

THE HILLTOP

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Volume XXIII : Issue I

SPRING 2023



COYOTE IN THE CORPS

WC GRAD IS A SHINING
STAR IN COLLEGE STATION

Photo by Aimee Lino

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This issue of The Hilltop highlights what Weatherford College is all about — student success. Due to the prolific expansion of academic, athletic, and fine arts programs, our students have more educational opportunities than ever before. The expansion of our university partnerships for both undergraduate transfer and graduate degree program admission has allowed more students than ever before to transfer and complete advanced degrees from prestigious universities seamlessly. Our newest partnership with the University of Texas at Arlington allows our students to earn a Ph.D. in



Nursing without leaving WC. Thanks to the support of our trustees, generous donors, and our entire stakeholder community, students are succeeding at unparalleled levels.

We also recognize our faculty and staff members of the year, as well as our distinguished alumni and alumna of the year winners in this Hilltop edition. We have such amazing students, employees, and stakeholders! Speaking of amazing, our generous donors shattered last year's record high levels of giving. The Weatherford College Foundation has awarded over \$600K in student scholarships this year. Our generous donors are truly changing lives at a record pace.

I hope that you enjoy reading the Spring 2023 Hilltop. It is such a privilege to serve with the dynamic stakeholder group at Weatherford College. You are collectively propelling this noble institution forward for the benefit of our students, our service area communities, and society at large. As both a former student and a current president, I want to personally thank you for your support of Weatherford College.

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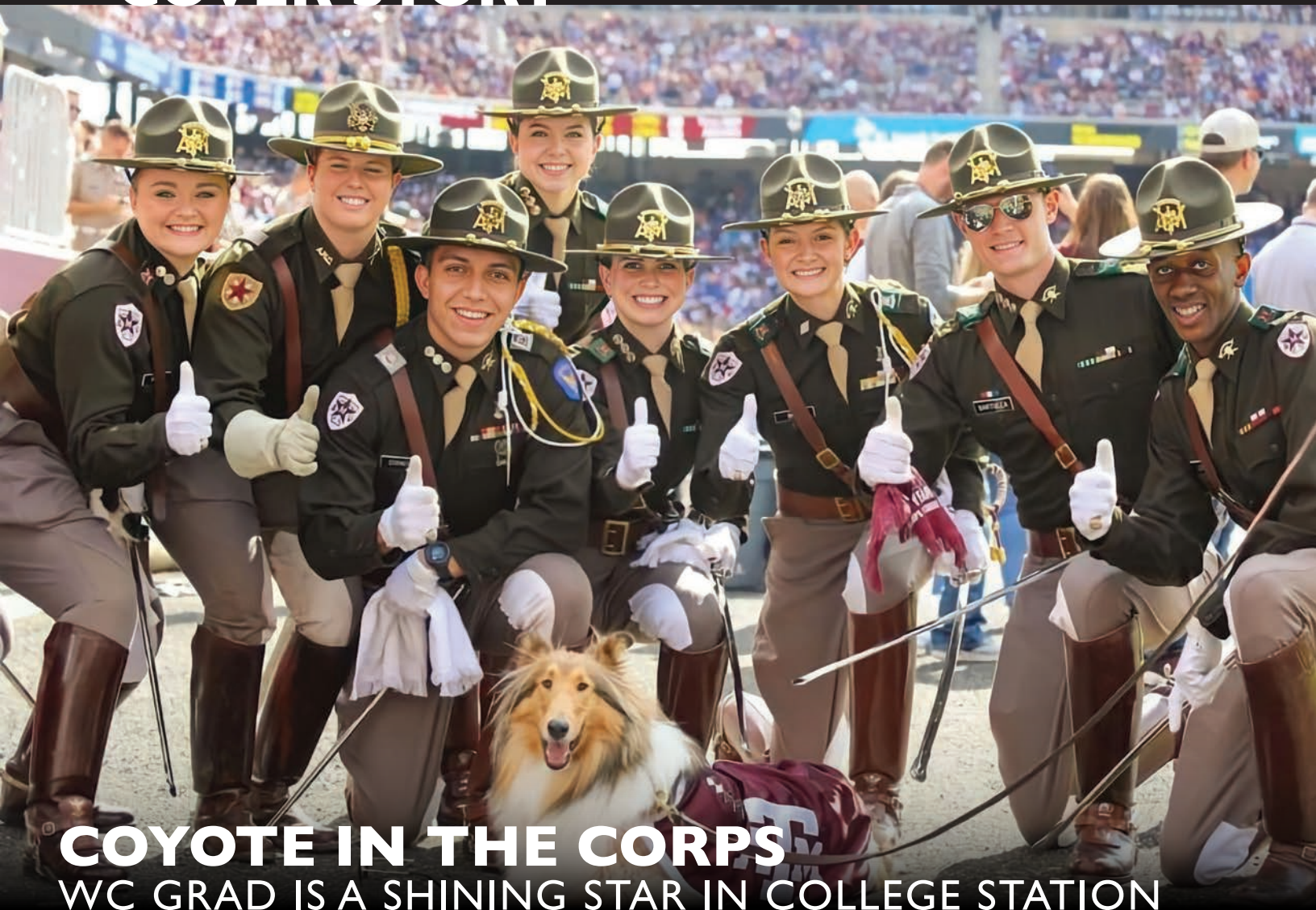
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COVER STORY



COYOTE IN THE CORPS WC GRAD IS A SHINING STAR IN COLLEGE STATION

by Crystal Woerly

Ashtyn Sweatt grew up hearing her dad's stories of his days at Texas A&M University, and she knew that's where her educational path would lead her. But Weatherford College was an important step in her higher education journey.

When Sweatt graduated from Peaster High School in 2020 as a dual credit WC student, the pandemic was in full swing. It didn't make sense to head straight to a university where she would be relegated to her dorm for most of the day when she could attend in-person classes at WC.

"That decision paid off in many aspects," Sweatt said. "I was able to graduate after only 10 months with my associate's degree, cum laude and on the Dean's List."

During her time at WC, Sweatt said Dr. Leon Abbott left a big impression on her.

"He can be credited with introducing me to my love for psychology," she said. "He was always very interesting to listen to, full of stories and is still one of my favorite professors."

Abbott described Sweatt as an exemplary student he will always remember and thanked her for reminding him why he is an educator.

"My experience with her as a teacher was significant," Abbott said. "I would purposefully just give her half the word, and she was motivated enough to go find the other part of the word. It was not difficult to motivate her; she motivated herself. I wish I could buy stock in her now because she is going to make the world a better place."

While at WC, Sweatt was employed as a student worker in the President's Office where she completed clerical work and assisted with event setups.

"This helped prepare me for my time at A&M," Sweatt said, describing her leadership role now in the Corps of Cadets. "In my job as executive officer, second in the chain of command for my outfit of 40 people, I do a lot of the bookkeeping. I also got an internship at a local law firm where I have similar duties as the ones I had back at WC."

continues with Coyote in the Corps on page 13.

MEMORIES



1957



1966



1963



1970s



1985



2013

Betty Jo Graber, 90, passed away January 15. Graber coached and taught at WC for 35 years and was later a member of the WC Board of Trustees. She pioneered the creation of the women's division of the NJCAA which came to fruition in 1975. She was in the inaugural classes for two halls of fame: the NJCAA Women's Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 1999. She was also team manager for the 1984 USA Olympic basketball team that won gold.

FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

Urela Barnett ('82), 90, of Jacksboro, passed away March 11.

Michael Floyd Barrett, 60, of Fort Worth, passed away November 17.

Brooke Allison Benton, 42, of Fort Worth, passed away February 17.

Jerry Wendal Clinton, 84, of Weatherford, passed away March 8.

Brenda Joyce Fulfer ('05), 72, of Lipan, passed away December 20.

Betty Jo Graber, 90, passed away January 15.

Patricia "Pat" Martin, 75, of Weatherford, passed away December 10.

Allan Jay Pye, 64, of Longview, passed away December 21.

Charlsta Mae Smith, 102, of Weatherford, passed away December 4.

Darrell Loyd Wadlington, 67, of Weatherford, passed away November 4.

Mary Ellen Whitsitt, 93, of Weatherford, passed away November 6.

Janel Lee Wilson, of Fort Worth, passed away November 26.

WC ANNOUNCES 2023 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS



Weatherford College has announced Parker County Attorney John Forrest as the 2023 Alumnus of the Year and Distinguished Alumni Award honorees Harvey Catchings and David G. Rogers.

A Parker County native, Forrest graduated from Weatherford High School in 1987. He earned more than 30 hours at Weatherford College and went on to complete a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his law degree from St. Mary's University.

Forrest was elected as Parker County Attorney in 2001, a position he has held for the past 22 years. He oversees the criminal prosecution of misdemeanors, the domestic violence unit, the child protective services unit, mental health cases, civil cases, and criminal and civil appeals.

He has received the Outstanding Citizen Award from the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce and is the past president of both the Weatherford Rotary Club and Optimist Club.

Additional community service by Forrest includes serving on the boards of the United Way of Parker County, Freedom House, the Children's Advocacy Center of Parker County, and the Weatherford ISD Education Foundation.

Catchings is believed to be the only former Coyote to play in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

A native of Jackson, Mississippi, Harvey attended WC on a basketball scholarship in 1969-70 before transferring to Hardin-Simmons University, where he completed his bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences.

Catchings played in the NBA for 11 seasons for the Philadelphia 76ers, the New Jersey Nets, Milwaukee Bucks and the Los Angeles Clippers. He played in three Eastern Conference Finals and one NBA Finals. He later broadcast Chicago Bulls games on the radio.

He also worked in mortgage lending and owns a promotional products company. After his basketball career, Catchings served as a national spokesperson for the NBA's "Stay in School" program, traveling the country to speak to junior high and high school students.

Rogers graduated from WC in 1976 with a perfect grade point average and transferred to Texas A&M where he completed both his bachelor's and master's degrees, graduating summa cum laude.

He was awarded the prestigious Henry Ross Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement and was a member of the honor fraternity Gamma Sigma Delta.

Rogers started his career as an agriculture investment consultant with MetLife. He is now the regional president and senior vice president of all commercial real estate lending for West Texas National Bank in Alpine.

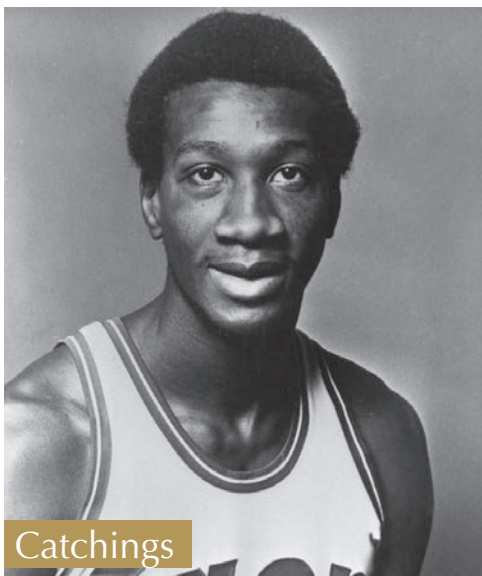
Before moving to Alpine, Rogers was an active member of the Weatherford Noon Lions Club and served as lieutenant and corral boss of the Parker County Sheriff's Posse. He also served on the Parker County Homebuilders Association Board of Directors.

He has served as president of the Sul Ross State University Foundation Board, an advisory council member of the Center for Big Bend Studies, and he served two terms as president of the Alpine Lions Club.

These former Coyotes were honored at the annual Alumni Awards Luncheon on Friday, April 14. If you were unable to attend the event, a video of the awards ceremony can be found on the college's YouTube channel located by scanning the QR code below.



Scan QR code to go to the WC Youtube Channel.



ST. CLAIR, MESSINGER HONORED AS PROFESSORS EMERITI



Weatherford College recently named two recently retired instructors as professors emeriti.

Marilyn St. Clair was recognized with the title in October following a nomination by Janetta Kruse, dean of WC's Workforce Education department.

For more than 42 years, St. Clair taught accounting, business and computer application courses.

"During her many years as department chair, she was diligent in keeping current with trends in her field, developing course schedules, initiating and monitoring budget and equipment requests and supervising fellow faculty members," Kruse said. "Teaching was her passion, and it showed in how she connected to and treated all her students. She worked diligently to support their success every way she could."

St. Clair began her teaching career at WC in 1978 and fostered the college's dive into offering a microcomputer degree in the early 1980s and the development of a separate computer science department which she led for many years.

"Marilyn taught and led the Business Computer Information Systems department through many changes in administration and evolving times," Kruse said. "She always did it with a passion and desire to serve the students the best way possible to prepare them for careers to be successful. She always stood her ground and fought for what she felt was best for her students, programs and faculty."

St. Clair was honored as the Faculty Member of the Year in 2002 and received the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Award in 2009.

Shortly after her recognition, St. Clair penned her own nomination for Dr. Jim Messinger, also to receive the distinction of professor emeritus. He was recognized in February for his 24 years of teaching business and computer science at WC.

"He is a highly-dedicated professional who knows how to motivate his students to strive for excellence," St. Clair said. "Dr. Messinger is the apex of a great professor – a professor who exemplifies the qualities we look for as an outstanding educator, mentor and leader. He is a passionate and dedicated educator with a deep commitment to closing the academic achievement gap and helping all his students achieve at high levels."

Messinger taught hardware, software and logic classes for the BCIS department and wrote the textbook for the logic design course published by Scott Jones, Inc. in 2005. He also taught pharmacological math for the nursing department and several classes in the business department.

He served on the Faculty Advisory Council for five years, two of those as president, and was a Faculty Senate member for ten years. He also sponsored several student clubs and organizations and has been the driving force behind the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells.



WC APPROVED TO OFFER BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION

Weatherford College has received staff-level approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences Degree in Early Childhood Education and Teaching. The new program is WC's fourth bachelor's degree.

This program is designed for students who have already completed an associate's degree and who wish to further their education and career opportunities. The program will be offered in a hybrid online format, which will allow students to complete coursework online while also participating in hands-on learning experiences and internships.

"This program will open doors for students of this generation and those to come," said Shannon Stoker, WC education department chair. "Students will have access to internships in the community and the ability to reshape communal narratives as they complete their coursework and enter the workforce."

This program will prepare individuals to work with children from newborns through the sixth grade. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, the need for teachers for this age group will increase by more than 30 percent over the next 10 years.

"We are thrilled to be able to offer this bachelor's degree program in education

to our students," said WC President Tod Allen Farmer. "There is a critical shortage of teachers throughout Texas, and Weatherford College is now poised to help close that gap by producing exceptional teachers. WC is now one of only two community college districts in the state authorized to offer this degree program."

Dr. Leslie Hancock was recently hired as the program director and will start in that position on May 15. She holds a Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, Literary and Language, and she has years of experience as an instructor in courses for emergent educators.

Photo courtesy of WISD.



**INTERESTED IN GETTING YOUR BACHELOR'S IN EDUCATION?
SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND
APPLY TODAY!**

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE AROUND CAMPUS



1. The annual Jack Harvey Academy of Exemplary Teachers luncheon was held in February, recognizing 43 exceptional educators for their work in the K-12 classroom.

2. WC's EMS Academy now has an ambulance simulator expanding its training capabilities. A public grand opening with a tour of their training area was held in March.

3. WC hosted a night of food and fun on Fat Tuesday for the college's first-ever Mardi Gras celebration. Nick Pugh took home first prize in the gumbo contest, and community members enjoyed a variety of New Orleans-inspired food and jazz.

4. Coyote baseball athletes visited Austin Elementary for story time.

5. The City of Weatherford repainted the water tower located on the southern end of the WC campus and updated the college's logo.

6. Student ambassadors dropped off a donation of toiletry bags at Freedom House for clients of the domestic violence and sexual assault assistance non-profit.

7. March ended with the annual Mike Brown Memorial Horse Judging Contest and career development events competition. This year's CDE brought in the largest group of ag students ever from across the state, with more than 500 entries in horse judging alone.

8. The foundation of the new Durant Hall is now in place. The project is scheduled for completion during the first quarter of 2024 and will include 57,000 square feet, four stories and 116 beds reserved for WC Honors Program students and athletes. The new facility will also include a weight room, cardio room, a multipurpose room for activities like yoga and Pilates, and an expansive balcony. It is designed to be expanded in the future.



9. Kelly Staub, director of WC's sonography program, was recognized as the 2022 Faculty Member of the Year at the annual employee award dinner held in December.

10. Rosie Villazana was recognized as the 2022 Staff Member of the Year. Rosie is a familiar face in the cafeteria and takes care of students like they were her own.

11. WC's student life department has beefed up activities and joined the City of Weatherford adult softball league. As of the first week of April, they were tied for fifth out of 12 teams and hoping to advance to the community playoffs.

12. Fine arts students performed their original content in Texas Hall for the spring songwriters showcase.

13. Dr. Greg Trickett spoke "On the need for virtue" at WC's fifth annual Interdisciplinary Academic Conference. This year's theme Shaking the Tree: Women in Revolution, showcasing the vital role of women in academics, medicine, law enforcement and all aspects of a forward-thinking society.

SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENTS



Brett & Alesia Armstrong Wiggs Scholarship



Tim & Tiffany Clark



Gary & Linda Snow

Bruce and Laura Wiggs have established a new permanent scholarship endowment with the Weatherford College Foundation, the Brett and Alesia Armstrong Wiggs Scholarship. Pictured are (left to right) WC Foundation President Brent Gough, Alesia and Brett Wiggs, Bruce and Laura Wiggs, Guy Wiggs and WC President Tod Allen Farmer. Tim and Tiffany Clark have also established a new endowment for scholarships and Gary and Linda Snow recently tripled their WC endowment.

UTA ARTICULATION AGREEMENT



Weatherford College and the University of Texas at Arlington solidified an articulation agreement in January for graduates of WC's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to enter the master's program at the Arlington university.

Like WC's BSN program, the Master of Science in Nursing at UTA is also available online, making classes more accessible to students.

"Our bachelor of science in nursing graduates now have the ability to earn a master's or doctoral degree in nursing without ever leaving Parker or Wise Counties," said WC President Tod Allen Farmer. "This agreement will provide our students seamless access from Weatherford College to UTA to further their educational goals. We're very pleased to open this pathway to UTA and the University of Texas System."

Students meeting the academic standards set forth by UTA will be eligible for early decision admission during their final semester at WC into UTA's MSN program (minimum grade point average of 3.0 required) or into their BSN to Doctor of

Philosophy in Nursing program (minimum GPA of 3.5).

"Our partnership with Weatherford College is an important step in filling the nursing shortage that impacts Texas and our nation," said UTA President Jennifer Cowley. "We are committed to partnerships that help us in advancing nursing education and are confident that students entering into our nursing program will go on to provide exceptional care in their communities."

WC recently expanded the Alesia Armstrong Wiggs School of Nursing by adding evening and weekend cohorts in Weatherford and in Wise County. For more information on the Wiggs School of Nursing or other health science programs, visit wc.edu.

Champions (\$50,000 and above)

Vickie & Jerry Durant, Richard & Nancy Stuart

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President Farmer, Sweatt, grandfather Dan Carney



COYOTE IN THE CORPS *from page 3.*

Once at Texas A&M, Sweatt threw everything she had into being an Aggie. She first toured the university in her junior year of high school and was introduced to the Corps of Cadets, which only increased her passion to become an Aggie.

“Seeing 2,500 people all in unison and the kindness I received from the cadets was something I knew I wanted,” Sweatt said. “Hearing the cadets talk about how much each of the traditions meant to them and the discipline of the organization was something I had to be a part of.”

As a transfer student, Sweatt was able to move up the ranks quickly to reach senior status, or a Zip, in only 10 months.

Sweatt was also accepted into the Traditions Council, the group that preserves and promotes the Texas A&M traditions including the bonfire and midnight yell. As part of the council, she served the families and friends of fallen Aggies on the Silver Taps committee.

“Standing behind the seated family as they watch the Ross Volunteers march in, fire the 21-gun-salute, listen to the special rendition of taps—called Silver Taps—play, listen to the bell tower, and watch as the study body departs Academic Plaza is enough to send chills down anyone’s spine,” Sweatt said.

Most recently, Sweatt was accepted to serve as a host at Muster, an annual event held on April 21 where Aggies gather to honor the fallen from that year.

Sweatt will graduate with her bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in psychology on May 11. Following graduation, she plans to stay in College Station working at a law firm while preparing for her LSAT.

“I am forever grateful for my time at Weatherford College,” Sweatt said. “I will always be proud to say that Weatherford College and the people there laid the foundation for my time at Texas A&M and everything that comes after.” 📖

STAUB APPOINTED TO JRC-DMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kelly Staub, Weatherford College’s diagnostic medical sonography program director, is now one of 12 professionals on the Board of Directors for the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

The JRC-DMS is responsible for reviewing sonography programs across the United States and making accreditation recommendations to the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Program, the largest accreditor in the health science field.

Members of this board represent different sponsoring organizations including the American College of Radiology, the

American Society of Radiologic Technologists, the American College of Cardiology and the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (SDMS).

Staub has served on the nominating committee with the SDMS, the largest professional membership organization for sonographers in the world, for the past year. She has been a member of the SDMS for many years and was asked last September to represent the organization on the JRC-DMC board.

“I have already learned so much and have been able to develop many new relationships,” Staub said.

ATHLETIC UPDATE



Since the last version of The Hilltop was published in the fall, WC has captured a conference championship, had three teams in the national rankings and is now preparing to host two regional tournaments.

The inaugural season of WC volleyball could not have gone much better, as the Coyotes won the Northern Texas Junior College Athletic Conference championship in their first season, finishing 21-8 overall and 13-2 in league play. Kailee May won the Coach of the Year Award in the conference and WC is set to host the regional tournament in November of 2023.

The WC men's basketball team had their best season in 15 years, finishing 23-8 overall and third in the NTJCAC, advancing into the second round of the Region V Tournament. Chris Lewis' team produced two all-region and six all-conference honorees.

When this publication went to press, the WC baseball team and softball team were both in the national rankings. Baseball was leading the conference and the softball team was in third place in early April, with both teams poised for the playoffs. The baseball team will host the Region V Tournament

for the first time at Roger Williams Ballpark May 12-16.

And last but not least, after winning the 2022 women's national championship and another men's individual title, the WC rodeo team is poised for a run in 2023. Johnny Emmons' team is vying for more titles as the regular season winds down and the College National Finals Rodeo gets going in June.

For more information on WC sports, go to wcathletics.com.



Scan QR code to view full athletic schedule.

WC SIGNS FIRST “4+1” AGREEMENT FOR MASTER’S PROGRAM



Weatherford College has inked its latest articulation agreement with Our Lady of the Lake University for students completing WC’s Bachelor of Applied Arts and Science in Organizational Leadership.

While working on their BAAS degree, WC students can enroll in Master of Science in Organizational Leadership courses from OLLU that will count toward both degrees.

This arrangement will allow students to complete their master’s degree in as little as one year after graduating with their bachelor’s degree in what is known as a 4+1 program.

WC President Tod Allen Farmer and OLLU President Abel A. Chávez signed the agreement on March 24 in San Antonio.

“WC students may now earn a bachelor’s degree in organizational leadership and an MBA in a total of five years without ever leaving Weatherford College,” Farmer said. “Our students’ educational opportunities continue to expand.”

OLLU’s program is offered in a “hyflex” format in which the professor is physically located on an OLLU campus and students can either attend in person or remotely through video technology.

This format will allow WC students to attend classes and to continue into the master’s program without having to relocate while also enabling them to interact with and learn from the faculty members and their classmates in a live, real-time setting.

The Master of Science in Organizational Leadership at OLLU is a weekend degree program with classes that meet every other Saturday. In addition to studying leadership with interdisciplinary professors and student colleagues, students benefit from a curriculum that stresses ethics, servant leadership and stewardship.

The application period for WC’s BAAS in Organizational Leadership program is currently open. Learn more at wc.edu/baas.

CLASS NOTES

Clay Baker has been named the new head coach for the Henderson High School football team.

April Blanton accepted a new position as a 911 operator for the Fort Worth Police Department.

Jordan Briggs’ horse “Rollo” was named the overall winner for the PRCA/AQHA Horse of the Year.

Casey Cromwell, former WC softball player, joined Washington University in St. Louis as the head softball coach.

Pat Hamilton (’71) has retired from Plains Capital Bank in Weatherford after 44 years of service.

Shelley Jeffroy was named as the 2023 Texas Teacher of the Year. Jeffroy, an Irving ISD teacher, was the keynote speaker for the 2023 Jack Harvey Academy of Exemplary Teachers.

Beth Jillson (’99) won the Coach of the Year Award in the Lone Star Conference for women’s basketball. She is head coach at Texas Woman’s University—the Pioneers (26-6) set school records for most wins and fewest losses in a season.

Keith Loftis was featured as a saxophonist on two recordings nominated for 2023 Grammy Awards: “The Evening: Live at the Apparatus” by The Baylor Project, nominated for Best Jazz Vocal Album; and “When Christmas Comes Around”

by Kelly Clarkson, nominated for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album.

Brendan Marchand (’20) is now a reporter for the Wise County Messenger.

Shaun Martin, WC distinguished alumnus, won another Grammy Award in February. His band, Snarky Puppy, won Best Contemporary Instrumental Album, making it the band’s fifth Grammy.

Elysia Worcester (’12) and Nick Gilley were married in November.

Gary Young (’06), has accepted the position of fire chief for the City of Copperas Cove.



REGISTER FOR SUMMER & FALL CLASSES!
Scan QR code for registration dates and information.

FINE ARTS AT WC



The Spring and Summer Fine Arts Seasons are here.
Check out the online schedule so you don't miss a thing.



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