foundation's second-largest scholarship fund behind the Marjorie Alkek Scholarship. Foundation President Bob



5.



6.



7.



8.

5. Glenn is pictured presenting commemorative plaques to the honorees.
 6. The Texas Workforce Commission presented a check for \$613,936 to Weatherford College for a Skills Development Fund Grant. This grant will provide 292 current PECOFacet employees in Mineral Wells and 61 new hires with job skills training during the next 18 months. Pictured are: David Setzer, Executive Director for Workforce Solutions North Central Texas; LeAnn Ridens, Global Employee Relations and Development Manager with PECOFacet; Ruth Hughs, Commissioner Representing Employers with the Texas Workforce Commission; and Dr. Kevin Eaton, President of Weatherford College.

7. Dan and Marsha Feely have continued their annual tradition of giving scholarship funds to the Weatherford College Foundation. In the last 10 years, the Feelys have given more than \$54,000 to the foundation to support the Michael Feely Memorial Scholarship. Dan is a member of the WCF Board of Directors.
 8. Weatherford College nursing students have been collecting items for Freedom House, the local non-profit which assists abused women and children through counseling and safe houses. Freedom House has recently purchased three additional transitions homes which need to be furnished.

THANK YOU

to the following donors who gave recent gifts to the WC Foundation (as of Oct. 6, 2015)

Dr. Arleen Atkins
Brent and Elizabeth Baker
Kathy Bassham
Mildred Beard
Diane Beaver
Boo-Ray's of New Orleans
Kathy Boswell
Dr. Richard and Pat Bowers
Christel Brenner
Crystal Brown
Andra and John Cantrell
Rebecca Ciolek
Sam Coody
Dr. David and Becky Daniel
Decatur Lions Club

Mrs. Marcia DeChiara
Becky and Matt DePuy
Marjorie Dome
Tonya Edwards
Stephenie Fields
Joy George
Beverly Gibbs
Bud and Betty Jo Graber
Pat and Sharon Hamilton
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Rusty Arnold Memorial
Scholarship Fund
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Kimberly Shubert
Charlsta, Karen and Kathy Smith
Brad and D'Linda Tibbitts
Joe and Patsy Tison
Rhonda and Leon Torres
Charles and Linda Wakefield
Chloe Walker
Michael B. Welborn
Jo Ellen Welborn
Dr. Mike and Avalon White
WHS Class of 1953
Ralph Willingham



ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN

Would you consider supporting students with an Annual Fund gift today?

You can give online today at www.wc.edu/about.giving-wc or mail a check to WC Foundation, 225 College Park Drive, Weatherford, TX 76086

For more than 140 years, WC has changed students' lives for the better. Thank you for helping us continue that tradition!



FORMER COYOTE LEADS CUBS TO THE NLCS

Jake Arrieta is taking Weatherford College baseball to new heights.

When *The Hilltop* went to press, Arrieta's masterful pitching had just led the Chicago Cubs to the National League Championship Series. His complete game shutout against the Pittsburgh Pirates in the wild card playoff was the talk of the baseball world, and he earned another win against the St. Louis Cardinals in game three of the American League Divisional Series.

He started the 2015 season strong, but was snubbed in the All-Star Game selection process. He proved the naysayers wrong after the break, turning in an unbelievable 0.75 earned run average, the lowest second-half ERA in the history of Major League Baseball.

His 22 regular season wins were the most in Major League Baseball, putting him squarely in the race for the National League Cy Young Award.

Arrieta came to Weatherford College in 2004-05 out of Plano East. He moved on to TCU and was then drafted into the Baltimore Orioles organization. He made his major league debut in 2010 and was traded to Chicago in 2013. 📸



Photo credit Steve Green/Chicago Cubs

CLASS NOTES

Several individuals with WC ties were honored at the 95th annual Weatherford Chamber of Commerce Banquet on Oct. 6. **Nancy Stuart**, WC Foundation Vice President, and her husband, **Richard**, won the James H. Doss Award. **Prissy Neely** ('67) won the Outstanding Citizen Award. Former student **Judy Flanagan** won the Athena Award. Holland Lake Nursing Center, led by Administrator and WC alumna **Donna Tillman**, won Big Business of the Year.

The Weatherford High School Ex-Students Awards Luncheon also

featured several former WC students. **Donna Dickinson**, **Dr. James Tatum** and **Fred Werner** were honored as Distinguished Alumni.

Several members of WC's first Occupational Therapy Assistant Program graduating class have been accepted into occupational therapy master's degree programs: **Wendy Boswell** and **Lee King** are now studying at Texas Woman's University and **Hanna Flowers** is at Howard Payne University.

John Adron "Buddy" Elders and his wife, **Jane**, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on Sept. 8.

Joe Morris was hired as Chief of the Horseshoe Bay Fire Department in July. Joe spent 29 years as an administrator in the Arlington Fire Department and earned his Fire Service Administration degree from WC in 2006.

Nathan P. Lee ('06) won the Graduate Dean's Medal upon graduation from Fresno State University in May. He earned a Master of Arts degree in Kinesiology with a 4.0 grade point average and also won the Outstanding Thesis Award for the Department of Kinesiology.

GNIFFKE *from page 3.*

in my mind that I wanted to get my degree before 20 so I could figure out what I wanted to do.”

She completed her Bachelor’s Degree in Communications in the spring of 2012 and moved to Capitol Hill where she worked for John Carter, U.S. Representative for Texas’ 31st Congressional District.

After only a few months on the job, Gniffke was in a horrible car accident. While sitting in traffic on the highway she was struck by another car traveling 55 mph. The accident required her to undergo several back surgeries and months of physical therapy, so she moved home to Millsap.

But Gniffke is not one to sit idle. While healing, she began taking classes online through Regent University for her master’s degree in Government and International Politics, and she stopped by Granger’s Fort Worth office to drop off her resume. She was quickly hired for a part-time position, which later turned into a full-time job, and she has worked her way up the ranks over the past three years.

“DC is a young city, but very cutthroat because everyone is trying to demand respect,” Gniffke said. “I love being in the district, but Parker County is my home. People root for you and want you to do well.”

Gniffke is now Granger’s Director of Outreach Operations and offices in Fort Worth. She acts as the eyes and ears for Granger in Texas’ 12th Congressional District, working with constituents from small towns in Parker and Wise counties to the big defense contractors in Fort Worth.

As for her future, she said her career path remains unseen.

“I don’t have a 20 year plan,” Gniffke said. “I don’t know that anyone ever does. Ultimately, no matter what job I’m in, no matter what career field I enter into, I’m just always going to strive for excellence. That’s my goal.”

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE BY THE NUMBERS

FALL 2015

TOTAL STUDENT BODY

5,496

GENDER



3,413 | 62%
FEMALE

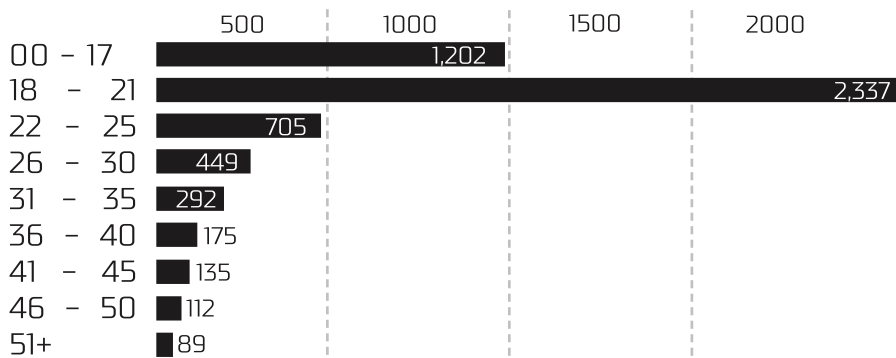


2,083 | 38%
MALE

STATUS OF STUDENTS



AGE



DUAL CREDIT STUDENTS



1,186

701 | 59%
FEMALE



485 | 41%
MALE

ETHNICITY

WHITE, NON-HISPANIC	75% 4,111	AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE	01% 42
HISPANIC	16% 900	INTERNATIONAL	01% 59
BLACK, NON HISPANIC	02% 154	ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	0.2% 8
TWO OR MORE ETHNICITIES	02% 112	UNKNOWN/NOT REPORTED	02% 67



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.WC.EDU
FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT WC.

COYOTE BASKETBALL

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE • 2015-2016 HOME SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENTS	TIME
10.31.15	PARIS	2:00 & 4:00 P.M.
11.4.15	PANOLA	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
11.10.15	WESTERN TEXAS	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
11.12.15	JARVIS JV	6:00 P.M. (M)
11.13.15	MOUNTAIN VIEW	3:30 & 5:30 P.M.
11.20.15	HOWARD	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
11.24.15	NEW MEXICO JC	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
12.5.15	CYM	1:00 P.M. (M)
1.5.16	RICHLAND	1:00 P.M. (M)
1.13.16	MCLENNAN*	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
1.19.16	GHP	3:30 P.M. (M)
1.20.16	COLLIN*	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
2.3.16	SW CHRISTIAN*	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.
2.15.16	GHP	3:30 P.M. (M)
2.20.16	HILL*	2:00 & 4:00 P.M.
2.24.16	RANGER*	5:30 & 7:30 P.M.

#32
VLATKO
GRANIC
 SOPHOMORE • POST
 Split, Croatia

ALL LISTED ARE HOME GAMES

*NTJCAC Conference games

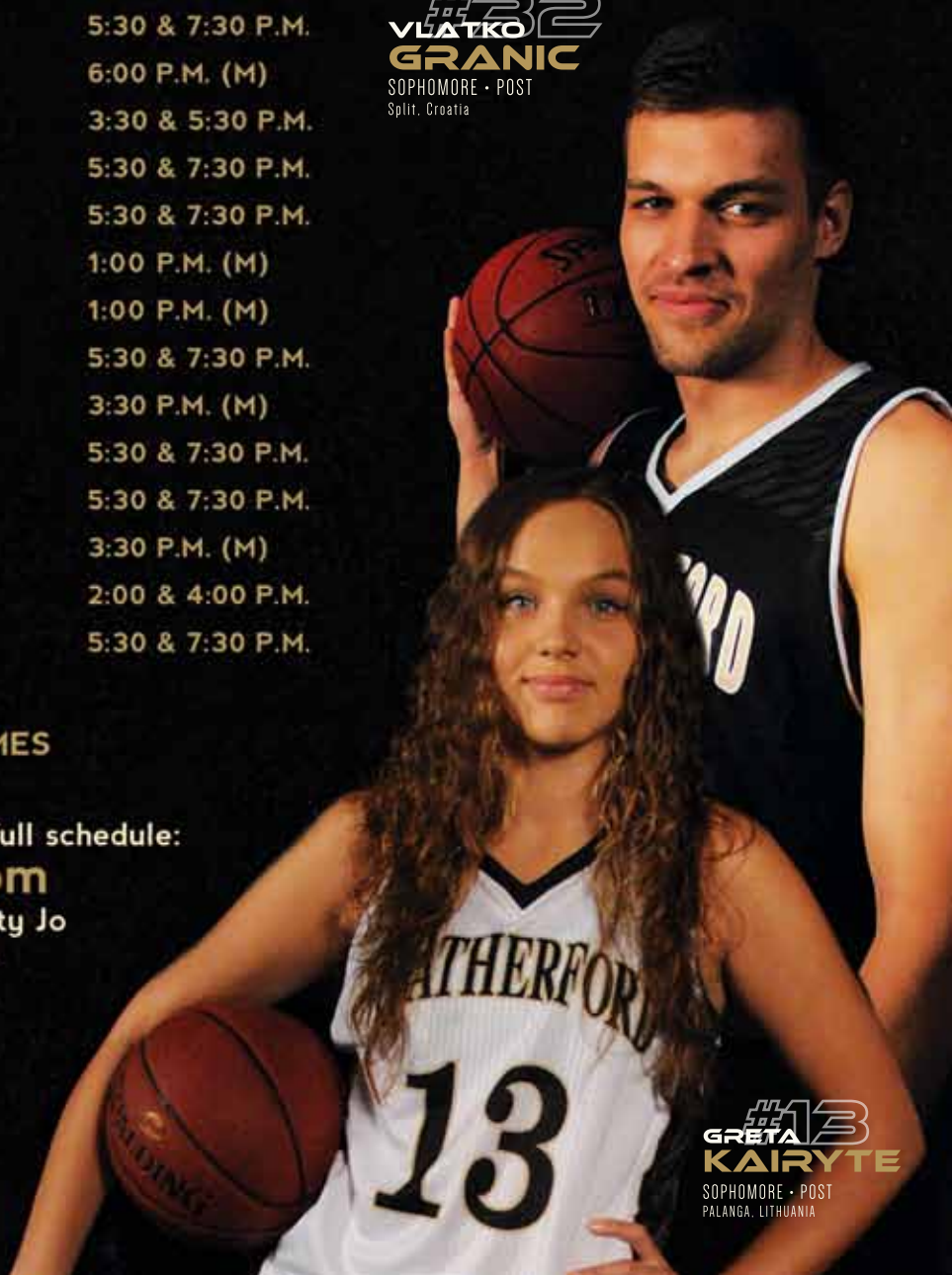
Check out our website for the full schedule:

www.wcathletics.com

Home games played in the Betty Jo Crumm Graber Athletic Center



#13
GRETA
KAIRYTE
 SOPHOMORE • POST
 PALANGA, LITHUANIA





FALL 2015 FINE ARTS EVENTS

Presented by the Fine Arts & Communications Department

DRAMA	<p>NOVEMBER 19 - 22 Musical: "9 to 5" Written by Dolly Parton Nov. 19 - 21 at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 22 at 2 p.m.</p>	
ART	<p>OCT. 23 - NOV. 4 DEC. 5 - APR 2016 Photography Show</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 11 - 29 Art Show NOVEMBER 16 Art Show Reception 6 p.m.</p>
MUSIC	<p>NOVEMBER 6 Jazz Band Concert 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 30 Handel's Messiah 7:30 p.m.</p>
	<p>NOVEMBER 7 Duo Azul Piano Concert 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>DECEMBER 4 Student Piano Recital • 1 p.m. Opera Workshop • 7:30 p.m.</p>
	<p>NOVEMBER 10 Choir Concert 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>DECEMBER 7 Student Voice Recital 1 p.m.</p>