

# UTEP

THE LHAKHANG

UTEP'S  
CULTURAL  
JEWEL

////////////////////////////////////

CLASS ACTS

ALUMNI IN  
ACADEMIA

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PEACE CORPS

ADVENTURE  
OF A  
LIFETIME



*Diana*  
**NATALICIO**

AMONG TIME'S 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL  
PEOPLE IN THE WORLD





## Mow-Town

Nugget, the unofficial mascot of TCM Day, grazed outside the Engineering and Sciences Complex during a break from the March 18, 2016 events that celebrated The University of Texas at El Paso's roots as an engineering school. Hundreds of students participated in activities such as the annual whitewashing of the "M" on the mountain across from Sun Bowl Stadium, the kissing of the 1,000-pound Blarney stone in the garden outside the engineering dean's suite, and a team mining challenge. Nugget indulged his many fans who requested selfies. Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre.

# Her TIME to Shine

UTEP PRESIDENT  
AMONG WORLD'S  
100 MOST  
INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

Diana Natalicio's work at The University of Texas at El Paso over the past 45 years has been all about passion, determination and seeking to make a difference in the lives of residents of the Paso del Norte region. Her hard work and leadership is now being recognized on a global scale.

**T**IME magazine named President Natalicio to the 2016 TIME 100, its annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world. The list, now in its 13th year, recognizes the activism, innovation and achievement of the world's most influential individuals.

"I am both humbled and deeply honored to have been named one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in the world," President Natalicio said. "The work that I have done would not have been possible without the creativity and courage of UTEP faculty and staff, the high aspirations and hard work of our talented students, and the support of our many alumni and friends, all of whom have enabled UTEP to successfully combine academic and research excellence with genuine access and equity.

"The only doctoral/research university in the United States that serves a predominantly Mexican-American student population, UTEP is known for successfully developing innovative strategies that level the playing field for students from historically underrepresented cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. This 2016 TIME 100 recognition shines a spotlight on the capacity of urban and minority-serving universities to increase both undergraduate and graduate student success in U.S. higher education. I am grateful to TIME for amplifying UTEP's story and our leadership role."

As TIME Editor Nancy Gibbs has said of the list, "The TIME 100 is a list of the world's most influential men and women, not its most powerful, though those are not mutually exclusive terms. While power is certain, influence is subtle. As much as this exercise chronicles the achievements of the past year, we also focus on figures whose influence is likely to grow, so we can look around the corner to see what is coming."

President Natalicio was recognized in the TIME 100 "Leaders" category among 31 global icons including U.S. President Barack Obama, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande.

"President Natalicio's impact on UT El Paso is immeasurable," said University of Texas System Board of Regents Chairman Paul L. Foster. "She has spent more than four decades at this institution and has dedicated her life and her unparalleled talent and intellect toward its success. She has led some of the nation's largest and most influential higher education organizations and committees, and her opinion is sought after by policymakers, legislators and university leaders across the nation and beyond. That she is one of the world's most influential people will come as no surprise to her peers around the nation, nor to her students and colleagues at UTEP and the UT System. We are thrilled that TIME is recognizing her for her extraordinary accomplishments."

UTEP's leader for the past 28 years,

and the longest-serving president of a U.S. public research university, President Natalicio has guided UTEP's transformation into a national model for educating a 21st century student population.

"I could not be more proud of President Natalicio for this much-deserved distinction," said University of Texas System Chancellor William H. McRaven. "Influential' is the perfect word to describe a career educator, and there is no doubt that President Natalicio's life work has opened up a world of limitless possibilities for thousands upon thousands of students. President Natalicio is a national leader in higher education, particularly for her work with first-generation college students, and her innovative approaches have been replicated with great success across the country. She models leadership and dedication, and I applaud TIME for recognizing her remarkable contributions."

Recognizing the critical importance of pre-college preparation to students' enrollment and success at UTEP, Dr. Natalicio has been a driving force in creating community partnerships to raise the aspirations and educational attainment of all young people in the Paso del Norte region and, through a deep commitment to both access and excellence, to provide them authentic and stimulating educational opportunities. She is a leading voice in the national conversation on

Continued on page 4



higher education, and an advocate for reaching past borders to develop robust international collaborations.

"I warmly congratulate Dr. Natalicio for her selection as one of TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People, a testimony to the deep and lasting ties that she has fostered between the United States and Mexico along the El Paso-Juárez border," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Roberta Jacobson. "At a time when we have placed academic exchange and regional workforce development at the top of our bilateral agenda, we thank Dr. Natalicio and her team at The University of Texas at El Paso for their continuing leadership in receiving more Mexican students each year than any other U.S. university. Her lifelong commitment to open educational opportunities for future leaders on both sides of the border, along with her dedication to research and innovation, has made a difference to our countries and to the North American region."

Sarita E. Brown, president of Washington, D.C.-based Excelencia in Education, said, "Thanks to TIME magazine, the world will now discover what some of us have been lucky to know for years. Diana Natalicio is a deeply committed and compelling leader of great

influence. Most compelling is that she chooses to use her influence to advance educational opportunities for students in the Juárez/El Paso region and to advocate for low-income and Latino students throughout the country. Hopefully future educational and civic leaders will be inspired to follow her lead."

President Natalicio joined UTEP in 1971 as a visiting assistant professor in the department of modern languages. When she began, she was reminded of her own apprehensions as a first-generation college student.

"I saw in many of my students' faces the same self-doubt that I had felt, wondering 'Am I really college material?'" President Natalicio recalled. "Within weeks of joining UTEP, I was sure that I had found a place where I could do for many other young people what [St. Louis University] had done for me, a place where I could pay back by creating opportunities for those following in my footsteps."

During her long and distinguished career with the University, Dr. Natalicio has served as professor of linguistics, chair of the modern languages department, dean of liberal arts, and vice president for academic affairs. She was named President in 1988, and under her leadership UTEP

has developed into a model public research university committed to both access and excellence. Enrollment has grown from 14,971 to 23,500 students who reflect the demographics of the region from which nearly 90 percent of them come. Today, 80 percent of UTEP's students are Hispanic and 55 percent of them are first in their families to attend college. UTEP's annual research expenditures have grown from \$6 million to more than \$90 million per year, and doctoral programs increased from one to 21 during this same period.

"Through my many years at UTEP, I've been privileged to participate in the transformation of many thousands of lives, and my life's work has become entirely focused on increasing access for all young people – particularly the nearly 40 percent of UTEP students who report a family income of \$20,000 a year or less – and ensuring their engagement in the same kinds of enhanced educational experiences offered to their peers in more affluent settings."

President Natalicio's impact has affected not only the students for whom she has worked so hard, but also the faculty and staff she has inspired.

"I am extremely proud and honored to serve under President Natalicio and



*"Through my many years at UTEP, I've been privileged to participate in the transformation of many thousands of lives, and my life's work has become entirely focused on increasing access for all young people..."*



help fulfill her vision of access and excellence," said Ann Branan Horak, Ph.D., UTEP director of religious studies. "I love teaching at UTEP because I know we are making a real difference in the lives of our students and our community. Her vision has been instrumental in making us the University we are today and the recognition is well deserved. She is an amazing role model for so many people – so many she will never even know or realize how she has influenced. And she's a role model for me of staying true to what I believe and working hard to make it a reality!"

President Natalicio's sustained commitment to provide all residents of the Paso del Norte region access to outstanding higher education

opportunities has helped make UTEP a national success story. She would say it has been a team effort, but every team needs a good leader.

"During a lifetime, you're lucky if you meet a handful of exceptional leaders; Dr. Natalicio happens to be one of those leaders that I have had the privilege of meeting in my lifetime," said Renard Johnson, president and CEO of Management and Engineering Technologies International Inc., or METI, and a UTEP Distinguished Alumnus. "Her abilities as a leader and her power to ignite passion for education has changed the course of The University of Texas at El Paso and the El Paso community forever."

**-Jenn Crawford**

# UTEP

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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### **36** Class Acts

UTEP prepares the best and brightest to be leaders in their fields. Sometimes, these leaders choose to use their talents to teach — and inspire — the next generation.



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### UTEP's Cultural Jewel

All who enter the Lhakhang are enamored by its beauty and remarkable detailing, but what does the Lhakhang tell us about Bhutanese culture, and what does it mean to UTEP?

# happening on campus

CAMPUS, RESEARCH, ARTS, ATHLETICS AND OTHER UNIVERSITY UPDATES

## Campus

### Piper Professor

Math Professor Wins Prestigious Award

UTEP continued its strong tradition of winning one of Texas' most prestigious academic awards.

Professor of Mathematical Sciences Larry Lesser, Ph.D., has been named the 14th Piper Professor award recipient for UTEP.

The Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation in San Antonio established its award in 1958 to honor professors for their dedication to teaching and their community. Every May, the foundation selects 10 winners from among all two- and four-year colleges and universities in Texas.

The Piper Professor designation comes with a \$5,000 award.

"Not since winning a University of Texas System Board of Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award in 2011 have I been so excited to win an award and join such exclusive company at UTEP and statewide," Lesser said, noting that he took courses from Piper



Larry Lesser, Ph.D.

Professors at both The University of Texas at Austin, where he received his graduate degrees, and Rice University, where he completed his bachelor's degree.

"It is humbling to win what feels like a lifetime achievement award when I feel I still continue to grow as an educator," Lesser said. "I'm so grateful for the inspiration and support I've received over the years from my family as well as from my colleagues and students, especially at UTEP. Through my work as a professor and director of UTEP's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, I try to pay the inspiration forward."

UTEP's Piper winners include faculty from philosophy, biological sciences, electrical engineering, English, economics and finance, teacher education, political science, metallurgical and materials engineering, and chemistry. Lesser is the second winner from mathematical sciences. - Lisa Y. Garibay

Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see a video interview with Larry Lesser.



## MOVED to Serve

Project MOVE Creates Learning Opportunity

Almost 1,500 Miners got up early on Feb. 27, 2016, to continue the tradition of serving El Paso as part of UTEP's seventh annual Project MOVE, which stands for Miner Opportunities for Volunteer Experiences.

The volunteers – mostly students – traveled to 60 job sites across the region to assist nonprofit organizations with projects that will enhance the lives of children, the elderly and everyone in between. They landscaped, painted, constructed mobility ramps, instructed young athletes, shared fire safety information, prepared community gardens and assisted in general cleanup. Regardless of the assignment, the UTEP volunteers brought energy and enthusiasm to their tasks.

Project MOVE is one of many UTEP community service projects throughout the year that provide opportunities to directly or indirectly assist residents in the region. According to the latest figures available, UTEP volunteers recorded 808,165 hours of community service in 2014 valued at more than \$18 million.

The goal of events such as Project MOVE is to create more well-rounded students who are familiar with the needs of their community and its residents. UTEP organizers hope the volunteers recognize the value of community service and continue to be involved wherever their professional careers take them.

"It was very rewarding to me," said Leon Santoyo, a senior criminal justice major and former Marine who was among a team of military-affiliated students who helped beautify and reorganize the USO at Fort Bliss. "I know we made a difference." -Daniel Perez

Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see a Project MOVE video.

## Fabulous at 40

### School of Nursing kicks off 40th Anniversary

**The year was 1976.** Jimmy Carter was elected president of the United States. The nation celebrated its 200th birthday and the Bee Gees' "You Should Be Dancing" hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.



Maria Amaya, Ph.D.

For UTEP Nursing Professor Maria Amaya, Ph.D., remembering these milestones evoked memories of campus pool parties, late night study groups and the day she graduated from The University of Texas at El Paso's first

baccalaureate nursing program.

Amaya was among the first students to graduate from UTEP's College of Nursing on Dec. 16, 1976, the same year the nursing program disengaged from The University of Texas Nursing School System and joined the UTEP family. The college became known as the UTEP School of Nursing, or SON, in 2006.

"The curriculum was – and still is – rigorous and challenging," Amaya said as she searched for her favorite graduation photo in boxes full of college mementos and old snapshots. "I expect it has been that way since the beginning. No matter the passage of time, one always feels proud, not just of being a nurse, but a UTEP nurse. You are one of the best."

The SON kicked off its "40th Anniversary: Legacy of Healing" celebration in April 2016. In conjunction with the yearlong celebration, UTEP launched a campaign to raise \$400,000 for the school by the end of the year.

Over the past 40 years, the SON has awarded 5,810 undergraduate, graduate and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees.

More than 60 percent of El Paso nurses earned their degree at UTEP.

"We are proud of the outstanding contributions made by our graduates, faculty and students to improve health care in the Paso del Norte region and enhance the quality of life of our residents," said School of Nursing Dean Elias Provencio-Vasquez,

Ph.D. "Thanks to our talented faculty, strong clinical partnerships and state-of-the-art facilities, the SON is preparing the next generation of health professionals who will shape the future of health care in El Paso and beyond." -**Laura L. Acosta**

## Reaffirmation of Accreditation

### Decision Expected in January 2017

**In March 2016**, The University of Texas at El Paso welcomed a team of peer evaluators from institutions in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The onsite visit was one of the final steps in the University's "reaffirmation of accreditation" process.

Every 10 years, UTEP and other institutions accredited by the SACS Commission on Colleges (SACS COC) must be reaffirmed. As part of the process, UTEP submitted a Compliance Certification Report and Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, a 10-year undergraduate student success plan.

Over the next decade, implementation of the QEP will increase students' awareness of their personal assets and promote student engagement in eight high-impact practices: first-year experience, student employment and leadership, undergraduate research and creative activity, learning communities, internship and practicum, study abroad/study away, community engagement and service learning, and a capstone experience.

Students also will have a new opportunity to earn a "Professionally Prepared"

designation by documenting their achievements in an electronic portfolio.

Peer evaluators will submit their UTEP report to commissioners at the SACS COC's annual meeting in December 2016. The commission will notify the University of its reaffirmation decision in January 2017.

-**Laura L. Acosta**

# 10

*Every 10 years, UTEP and other institutions accredited by SACS must be reaffirmed.*



# ARMY ROTC:

*100 Years of Mining Leaders*

**Being a cadet** means much more than putting on a uniform and training hard. The experience builds tenacity, adaptability and confidence and propels young people to become experienced, confident leaders.

Army ROTC is celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2016. For 100 years, the national program has been instrumental in molding strong and dedicated leaders in various fields throughout the world.

The University of Texas at El Paso's ROTC "Fighting Miner Battalion" is one of the programs made possible through Army ROTC. Since its establishment in 1948 on the campus of the College of Mines and Metallurgy, now UTEP, it has built and continues to produce its fair share of strong soldiers and dynamic leaders.

Retired Maj. Gen. James Maloney was among the first cadets to take part in the UTEP ROTC program in the early 1950s. He went on to serve as a master general in the Army and led Fort Bliss as commander from 1982-85, achievements he attributes to his time as a dedicated cadet.

"Being a cadet in the ROTC program at Texas Western College, now UTEP, was the foundation of my military career," Maloney said. "Being a distinguished military student launched me into my 31-year-long Army career. Being in this program was very important to me personally and professionally."

Cadet David Morris is a current UTEP senior planning to graduate in May 2016 with a degree in microbiology. Upon graduation he will attend medical school on a full scholarship with hopes of being a trauma or thoracic surgeon.

Morris has been a part of the ROTC program since 2012. What he has learned as a cadet will leave a lasting impression.

"ROTC has prepared me for my future by teaching me that to be a leader I need to inspire others by my own actions, and as a leader I need to keep improving myself in order to improve others."

**Christina Rodriguez**

Cadet David Morris

TWO-THOUSAND SIXTEEN

# TOPTEN SENIORS

By Esmeralda Treviño



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

## ◀ **Keighton Allen**

MAJOR: ECONOMICS

FUTURE PLANS: MASTER'S DEGREE IN ECONOMICS AT UTEP

From the office to the soccer field, Keighton Allen has worked in a wide variety of fields. As a goalkeeper for the UTEP women's soccer team, Allen knows all about teamwork and leadership. She applied these skills as an intern at Top Notch Personnel Staffing. Allen believes in "always leaving a place better than you find it," and has a mission to do this for the place she now calls home – El Paso.

## ▼ **Oscar Casanova**

MAJOR: FINANCE | FUTURE PLANS: ANALYST AT GOLDMAN SACHS

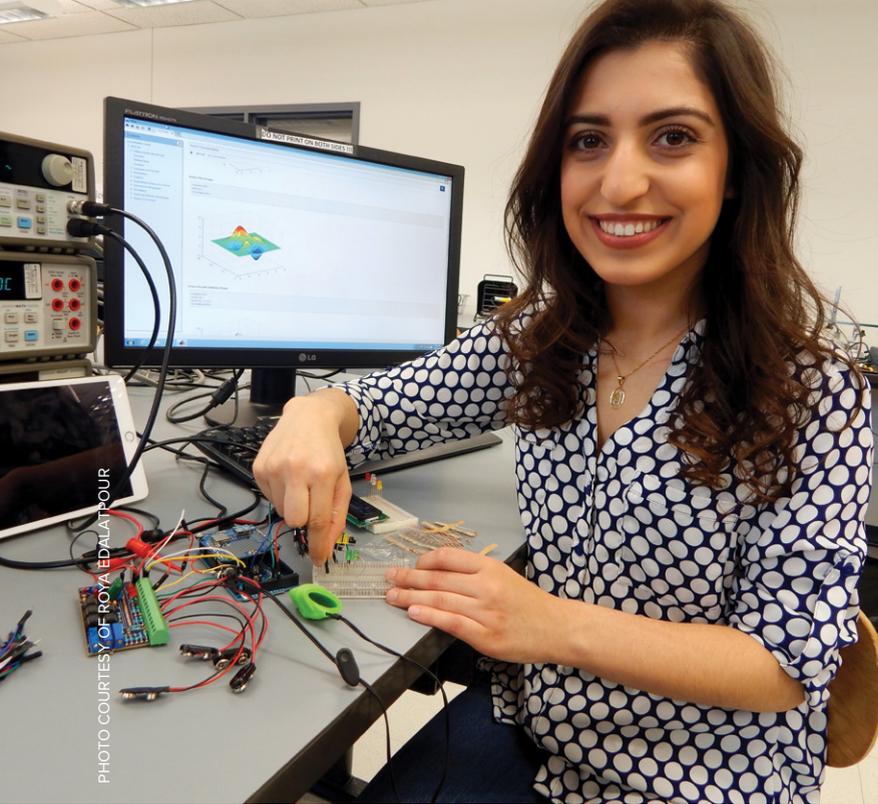
"All in all, UTEP has given me access to excellence," said Oscar Casanova on how UTEP has opened the doors to a successful career. Casanova has completed several internships with prestigious finance companies, such as J.P. Morgan. Working for UTEP at the University Career Center and Residence Life also has expanded his skill set. Casanova has many honors and hours of volunteer experience that have carved the path for his biggest professional accomplishment: landing a full-time analyst role at the banking firm, Goldman Sachs, beginning in July 2016.



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

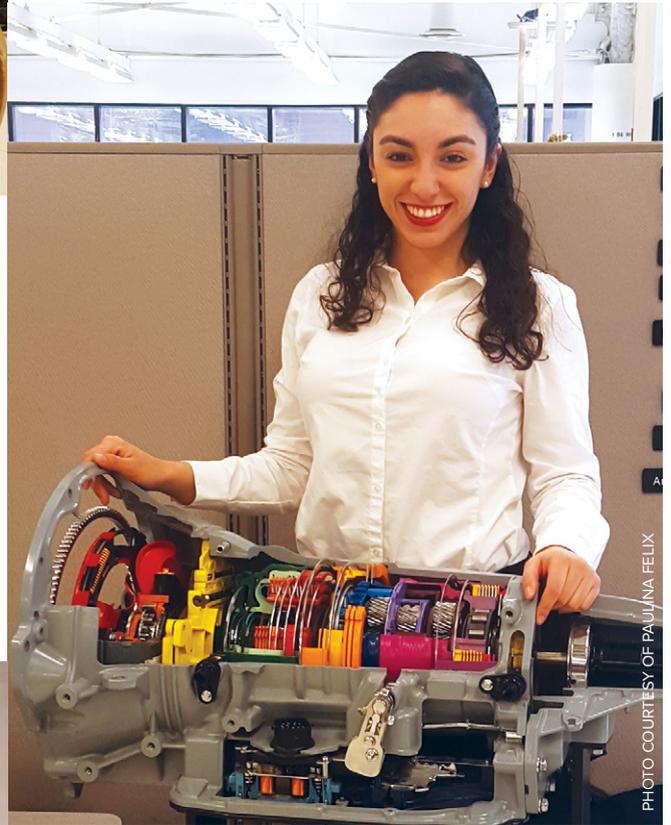


## ◀ **Roya Edalatpour**

MAJOR: ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

FUTURE PLANS: MEDICAL SCHOOL AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Roya Edalatpour partook in internships with companies including ExxonMobil and General Electric Aviation throughout the summers of her undergraduate career. Applying the knowledge she learned in the classroom to the professional setting took her to the White House Tech Inclusion Summit, where she discussed underrepresented youth in the technology sector. She is taking classes at Boston University for a year in residence to prepare herself for a graduate career in the medical field.



## **Paulina Almada Felix** ▶

MAJOR: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

FUTURE PLANS: CAREER AS A MECHANICAL ENGINEER

An active member of several engineering organizations, Paulina Felix has been a dedicated leader throughout her undergraduate career. Volunteering for Project MOVE and the Baja SAE Competition through UTEP, Felix has accumulated several hours of volunteer work and community service. The aspiring mechanical engineer plans to “use her knowledge to contribute to the creation of new, more efficient products that will positively impact today’s society.”



## ◀ **Rodrigo Lugo**

MAJOR: BIOLOGY

FUTURE PLANS: WORK WITH A MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION WHILE CONSIDERING MEDICAL OR LAW SCHOOL

“I have been so fortunate to be involved in extracurricular activities at UTEP,” Rodrigo Lugo said. “They have impacted me in such a way that changed not only who I am, but they have shaped the person I will become.” Lugo has been involved with activities at UTEP and in the surrounding community, including the Student Government Association, Project MOVE and pre-veterinary programs. Lugo will take the skills learned at UTEP with him as he pursues his future career.

Continued on page 12

## **David Morris** ▶

MAJOR: MICROBIOLOGY

FUTURE PLANS: ARMY RESERVES AND MEDICAL SCHOOL AT TEXAS TECH'S PAUL L. FOSTER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Serving in the UTEP ROTC gave David Morris the opportunity to develop his character and become a leader. "After nearly four years of physical training, leadership classes, field training exercises and tactical labs, I am proud to say that I will be commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army," Morris said, crediting UTEP with his success. Morris also worked as a Chemistry Peer Leader for the University, guiding students through their chemistry courses.



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE



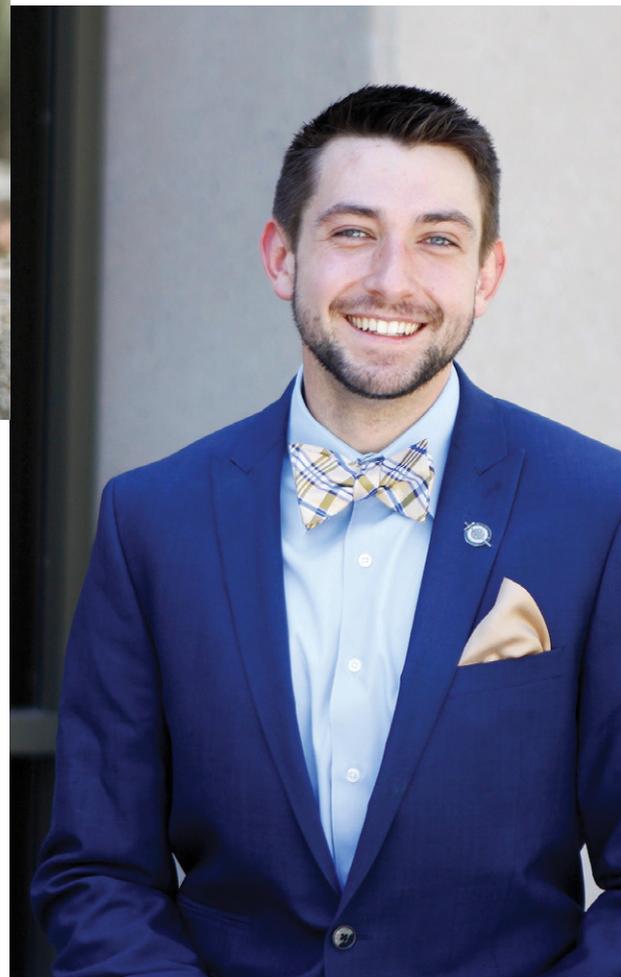
IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

## ▲ **Monique Navarro**

MAJOR: MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

FUTURE PLANS: CAREER IN FAMILY LAW

Volunteering throughout the community and being active on campus, Monique Navarro is no stranger to hard work. Recognizing the vast opportunities that UTEP provided to her, Navarro has involved herself in various workshops and meetings with some of the most influential people in the community. "I have found that with the support of UTEP, my education has reflected those values which I hold so dear, while my major in multidisciplinary studies has allowed me an expansion in thought I never imagined possible," Navarro said.





IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

## ◀ Alexis Ramos

MAJOR: BIOLOGY

FUTURE PLANS: EARNING AN M.D./PH.D.

Working as an undergraduate research assistant as well as shadowing doctors throughout her undergraduate career have allowed Alexis Ramos, a biology major with a biomedical concentration, to come closer to reaching her goal of becoming a medical doctor. Ramos has an endless list of volunteer work that spans activities on campus, such as the University Honors Program, to civic activities such as coaching for the El Paso Little Blazers football team. “I will strive to be the best I can be in academics, the community and with others,” she said.

## ▼ Troy Rowden

MAJORS: ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE, AND PHILOSOPHY

FUTURE PLANS: GRADUATE SCHOOL

“UTEP has uniquely made me aware of how important it is to seize each and every single day, hour, minute and word,” said Troy Rowden, former president of Phi Delta Theta fraternity. He spent his undergraduate years participating in countless hours of volunteer work along with teaching children philosophy as an instructor for the Philosophy for Children Program. This, along with working at the University Writing Center, has prepared Rowden for excellence.

## Ileana Rubio ▶

MAJOR: INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

FUTURE PLANS: MASTER’S DEGREE IN SYSTEMS ENGINEERING

“The many doors that UTEP has opened for me throughout my years as an undergraduate have allowed me to expand my knowledge in various subjects,” Ileana Rubio said. After her first year at UTEP, Rubio decided to become more involved in the University and take advantage of the opportunities that were available to her. Interning at Lockheed Martin and leading the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society as president only scratch the surface of the activities and organizations in which she has participated.

LAURA TREJO



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

# Shared History

*El Paso High Celebrates Centennial*

**When Anna Lucia Mares speaks** to a room filled with hundreds of engineers, she doesn't get nervous.

She owns the room.

"My dad always told me that nobody knows more about your subject than you do. That is very true in life and in engineering, and UTEP gave me the basis to do that," said Mares, who graduated from El Paso High School and earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at The University of Texas at El Paso in 1991. "The building blocks from El Paso High to UTEP are a good fit and prepare you to compete worldwide. I feel good about who I am and the education I received, and I know I'm good at what I do."

El Paso High School and thousands of its alumni are celebrating the school's 100th anniversary in 2016 with several legacy talks and a special homecoming in October.

UTEP and El Paso High School's shared history during the last century spans architecture, education and athletics.

Architecture firm Trost and Trost designed El Paso High School's current building on Schuster Avenue. The

company also designed the original buildings for the State School of Mines and Metallurgy, now UTEP.

El Paso High School initially included first through 12th grades. In 1921, the school district established a junior college – the first municipal junior college in Texas – on the high school's top floor. Around 1926, the junior college was losing students to the College of Mines, which did not charge tuition. Civic leaders came together and persuaded the state legislature to fund an expansion of the college's curriculum. In return, the junior college would close. Those actions created the beginning of UTEP's colleges of liberal arts, education, business administration and science.

UTEP and the high school also have crossed paths in athletics. The first three Sun Bowl games – from 1935-37 – were held at El Paso High's Jones Stadium. The school also had a connection to

## GOING FOR THE RECORD

El Paso High will try to break the Guinness World Record for largest reunion after the Oct. 8, 2016 football game against Austin High School. More than 3,300 alumni will need to be on the field to break the record.

the legendary 1966 Texas Western College team that won the NCAA basketball championship.

"About three weeks after the 1966 championship game, we had a fundraiser – a seniors versus faculty basketball game at El Paso High," said Steve Blumenthal, El Paso High class of 1966. "We had some of the Miners take part in the game as the refs. It became like a Harlem Globetrotters game with them taking the ball and doing trick shots. Nobody minded that they were interrupting the game. How many people get an opportunity like that? Everybody just had a great time."

Beyond sports, the biggest connection between the two schools is students graduating from El Paso High and continuing their education at UTEP.

"I grew up in Sunset Heights, so I was familiar with UTEP while growing up," said Dan Favela, who graduated from UTEP and El Paso High. "I had a blast at both."

**-Leonard Martinez**

*"The building blocks from El Paso High to UTEP are a good fit and prepare you to compete worldwide."*

Anna Lucia Mares

## MORE ON CENTENNIAL

El Paso High School is having a Legacy Series of talks throughout the year. For a complete list, including information on the high school, visit [www.ehpscentennial.com](http://www.ehpscentennial.com).



# MEET YOU AT THE MET

*Art Student Selected for  
Prestigious Internship*

**S**

**sophomore art student** Paloma Martinez, who goes by Paloma Vianey, is headed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for a prestigious summer internship.

Vianey is one of eight students selected for the Met Cloisters Summer Internship, a nine-week, paid internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She will work in the Education Office of The Met Cloisters, a branch of the museum that specializes in the art of medieval Europe.

After an application process that had more than 200 students vying for eight slots, Vianey was one of 35 selected for interviews.

Of the eight students selected for the internship, Vianey is the only one from a public university, a fact she wears with pride.

"I'm proud to represent UTEP in such a prestigious and competitive internship," she said. "I was terrified at first, since I'm not from one of those (private) schools, but I realized there's nothing to be afraid of – they picked me for a reason."

Assistant Professor of Art History Max Grossman, Ph.D., is proud to see the University represented at an internationally recognized institution.

"The Department of Art at UTEP offers courses in art history, studio art and art education that are of the highest quality, and it has an excellent record of preparing students for competitive internships throughout North America," Grossman said. "We are very proud of Paloma's achievement and are confident that she will benefit immensely from her internship at the Met, which is one of the most prestigious museums in the world."

Vianey expects that the internship will help her grow as an artist and burgeoning art historian. **-Kyle Alvarado**



## UTEP Hosts 3 Centennial Lectures

The Centennial Lecture Series invites noteworthy speakers to the UTEP campus to share their perspectives on a broad range of contemporary issues that are likely to impact our society, culture and lives in the years ahead.



### Expert Links Climate Change and Water Scarcity

Water and climate expert Brad Udall visited UTEP on April 26, 2016 to talk about "The Evolving Water Crisis in the American Southwest." Udall, senior

water and climate research scientist at the Colorado Water Institute at Colorado State University, discussed how climate change and future water scarcity are linked. He acknowledged some progress in slowing the rate of greenhouse gas emission, but emphasized that much more work was needed to reverse the trend. **-Jenn Crawford**



### Nobel Prize Recipient Analyzes Mexican Novels

Recipient of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Literature and celebrated author of more than 40 books, Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio presented a Centennial

Lecture on March 4, 2016. The lecture highlighted the main aspects of the Mexican novel of manners, a genre often loathed by academia. Le Clézio's talk came to fruition on a border that reflects the distance between two worlds: the academic literature from the capital, Mexico City, and the literature from the provinces. **-Esmeralda Treviño**



### Expert Discusses Crisis of Classical Music

Leader of three of America's finest music schools – the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music and the College of Fine Arts of The University

of Texas at Austin – Robert Freeman, Ph.D., musicologist and music educator, delivered

a Centennial Lecture on Jan. 28, 2016. His talk, titled "The Crisis of Classical Music in America," covered the future of musical education, including recommendations for young musicians, parents of musicians, music professors and others involved in music academia. **-Esmeralda Treviño**

## Miner Memory The First Commencement

The Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, now The University of Texas at El Paso, conducted its first Commencement ceremony 100 years ago on the evening of May 30, 1916. It took place in the 300-seat auditorium of the original campus' main building on what is now Fort Bliss. Judge Beauregard Bryan presented bachelor's degrees in mining engineering to Vere Leasure, Lloyd Nelson and Clyde Ney. Rabbi Martin Zielonka of Temple Mount Sinai, a staunch supporter of higher education, spoke about "The Power of Personality" during his commencement speech. The event included a performance of "Somewhere a Voice is Calling" by Zula Robinson, who was accompanied by several musicians. Ney died four years later in a mining accident in Globe, Arizona. Nelson, nicknamed "Speedy," taught at his alma mater for more than 40 years until his death in 1964. Leasure held several jobs in the mining industry in Chile, Mexico and the United States. He retired in El Paso and died in 1966. **-Daniel Perez**

## Research

### Bending Light

#### UTEP Lab Develops Revolutionary Lattice

Inside UTEP's Electromagnetics (EM) Lab, where Associate Professor Raymond Rumpf, Ph.D., works alongside a dedicated group of students, light is being controlled in ways never before possible – ways that could change the way we do things every day.

Rumpf and the graduate students he mentors took on a challenge that has been eluding leading researchers: take a cheap, manmade latticework and use it to channel light beams better and more abruptly than ever has been done before.

The students not only accomplished this feat, they also broke the record for the world's tightest bend of an unguided optical beam.

The team is now exploring ways to use

this technology to replace metal wires in computer circuit boards, which could potentially transfer information at a much higher and faster rate – the speed of light, in fact.

A related technology will also significantly improve antennae in cell phones for faster internet connections and much longer battery life.

"We have some new partners and some very exciting new device concepts beyond just bends that may prove to be even more game-changing and revolutionary," Rumpf said. **-Lisa Y. Garibay**



Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see a video about this research.

## Childhood Adversity Program Prepares High School Researchers

A UTEP researcher is studying childhood adversity with the help of 10 high school students with firsthand knowledge of the topic.

Hector Olvera, Ph.D., director of research at the UTEP School of Nursing, has recruited 10th and 11th graders from the Alpha Youth Leadership Academy (AYLA) in El Paso to launch a new research project.

Funded by the UTEP School of Nursing and the JPB Foundation, AYLA is a skill and character development program created by Olvera in 2011 for students in the 8th to 12th grades who live in public housing in El Paso.

"These kids are capable of doing great things in their communities through science and through other avenues," said Olvera, a JPB Environmental Health Fellow with Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The students will study one of four topics: social and health disparities, environmental health, stress and health, or epigenetics.

To prepare their research proposal, students attended a research methods class at UTEP and visited the University's state-of-the-art laboratories. They also met with Olvera's mentor John Spengler, Ph.D., director of the Harvard Chan School's Center for Health and the Global Environment.

"What really impressed me was (the students') polite confidence as they sought me out for conversations about climate change, health research and opportunities for engaging careers," Spengler recalled of his visit to UTEP. "Hector and his UTEP students have created something very special in El Paso that will forever change the lives of these high school students." **-Laura L. Acosta**

# Mosquito Tracker

*Humans are bigger, faster, smarter and more powerful than mosquitoes, yet we still can't beat them. But, Doug Watts, Ph.D., is working to try.*

Well ahead of monsoon season – in fact, starting well before the first of the year – Watts and his team at UTEP's Mosquito Ecology and Surveillance Laboratory (MESL) were tracking the pesky insects' travels around the globe due to a concern that has since become a global crisis: Zika virus.

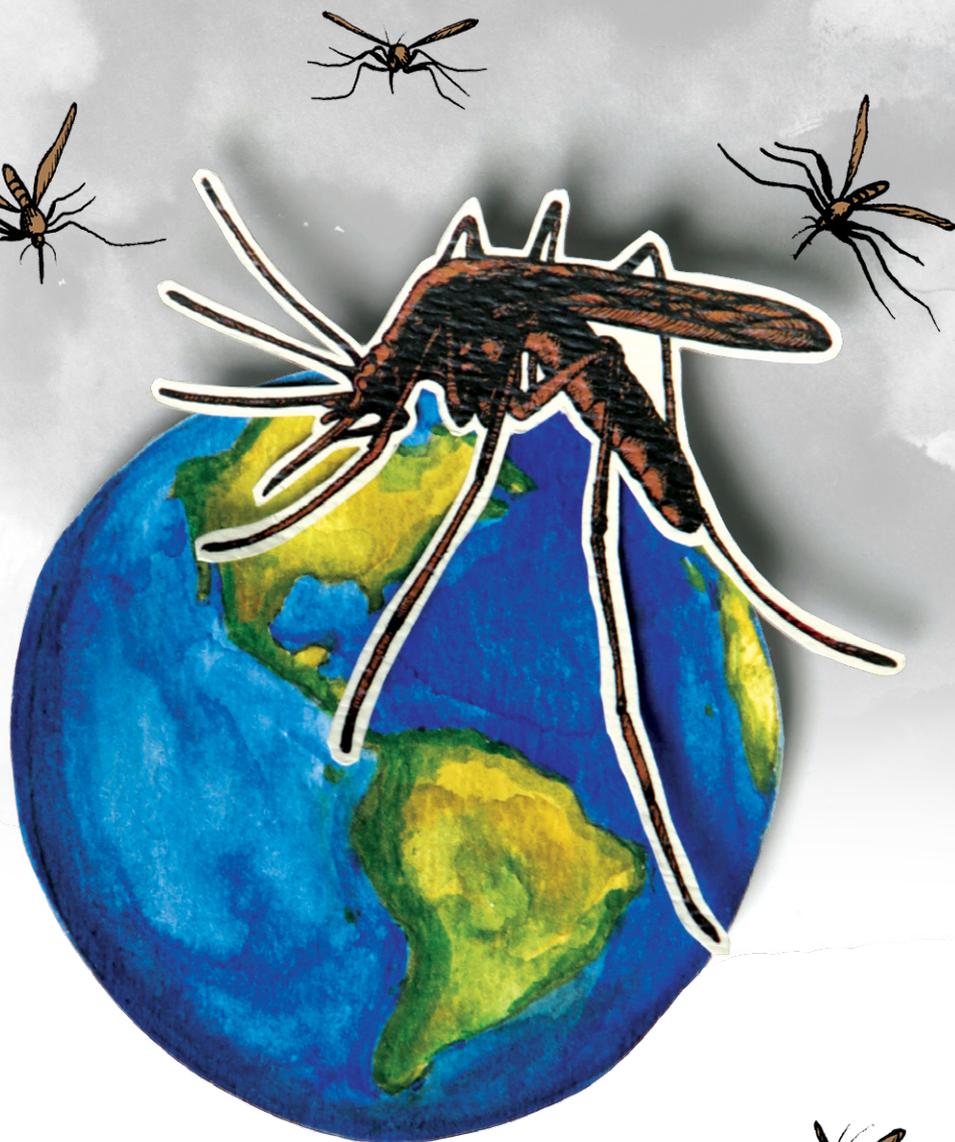
Of immediate concern is the fact that the particular mosquito that transmits Zika (as well as dengue fever and chikungunya, another virus on the rise) is the second-most common one in El Paso.

Watts knows this species almost better than anyone. The internationally renowned researcher of mosquito-borne diseases is celebrating his fifth decade in the field and has amassed expertise in infectious disease all over the world. He began chasing down this species, *Aedes aegypti*, starting in 1977 in Bangkok, Thailand.

"At that time I recognized just how difficult it was to control this mosquito, to do anything to reduce the population," he said.

Watts is keeping in close contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as health agencies around the Southwest. He hypothesizes that when – not if – Zika arrives in the U.S., it will first concentrate around the southern border of Texas, which offers an ideal mosquito environment.

Preventive measures are all the more necessary given that there is no vaccine for Zika.



## Zika Virus

Watts hypothesizes that when – not if – Zika arrives in the U.S., it will first concentrate around the southern border of Texas, which offers an ideal mosquito environment.

"If mosquito control is ever going to work, the number one priority is education," Watts said.

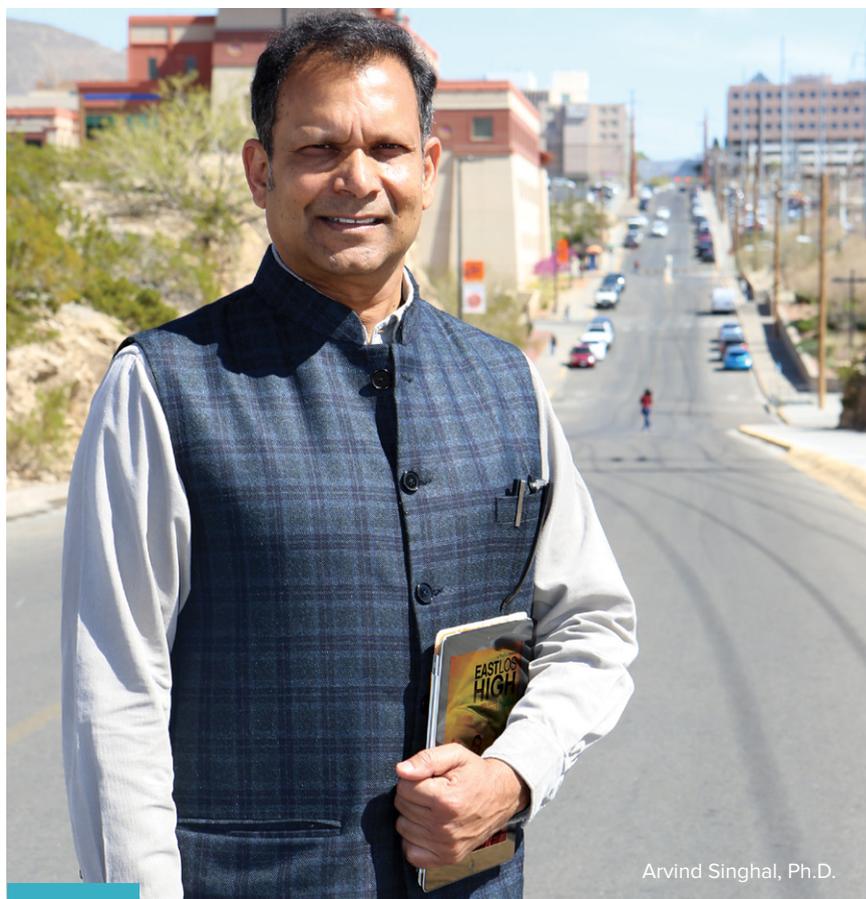
MESL informs mosquito control and health care professionals working to eliminate the pests and treat anyone who becomes infected with the diseases after being bitten. It also provides bilingual preventive education to elementary school children, leaving them with coloring books that inform well beyond just providing an artistic outlet. Some of these are tactics as simple as not allowing toys or tires to stay outside where water can pool and attract breeding bugs.

"We're going to be seeing more of this as the population of humans increases," Watts added. "It'll be a never-ending profession to stay ahead of these crazy bugs." -Lisa Y. Garibay



Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see a video about this research.

# UTEP Research Examines Teen TV Show's Impact



Arvind Singhal, Ph.D.

What's Twitter saying about East Los High?



**KWEVOKWEWOP** @\_Perfected  
East Los high is so good every episode is like a season finale can't wait for season 4 omg  
2:01 AM - 31 Jul 2015

**citlali** @Citlaalix  
I just finished watching all 3 seasons of east Los high and idk what to do with my life anymore  
7:26 PM - 28 Mar 2016

**Cindy Zamberletti** @thagrinnoy  
So, the season finale of East Los High 🙄🙄🙄 I didn't see that coming! Eddys departure. Jacobs love triangle. Liliana! 🙄🙄 #elh  
4:45 PM - 29 Jul 2015

**TO** researchers at The University of Texas at El Paso, the Hulu TV show "East Los High" is one big science experiment.

"East Los High" follows in the footsteps of teen dramas like "Beverly Hills, 90210" or "Gossip Girl" but also uses transmediated storytelling across multiple Internet and social media platforms.

The show's executive producer, Katie Elmore Mota, developed the basic concept for "East Los High" back when she was earning her master's degree and Arvind Singhal, Ph.D., a communication professor at UTEP, served as one of the expert respondents for her thesis. When the show had a broadcast date, she asked Singhal if he would be interested in doing research related to the show.

Singhal, an expert in the area of narrative for change, partnered with Hua Wang, Ph.D., at the University of Buffalo to assess the show's impact. UTEP graduate students helped with the research.

"If you're interested in bringing about any kind of change, whether it's teenage pregnancy issues among the Latina population or HIV/AIDS prevention, you listen to the stories to understand what's going on," Singhal said. "If you want to change what's going on, then you change the stories."

The experimental component of the study enlisted 136 Latino women in the El Paso area between ages 18 and 28 who had never seen "East Los High" and were asked how much they knew about sexual health. They were split into groups that then either received sexual health information through a fake news story, read a short story version of an "East Los High" plot, watched the show, or watched the show and looked at the "East Los High" website.

"Our research was actually able to show that not only did people tune in on different

platforms, but they were very active participants," Singhal said. "They were engaged in the storylines, they loved the characters, and believed the program was realistic and authentic in its depictions of Latino teenagers."

The Wang-Singhal study on "East Los High" and its effect was published in the June 2016 American Journal of Public Health, which is the world's premiere public health journal.

The show has been renewed for a fourth season, which is scheduled to premiere July 15, 2016.

"I think what 'East Los High' demonstrates is that commercially viable entertainment can be used for good," Singhal said. "Is it going to change Hollywood overnight? No. The fact that there's a season four suggests that these programs have longevity. I'm hoping that .... this inspires young people and even those in Hollywood with social sensibilities to create similar shows."

**-Leonard Martinez**

# Student Presents Research on Capitol Hill



Cecilia Hinojosa

## Nicotine Addiction

Hinojosa presented her work on nicotine addiction and diabetes. In clinical studies, it has been shown that diabetic individuals have a harder time quitting smoking than those who do not have diabetes.



### Cecilia Hinojosa,

who graduated from UTEP with a B.A. in psychology in May

2016, was among 60 undergraduates from around the country chosen to present their research to Congress, congressional staff and federal agencies in Washington, D.C., in April 2016.

Hinojosa presented her work on nicotine addiction and diabetes. In clinical studies, it has been shown that diabetic individuals have a harder time quitting smoking than those who do not have diabetes.

Before making the trip to Washington, Hinojosa said she hoped members of Congress and others would see how much research is being done at the undergraduate level and how important that research is.

"I have been to many universities and the amount of hands-on experience undergraduates receive at UTEP is quite unique," Hinojosa said.

Laura E. O'Dell, Ph.D., an associate professor in UTEP's Department of Psychology, said Hinojosa is the type of student with whom every professor dreams to work.

"She is smart, hard working, honest and a team player," O'Dell said. "Her dream is to become a clinical psychologist and work with and research patients suffering from [post-traumatic stress disorder]."

Hinojosa's father and grandfather were in the military, which led to her want to serve her country.

"As I was conducting research on the many options I would have in the military, I saw the statistics on how many men and women were coming back from their tours overseas to deal with the debilitating disorder of post-traumatic stress disorder and saw this as my opportunity to serve my country," Hinojosa said. "I have decided to dedicate my life to further the research in the area of PTSD."

Hinojosa was accepted into the experimental psychology doctoral program at Tufts University, where she will be conducting neuroimaging studies on PTSD. **-Leonard Martinez**

## Arts

### Music History

#### UTEP Receives Papers of Leading Music Historian

The University of Texas at El Paso's Music Department has acquired 25 boxes of books, papers and correspondence written by Robert M. Stevenson, one of the 20th century's leading historians on music in Spain and Latin America.

Stevenson lived in El Paso during his formative years and received an English degree from UTEP before embarking on an international career as a scholar, composer, pianist and teacher.

The collection also includes recordings, photographs and memorabilia.

The collection is being processed to make it available for research and study by UTEP students, faculty and scholars from other institutions, and to the general public.

"After looking through several of the boxes, I was struck by how well, and in what detail, the collection documents the history of El Paso during the earlier 20th century," said Lorenzo F. Candelaria, Ph.D., professor of music history and literature at UTEP. "This is a valuable collection whose impact goes well beyond the music world."

The remainder of the Stevenson collection is now at the Real Conservatorio Superior de Madrid in Spain. **-Leonard Martinez**

### Excellence in Book Design

#### Winners of 15th Carl Hertzog Award Selected

The Friends of the University Library of The University of Texas at El Paso announced the winners of the 15th Carl Hertzog Award for Excellence in Book Design on Jan. 9, 2016. Richard Wagner of Mixolydian Editions of Petaluma, California, and David Pascoe of Nawakum Press of Santa Rosa, California, took the top honor for their design efforts on the book "Loom" by Alan Loney.

The pair was honored at an award ceremony March 13. They were each presented with a cash prize, a framed certificate and a specially struck medallion designed by Hertzog's longtime associate Tom Lea. **-Christina Rodriguez**



Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see a video interview with Cecilia Hinojosa.

**Athletics**



# Miner Fans are a Major Force

The UTEP women's basketball team enjoyed a special season in 2015-16. The Miners made a run to the Women's National Invitation Tournament quarterfinals, won the program's third Conference USA regular-season title, equaled the school record for both overall (29) and league-only (16) wins and broke into the top-25 rankings.

Along the way, UTEP also enhanced what is already a special connection between the Miners and their loyal fan base. Most winning programs enjoy good support, but once again in '15-16 UTEP faithful took it to an entirely different level.

Consider the Leggett family, who drove 1,275 miles across four states – and that's just one way – to cheer on UTEP at the 2016 C-USA Championships. The sign made by the four children moved the team so much that it hung from the locker room door during all four WNIT home games. UTEP attracted better than 4,500 fans in each of those contests, including 9,000-plus in the quarterfinals versus Oregon on March 28.

Loyal season ticket holders Dianna Williams and Trephya Sumpter surprised the team by flying to cheer them on at Louisiana Tech, saying that they felt the Miners could use some orange in the stands in Ruston.

True Miner fan Pat Flores, who is known for her "Not Today!" statement at games, went out and bought a Volkswagen. It isn't just any "bug," though – it's an orange one (rims too, thanks to husband Willie's paint job) that was even featured in a Miner video promotion.

*Gregory Lopez and his family attend all of the Miner home games. The 33-year-old shows off his pride by having his dad shave the jersey number of his favorite players and a Miner pickaxe into his hair. He's also wheeled out to the court by Paydirt Pete to pump up the crowd during timeouts. He was even included in the official team photo during the C-USA Championship celebration.*

And who could forget, of course, the way the community supported Starr Breedlove, Jenzel Nash and Cameasha Turner after they all suffered broken noses. Several Miner fans went out and bought masks that looked similar to the ones worn by the student-athletes and donned them at games.

These were just a few of the many examples of outrageously orange acts by UTEP faithful this past year, and it's safe to say they personify the essence of the Miner Spirit. - **Mark Brunner**

## 9,000-plus

UTEP attracted 9,000-plus in the quarterfinals versus Oregon on March 28.



# Golden Anniversary

The **1966 Texas Western** (UTEP) men's basketball team forever changed the face of intercollegiate athletics by winning the NCAA championship game with an all-black starting lineup on March 19, 1966, in College Park, Maryland. The Miners' win against the University of Kentucky happened 50 years ago, but judging by the enthusiasm evident during the golden anniversary celebration, its significance still resonates today.

The champs made it back to the UTEP campus in February 2016 and were honored with an unforgettable reunion, basketball game, CBS Sports network documentary, and city and county recognitions. Players reconnected and relived the groundbreaking event by sharing their stories; media coverage spanned from coast to coast.

The Feb. 6 UTEP basketball game in their honor was a thriller, with the fans stripping out "The Don" wearing commemorative orange and blue 50th anniversary T-shirts. Nostalgic pregame and halftime time events upped the excitement, and the afternoon ended with a nail-biting victory in overtime. Memorable messages came in person from people including NCAA President Mark Emmert and via video from celebrities including President Barack Obama. - **Lauren Macias-Cervantes**



 To watch video tributes to the team, view slideshows and read media coverage from around the nation, visit [gloryroad.utep.edu](http://gloryroad.utep.edu).



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE

Top: David Lattin made the trip from Houston to attend the 50th anniversary events. Here he shares his story with the CBS video crew recording elements for a special focusing on the trailblazers.

Middle, left: Harry Flournoy wasn't able to make the trip to El Paso for the 50th anniversary celebration, but provided a video message that was played at the Feb. 6 game.

Middle, right: Nine members of the 1966 men's basketball team pose for a group shot after recording a CBS special inside Memorial Gym.

Left: At 6-foot-8, Nevil Shed was the tallest of the '65-'66 Miners. An iconic photo of himself 50 years ago is shown in the background.

# Bronzed Star

AS

**a youngster** watching the Olympics Games in Canada, Kelly Parker recalled the emotions of the medal ceremony. She said

hearing the anthem and watching the national flags go up would give her goose bumps.

The former UTEP soccer star got to experience that feeling firsthand as a member of Canada's Women's National Team that earned a bronze medal at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, United Kingdom.

"It was a realization that all my hard work and dedication had paid off," she said. "It was a really overwhelming moment."

The native of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who lives in Los Angeles, California, gives part of the credit for her athletic success to her time at The University of Texas at El Paso, where she is still revered as one of the greatest soccer players in school history. From 1999 to 2002, the midfielder became UTEP's all-time leader in assists with 30. She also was on the Western Athletic Conference all-academic team for four years and made the dean's list three times. She earned her bachelor's degree in public relations in 2004 and was inducted into the UTEP Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015.

Parker said she learned the true value of discipline, hard work and leadership from her time with the Miners, where she also served as an assistant coach for five years. She praised Coach Kevin Cross and her UTEP teammates for pushing her to raise the level of her game.

She joined the Canadian national team in 2003 and participated in the 2011 Women's World Cup. A knee injury forced her to retire officially in 2013.

Today she stays involved with soccer as a private coach of her own soccer club, Chelsea SC LA, and as director of coaching for the Force Football Academy in Los Angeles, California.

"I am excited to share a lifetime of knowledge and experience in the sport with the youth," she said. - **Daniel Perez**



*"It was a realization that all my hard work and dedication had paid off. It was a really overwhelming moment."*

KELLY PARKER '04

**30**

From 1999 to 2002, the midfielder became UTEP's all-time leader in assists with 30.

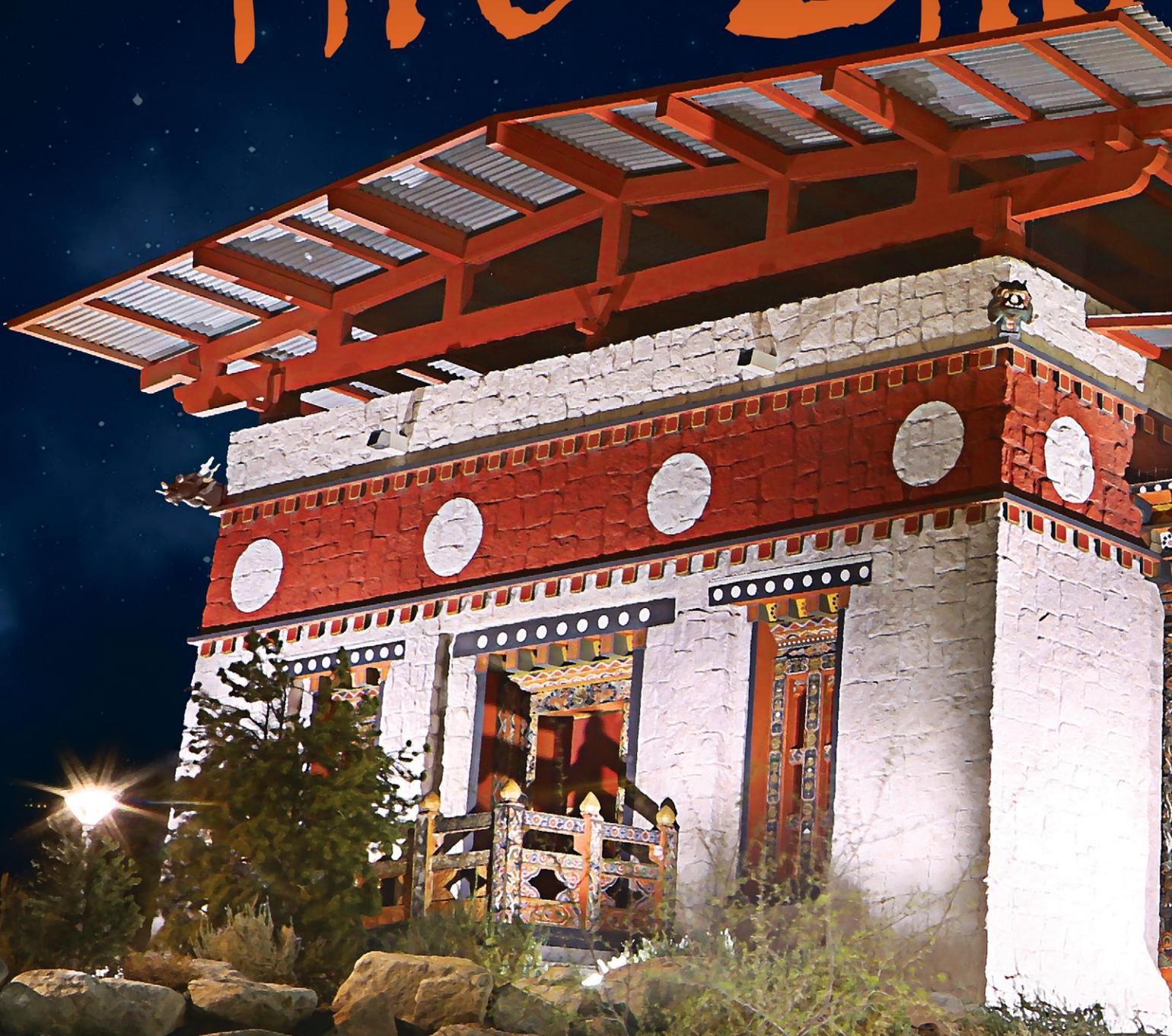
**4**

She was on the Western Athletic Conference all-academic team for four years.

**3**

She made the dean's list three times.

# The Lha



# Lhakhang

## UTEP's Cultural Jewel

*By Christina Rodriguez*

*Photos by J.R. Hernandez*



The grand crimson doors swing open and footsteps echo off the raised pinewood floor, breaking the stark silence. Freshmen Karma Dema and Sonam Deki take small, cautious steps as their eyes carefully scan the 40-foot by 40-foot room with a look of wonderment on their faces, their mouths wide open.

"Wow," Karma says. "It's like being home."

"Can you believe it, Karma?" Sonam responds. The two young women left their country of Bhutan six months ago to pursue their studies at The University of Texas at El Paso. For the first time, they are touring the building that immediately caught their eye upon arriving on campus, the cultural centerpiece of Centennial Plaza – the Lhakhang.



The UTEP campus as a whole has proven a smooth transition for the two freshmen. The Bhutanese-inspired buildings across campus are warm reminders of the faraway home and the family they left behind. However, it's the Lhakhang that has special meaning to them.

"We pass by every day after our classes and it (the Lhakhang) brings us peace and relieves stress from our studies just seeing it from the outside," Sonam said. "I'm glad we finally got a chance to come in and see it."

A gift from the Bhutanese people to the people of the United States, the Lhakhang was first showcased at the 2008 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. After the festival, the structure was deconstructed and sent to El Paso, where it was later permanently rebuilt as a cultural exhibit at the heart of the UTEP campus with the help of 12 young Bhutanese artisans.

All who enter the Lhakhang are enamored by its beauty and remarkable detailing, but what does the Lhakhang tell us about Bhutanese culture, and what does it mean to UTEP?

Every aspect of the structure from the inside out tells a very deliberate story about Bhutanese culture through its carvings, paintings, sculptures, and even its architecture; and every story has meaning for the Bhutanese people. Bhutanese art and architecture are very symbolic and visually serve as important historical and cultural vehicles to convey social and moral knowledge and values.

"The Bhutanese people have a very visual vocabulary," said Preston Scott, curator of the Bhutan program at the 2008 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. "It is important for people to really see what they are looking at (in the Lhakhang), with the operative word being, 'see.'"

Pema Lingpa, a historic Bhutanese scholastic and monastic leader who lived

in the early 16th century and excelled in painting, sculpting, architecture and metal work, significantly influenced traditional visual arts that remain vibrant in Bhutan today. His artistic significance is recognized through *zorig chusum* or the "13 Traditional Arts" that remain central to Bhutanese art and culture and are represented throughout the Lhakhang.

There are more than 1,000 *lhakhangs* throughout the kingdom of Bhutan built for religious or commemorative purposes. In Bhutan, *lhakhangs* are highly respected buildings used as a place for reflection and contemplation, and typically depict meaningful aspects of Bhutanese life, history and culture through their art and architecture.

"Bhutanese people think very highly of *lhakhangs*," Karma explained. "The art and architecture of the *lhakhangs* are very important as it signifies our country's rich and diverse culture. The color and the symbols each have their significant meaning.



Sonam Deki



Karma Dema

The walls are painted with gods and goddesses and the ceilings are painted with mandalas (a ritual symbol that represents the universe). We walk into a room full of awe-inspiring paintings, large statues of Buddha and a heavenly smell of incense. It is no less than getting a feel of what heaven looks and feels like to us (Bhutanese people)."

Back home, Karma and Sonam visit their *lhakhang* frequently when they need to reflect or de-stress and also on special occasions like the Descending Day of Buddha, which is a government holiday in Bhutan. On these occasions, they offer butter lamps that illuminate the *lhakhang*, pray for the well-being of all living things, and receive blessings.

The aim of the Bhutanese people in rendering the Lhakhang for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival was to teach people about the life and culture of a people from a small remote kingdom that few outsiders knew anything about. At UTEP, it serves the same purpose, although it is not used as a temple.

"Bhutan has a very special place in the Western imagination," said Michael Mason, director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. "It was closed (to tourists) for a long time ... so Americans are tremendously curious about Bhutan for lots of different reasons. We were particularly thrilled in this case to be able to find a natural home where this longstanding relationship between Bhutan and the United States could be expressed and celebrated."

As soon as you ascend to the top of the steps leading to the Lhakhang, you are immediately engulfed with architectural details. The deep red color of the roof signifies a prominent public building, while the gold pinnacle or *sertog* that crowns the Lhakhang is traditionally reserved only for structures of very high importance. The four rectangular *geykar* windows, which are common throughout Bhutan, are usually very basically constructed. However, for this particular structure, they were crafted and painted very ornately to emphasize its

significance. The dominant window at the front of the building, referred to as *rabse* and meaning bright and open, also has a particular significance.

"The *rabse* window represents full light and opening eyes to see things," Scott said. "Its meaning – and function – is to help illuminate the world around you by simply letting more light inside – functionally as well as symbolically."

The symbolic language of the building continues to speak even more profoundly as you enter the Lhakhang. The three nooks of the built-in structure known as the *choesham*, represent Guru Rinpoche, credited with the spread of Buddhism in Bhutan; Sakyamuni, the "historic Buddha" or "enlightened one," and Shabdrung, known as the unifier of modern Bhutan. These clay sculptures are typically found in important public buildings as well as in many homes throughout Bhutan.

"The Lhakhang at UTEP is one of the few



places outside of Bhutan where you will find this type of sculpture," Kaye Mullins, a curator at UTEP's Centennial Museum, said. They are highly symbolic of many cultural values by every element of their design. They are hand-crafted from Bhutanese clay and papier-mache made from the daphne plant that grows in Bhutan, dried without firing, and then very carefully painted. The lotus blossoms that the figures sit upon convey purification and the "blossoming of human potential." The jewel upon Sakyamuni's head represents wisdom, and the symbolic ritual object, or *dorji*, Guru Rinpoche holds depicts the combination of a thunderbolt and diamond to represent the energy and clarity needed to cut through ignorance, anger and greed in life. The cultural significance of these sculptures can go very deep and convey meaning through their clothing, color palette and even their poses. What they all have in common in some way is the shared representation of wisdom and compassion, which resonates symbolically

throughout the entire structure.

To teach the public as much as possible about Bhutanese life, history, art and culture, certain components of the Lhakhang at UTEP are unique and wouldn't traditionally be found in a *lhakhang*. Examples of this are the mannequins cloaked in traditional Bhutanese dance costumes used for *cham* or "masked dance" during annual *tsechu* festivals. These festivals are an important part of Bhutanese culture that allow social bonding among various and distant villages. *Cham* dancers perform vignettes based on the life of Guru Rinpoche and other respected figures in Bhutanese history. The themes behind most of the dances reflect compassion, forgiveness and enlightenment. The costumes are present in the Lhakhang to highlight the Bhutanese talent for textiles and screen printing, as well as to acknowledge the importance of these dances in Bhutanese cultural life.

With Bhutan known as the "land of the thunder dragon," the dragon holds particular

cultural significance. Visual depictions of the dragon can be seen throughout the structure, both inside and out.

"When the people of Bhutan hear thunder, it is the dragon talking," Mullins explained. "When they hear wind, it is the dragon flying. For this reason, an open space was left between the outer and inner roof of the structure so that the dragon can move."

The paintings on the interior walls of the Lhakhang provide visual, allegorical glimpses of some of the history and evolution of Bhutanese culture. The paintings were created at the Choki Traditional Art School in a small village not far from Bhutan's capital city, Thimphu. The overall designs of the images were prepared according to traditional methods on linen by master painters and then completed by a team of advanced painting students. The linen used was sized to match the specific wall sections of the Lhakhang and then stretched onto wooden frames before being painted. Because the paintings were too large to



The interior walls of the Lhakhang are covered with floor-to-ceiling, brightly colored paintings that contain examples of Bhutanese iconography very rarely seen outside of the remote Himalayan kingdom and that invite study and reflection to discover their significance.

be completed at the Choki School's own facilities, a local farmer allowed the students to use the large, high-ceilinged rooms of his traditional farmhouse as a painting studio. Once completed, the paintings were affixed to the Lhakhang's walls like wallpaper. As is customary in Bhutan, the paintings were completed by teams of artists who do not sign their work and remain anonymous.

Most of the iconography represented in the paintings relates to different stories about the lives of Sakyamuni and Guru Rinpoche handed down for centuries. Several of the paintings also include distinctive Bhutanese landscapes and other local and, in some cases, modern references. However, the paintings are not composed or organized with any particular beginning or end. Instead, they are intended to provide visual stimulation that provokes the mind to ponder the meaning of the images and life experiences represented. Because the style of the iconography is so foreign to most Western eyes – and in some cases can even confuse, bewilder, or frighten – it is

important to approach them with a sense of genuine curiosity in order to begin to explore their meanings.

Of particular significance in the Lhakhang are the overlying themes of wisdom, compassion and enlightenment that repeat and resonate through every architectural and artistic element. These values are at the core of Buddhism, which defines so much of Bhutanese culture.

"It was not the intention, but it's interesting that the themes of wisdom and compassion the Lhakhang conveys are also particularly appropriate to life at a university," Scott said. "These are the highest values a university can represent in a society at its best."

The Lhakhang, beneath all the grandeur, tells the story of a people from a small remote kingdom with a culture that embraces values not so different from our own. The unspoken messages of wisdom and compassion that the Bhutanese people hold dear are reflected artistically and architecturally throughout the structure, showing us that though we express ourselves with different artistic styles and

motifs, we are also a lot alike. For UTEP, the Lhakhang also is a physical representation of the connection the University has long shared with the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, and more importantly, the friendship that has evolved between UTEP and the people of Bhutan.

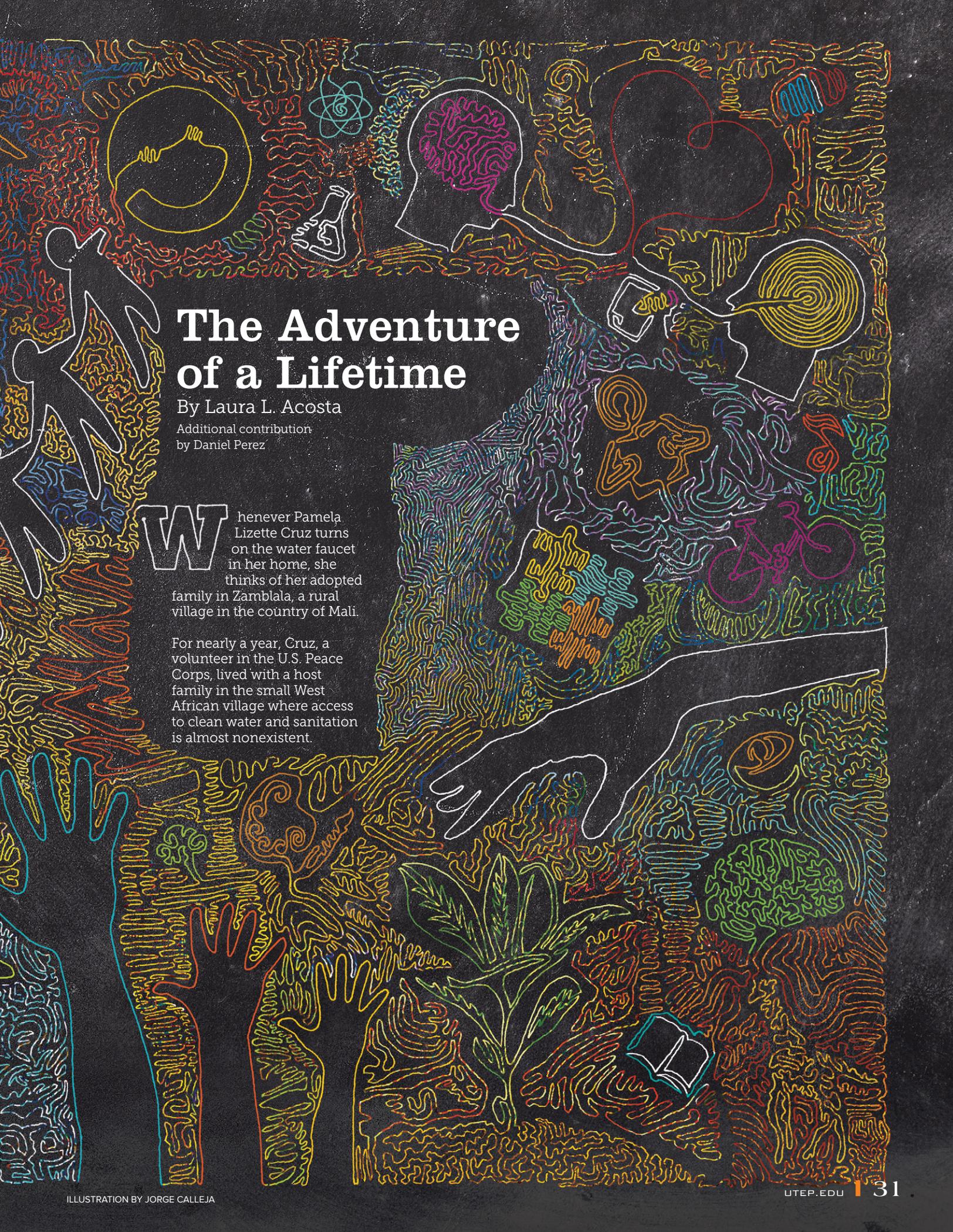
This connection and friendship are what Karma Dema and Sonam Deki feel fortunate to be a part of and what makes them feel at home, despite being several thousand miles away from Bhutan.

"As Bhutanese students at UTEP, we feel very grateful for all the love and support the University shows to our small and isolated country of Bhutan," Karma said with a smile. "UTEP is a home away from home for us ... We are so grateful to UTEP and hope this friendship we share grows stronger as time passes by."



Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see a video about the Lhakhang.





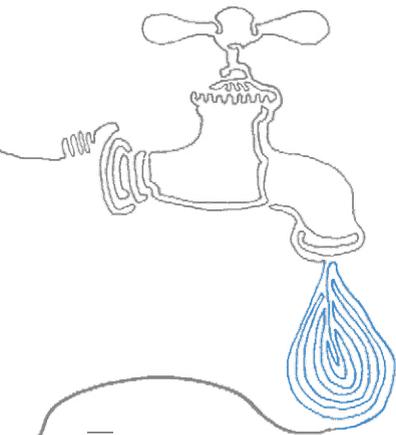
# The Adventure of a Lifetime

By Laura L. Acosta

Additional contribution  
by Daniel Perez

**W**henever Pamela Lizette Cruz turns on the water faucet in her home, she thinks of her adopted family in Zamblala, a rural village in the country of Mali.

For nearly a year, Cruz, a volunteer in the U.S. Peace Corps, lived with a host family in the small West African village where access to clean water and sanitation is almost nonexistent.



A Fulani woman at a spring carries water back to her village in Mali, West Africa. Photo courtesy of the Peace Corps.

Families fetched water for drinking, cooking and washing from hand-dug wells that were topped with rocks, rotting planks and old tires. The lack of infrastructure created a breeding ground for mosquitos, bacteria and other pollutants.

Before Mali, Cruz planned to serve in a Latin American country when she joined the Peace Corps in June 2011. But that changed after she mentioned to the Peace Corps recruiter that she took French at The University of Texas at El Paso, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science in 2010.

Instead, the El Paso native traveled more than 6,000 miles to Mali to build wells and latrines in the French-speaking country.

She did so by working with her Peace Corps *homologue* (French for counterpart) Samuel Dembele to mobilize the villagers to cover, line and reinforce the wells. They built metal doors and concrete drainage aprons to prevent contaminated surface water from flowing back down into the wells and added wash areas for dirty dishes and laundry.



Pamela Cruz works with her Peace Corps counterpart Samuel Dembele, left, to finish a top well apron in the village of Zamlala. Photo courtesy of Pamela Cruz and the Peace Corps.

By the time Cruz returned to El Paso in April 2012, they had built 15 top well aprons and wash areas and 21 latrines and soak pits.

"I found my sense of adventure when I stepped out of my comfort zone," recalled Cruz, the village's water sanitation extension agent. She also helped with food security and malaria monitoring.

When she wasn't digging wells or latrines, Cruz immersed herself in the local culture. She cooked *toh* (a thick porridge made of millet) for her host family on an outdoor stove, made shea butter with the Women's Association of Zanzoni, and went to the mosque with her host mother to celebrate the end of Ramadan.

"I wanted to travel and learn about different cultures and people," explained Cruz, a research analyst for the Mexico Center at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. She received a master's degree in political science from UTEP in 2014. "Peace Corps gave me the opportunity to fall in love with a country and culture that otherwise I doubt I would have gotten a chance to know."



Pamela Cruz, left, is shown with members of the Women's Association of Zanzoni. Photo courtesy of Pamela Cruz and the Peace Corps.



UTEP's history with the Peace Corps stretches back to 1961 when the program was created by President John F. Kennedy to send volunteers abroad to fill a need and promote friendship and mutual understanding between countries and cultures.

Texas Western College (TWC), now UTEP, is one of the first two sites to train Peace Corps volunteers.

Corps officials changed the training site from The University of Texas at Austin to TWC after an African-American member of an advance team was denied access to a UT Austin faculty lunchroom. Sargent Shriver, the Peace Corps director, was aware that TWC was integrated and moved the training to El Paso. Rutgers University in New Jersey and TWC began their training on June 25, 1961, but Rutgers is recognized as the first to start because the institution is in the Eastern time zone. However, TWC was the first to graduate its cohort from the training program with its ceremony on Aug. 20, 1961. The Rutgers ceremony was five days later.

In April 2016, UTEP was ranked by the Peace Corps as one of the top volunteer-producing Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the United States. One of only two ranked Texas universities, UTEP placed No. 12 nationally.

"We are making a very strong effort now to recruit a diverse volunteer force, the best and the brightest of our nation, but a volunteer force that reflects our nation as we truly are, which is increasingly diverse," said Carrie Hessler-Radelet, director of the Peace Corps, who visited UTEP in April 2016. "We are extremely excited to be partners with UTEP."

The Peace Corps also awarded UTEP a \$125,000 grant over the next five years to establish a Peace Corps Campus Recruitment Office and hire a graduate student who is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) to become a campus-based recruiter for the organization.



### Carrie Hessler-Radelet

the 19th director of the Peace Corps, visited UTEP in April to announce that the University was one of the Peace Corps' top volunteer-producing Hispanic-serving Institutions.

Peace Corps volunteers work at the grassroots level to develop sustainable solutions that address challenges in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health and youth development.

Volunteers typically serve 27 months. They are paid a living allowance that enables them to live in a manner similar to the local people in their community. Ninety percent of volunteer positions require a bachelor's degree.

To date, 220,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 141 host countries, including 161 UTEP alumni who have answered the call to give back to their country by helping people across the globe improve their life circumstances.



Donna Ekal, Ph.D., right, works with UTEP students. Photo by Laura Trejo

Answering the call to service, such as working with the Peace Corps, is one of the criteria used by Washington Monthly magazine to rate national universities. UTEP ranked among the top 10 universities in the nation in the publication's 2015 college rankings.

"UTEP students are excellent candidates for the Peace Corps," said Donna Ekal, Ph.D., associate provost for undergraduate studies at the University and a RPCV. Ekal served in Thailand in 1983-85 after receiving her undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota.

"Our students have all sorts of assets that they can contribute, such as language skills and family commitment," Ekal added. "They understand the power of an education and what a difference that can make."

To promote the mission and benefits of the Peace Corps, Ekal often talks to interested students about her service in Trang, Thailand. As an agronomist, Ekal dried and stored grain products, vaccinated chickens and grafted fruit trees.

During a Peace Corps presentation at UTEP, she captivated the audience with a story about how one of the local families presented her with a frog for breakfast.

After the first rain of the season, the family had been out all night hunting frogs for their meat. The following morning, the family greeted Ekal with the

Continued on page 34

biggest frog. They hadn't eaten meat for weeks and they were honored to present their guest with a frog for her morning meal. Even though she no longer remembered what the frog tasted like, Ekal said that moment helped to define the person she is now.

"I tell the story in my presentation because I remember I had a choice," Ekal said. "I can be the person who eats the frog and makes all these people really happy, or I can be the person that says 'no.' I think that decision and others in that same vein have really contributed to who I am today."

The Peace Corps put Ekal on the path that eventually led her to UTEP.

And just like it did for Ekal, the Peace Corps can help students who are unsure about what's next after graduation figure out what is important to them.

Anne M. Giangiulio, an associate professor of art and graphic design at UTEP, can attest to that. Unsure of what she wanted to do after graduating from Villanova University with a degree in English, Giangiulio applied to the Peace Corps. She taught

English to elementary school-aged children from 1996-98 in the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of western Africa.

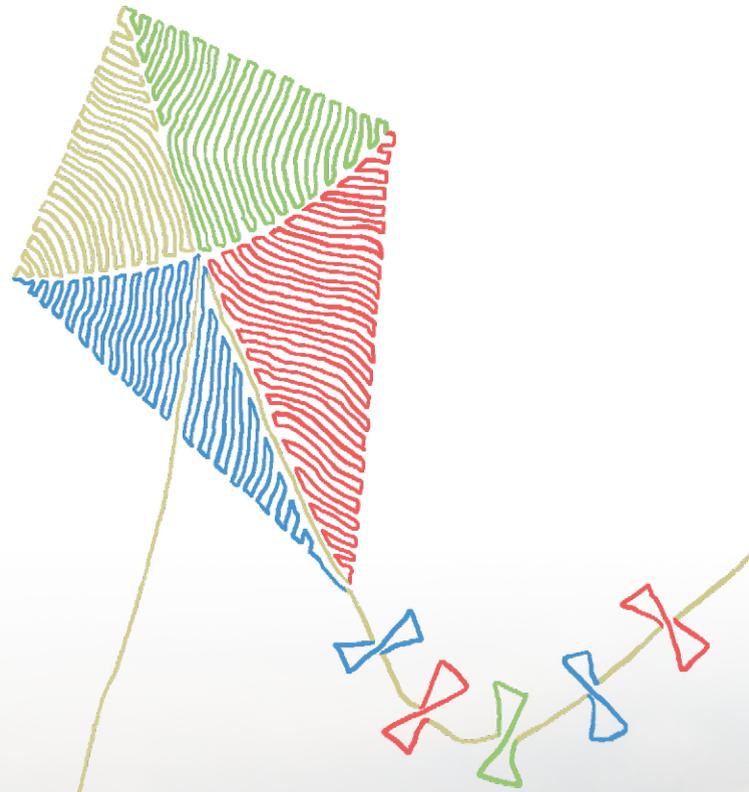
An art project that involved teaching children how to recycle plastic bags by turning them into kites got Giangiulio thinking about ways to combine teaching art with community service – something she has continued to do with her UTEP students since joining the University in 2004.

"I do a lot of community-based projects with graphic design students," Giangiulio said. During the spring semester, students in her Graphic Design 4 class worked on a new logo for the Rescue Mission of El Paso.

"I try to instill in them the importance of service and how there are a lot of great causes in our community that deserve graphic design, but (organizations) can't afford it," she said. "They're fulfilling a real need within their own community."

Giangiulio said she discovered her passion for art in the Peace Corps. Ivan Gallegos hopes something similar happens to him.

Cape Verde children enjoy their recycled plastic kites. Photo by Anne M. Giangiulio.



“They’re fulfilling a real need within their own community.”

Anne M. Giangiulio





Visit [utep.edu/magazine](http://utep.edu/magazine) to see an interview with Carrie Hessler-Radelet.



Gallegos graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in metallurgical and materials engineering from UTEP in May 2016. Thinking about becoming an aerospace engineer, Gallegos decided to take a break before starting graduate school. Instead, he will teach chemistry and biology to high school students in Mozambique for the next two years to reflect on his career choice.

Before joining the Peace Corps, he met with John McClure, Ph.D., professor of metallurgical and materials engineering at UTEP. McClure taught science in Ghana in 1968-69 with the Peace Corps and encouraged Gallegos to take advantage of the opportunity to travel abroad with the volunteer program.

"I want to work in engineering, but ultimately I want to branch out into the education sector and teach STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)," Gallegos said. "It amazes me how much we've figured out through STEM and I want to share that with other people, starting with the kids in Mozambique so they can develop a passion for it."

Before he leaves on Aug. 30 for a three-month training in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, Gallegos is learning Portuguese, the country's official language, using the Duolingo app. He plans to tutor students at Socorro High School over the summer to help with his teaching skills.

Part of the Peace Corps mission is to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served. Gallegos plans to share the Hispanic-American culture with the people of Mozambique by introducing them to Mexican-American music and break the stereotype that all Americans look Caucasian. As a trained mariachi, Gallegos sings and plays the violin, guitar and bass. He hopes to fit one of his instruments into his luggage.

“Above all, I want to inspire the young people of Mozambique to continue their education by getting them excited about STEM. It’s a field with a huge need for people.”

Ivan Gallegos



J.R. HERNANDEZ

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: TOP, DUANE ZEHR, BRADLEY UNIVERSITY; MIDDLE, MICHAEL MOODY, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

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UTEP prepares the best and brightest to be leaders in their fields. Sometimes, these leaders choose to use their talents to teach — and inspire — the next generation.

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# CLASSES ACTS

By Daniel Perez

Edna Martinez, Ruben Espinosa and Jose Lozano saw The University of Texas at El Paso as a stepping stone on their career paths. Martinez wanted to save lives as a physician. Espinosa planned to win cases as an attorney. Lozano expected to study distant galaxies as an astronomer.

Fate had a different plan for them, and UTEP played a significant role in their futures. Their University experiences redirected their career interests and stoked their desire to serve subsequent generations of college students. Each earned a Ph.D. and joined the professoriate. The trio was drawn to teaching and research, and each had the desire to be a role model as a Latino faculty member.

*Excelencia* in Education's "The Condition of Latinos in Education: 2015 Factbook" states that Latinos made up only 4 percent of faculty in institutions of higher education in 2011, while at the same time they made up about 16 percent of the nation's population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Martinez, Espinosa and Lozano are working to change that underrepresentation.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation announced in January 2016 that it had selected UTEP as one of three Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) involved in a \$5.1 million, five-year effort to increase the number of Latino professors in the humanities – art, music, literature and languages – at the nation's colleges and universities.

UTEP is proud of its established efforts to serve a 21st century student demographic, which has expanded the pool of Hispanic students who go on to earn doctoral degrees and succeed in academia or industry, said Charles Ambler, Ph.D., dean of UTEP's Graduate School.

He pointed to research by the National Science Foundation and the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics that showed in 2014 that UTEP was No. 1 among U.S. institutions of higher education that prepare Hispanic U.S. citizens and permanent resident undergraduates who go on to earn doctoral degrees.

"We want students to think in terms of their potential," said Ambler, who added that part of UTEP's central role as an HSI is to help students, especially first-generation college students, to understand their options. HSIs are colleges and universities with a full-time undergraduate enrollment that is at least 25 percent Hispanic. In fall 2015, UTEP enrolled 20,220 undergraduates, 83 percent of whom were Hispanic.

Martinez, Espinosa and Lozano are grateful to their UTEP faculty mentors who saw their potential and cultivated it. They embrace their role as teachers and their responsibility to inspire those who want to follow them into the professoriate.



# THE BORN TEACHER

**Edna Martinez** is the second of four children raised in an Army family that moved around the country and to Panama during her formative years. As a youth, the El Paso native was known for her ability to take charge.

"I made sure things happened," Martinez said. She is an assistant professor of educational leadership at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), about 60 miles east of Los Angeles. "I learned that it was OK to ask questions, OK to get involved and OK to not take 'no' for an answer."

The family returned to the Sun City in time for her to graduate from El Paso's Andress High School in 1999. Martinez enrolled at UTEP and earned her bachelor's degree in biological sciences with a biomedical track in 2005, but she already had decided to affect lives on a different level. Her transition from wanting an M.D. to a Ph.D. started when she got involved in campus initiatives that enhanced chances for student success, such as New Student Orientation and CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program). What she witnessed were academic disadvantages and inequalities in the K-12 and higher education systems that she wanted to help change. She was accepted into UTEP's Graduate School, where she pursued her master's degree in educational administration.

"I loved the idea of staying on a college campus and turning it into a career," the educator said. "I may not be able to save a life, but I can have an impact on a life the way my teachers had on mine."

She was recruited to Clemson University in South Carolina for her doctoral work in educational leadership – higher education. She said the timely messages from her UTEP mentors added a more humanistic element to teaching beyond the classroom. She earned her Ph.D. in 2014, but also learned about faculty lifestyle that balanced teaching, service, research, publishing, presentations and conferences.

"I realized that I could do this," she said.

Although courted by a more prestigious university, Martinez decided to start her professorship at CSUSB because the campus and the community reminded her of what UTEP and El Paso were like 20 years ago when the University was refining its access and excellence mission. She was drawn in particular to the chance to serve as a role model to the campus' minority students. She balances her courseload and research with participation in on-campus mentorships and off-campus programs that promote higher education.

"I am a proud product of an HSI," Martinez said, referring to UTEP. "I know the impact that HSIs and faculty of color can have on students, and that's something I wanted to carry forward in my career."

She shared examples of making time to assist students interested in the professoriate by helping them build their resumes with research assistantships and opportunities to present and publish their findings.

"There are HSIs across the country, but their faculty does not necessarily reflect their student population," she said. For the 2015-16 academic year, UTEP's percentage of Hispanic faculty was 36 percent. "It's important for students of color to have faculty of color who can serve as mentors."



*I may not be able to save a life, but  
I can have an impact on a life the  
way my teachers had on mine.*



*As one of the nation's handful of Latino Shakespeares (scholars), I recognized that I was in a unique position and I don't want to underplay that.*

## THE BARD SCHOLAR

**Ruben Espinosa** is a first-generation American who dreamed of being a great novelist like Faulkner and Hemingway. Mostly quiet and shy, he began his lifelong love of books while a junior at El Paso's Burges High School.

"Carpe Diem," said Espinosa, an associate professor of English at UTEP who specializes in Shakespeare and early modern studies. The El Paso native quoted the famous Latin "Seize the Day" line from the 1989 movie "Dead Poets Society."

Thinking pragmatically, the first-generation high school graduate enrolled at UTEP as a political science major and planned to become a lawyer. He considered his initial classes tedious, but enjoyed his literature electives, so he switched majors to English literature his sophomore year. He admitted to not knowing what he would do with his degree, so he added an education minor as a safety net.

"I had no ambition to be a teacher," he said in his third floor office in Hudspeth Hall after a morning class. "It was a time of wanderlust. I was going to move to Austin (Texas) and be part of the art scene."

Espinosa was a regular on the Dean's List and had earned his teaching credential by the time he graduated in 1998. The El Paso Independent School District hired him as a full-time middle school English teacher. By the next year he was teaching at El Paso High School. To challenge himself, he enrolled in UTEP's Graduate School and earned his master's degree in English literature in 2001. His faculty mentors encouraged him to pursue a doctorate, which he considered a ticket to a higher education job where he could write and do research about literature on top of teaching.

"There was clarity at this point," said Espinosa, who accepted an offer to study at the University of Colorado, where he received his doctorate in 2008. "I was committed to becoming a professor."

He entered a tough job market where there were six applicants for every Shakespeare/Renaissance-focused tenure-track position across the country. One of his former UTEP professors advised him that the University would have a temporary visiting assistant professor position, but could not guarantee it would last beyond the academic year.

Espinosa received several tenure-track offers, but decided to gamble on himself and took the UTEP job. He saw it as an opportunity to come home and to teach students who looked like him. UTEP put him on the tenure track the next year and he earned tenure in 2014.

The educator said teaching to a Latino population added value to his research, which has moved to Latino engagement with Shakespeare. He is proud of his work in the classroom, and with recruiting other Latino scholars who have strengthened his department.

"As one of the nation's handful of Latino Shakespeares (scholars), I recognized that I was in a unique position and I don't want to underplay that," Espinosa said. "I think what our students offer is an invaluable perspective."

He recalled when a graduate student in a Shakespeare course approached him at the end of the semester and told him that he was her first Latino professor who taught the kind of course that she hoped to teach one day.

"That spoke to diversity," he said.



# THE PHYSICS 'GEEK'

**Jose Lozano** was born into a family of educators that moved from Chihuahua, Mexico, to Juárez when he was young. His father was a professor of differential equations and civil engineering in Juárez, and other family members taught grades K-12.

The obedient and disciplined “nice kid” participated in organized sports through high school, when he became more interested in music. He joined several bands as lead guitarist and played everything from soft rock to heavy metal in bars and clubs throughout El Paso until he started his dissertation in 1998.

The math and science whiz became interested in astronomy in high school and saw himself as a researcher at a university or observatory. His first stop was UTEP, where he enjoyed the theoretical and experimental approach to physics employed by the “scary smart” faculty. It did not matter to him that few of his professors were Hispanic. His focus was on the coursework.

“My friends and I spent almost every waking moment solving problems and thinking about what the professors taught us in class,” said the associate professor of physics during a telephone interview from his office at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, about 60 miles north of Springfield. “We were the geeks, but it was fun.”

His curiosity about physics in general overtook his specific interest in astronomy by his junior year. He earned his bachelor’s degree in 1988 and completed his master’s in physics two years later. He considered going to UT Austin for his doctorate, but UTEP offered him the chance to create and operate his own lab with new equipment.

“If I went to UT, I would have been at the bottom of the totem pole,” Lozano said. “At UTEP, I would be in charge of the lab from the ground up. It was going to be my baby.”

He designed, assembled and tested every piece of equipment, and produced research that spawned seven published papers. He earned his doctoral degree in 1998 in materials science and engineering. Lozano continues to study surface science that uses ultra high vacuum systems.

It was during his third year of postdoctoral work at UT Austin that he decided to pursue a career in academia that he had been part of since 1989 when he was a graduate assistant in a UTEP astronomy lab. Around the same time, his former UTEP dissertation chair, Jim Craig, Ph.D., who was working at Bradley, alerted him to a tenure-track job in his department. Lozano said he liked the campus’ 12:1 student to faculty ratio. He was hired in 2002 and made tenure four years later.

He has noticed more Hispanics and other minorities in his classes in recent years, and he appreciates that some perceive him as a role model. Many of the undergraduates participate in the department’s research, like at UTEP, and help with the publications and presentations. He estimated that about 50 percent of his students go on to graduate schools around the country.

He advises those who tell him they want to become physics professors to work hard, keep their options open, “and make damn sure you know the material.”



*At UTEP, I would be in charge of the lab from the ground up. It was going to be my baby.*

# The Alumni Lounge

ALUMNI NEWS, PROFILES, OBITUARIES AND PHOTOS

## 1950s

**Don Maynard (B.A. '58)** was named the 2015 Legend of the Sun Bowl. He played in the Sun Bowl game in 1957, won a championship in Super Bowl III with the New York Jets and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1987.

## 1960s

**Mario T. Garcia (B.A. '66, M.A. '68)** published the book "The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement" (University of California Press, 2015) about the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s as they unfolded in Los Angeles.

**Larry W. Langberg (B.A. '66)** is the first and only FBI agent to serve as national president of both professional organizations for agents: the FBI Agents Association from 1988 to 1995, and the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, where he is the current president. He served as an agent for more than 30 years. Larry is married to the former Keni Patton (B.A. '69).

**Leslie H. Taylor (B.A. '68)**, a retired Army officer and president and CEO of Taylor-Oden Enterprises, a defense IT company, serves on the advisory board of the College of Health and Human Services at George Mason University.

## 1970s

**Ricardo Acosta (B.S. '75, M.S. '77)** retired from El Paso Electric Co. after 36 years. He was director of resource planning.

**Armando Chavez (B.S. '77, M.S. '82)** retired after a 30-year career with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, finishing as a consumer safety officer in Tucson, Arizona.

**Robert LeRoy Giron (B.A. '73)** won the 2015 Great Midwest Book Festival Award for Compilations/Anthologies for a book he edited, "The Best of Gival Press Short Stories" (Gival Press, 2015).

**Debra C. Hester (BBA '77)**, a Realtor with ERA Sellers Buyers, was recognized as the 2015 highest-

producing agent in the El Paso region out of 160 agents.

**Charlie F. McNabb (B.A. '71)** was selected as city attorney for the City of Georgetown, Texas.

**Gary Paul Molberg (BBA '72)**, president and CEO of the Amarillo [Texas] Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives state organization.

**Roger Evan O'Dell (BBA '77)** was appointed by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to the OneStar National Service Commission Board. The board promotes volunteerism and helps administer AmeriCorps programs in Texas. His term will expire in 2018.

**Martin Silva (BBA '72)** recently celebrated the 90th anniversary of Silva's Supermarket in El Paso, which his father started in 1919 and renamed Silva's Market in 1925. Silva is the president and CEO of the company that owns the supermarket.

**Dorothy Patricia Ward (B.A. '75, M.A. '77)**, assistant professor and administrative director of the Entering Student Program at UTEP, will serve on the national advisory board for the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. The center is a clearinghouse for scholarship, policy and best practice for all postsecondary student transitions.

## 1980s

**Miguel Juarez (B.A. '85, M.A. '12)** organized the "Oscar R. Castillo: Documenting Chicano Life and Activism Exhibit" at the 55th Annual Western History Association Conference in Portland, Oregon.

**Dana Mark Jurick (M.S. '89)** was appointed to the Texas Governors' Technical Advisory Committee to the Bureau of Economic Geology. He resides in Houston, Texas with his

wife, Kalsey (B.S. '88), who is a court-appointed child advocate in Harris County, Texas.

**Dawn Marie Summers (B.S. '83)** retired after 33 years with the San Diego Police Department.

## 1990s

**Miguel Fernandez (BBA '98)** inducted into the El Paso Business Hall of Fame by Junior Achievement of the Southwest. Fernandez is CEO of Transtelco, a telecommunications service provider in El Paso. He is developing The Stanton, a boutique hotel in Downtown El Paso.

**Mary Ann Friesen (MSN '92)**, nursing research and evidence-based practice coordinator for the Inova Health System of Northern Virginia, serves on the advisory board of the College of Health and Human Services at George Mason University.

**Sally Anne Hurt Deitch (BSN '90, MSN '94)**, market CEO of The Hospitals of Providence in El Paso, was inducted into the El Paso Business Hall of Fame by Junior Achievement of the Southwest. In addition, the Federation of American Hospitals presented her with the 10th annual Corris Boyd Leadership Award. The award honors an individual or company that has made an outstanding contribution in fostering leadership in the health care industry.

**Leonard "Lenny" Martinez (B.A. '98)** was hired by UTEP's University Communications office as a communications coordinator. He previously worked for the El Paso Times, KVIA-TV and the City of El Paso.

**Robert Charles Moore (B.A. '98)**, El Paso Times editor, was recognized with the School Bell Award for excellence in public education reporting by the Texas State Teachers Association. Moore

Continued on page 44



**UTEP alumni** Chris Porter '01, left, and Paul Yetter '80, right, both attorneys at Yetter Coleman LLP in Houston, and Yetter's wife, Patricia '81, had lunch with 1966 Texas Western men's basketball championship team member David Lattin in May 2016.

To contribute to the Alumni Lounge, send your update to [univcomm@utep.edu](mailto:univcomm@utep.edu)



# This She'll Defend

Claire Starnes '81

## Alumna's Book Brings Attention to Women Vietnam Veterans

**Claire Starnes initially joined** the U.S. Army as a means of escape from everyday life. Born in Biddeford, Maine, in 1944, she enlisted in 1963 and completed basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

At first, Starnes did not meet the Army's weight requirement and had to eat bananas until she gained enough weight to enlist.

"I enlisted because I wanted to explore the world and I never wanted to see my boyfriend, who I had just broken up with, again," Starnes recalled as she tugged at her leather biker vest.

In 1969, she volunteered to go to Vietnam as one of more than 1,000 U.S. military women – other than nurses – who served there between 1962 and 1973.

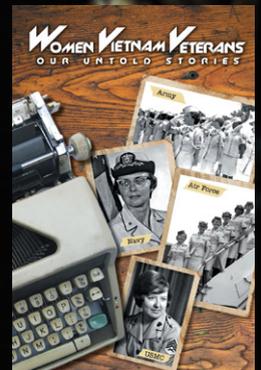
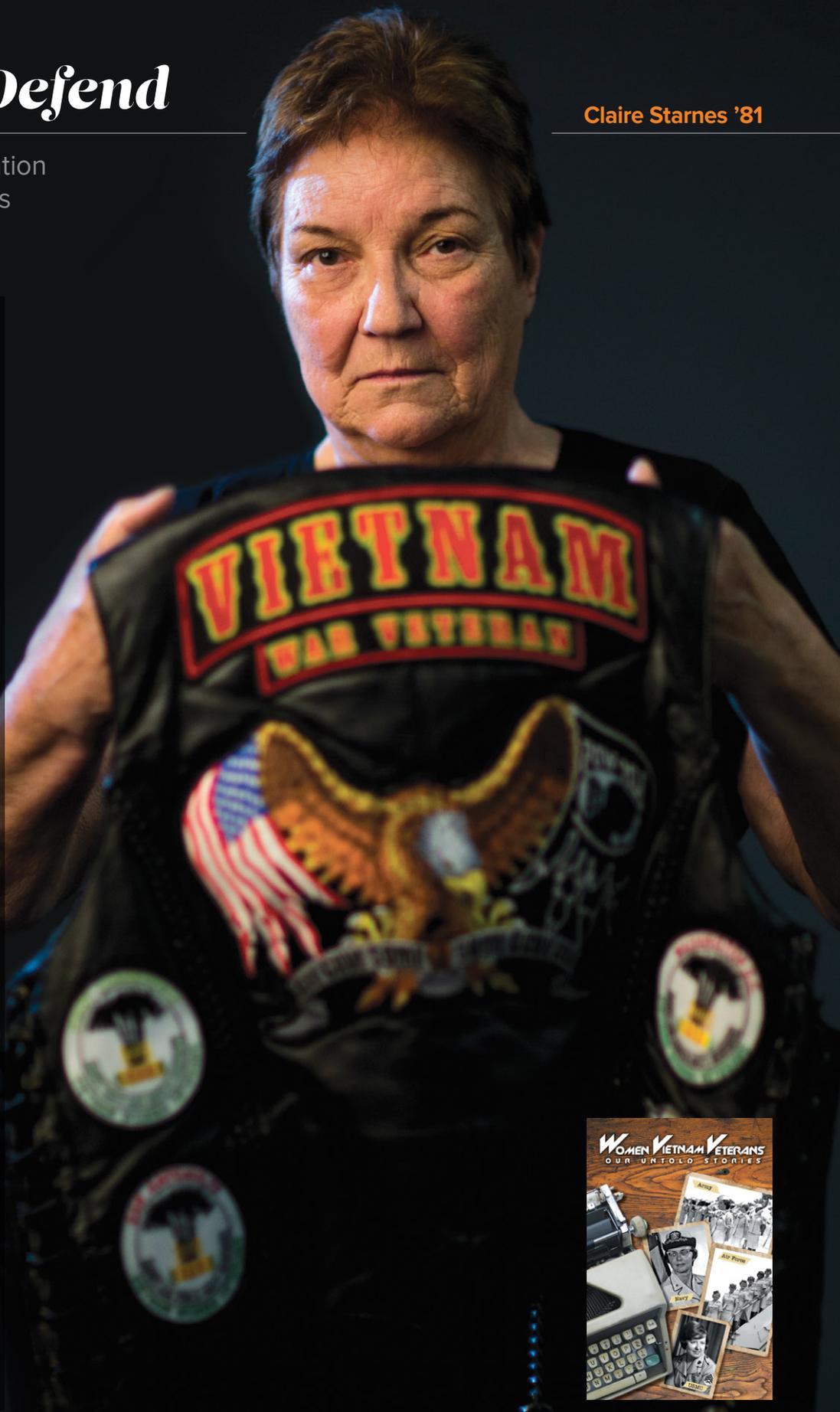
"Arriving in Vietnam is like arriving nowhere else," said Starnes, who worked as a photojournalist throughout her station and went on to become a communications specialist for the Army. "The first thing that hits you is the extreme humidity, along with the different smells."

Five years after her service ended in June 1973, Starnes enrolled at The University of Texas at El Paso so she could get a degree in the field where she had the most experience: mass communications. She worked at the University's radio station, KTEP-FM (88.5) and The Prospector student newspaper.

"Some of my favorite memories are from my time with Chi Gamma Iota," Starnes recalled of the organization that provided support to former service personnel. "I felt at home with the veterans and am still in touch with many of them."

Starnes earned a bachelor's degree from UTEP in 1981. Upon graduating, she became editor at Fort Bliss Ordnance Magazine. Later, she collaborated with Vietnam veteran Donna Lowery and others to find military women who served on the ground in Vietnam and create the book "Women Vietnam Veterans: Our Untold Stories."

"We want to bring meaning to what these women did," Starnes said. "Hopefully we will be recognized and be put in a history book." -**Esmeralda Treviño**



is being honored for outstanding collection of editorials, the fourth consecutive year he has won the award.

**Joe Edward Valenzuela (BBA '90)**, co-owner of Rubia Wine Cellars, won silver medals at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition for two of his wines.

## 2000s

**Marshall Charles Barclay (MBA '05)** was named financial planner of the year by Lincoln Financial Advisors, a broker/dealer and registered investment adviser in El Paso.

**Jennifer Marie Barnhouse (B.A. '08)** joined the MIMCO Inc. marketing team in El Paso as a graphic artist. MIMCO is a commercial real estate agency.

**Cesar Jose Blanco (B.A. '05)**, a Texas state representative, was named political director of the Latino

Victory Project, a group aimed at electing Latinos to national office.

**Estela A. Casas (B.A. '05)**, KVIA-TV anchor, was recognized with the School Bell Award for excellence in public education reporting by the Texas State Teachers Association. Casas was honored for outstanding television program series for "Estela's Escuelas."

**Jennifer Lee Dowdy (B.A. '00, MBA '10)** has been named executive director of Progress321. A project of the El Paso Community Foundation, Progress321 provides professional development activities, community-focused initiatives and networking events.

**Gerardo Manuel Lopez (B.S. '04)**, who also goes by Blake Vaz, co-produced two seasons of the music show "VidaLexus Presenta Té Para Tres con Pili Montilla." The show received an Emmy Award in the magazine show category at the 39th annual Suncoast EMMY Awards in

December 2015. The program allows audiences to experience a day in the life of the most relevant acts in Latin alternative music.

**Kristy Elizabeth McGee (BBA '00)** joined Raymond James as senior vice president for investments. She has 15 years experience as vice president and senior portfolio manager with Morgan Stanley.

**Osvaldo Mendoza (B.M. '04)** had his original piece of music, "Overture to Victory," premiered by the El Paso Symphony in November.

**Claudio Ivan Ordaz (B.M. '01)** founded the Savonlinna Camerata orchestra in Finland in 2013 as the first Mexican conductor to start his own orchestra in Europe. It started with 12 musicians and has since grown to include 34 members and performed throughout Finland.

**Edmundo Portillo (B.A. '04)** was named vice president of Cimarron Mortgage Capital by

Hunt Companies. He oversees the company's permanent loan division and manages its construction lending division.

**Jesus M. Rivera Jr. (B.A. '08)** was named Texas Society of Professional Engineers Young Engineer of the Year, El Paso Chapter.

## 2010s

**Jacob Jerome Barde (B.A. '12)** was hired by law firm ScottHulse to focus on corporate, commercial finance and real estate in the firm's El Paso office.

**Sara Elena Chavez (B.S. '12)** was hired as a physical therapist at El Paso Physical Therapy Services. Her therapy interests are manual therapy, geriatrics, orthopedics and women's health.

**Avina C. Gutierrez (BMS '11)** was elected mayor of Yakima, Washington. She was among the first three Latinos ever elected to the town's city council and is the first Latina to be chosen as mayor.

**William Guzmán (Ph.D. '10)**, an assistant professor at Florida A&M University, was awarded the C. Calvin Smith Book Award by the Southern Conference on African-American Studies for his book "Civil Rights in the Texas Borderlands: Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and Black Activism" (University of Illinois Press). Guzmán also was appointed to the Florida Education Commissioner's Task Force on African-American History.

**Richard Glenn Hunt (BBA '12, M.Acc. '13)** was promoted to senior in tax practice at Schmid, Broaddus, Nugent & Gano in El Paso.

**Erika Imhoff (M.Ed. '11)** successfully completed the HITS Half Ironman triathlon in Palm Springs, California. She placed first in the Athena division.

**Robert Rodriguez (B.A. '10)** was hired by Varay as a business development professional. Varay is a computer support and IT consulting company in El Paso.

**Illiana Vasquez (BBA '13)** was promoted to senior in tax practice at Schmid, Broaddus, Nugent & Gano in El Paso.



## Welcome to Washington

UTEP alumni welcomed and hosted approximately 20 UTEP students at La Tasca restaurant in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 13, 2016.

The students attended the Transportation Research Board 95th annual conference along with UTEP civil engineering professors Carlos Chang-Albitres, Ph.D.; Ruey Cheu, Ph.D.; and Soheil Nazarian, Ph.D.

Special alumni guests included Victor Mendez '80, deputy secretary of transportation with the U.S. Department of Transportation; Willarda Edwards '72, immediate past president of the UTEP Alumni Association; and Monica Jurado '06, '08, with the Office of Technical Support for the Federal Highway Administration.

# From Dropout to Dr.

Hector A. Garcia '99



Hector Garcia speaks at "TED Talks Live-War and Peace" in November 2015 at The Town Hall in New York City.

**Hector A. Garcia's journey** to become a professor, researcher and author did not follow a traditional path. He was a high school dropout who described his life as "bleak or boring" until his intellectual curiosity drove him to pursue a higher education at UTEP.

As he started a new academic journey, he was inspired by the *cartoneros* he would see near campus – hard-working people who collected discarded cardboard boxes and took them across the border to recycle.

He recalled one determined *cartonero* who used a bicycle built for carrying stacks of material.

"I'd see him every day in his straw hat and *guaraches* (sandals) carrying these impossible loads of flattened cardboard on his bike up and down Mesa, which UTEP alumni know is all hills.

"To me, this man was a warrior, and I admired him. His image called into sharp relief the privilege I had simply by being born on this side of the river. And I realized that no matter how hard he worked, he would never have the same opportunities as I did, and that I simply couldn't squander what I had."

Garcia pushed forward, earning straight A's and winning scholarships that helped pay for his education through graduate school.

Now as a psychologist, he serves others.

Garcia, Psy.D., who graduated from UTEP in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in psychology, is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and a clinical psychologist specializing in the treatment of combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He has published extensively on the treatment of PTSD in combat veterans, masculine identity in the aftermath of war, stress and rank in organizations, and the interplay between religious practice and psychopathology.

In fall 2016, he took part in a special TED Talks series on Broadway, where he discussed the science behind the best PTSD treatments for combat veterans. TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a series of global conferences and talks under the slogan "Ideas Worth Spreading."

Garcia said he was honored to be part of TED's mission to help humanity by sharing information with people across the world.

"More people need to know how much we can do now to help PTSD sufferers recover," he said.

**-Leonard Martinez**



...And I realized that no matter how hard he worked, he would never have the same opportunities as I did, and that I simply couldn't squander what I had."

# In Memoriam

## 1940s

- Arthur E. Alarcon (B.S. '49)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 9, 2016
- Virginia "Jinney" U. Hair (B.A. '41)**  
Las Cruces, New Mexico; November 16, 2015
- Ann Louise Leeds (B.A. '46)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 13, 2015
- Dorothy Helen Schumann (B.A. '48)**  
Odessa, Texas; January 1, 2016

## 1950s

- Clarence A. Albrecht (BBA '57)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 19, 2015
- James Otto Bombach (BBA '58)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 7, 2015
- Burch Neal (McFarland) Dille (M.Ed. '59)**  
San Angelo, Texas; January 12, 2016
- Carolyn B. Feinberg (B.A. '53)**  
El Paso, Texas; December 21, 2015
- Dan Ray Frantzen (B.S. '55)**  
Lafayette, Louisiana; September 8, 2015
- William "Bill" J. Haggard (B.S. '51)**  
Houston, Texas; January 19, 2016
- Ernest L. Keily (BBA '50)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 14, 2016
- Billy B. Kern (B.A. '56)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 30, 2016
- Robert "Bobby" D. Lowman (B.S. '57)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 21, 2016
- F. Ray McCormick (B.S. '58)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 19, 2016
- Shirley A. Noah (B.A. '58)**  
Houston, Texas; November 23, 2015
- Morris "Moe" L. Schmieder (B.A. '52)**  
Tucson, Arizona; December 1, 2015
- Raymond J. Snare (B.A. '52)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 20, 2015
- Nancy Saunders Wyler (B.A. '56)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 16, 2016

## 1960s

- Martin O. Adams (BBA '66)**  
Fort Stockton, Texas; February 2, 2016
- Luis R. Alvarez (BBA '66)**  
Houston, Texas; January 19, 2016
- Betty Ann Brown (B.S. '63)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 23, 2016
- Gerald E. Fadal (BBA '65)**  
Woodstock, Georgia; December 15, 2015
- William Gurany (B.S. '61)**  
Leesburg, Florida; February 12, 2016
- Lonnie G. Lovell (BBA '69)**  
Dallas, Texas; October 21, 2015
- James "Jim" L. Miller III (B.A. '64)**  
Garland, Texas; October 30, 2015
- Phyllis Carlene Morgan (B.S. '66)**  
Woodburn, Oregon; November 5, 2015
- Mary M. Morrow (B.S. '63)**  
Sanger, Texas; January 31, 2016
- Henry G. Rettig (B.A. '62)** Las Cruces, New Mexico; November 15, 2015
- Lawrence Carl Wade Jr. (B.S. '60)**  
Burbank, California; November 26, 2015

## 1970s

- Margaret C. Althoff-Olivas (B.A. '77)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 14, 2016
- Jerith Clarence (B.S. '70)**  
St. Louis, Missouri; February 18, 2016
- George E. Garcia (B.S. '71)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 9, 2016
- George W. Gonzalez (BBA '73)**  
Arlington, Texas; November 13, 2015
- Marianne Fite Green (M.A. '70)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 1, 2016
- Robert M. Harris (B.A. '70)**  
El Paso, Texas; December 18, 2015
- Joyce L. Jastrzembki (BBA '79)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 2, 2016
- Herbert C. Mott (B.S. '71)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 11, 2016
- Douglas B. Paul (B.A. '75)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 17, 2015
- James H. Riley (B.S. '70, M.Ed. '75)**  
El Paso, Texas; February 15, 2016
- Sanford Jesse Zentz (B.S. '77)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 1, 2015

## 1980s

- Gladys Geneva Blount (B.S. '80)**  
El Paso, Texas; December 20, 2015
- Mildred G. Douglas (B.A. '85)**  
El Paso, Texas; December 28, 2015
- Judy Ann Frederick (BSN '81)**  
Tyler, Texas; November 3, 2015
- Rosa Maria Hernandez (M.Ed. '82)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 29, 2016
- Vance D. Jenkins (BBA '89)**  
Golden, Colorado; January 6, 2016
- Merton David Pepper (BBA '81)**  
Mason, Texas; December 31, 2015
- Barbara Ann Van Pelt (B.S. '82)**  
El Paso, Texas; December 8, 2015
- Blanca E. Veloz (B.S. '83, M.Ed. '00)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 22, 2015

## 1990s

- Angela A. Gomez (BBA '97)**  
El Paso, Texas; January 5, 2016
- Karen Kimberlin (BSW '99)**  
El Paso, Texas; December 24, 2015
- Artie Lou Metcalf (M.A. '90)**  
Arkansas City, Kansas; January 31, 2016

## 2000s

- Gabriel Nicholas Acosta (BBA '00)**  
El Paso, Texas; November 20, 2015
- Roger Skimo Grays (B.S. '05)**  
Las Cruces, New Mexico; November 30, 2015
- Claude Wendelin McNutt (M.Ed. '00, M.Ed '04)** El Paso, Texas; December 16, 2015

## 2010s

- Luis Eduardo Santos-Vega (B.A. '15)**  
El Paso, Texas; October 5, 2015



## Lola Dawkins, Ph.D.

Lola Dawkins, Ph.D., a 1954 business graduate from Texas Western College (now UTEP) and former UTEP business professor, died March 18, 2016 in El Paso. She was 102.

Dawkins was an award-winning professor emerita of marketing and management who joined the UTEP faculty in 1965 and retired in 1984.

She is well remembered by her students and built a reputation as a tough grader. When asked during her December 2015 birthday party what her favorite part of teaching was, Dawkins' eyes lit up and she said with a smile, "I didn't think of myself as a teacher. I created the climate for learning."

She shared that she liked when students contacted her or sent her cards thanking her and sharing their success.

"She was very proud of her tenure at UTEP and very honored to be professor emerita and to be a Gold Nugget," her niece, Carol Ann Olachia, said.

Dawkins was recognized as a Gold Nugget Award recipient in 1998.

One of Dawkins' favorite UTEP assignments was leading the team that oversaw the design of UTEP's Business Administration Building, which opened in 1982. She also led the committees that recommended the building's furnishings and equipment.

Even after her retirement, Dawkins maintained her ties to the University through volunteer work with organizations such as the Heritage Commission and scholarship funds that benefit business students.

There's no question Dawkins impacted the lives of those inside and outside her classroom. Jackson Curlin is one former student who became a family friend and hosted Dawkins' 102nd birthday gathering.

"I feel fortunate to know her," Curlin said in December. "I think it's wonderful she's lived this many years. I feel certain that her legacy, if it has touched 100,000 people, it will soon touch 1 million people because of the students that she has turned out and students that continue to benefit from her generosity."

The Lola B. Dawkins Fund for Excellence in Business Administration was established in 1986 by alumni, friends and faculty honoring Dawkins upon her retirement. The fund provides scholarships to business students, especially those who intend to teach business education at the high school level.

For information on giving to the fund, call 915-747-8533 or email [givingto@utep.edu](mailto:givingto@utep.edu). -Leonard Martinez



# Give What You Get

James Cearley Gives Back to Program that Gave Him a Lifetime of Success

**Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."** These words could not be truer for University of Texas at El Paso alumnus James Cearley, who showed his appreciation for his alma mater in a big and benevolent way.

Cearley is one of three children born to a young military family and one of three first-generation UTEP graduates. His parents instilled in their children the notion of thinking big and developing options for their futures, including pursuing college degrees.

Shortly after receiving his geology degree at UTEP in 1978, Cearley began a 35-year career with the Chevron Corp. He held numerous technical and managerial positions, and ended his career as the General Manager of Deepwater GOM Exploration in Houston. He and his team of scientists and engineers made significant contributions to deep-water oil discoveries in the Gulf of Mexico.

"I can honestly say that I genuinely loved my job at Chevron," Cearley said. "It never felt like going to work; I looked forward to coming in every morning and did not want to leave at night. I was doing exactly what I loved."

After retirement in 2013, Cearley became a member of the UTEP College of Science Advisory Board. Through this involvement, he established the base funding for the Field Geology Experience Fund endowment. The program provides funding for students to purchase field equipment (including tablets and geological software) and offset student lab fees and field trip expenses. The endowment enables students to participate at conventions and other research-related events.

"This fund is important to me personally because I want to ensure that future geology students are able to experience the same rich geologic field environment as I did," Cearley said.

In addition to his generous gift to the University, he has also inspired fellow alumni to be a part of this rewarding endeavor. Cearley has pledged to match all contributions up to \$50,000 until the end of 2016.

"As an individual who came from fairly modest means, I feel very fortunate to be in the position to give back to UTEP and influence others to support this institution," Cearley said. "Ready access to an affordable local university was paramount in providing me with an avenue to professional, high-paying job opportunities." - **Christina Rodriguez**

James Cearley '78





## John M. Levosky, Ph.D.

John M. Levosky, Ph.D., UTEP professor emeritus and former chair of mechanical and industrial engineering, died Feb. 10, 2016. He was 85.

Widely known in the UTEP College of Engineering for his difficult dynamics class, Levosky left a lasting impression on many of his former students. He was the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society faculty adviser throughout the 1980s.

"I've really enjoyed my career in engineering and Dr. Levosky's lessons and example are with me every day," said Keith Fong, who served as Tau Beta Pi's president during the 1980s under Levosky's advising. "I was privileged to be one of his students."

"Dr. Levosky inspired me to be the professor that I am today in expecting excellence and commitment from all my students," said Roger Gonzalez, Ph.D., chair and professor for Engineering Education and Leadership and a former student of Levosky. "My love for engineering dynamics is due to him. I will always remember him fondly; his inspirations live on."

Levosky, who grew up in Yatesboro, Pennsylvania, and was living in Wimberley, Texas, at the time of his death, received both his B.S. in mechanical engineering and his B.S. in industrial engineering from Lamar State College. He received a Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University. He started teaching at UTEP in the mid-1960s and retired almost 30 years later.

"He had a talent for knowing exactly how much more a student could perform, and amazingly he could make students pull it out," said Louis Everett, Ph.D., the John T. MacGuire Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering at UTEP and a former student of Levosky's. "I wouldn't be half the engineer I am today without Dr. Levosky."

The John M. Levosky Endowed Scholarship Fund for Mechanical and Industrial Engineering was established in 1997 by friends, former students and colleagues in honor of Levosky. The endowment provides an annual scholarship to an undergraduate mechanical engineering student.

This endowed scholarship in Levosky's name enriches the educational experience for many students who would otherwise be unable to afford higher education.

Donations in Levosky's honor may be made to the John Levosky Endowed Scholarship Fund for Mechanical and Industrial Engineering. Please contact the UTEP Office of University Development at 915-747-8533 or [givingto@utep.edu](mailto:givingto@utep.edu) for more information. - **Esmeralda Treviño**



## John Aubrey Whitacre Jr.

UTEP Professor Emeritus John A. Whitacre, Jr. died in El Paso March 15, 2016. He was 93 years old.

Born in Stephenville, Texas in 1922, Whitacre served in the Army Air Corps as a B-24 bomber pilot during World War II. He went on to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering at Texas A&M University.

After working in the engineering field for several years at Dow Chemical in Freeport, Texas, Whitacre joined the College of Engineering faculty at Texas Western College in 1964, where he taught thermodynamics. He quickly earned the reputation for being a tough yet thoughtful professor who always pushed his students to put forth their best effort.

"John was the most feared engineering professor," recalled retired UTEP Engineering Professor Jack Dowdy, Ph.D. "All engineering students had to pass his class in order to earn their degrees, and he expected his students to have a substantial amount of knowledge by the time they finished his class."

While at Texas Western College, Whitacre worked diligently with the college's Schellenger Research Laboratory, which conducted research around the world for the military and private industry.

One of his research efforts – the Da Vinci Project – received coverage in National Geographic Magazine. The project involved releasing high altitude balloons into the atmosphere to calculate air density at various levels.

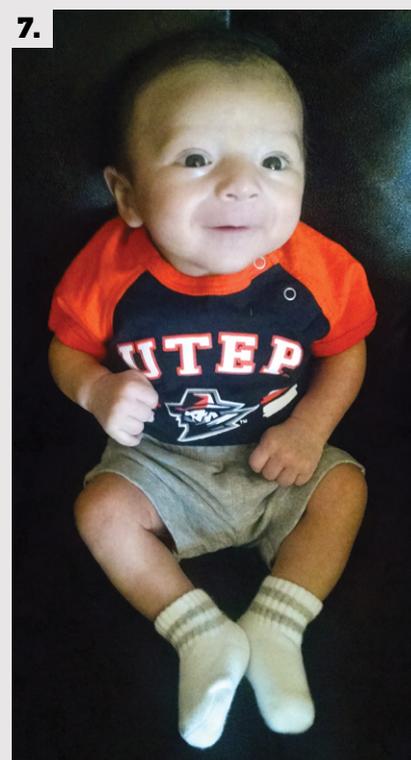
Despite his reputation for being a challenging professor in the classroom, Whitacre enjoyed mentoring students and helping them to become successful professionals in their chosen careers. As a mechanical engineering student from 1966-69, UTEP alumnus, entrepreneur and engineer Juan Herrera, Ph.D., worked closely with Whitacre on a research project that used solar energy to run laundry machines.

"Professor Whitacre was the best professor I have ever had," Herrera said. "He was a true engineer. He worked as an engineer before teaching, knew a lot about the field and always helped his students in any way he could."

Whitacre's son John Allen Whitacre remembers how proud his father was of his 30-year teaching career.

"Above all, he was a teacher," John Allen Whitacre said. "He not only taught students, but he also taught life lessons. Sometimes he taught with books, but most times he taught by example." - **Christina Rodriguez**

# Births & Marriages



**Marriages** - **1.** Ana Karen Ramirez (B.A. '12) and Neyri Eden Acuna (BBA '10) were married July 18, 2015 in El Paso. **2.** Edna Rodriguez (BSN '08) and Tim Booth were married Feb. 6, 2016 in Tucson, Arizona. **3.** Maritza Jimenez (BSW '01) and Rafael Marin were married Oct. 17, 2015 in Fabens, Texas.

**Births** - **4.** Gonzalo Aguilera III was born Feb. 17, 2016 to Nalleli Torres (BBA '07) and Gonzalo Aguilera Jr. in El Paso. **5.** Julián Villasenor was born Oct. 16, 2015 to Blanca Mendez (B.A. '07) and Emmanuel Villasenor (B.A. '07) in Scottsdale, Arizona. **6.** Mathieu Dillinger Prado was born July 7, 2015 to Paola Rimada (B.A. '16) and Marc Prado (B.S. '15) in El Paso. **7.** Ryan Isaac Olivas was born July 15, 2015 to Melissa Olivas (BBA '09) and Richard I. Olivas (BS '05; MS '11).



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