20 UTEP alums in their 20s conquering the world

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO ALUMNI MAGAZINE FALL 2016

Scientists beyond Borders

These are the stories of researchers from The University of Texas at El Paso, whose work has impact well beyond the Paso del Norte region.

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Homecoming 2016 Guide

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Richard Alfaro-Diaz, a doctoral student in geological sciences, demonstrates the University's Cyber-ShARE Center of Excellence Collaborative Visualization System, better known as the "Viz Wall." Photo by J.R. Hernandez.
Happy New Year!

The start of a new academic year at UTEP is always exciting. Anticipating the opportunities of the coming year energizes us, and our many accomplishments of the past year assure us that we’re well prepared to capitalize on them.

Among major accomplishments of the past year was UTEP’s successful review for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Comprehensive and time-consuming, this decennial process offers us a wonderful opportunity to assess and benchmark UTEP’s overall performance. Thanks to the outstanding work of the entire UTEP team over the past decade and of UTEP’s SACS team members who assured our readiness for the site visit, I’m confident that we will all be pleased and proud of the outcome when it is announced at the SACS annual meeting in December.

One of the key requirements of the SACS review is the preparation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which focuses an institution’s efforts and investments on a specific agenda over the next decade. UTEP’s QEP, called the UTEP Edge, will focus on enhancing student engagement and success. Specifically, we will work toward more successfully integrating the work of the entire UTEP campus family—from Academic and Student Affairs to Facilities, Business, Advancement and Auxiliary services—into promoting student success, from initial enrollment to graduation.

But we recognize, too, that enhancing UTEP students’ success shouldn’t end with graduation. We know that the very best measures of our performance are often the accomplishments of our alumni. Our interest in UTEP alumni success has led increasingly to efforts to connect with alumni through this magazine, a variety of social media, and events such as Homecoming and PICK-NICs.

Connecting works best as a two-way street, and we are now excitedly developing a strategy that will engage our proud UTEP alumni across the globe—all of you!—as active partners in the UTEP Edge. We believe that our alumni can be key partners in facilitating UTEP graduates’ career launches through a Miner network that you are uniquely qualified to help us create. You’ll soon be hearing more about this highly promising initiative from our newly appointed Assistant VP for Alumni Relations Maribel Villalva (see back page).

We very much hope that you’ll be as eager to join your fellow alumni as members of the UTEP Edge team, as we will be to have you with us.

Go Miners!

Diana Natalicio
President
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### SEISMIC MODEL

Ph.D. student Osei Tweneboah has successfully applied a mathematical model typically used to analyze financial data to earthquake data, which may help better predict disasters. Read more about it on page 12.

### Features

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**Twenty in Their 20s**

Successful UTEP alumni aren’t all middle-aged. Meet 20 young Miner graduates who have followed their passions with gusto and confidence and achieved a level of success before their 30th birthdays.

**Scientists Beyond Borders**

Whether the problem is Arctic biology, fuel cell efficiency, or drug development and screening, UTEP researchers contribute significantly to their fields by going out into the field – and sometimes that means the far reaches of the planet.

**Homecoming 2016**

The weeklong Homecoming festivities include something for everyone, from a 5K race to a parade, student activities, tailgates, alumni events at each college and a pep rally, all culminating with the football game on Oct. 29.

### On The Cover

Associate Professor of Biological Sciences Craig Tweedie, Ph.D., conducts research on how global climate change is affecting the Arctic and thus the rest of the world. Photo courtesy of Craig Tweedie.
On Instagram, visitors to the UTEP campus find inspiration everywhere. Use the hashtag #MinerMoments on Instagram to be featured in an upcoming issue of the UTEP Magazine. Be sure to follow UTEP on Instagram: utep_miners

Bolt of Inspiration

Isaac Clemen, a 2015 mechanical engineering graduate, used multiple photographs to make this composite image as he played the new Pokémon GO app with a friend in late July. “I was taking 5-second exposures as I was playing the game and was lucky enough to capture this one,” Clemen said. “When the lightning struck and my camera was still capturing it, I remember thinking ‘Dang. That’s gonna be intense.’”

Clean Room; Cool Selfie

Working under the direction of David Zubia, Ph.D., at UTEP’s Nanofabrication Facility, Karla Tarango took a quick pic in the lab’s clean room before resuming her internship in the lab.

Her Moment of Zen

During a field trip with her classmates, Arantxa Isais found the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens an inspiring place to take a picture. “I found the gardens peaceful when we went there,” she said. “I felt like every part of the garden was like a masterpiece.”
College of Health Sciences
Interim Dean Appointed

Osama I. Mikhail, Ph.D., was appointed interim dean of UTEP’s College of Health Sciences in May 2016. He takes the place of Kathleen Curtis, Ph.D., who retired after nine years at UTEP and 32 years in higher education.

Mikhail previously served as the interim dean of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health. A national search to recruit a new dean of the College of Health Sciences is underway.

Mikhail is the senior vice president for strategic planning at the UTHealth School of Public Health, director of the Fleming Center for Healthcare Management, and has been a professor of management and policy sciences at the School of Public Health since 1989.

- Laura L. Acosta

Hispanic Entrepreneurs
Center Studies Why Hispanic-Owned Businesses Succeed

U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2015 that the number of Hispanic-owned businesses in the country increased to 3.3 million from 2.3 million from 2007 to 2012, and that number is expected to continue growing. Researchers at The University of Texas at El Paso are studying factors that could help those businesses be successful.

UTEP’s Center for Hispanic Entrepreneurship (CHE) will analyze data during the fall 2016 semester about the perception, motivation, innovation, determination and confidence among Hispanic business owners in the El Paso region. The center conducted the survey during summer 2016.

“IT will be interesting to see what happens,” said Gary Frankwick, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Business Administration and professor of marketing, who is helping with the project.

The personal finance website WalletHub ranked El Paso, Texas, as the country’s second best city for Hispanic entrepreneurs in 2016. Laredo, Texas, was No. 1. Factors contributing to the rankings included entrepreneurship rate, education levels and median annual income of Hispanics in each city.

The UTEP study is a follow up to a December 2014 CHE project that created a database of the area’s Hispanic-owned businesses and investigated their needs. The project was done in collaboration with the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Among the findings were a desire by business owners for additional courses, workshops, and networking and funding opportunities, said Denisse Olivas, CHE director and a UTEP marketing lecturer.

That research led to an article scheduled for publication in August 2016 in the Journal of Business Diversity, a national peer-reviewed academic periodical.

- Daniel Perez

Denisse Olivas, marketing lecturer and director of UTEP’s Center for Hispanic Entrepreneurship, left, researched factors that could enhance the success of Hispanic-owned businesses. She was assisted by Gary Frankwick, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Business Administration and professor of marketing, and UTEP graduate Carla Villaverde. Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre.
UTEP Graduates Largest Class at
Commencement’s 100th Anniversary

Cool Caps
Graduates decorate their mortarboards in unique ways. Check out UTEP’s Instagram page to scope out other caps.

One hundred years after the State School of Mines and Metallurgy, now UTEP, awarded the first Engineer of Mines degrees to three graduates in 1916, nearly 2,700 students graduated from The University of Texas at El Paso’s three Commencement ceremonies on May 14 – the largest graduating class in the institution’s history.

During her Commencement remarks, UTEP President Diana Natalicio lauded the University’s century-long tradition of helping graduates transform their future.

“You set high aspirations for yourselves, persevered and worked hard to develop your talents and achieve your goals, and greatly increased the probability that the success you celebrate today will serve as a springboard for other big dreams that you’ll achieve in the future, much as you did this one,” President Natalicio said.

- Laura L. Acosta

Visit utep.edu/magazine to see a Commencement video
“YOU SET HIGH ASPIRATIONS FOR YOURSELVES, PERSEVERED AND WORKED HARD TO DEVELOP YOUR TALENTS AND ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS...”

Diana Natalicio, UTEP President
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has approved a new Ph.D. program in mechanical engineering at The University of Texas at El Paso, bringing the number of doctoral degrees offered to 21, along with 72 bachelor’s and 73 master’s programs.

“The aim is not only to give local students the best education and career training, but also to create jobs here at home so that talent can remain close by and the economy thrives,” said Department of Mechanical Engineering Chair Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D.

The doctoral program will emphasize energy, aerospace and advanced manufacturing – areas with a strong record of success for the department.

“The approval of our new Ph.D. in mechanical engineering represents further validation of UTEP’s success in building excellence in research and doctoral education,” said UTEP President Diana Natalicio. “Under the leadership of Dr. Choudhuri, the mechanical engineering faculty has systematically enhanced its doctoral program capacity through highly competitive research initiatives and the funding they have attracted.”

Almost 90 percent of UTEP mechanical engineering master’s degree recipients in 2015 received jobs in the energy sector or from aerospace and defense contractors, NASA, the Department of Defense or other federal agencies. One hundred percent of students graduating from the energy science and engineering track of the University’s Environmental Science and Engineering Ph.D. program – which was a popular option for mechanical engineering majors before the new doctoral degree was approved – received job placement upon receipt of their doctorate.

- Lisa Y. Garibay
A team of students and faculty from The University of Texas at El Paso and Bowie High School have won a prestigious international challenge that aims to make the stuff of science fiction a reality.

**CubeSat Competition**

**UTEP Team Helps High School Students Win International Competition**

CubeSats usually collect data or take photos while in orbit; however, the UTEP and Bowie team’s CubeSat will send a manufacturing robot into space to perform basic tasks and send data back to Earth in order to provide insight to other engineers, scientists and future researchers.

The Museum of Science Fiction, in partnership with NASA and Cornell University, named the El Paso team a winner of its international CubeSat competition, awarding them $10,000 for its design proposal of a CubeSat – a grapefruit-sized satellite designed to perform a specific task while in orbit around the Earth. The award will help fund the final construction of the satellite. Winning teams will have the opportunity to send their satellite into orbit through NASA’s CubeSat Launch Initiative program.

"Things are happening at Bowie High School that I never dreamed were possible, but when our school works closely with our community, especially groups as energetic as the mechanical engineering department at UTEP, dreams suddenly become possible," said Michael Warmack, Ed.D., principal of Bowie High School.

In addition to El Paso, winning entries from the global competition came from Ithaca, New York, and Suzhou, China.

“These designs were selected based on a combination of innovation, technical feasibility, and successful articulation of a concept from science fiction,” said Mason Peck, a member of the museum’s board of advisers and director of Cornell University’s Space Systems Design Studio. “I want to congratulate these young minds who displayed a mature and professional degree of technological acumen with their proposals. I’m eager to see their designs go from the drawing board to reality and up into orbit.”

Over the next year, UTEP will help the Bowie students adapt their winning concept into a working spacecraft that will launch into orbit through the CubeSat Launch Initiative. Data collected from the mission will be shared with participating schools and other research organizations. Research findings will be published in the museum’s triannual Journal of Science Fiction.

“I’m extremely proud of our students and equally appreciative of the opportunities that our partnership is making possible,” Warmack said. “We’re working together to do nothing less than change lives and strengthen a community by creating opportunity. That’s as cool as putting a satellite into Earth orbit.”

- Lisa Y. Garibay
For the eighth consecutive year, UTEP faculty members have been selected by The University of Texas System Board of Regents to receive the Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award (ROTA). This highly prestigious recognition is bestowed upon undergraduate educators who set a high standard of teaching for others to aspire to achieve.

In recognition of their extraordinary classroom performance and innovation in instruction, each awardee receives $25,000.

Candidates are selected through a rigorous campus-based process with an emphasis on student and peer faculty evaluations.

“Our award-winning faculty not only excel in the classroom, they are outstanding scholars, researchers and writers,” said Howard C. Daudistel, Ph.D., interim provost and vice president for academic affairs. “I congratulate each one of them for their success and thank them for their commitment to maintaining UTEP’s stature as a leader in higher education.” - Christina Rodriguez

Share your stories about these outstanding teachers at utep.edu/magazine.
Research

The Math of Earthquakes
Student Applies Financial Model to Seismic Data

A UTEP computational science doctoral student has successfully tied a new mathematical modeling process to the study of earthquakes.

“The model that we applied to the earthquake data was originally applied to financial data,” said Osei Tweneboah, who received his master’s degree from UTEP in 2015. “Financial data is high frequency, which means there are a lot of fluctuations in the data. Earthquake data behaves like the financial data.”

After going through a variety of financial models to find a good fit, Tweneboah zeroed in on one called Ornstein-Uhlenbeck. His modeling will help analyze the effect that earthquakes from long ago have on present and future quakes. The hope is for better understanding of how tectonic stress decays and accumulates during long periods of time – and to potentially estimate when an earthquake could happen.

In May 2016, Tweneboah presented his findings in a paper published in the journal Pure and Applied Geophysics. Co-authors were Chair of the Department of Mathematical Sciences Maria Mariani, Ph.D.; and Research Assistant Professor Hector Gonzalez-Huizar, Ph.D., and Professor Laura Serpa, Ph.D., of the Department of Geological Sciences.

Visit utep.edu/magazine to see video interviews with Osei Tweneboah and Marc Cox.

Addressing Aphasia
Researcher Helps Stroke Patients Find Their Voice

While working as a speech-language pathologist for 17 years, Patricia Lara, Ph.D., often wondered what was happening in the minds of her patients with aphasia – a language disorder caused by damage to the brain after a stroke or head injury. Persons with aphasia often find it difficult to speak normally. They may struggle to find the right words to use, often using related or even made-up words when speaking. They also may have trouble understanding what other people are saying, especially if they speak quickly.

Lara, an assistant professor in UTEP’s speech-language pathology department, recently completed a study looking at how seven bilingual individuals with aphasia respond to spoken language switching.

She used a noninvasive imaging procedure to study the brain’s ability to reorganize its neural pathways after damage, called neuroplasticity.

By placing an electrode cap on a participant’s head, Lara can see how many electrical signals are being produced while the brain is processing information, and where the activity is taking place.

After measuring this electrical activity in aphasia patients, Lara found that there was no difference in how they processed English and Spanish.

The results of this preliminary study show that people suffering from aphasia who speak more than one language may still retain the ability to switch easily from language to language, despite the injury to the brain.

“Clinicians advise caregivers to have conversations in either English or Spanish because it’s easier for individuals with aphasia to process one language, but that may not be the case...” — Laura L. Acosta
Gabriella E. Sanchez, Ph.D., assistant professor of security studies at The University of Texas El Paso’s National Security Studies Institute, is an anthropologist who studies the social organization of human smuggling groups. Her research looks at “coyotes,” the men and women who, for a fee, facilitate the transit of migrants and refugees across borders while attempting to avoid law enforcement detection.

Sanchez has conducted fieldwork in Mexico, North Africa, the Middle East and Australia, where she has learned that the conditions that lead to smuggling activity are similar everywhere. However, socio-cultural and geographic characteristics unique to each region shape the dynamics of the markets.

“I have been fortunate to travel to locations where I can spend time working with migrants, refugees and smugglers themselves,” Sanchez said. Despite the many challenges of the market and its potential for violence, among migrants and refugees in transit “there’s a great sense of community, support and solidarity,” which she credits for the success of her research.

Sanchez’s work has been supported by federal agencies including the Department of Homeland Security, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of State, and has informed smuggling research and policy.

“Dr. Sanchez’s research and expertise into the organizational dynamics of smugglers is groundbreaking and unmatched by anyone in the United States,” said Victor M. Manjarrez Jr., project director for UTEP’s Center for Law and Human Behavior. “We are fortunate to have someone such as Dr. Sanchez at UTEP conducting research into an area rarely studied.”

Sanchez’s study of women as facilitators of human smuggling, published in 2016 in the journal Geopolitics, described women’s roles as coyotes in Phoenix, Arizona, one of the main U.S. hubs for irregular migration.

“The smuggling market is always changing,” Sanchez said. “Some policymakers often claim smugglers are becoming more sophisticated, or that they have acquired more technology and see that as a synonym of their progress. I myself dislike the use of the word ‘sophistication’ because I think it professionalizes the activities of the smugglers who exploit and abuse migrants and refugees. Yet our collective research reflects that some smugglers are indeed quite effective at what they do, but that the smuggling market and its conditions have created room for exploitive, violent practices that have a negative impact on human life.”

- Leonard Martinez

Border security and immigration aren’t just issues in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; they are topics being addressed and discussed in countries around the globe.

**Understanding Coyotes**

Professor Studies Human Smuggling Around the Globe
That gender stereotype is what led Scott Frankowski, a doctoral student in UTEP’s Department of Psychology, and his colleagues to develop a test to measure a person’s need for drama (NFD).

The research was published in the journal Personality and Individual Differences in spring 2016.

“We know it’s not true that women have more drama, so we developed a scale to test need for drama for a (statistics) course,” Frankowski said.

The test measures interpersonal manipulation, impulsive outspokenness and perceived victimhood. The test also provides insight into some people’s dramatic behavior online and in person, according to the published research.

Two NFD groups were tested – one using samples from UTEP students and one using samples from across the U.S.

“With the UTEP sample, we have a different demographic here,” Frankowski said. “It’s mostly Latino and it’s a lot younger than our other samples.”

The UTEP and national studies both found that young people are a little higher on the need-for-drama scale than the older participants.

The studies found that there is almost an equal number of men who have a need for drama as women. There were a few surprising results.

“We didn’t expect the (NFD) trait to be so manipulative,” Frankowski said. “It correlates really strongly with the traits we call the dark triad – psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism. These are really anti-social traits. These people are seeing themselves as victims a lot in order to manipulate others. It’s not really surprising, but we didn’t think you’d always be using that to influence others and manipulate others.”

UTEP Psychology Professor Osvaldo F. Morera, Ph.D., said the research and work done by Frankowski and the other students on this project “set a standard for what could happen from a class project.”

Morera said publication of students' research helps the students add to their curriculum vitae.

“Being able to publish one’s research is important for all graduate students, as it shows potential employers that the students can develop a research idea, design a study to answer the question, carry out the study and then communicate what was done to a scientific audience.” - Leonard Martinez

Where do you fit on the “need for drama” scale? Visit utep.edu/magazine to take our quiz and find out.
Fans can look forward to an exciting UTEP football season, with seven home games on tap for the first time in 13 years. Included are a couple of stellar nonconference matchups, including the first-ever meeting between UTEP and the United States Military Academy Black Nights on Sept. 17.

Fort Bliss has played such a vital role in the community over the years, making the Army game a truly unique opportunity to celebrate both local and national armed forces.

With that in mind, UTEP has partnered with representatives from the city and county of El Paso and Fort Bliss to put on a show that El Pasoans will never forget. The UTEP-Army game is designed to take on an “event” feel, similar to the UTEP-Western Kentucky basketball game in February where the 1966 national championship team was honored on its 50th anniversary.

The theme is “One City. One Team.” and, for one day, it’s about much more than the Miners tackling the Black Knights on the gridiron for the first time.

“A lot of exciting things are in the works,” said UTEP Director of Athletics Bob Stull. “I can promise you, if you’re in the stadium on Sept. 17, there are going to be a lot of ‘wow’ moments.”

Fans can keep abreast of the developments surrounding the game through updates on UTEP’s official athletic department website, utepathletics.com.

Kickoff is set for 5 p.m. MT. - Jeff Darby
Gerardo “Jerry” Cano joined the UTEP Marching Miner Regiment to meet other students with similar interests. “When I came [to UTEP] as a freshman, I knew I wouldn’t be able to associate with people in my classes easily,” Cano said. “But having others who were in band and being able to find others with the same majors, maybe even the same classes, helped a lot.”

Cano is entering his fourth year as a member of the Marching Miner Regiment. He is one of the band’s drum majors who lead the band through the performances.

The band members practice year round, but the most intense preparation for the football season begins in August, with daily practices from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. “We work a lot on our fundamentals and music, because we don’t want to just look the part, we want to sound the part, too,” Cano said. “We get a lot of work done, plus we get to know each other.”

Fall can be one of the busiest and most stressful times for Cano. “You have to prepare for the football games, but you have to study for the midterms,” Cano said. “Band can take some time away but I always find a way to make it work.”

Cano described being a drum major as being part of a different environment compared to playing in the band. “You take on more of a leadership role,” Cano said. “You don’t have to worry about marching and you really get to know everyone. You have to lead by example. If you mess up, the others might, as well.”

On game days, the band’s goal is to get fans pumped up before the game and then lead the way into the stands. “I put my game face on,” Cano said. “I may get a little anxious; however, I persevere and try to not mess up. It feels great to be known within the community, and the band brings a strong presence.”

- Leonard Martinez
Becoming a part of the Marching Miner Regiment at UTEP helped Patrick Ramirez do more than get his exercise three times a week and on game days during the fall. "Joining marching band is what made the love of music grow for me," said Ramirez, one of the band’s drum majors. "It added the athletic side. A lot of people don’t think it’s athletic, but it really is."

Ramirez’s love of music started when he joined band in sixth grade, playing the trumpet. It has since become a special place for him. "Music is a safe haven for me," Ramirez said. "It’s comfortable not only playing it by yourself, but also in a group where you get to make music and have a good time."

Ramirez describes himself as a sponge, soaking in the good and the bad and making the best of it. "You learn from everything, so I know what it is like to be pushed down to the point of giving up," Ramirez said. "I feel like my ultimate goal in life is to give back. It’s to help and inspire someone to give back."

He has given back by volunteering to do community service and helping friends when they need it. "I like the idea of giving back because I’ve received a lot of help from my professors, and peers have helped me out, too," Ramirez said. "They have given to me, and I want to give back to others."

Another way he will give back is by becoming a music teacher, but not right away. "I want to experience playing in different ensembles," Ramirez said. After gaining experience, he looks forward to the challenge of teaching middle school or elementary school students. "I feel like it’s harder to teach younger students," he said. "It’s brand new to them. You have to simplify the concepts. I also like the constant energy from younger people ... I want to make it fun for them."

- Leonard Martinez
The University of Texas at El Paso encourages its students to dream big, and challenges its graduates to pursue those dreams. UTEP alumni around the world have used their talents to enhance society through a spectrum of professions. The following are a few examples of young Miner graduates who have followed their passions with gusto and confidence and already achieved a level of success. They were selected from nominees who share a common trait promoted by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who said the only way to do great work is to love what you do. Picks up!
Jonathan “J.J.” Childress co-founded and co-owns Proper Printshop Productions, LLC. The El Paso native opened the shop, which prints apparel, posters, fine art and more, while a UTEP undergraduate. He manages daily operations and client acquisition, experience and solutions; and he plans, coordinates and executes special projects. He started the business with his roommate in the living room of their apartment. Today, the shop at 800 Montana St. in El Paso has become a venue for interesting and engaging art-focused events. After earning his bachelor’s in finance and accounting in 2010, Childress became a financial adviser for Morgan Keegan Associates/Raymond James. While working for Morgan Keegan, he earned his MBA from UTEP in 2012. He left Morgan Keegan to establish an independent Registered Investment Advisory firm in El Paso and served as a partner with a capital management company. He serves on several local business advisory boards where he promotes design, education and technology.
Rafael Gabilondo earned his bachelor’s degree in finance from UTEP in 2015, but even before that had a hand in the family cattle business based in Mexico. The companies deal in cattle trading, production and transportation. He holds a number of titles: manager and co-owner of R&R Gabilondo Cattle Co., cattle buyer and logistics manager at Border Livestock, deputy director and operations manager of Santa Teresa Livestock Crossing, and a partner at Silver Wings Transport. The El Paso native said his “hard headedness” helps him succeed. He made his first serious investment at 19 and it paid him back 300 percent, helping build his confidence in the business world. Gabilondo admits that not every deal has gone that well, but said hard work delivers its own reward. “Life keeps putting different opportunities on my table and I try to grab each and every one of them,” he said.
ADAN CONTRERAS

Adan Contreras is an art director with Dallas-based Agency Entourage. His work on ad campaigns for such companies as Capitol Records and the CW television network has helped earn his company several advertising awards. The Juárez, Mexico, native also co-founded Inkbyte Studios, a digital freelance firm that has produced animation and graphic art for the likes of UTEP and the El Paso Zoo. He has earned awards locally (top prize at the La Estrella Film Festival) and internationally (his poster was included at a British exhibition). Contreras graduated magna cum laude in 2013 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design with a minor in creative writing. His measurement of success goes beyond personal achievement. “I want to build a strong legacy through my own business by helping brands grow and reach their full potential through creativity,” he said. Contreras will move to Southern California this fall to become a Cartoon Network storyboard artist.

ADRIANA GÓMEZ LICÓN

Adriana Gómez Licón is an Associated Press correspondent based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, who earned her bachelor’s in journalism from UTEP in 2009. She worked for the El Paso Times for about 18 months before joining the AP as a Mexico City correspondent. She has reported from Brazil since 2014. She has covered topics of international interest that include health care, economics, politics and sports. Gómez Licón produced early stories about the surge in birth defects when little was known about a link between microcephaly and the Zika virus. The Overseas Press Club recognized her in 2014 for international reporting for her story about a Mexican beauty queen and her fateful involvement with drug cartels. The Texas Associated Press Managing Editors presented her with its 2011 Star Reporter of the Year Award for a series about drug cartel violence and its effect on Ciudad Juárez. She “is a compelling storyteller,” one judge shared.
Diana Villavicencio earned her bachelor’s in economics and international business in 2010 and her master’s in economics in 2014. Soon after graduation, she was hired as an economist in the Economic Market Analysis Division (EMAD) of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office in Chicago, Illinois. The El Paso native is one of EMAD’s 35 economists across the country that use local and national information about changes in the economic, demographic, and housing inventory characteristics to prepare comprehensive housing market analyses for specific housing markets and other reports that support and guide HUD operations. The reports present counts and estimates of employment, population, households, and housing inventory. That information also is useful to builders, mortgage lenders, and industry concerned with local housing conditions and trends. Villavicencio, who has volunteered with organizations that assist the homeless, praised her master’s program for making her professionally competitive and personally accountable in all aspects of her life.
CARLA ESPINOZA
College of Liberal Arts
Chicago, IL
AGE 29

Carla I. Espinoza is the managing attorney for Chicago Immigration Advocates. She does legal work for underrepresented communities such as refugees and those who try to rehabilitate themselves while in the criminal justice system. The UTEP Miner serves as an advocate for migrant rights and has set new precedent relating to the United Nations Convention Against Torture. Her passion for that kind of law started as a student in UTEP’s Law School Preparation Institute. “I realized then that I had to help people facing those problems,” Espinoza said. She earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology and legal reasoning in 2009 and her J.D. from the DePaul University College of Law in May 2012. She volunteered at the law school’s immigration clinic and other community grassroots organizations that focused on human rights. While a law student, Espinoza represented an indigenous community and helped create legal precedent within the Inter-American Human Rights System relating to land rights.

CARLOS RODRIGO ALVAREZ
College of Science/
College of Health Sciences
Austin, TX
AGE 29

Carlos Rodrigo Alvarez is a public health and prevention specialist III with the Texas Department of State Health Services stationed in Austin. The El Paso native started his professional journey after he earned his bachelor’s in microbiology at UTEP with a minor in chemistry in 2010. The City of El Paso Department of Public Health hired Alvarez as a microbiologist. He enrolled in UTEP’s Master of Public Health program and received his degree in 2015. He moved up the ranks during his three-and-a-half years working on LGBT health-related projects for the city. As a disease intervention specialist/surveillance specialist for the El Paso health department, he worked with HIV/STD patients in the investigation and prevention of disease. The state hired him in January 2016. He is working on a project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to collect information about access to care and social behaviors of people with HIV in Texas.
Erin Coulehan is a freelance journalist who focuses on culture and the music industry for the likes of Elle, Rolling Stone, Cosmopolitan and Salon.com, and is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at Walden University. The El Paso native earned her B.A. in English and American literature with a minor in humanities in 2011. After graduation she helped start El Paso-based lifestyle publication The City Magazine before leaving for Georgetown University to work on her master’s in journalism. After spending 18 months profiling a punk rock band whose lead singer was bipolar, she decided her thesis would be about what linked bipolar disorder, creativity and musicians. “I completely fell in love with the intersection between art and psychology and wanted to extend the topic,” said Coulehan, who volunteers as a genetic and brain mapping researcher at Texas Tech University’s Center for Excellence in neurosciences in El Paso.
Ambar J. Calvillo-Rivera is national director of partner engagement and outreach for Enroll America, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that works with a diverse, nationwide network including labor unions, consumer groups and the White House to promote access and enrollment to health coverage in communities across America. She previously worked as Enroll America’s deputy director of women’s engagement. The El Paso native earned her bachelor’s degree in organizational and corporate communication from UTEP in 2011 and her master’s in educational leadership from the University of New Mexico two years later. Calvillo served as a political engagement fellow during the 2012 presidential campaign and on the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Committee. She has worked in Washington ever since. The UTEP alumna is described as a compassionate intellectual who is proud of her U.S.-Mexico border roots, and is recognized as an influential Latina in Washington.

J. Alejandro “Alex” Muñoz Mendieta graduated from UTEP in 2011 with a BBA with concentrations in finance and accounting. The former Top 10 Senior and Student Government Association president (2009-10) is a senior strategy associate at Bloomberg L.P., where he collaborates with internal business leaders to develop and articulate product strategies and to assess and execute acquisitions. In addition, the native of Juárez, Mexico makes recommendations to Michael Bloomberg, the company’s CEO, and other members of Bloomberg’s management committee regarding courses of action for different projects. He started his career within JP Morgan’s Investment Bank, where he participated in approximately $100 billion in debt financings in the technology, media and telecom industries, to include Facebook’s financing for its initial public offering. His goal is to become a financial technology executive and serve developing communities. He stays connected to the border through Project Paz, a nonprofit that supports at-risk children, and as an active UTEP alumni member.
Paul Deffenbaugh is a senior scientist at Sciperio, Inc. He leads a research team that promotes 3D printing and 3D-printed electronics. His team completes government and customer supplied projects that develop and implement novel 3D printing methods. The native of Palm Bay, Florida, earned his master’s in EE in 2012 and his Ph.D. in EE two years later. Since then he and his Sciperio team have worked on 21 projects for customers whose needs required never-before-created structures. His team delivered and in several cases has earned awards for the company. He considers one of his team’s greatest accomplishments was the world’s first 3D printed phased array antenna. Deffenbaugh has 3D printed an antenna in microgravity to show it was a viable concept that could factor into future decisions for manned space flight. He also is studying how 3D printing may be used to create human organs in space, which has life-saving implications.

David Castro is a senior healthcare consultant for Ernst & Young, one of the world’s biggest advisory firms. The El Paso native earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2010 and a Master of Business Administration in supply chain management four years later. He got a job with Providence Memorial Hospital after his BSN and soon was appointed co-director of the DaVinci Robotics program, which got him interested in financial analysis and supply-chain workflows. After his MBA, he was recruited to Memorial Hermann hospital in the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Within four months he was appointed trauma clinical manager, leader of the nation’s second busiest and third largest surgical trauma center. His efforts generated millions of dollars of revenue, saved thousands of additional dollars and decreased mortality rates. In January 2016, Castro was recruited by Ernst & Young. He travels around the country trying to figure out how hospitals can cut healthcare costs.
Ivan Gris Sepulveda co-founded Inmerssion in 2013. The tech startup focuses on innovative ways virtual agents (computer-generated characters with artificial intelligence) and virtual/augmented reality can help educate and entertain. The company researches and produces interactive software that has been displayed, presented and/or demonstrated in Sweden, Iceland and the Czech Republic as well as throughout the United States. Inmerssion has integrated IBM’s artificial intelligence systems with its virtual agents. The entrepreneur, known professionally as Ivan Gris, earned his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in computer science from UTEP in 2010, 2011 and 2015, respectively. The Juárez, Mexico, native continues to be involved at UTEP through its Interactive Systems Group, which studies virtual agents. Gris is a published author of at least 17 research papers focused on gaming, virtual reality and human-computer interaction. He also has started two other successful commercial companies that combine art and handcrafted jewelry with technology and pop culture.
Juan Carlos Lopez is an aerospace engineer for NASA’s Loads and Dynamics branch at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. His technical responsibilities involve analyzing how the spacecraft reacts to environments during all stages of flight. His work is crucial in the design and safety of flight-certified space vehicles. He has developed techniques that better determine the safety and durability of the craft. He recently led studies on the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module, the first human-rated inflatable habitat to attach to the International Space Station. Outside the lab, he chaired NASA’s Hispanic Employee Resource Group (HERG), where he led initiatives to get more minorities in the workforce. He also launched an effort to explore international collaborations with Latin America as part of the NASA mission to Mars. Lopez represented the group at a White House reception where he met President Obama and Vice President Biden. He earned his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 2012.

Vanessa De La Rosa, Ph.D. is a postdoctoral fellow at the Silent Spring Institute and Northeastern University, where she conducts community-based participatory research focused on women’s health and environmental justice projects that emphasize collaboration between social scientists and life scientists. She earned her bachelor’s in chemistry from UTEP in 2008. Since then she has earned her doctorate in molecular toxicology from UC Berkeley, where she received awards and grants for her work on improving our understanding of how exposures in the environment can impact health, which led to collaborations with leading scientists in the field of toxicology. De La Rosa earned a teaching and research postdoctoral fellowship at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, where she studied health disparities in Navajo communities and developed undergraduate biology curriculum. She has worked with colleagues to develop programs meant to increase the number of minority students who pursue advanced degrees and careers in science.
ISAAC GORDON

College of Business Administration
Los Angeles, CA

Age 27

Isaac Gordon is a former UTEP basketball player (2007-11) who earned his bachelor’s degree in finance in 2011. The Los Angeles native juggled being a professional ballplayer overseas while at the same time studying to become a certified public accountant during his first off season. He passed his CPA exams to include earning a “perfect” 99 on the audit section of the test. Today, Los Angeles-based Gordon & Associates caters to high profile, high net worth entertainers, athletes and business executives. The corporation’s comprehensive financial services include wealth management, business development, strategic financial planning and tax preparation. He said part of his success is due to the “blue collar work ethic” he honed at UTEP. He played professional basketball in Europe through May 2016. Gordon said basketball keeps him mentally and physically sharp. He plans to pursue his MBA in the next few years, possibly through UTEP.

DANIRA YVETTE GONZALEZ

College of Business Administration
El Paso, TX

Age 28

Danira Yvette Gonzalez wanted to be a business executive, but started at UTEP as a biology major to follow in the footsteps of her father, a Borderland dentist. The first-generation American eventually decided to pursue her own dream and majored in finance. She worked her way through college and was hired by a local bank as a business loan analyst after graduating in 2011. Wells Fargo Regional Business Banking Group hired her two years later, and she has taken on different jobs with more responsibility. The El Paso native recently was promoted to assistant vice president, credit analyst III, where she analyzes and underwrites credit relationships in commercial banking. Regional loan relationships include real estate, commercial and industrial projects in excess of $45 million. Gonzalez also serves on several community boards, and is a member of the Junior League of El Paso and the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class 38.
Rebeca Anna Nuñez is the newest senior associate in the Business Tax Services practice with Ernst & Young in Houston, Texas. Prior to that, the El Paso native worked at a specialty accounting firm in Houston and rose to senior associate in 15 months. Her duties at these firms include working with the IRS to identify and substantiate state and federal tax credits, deductions, and tax strategies for companies across the country. Over the years, her efforts have saved taxpayers $13 million and counting. Nuñez earned bachelor’s degrees in political science and English and American literature from UTEP in 2011, and earned her J.D. from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in 2014. While at Indiana, she worked in-house for a Brazilian conglomerate and at law firms in El Paso and Sao Paulo, Brazil, and clerked for the former chief justice of the Court of Appeals of Indiana.

Hannah Muegge started the Facebook page for UTEP’s rifle team as a student. In 2015, she became the face of the team as its head coach. Muegge, a four-year letter winner, earned her BBA in accounting in 2013 and stayed with the team as a graduate assistant – the first in team history – and assistant coach as she worked toward her MBA in 2015. When the head coach position opened up, UTEP picked the native of Boling, Texas, because of her outstanding history with the program and the work ethic, leadership, vision and passion she demonstrated. At age 25, she was the youngest coach at UTEP and among the youngest in her sport. Muegge already has implemented some of her ideas. The 2013 team MVP has overseen the renovations of the team practice facility, locker room and viewing lounge. That work has had a positive impact on recruiting and team morale – and she’s only just begun.
Raul Chavira Jr. earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music education in 2010 and 2015, respectively. He started as a music educator at Indian Ridge Middle School in the Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso. His school bands were consistently successful at competitions and were invited to perform at national and international music conferences. He was selected the school's Teacher of the Year in 2015 and was runner up for the YISD Teacher of the Year. He recently moved to the new Pebble Hills High School in the Socorro Independent School District. His goal is to make Pebble Hills the first fine arts magnet program in the Southwest. On top of his academic work, Chavira (aka RC Manor) is a singer-songwriter who has released a pop album and recently was approved membership into the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences of the United States, the organization that puts on the Grammy awards.
SCIENTISTS BEYOND BORDERS

by Lisa Y. Garibay
packs only the barest essentials for the dangerous jungles of the Congo, but a few books go alongside the medical kit, because you have to have something to pass the time when you’re being treated for malaria. In Nepal, one is careful to pack a fully equipped tent camp, because it may not be safe to sleep in buildings when you’re chasing earthquakes. In China, one walks vast fields of crops being dosed with toxic levels of pollution, because that is our atmosphere’s future. In the icy Arctic, one bundles up as best they can while gathering irrefutable proof that the Earth is warming.

These are the stories of researchers from The University of Texas at El Paso, whose work has impact well beyond the Paso del Norte region. The work is interwoven with advancements in education, politics, agriculture, economics and much more around the globe. It not only benefits the researchers’ peers and students; more urgently, it may help save life on Earth.
“WHEN

you have a critical mass of researchers working on similar or related problems, the ability to make large leaps forward in understanding is heightened,” said Robert Kirken, Ph.D., dean of UTEP’s College of Science. “Whether the problem is Arctic biology, fuel cell efficiency, or drug development and screening, our researchers contribute significantly to their fields and incorporate their knowledge into the classroom, where the next generation of scientists may be prepared and inspired.”

IN THE ARCTIC

When UTEP scientists are in the Arctic Circle testing how their newly patented camera and software system detects changes in sea ice, sea state and coastal erosion, they’re contributing to what we know about how humanity is altering the Earth.

UTEP has one of the largest groups of biologists working in the Arctic of any university outside of Alaska. But undergraduate and graduate students play a big role, too.

“They are the ones that do 90 percent of everything that goes out the door,” said Craig Tweedie, Ph.D., associate professor of biological sciences. “Education and outreach is what ties everything together, it gives us that anchor for our research activities.”

Tweedie’s team studies how humans changing levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane – the infamous greenhouse gasses – has been enough to cause a dramatic loss in sea ice – an area double the size of Texas.

“Society as we know it developed in the stable climate period that we’ve had over the last 10,000 years,” Tweedie explained. By the time his students are at the peak of their careers, they may be managing an environment that humans have never seen on Earth.

With a project they named “Back to the Future,” the team went to decades-old research sites including the Eastern Russian Arctic, Wrangel Island and Northern Alaska. Using the same techniques that were used to establish the sites originally, the team looked at how things have changed.

At Baffin Island near the Barnes Ice Cap, one of the remotest places UTEP researchers have ever been, Tweedie’s team compared photographs taken in 1963 with those shot 50 years later on the same calendar day.

“What you can see is this glacier has retreated up the valley, the top of the ice cap has dropped in altitude, and all of these snow banks have completely disappeared,” he said.

This retreating ice causes rising sea levels and storm surges throughout oceans because there is no ice to calm the waters. Tweedie predicts a global refugee crisis exponentially worse than the current plight of Syrians if, for example, a region like the Bangladesh delta floods. Global warming is not yet causing the disappearance of entire countries, but Tweedie fears it could if things don’t turn around quickly.
“I would say it’s the biggest challenge facing mankind,” Tweedie said.

But to the veteran researcher – who has spent days in the University’s only boat during wind chills of minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit to conduct this critical work – UTEP represents exactly what humanity needs to do to beat this thing.

“It’s not just about numbers and demographics here [at UTEP], it’s the way of thinking that goes with that and responsiveness to adversity, responsiveness to an acceptance of cultural and social differences,” he explained. ‘All those things that we have here on the border are a microcosm of many of the challenges and future solutions we need to come up with as a global community.’

Far from the remote Arctic Circle, another UTEP researcher is tackling climate change implications in the most populous nation on Earth.

Increasingly a global economic force to be reckoned with, China is also investing money and brainpower into important research that can stem the tide of climate damage. UTEP Department of Chemistry Chair Jorge Gardea-Torresdey, Ph.D., partnered with Nanjing University to study the effects of nanoparticles – microscopic molecules with a wide range of applications – on global warming and agriculture.

He explained that in just a few decades, crop fertilizers will most likely be made of nanoparticles, which work better than what is used now since the tiny structures can get to the cells of the plants to deliver nutrients.

Gardea-Torresdey’s study asks whether crops grown with nanoparticles will be damaged by higher CO2 levels in the air.

Currently, air quality in many spots on Earth is harmful. One example is Mexico City, which declared a pollution emergency in spring 2016 in response to dangerously high levels of CO2 and ozone, a major component of smog.

But it could get worse.

“Years from now, CO2 levels are going to increase,” Gardea-Torresdey said. “It’s going to be bad.”

Sprinkled throughout huge fields of growing wheat and rice in Nanjing, approximately 200 miles from Shanghai, are enormous tanks of dry ice (the compressed form of CO2) dousing the plants for Gardea-Torresdey’s study. It’s unprecedented in that this type of testing is mostly conducted in labs with seedlings under controlled conditions. Gardea-Torresdey’s project monitors plants out in
the field for the duration of their entire life cycle.

The team is also watching how these molecules introduced into crops affect fish in aquatic systems because, as Gardea-Torresdey said, “All nanoparticles are going to end up in the water” due to runoff from fertilizing and other uses. UTEP students have had many opportunities to work with this study on campus through the exchange of samples and analysis. Chinese students have traveled to UTEP, and a Nanjing scientist recently completed a yearlong sabbatical at UTEP conducting research for the project.

Given the sometimes tense relations between China and the U.S., such a partnership may seem unlikely. But not according to Kirken.

“Scientific research is often able to move forward even when socioeconomic and political situations are strained or in flux,” he said. “Investigators are like independent contractors; their studies are aimed at solving important problems that go beyond any one administration or conflict and frequently provide global benefits,” he said.

For Gardea-Torresdey, those benefits to mankind are what it’s all about.

“I’m a scientist of the world – I don’t care about international or political borders,” he said. “This work is for the whole world.”

The Democratic Republic of Congo is notorious for civil war, rampant corruption and treacherous terrain. But almost a decade of work there has given Associate Professor of Biological Sciences Eli Greenbaum, Ph.D., a powerful perspective on why humans should learn to live in harmony with their environment.

Doctoral student Daniel Hughes came to UTEP for his Ph.D. specifically to join his professor in these jungles. He and Greenbaum not only discovered new species, they also trailblazed ways of preserving specimens for greater scientific study.

But why go through all that trouble in the first place? For Greenbaum, the answer is a compelling trifecta.

First off, nothing could be more fundamental than one’s own health.

“There could be a drug that could help you with some kind of ailment at a later point in your life,” Greenbaum said. “There could be a cure for cancer in there.”

The herpetologist explained that there are potentially an infinite number of biomedical applications for the molecules in the skin of frogs and the complex venoms in snakes. One Asian species of viper has anticoagulant properties in its venom; components of it are being used to treat people who have issues with their blood.

Second, there’s the quickly changing climate, which can be vastly improved if the Congo is preserved.

“Tropical rain forests in particular take an enormous amount of CO2 out of the atmosphere and are actually slowing [the climate change] process down a lot,” Greenbaum explained. “If we can conserve as many areas of these rain forests as possible, it helps us with the effects of global climate change.”

He and other collaborators brought a single endangered frog, found in a rainforest that was not protected, to the attention of the international community in 2012. As a result, the government stepped in and declared the area a forest reserve.
“There could be a cure for cancer in there.”
Finally, maintaining biodiversity is a life-or-death issue, according to Greenbaum. "If we lost all the plants and animals that are in the wild tomorrow, we would disappear with them," he said.

Imagine you’re going to get on a plane and fly to Dallas, but as you board you see the mechanics taking rivets out of the wings. You say, “Hey, what are you doing?” One of the mechanics says, “Oh, don’t worry, it’s just a few.”

“It’s the same thing with species on our planet that are going extinct,” Greenbaum explained. “At some point you’re going to take out one rivet too many, the wing’s going to fall off and you’re going to crash.”

Despite having been hit with malaria seven times, along with giardia, dengue fever and typhoid fever, Greenbaum will keep going back to the Congo for one main goal: “To discover and describe as much biodiversity as possible while it’s still there,” he said. “Even under the best of circumstances, I fear that in the coming decades we’re going to lose a lot.”

Some disasters – like the expected effects of climate change – can be predicted and averted. Others strike and cause devastation without notice. Assistant Professor of Geological Sciences Marianne Karplus, Ph.D., went to work in the mountains of Nepal to find out why and how earthquakes occur there.

Within weeks of the largest earthquake in Nepal in 80 years – a magnitude-7.8 temblor that devastated the country in April 2015 – the National Science Foundation awarded a team of scientists led by Karplus with support from UTEP faculty and students a Rapid Response Research (RAPID) grant to study the earthquake’s aftershocks. Their goal was to gain a better understanding of these movements beneath the Earth’s surface.

The team included Professor of Geological Sciences Aaron Velasco, Ph.D.; doctoral students Ezer Patlan and Mohan Pant, who is from Nepal; geological sciences Research Associate Galen Kaip; and UTEP alumnus Agustin Barajas. They joined researchers from the Department of Mines in Nepal, Stanford University, Oregon State University and the University of California, Riverside, for a yearlong project to place, maintain and retrieve 46 seismometers around the region with the most aftershocks.

“A large part of our goal is getting a better understanding of the structure, where the faults are, where the earthquakes are happening, understanding how this whole system is working and how the buildup of stress from the convergence of India moving toward Asia is being relieved through time,” Karplus explained.

Quickly putting together a field team was a challenge. Requirements went beyond just a passport – participants also had to have field experience in a remote location along with physical resilience (each team would be required to hike, dig and carry equipment).

Her project has resulted in a dataset that is perhaps the best-instrumented recording of aftershocks from a megathrust earthquake – one that occurs when one continental plate goes beneath another or an oceanic plate. The research also helps humans build structures to diminish earthquake damage and improve disaster response when these events occur.

Strong collaboration from Nepalese colleagues guided the U.S.
Larry Lesser and Amy Wagler (left), faculty in the Department of Mathematical Sciences, and their graduate students have been doing some of the first and most definitive research on how Spanish-speaking English learners learn statistics. Since Spanish is the dominant language of 80 percent of English learners in the U.S. and is also the world’s most common non-English language other than Chinese, their work clearly has international implications and has been published in international top-tier journals such as Statistics Education Research Journal.

To read about Lesser and Wagler’s work and to see more photos and videos of UTEP scientists abroad, visit utep.edu/magazine
Homecoming is a tradition centered around bringing alumni and a new generation of students together to build camaraderie and celebrate school spirit. The weeklong festivities include tailgates, pep rallies, a parade and other fun-filled activities that give alumni an opportunity to reconnect with their alma mater. Students take an active role in the Homecoming planning process by coming up with possible themes for the week and then voting on their favorite. The theme is incorporated into some of the events and activities throughout the week and inspires the parade floats. This year's student-selected theme is Pete's Arcade, paying homage to past and present video arcade-style games with a Miner flair. Grab your Miner gear and join us for the 2016 Homecoming festivities Oct. 23-29. Game on!
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Grab your Miner gear and join us for the 2016 Homecoming festivities Oct. 23-29. Game on!

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**PARADE ROUTE & MORE**

**GAME ON**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23
7th Annual Miner Dash
5K Run/3K Walk and Family Fitness Fiesta
8 a.m. – noon
Meet at Centennial Plaza
Dr. George King 915-747-7245
Register at minerdash.utep.edu

SGA Homecoming Pageant
7 – 9 p.m.
Magoffin Auditorium
Maggie Ortega 915-747-6742

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27
Miner Morning Mania
5:30 – 8 a.m.
Sun Bowl Stadium Parking Lot
in front of Larry K. Durham Center
Elizabeth Ashby 915-747-5038

Gold Nugget and Friends
of the College of Health Sciences Reception
4 – 5:30 p.m.
Health Sciences and Nursing Building, Curlin Plaza
Leticia Paez 915-747-8268

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29
College of Engineering Alumni Breakfast
8 – 11 a.m.
Union Building East,
Tomas Rivera Conference Center, 3rd Floor
Ingrid Wright 915-747-5971

Communication Homecoming Brunch
9 a.m. – noon
Cotton Memorial Lawn
Stacy Sowards 915-747-8854

UTEP Black Alumni Network/African-American Studies Department Roundtable Discussion
10 a.m. – noon
Union Building East,
Templeton Suite, 313
Kimberly McDaniel 915-777-9145

School of Pharmacy Tailgate
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sun Bowl Stadium Parking Lot
Angelica Rodriguez 915-747-8303

Homecoming Parade
2 p.m.
Start: Mesita Early Childhood Development Center at Vilas
End: Centennial Plaza
Liliana Barrios 915-747-8600

Pep Rally
3 p.m.
Centennial Plaza
Liliana Barrios 915-747-8600

UTEP Alumni Tailgate
3 – 5:30 p.m.
Kidd Field
Valeria S. Sanchez 915-747-8600

Miner Varsity Club Tailgate
3 – 5:30 p.m.
Kidd Field
Miner Athletic Club 915-747-8759

Friday, October 28
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Bell Hall, Room 125
Maria Salayandia 915-747-5703

UTEP SGA Past Presidents’ Luncheon
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center (Alumni Lodge)
Judy Heredia-Perry 915-747-6361

Book Presentation:
“The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement”
by Dr. Mario T. Garcia
Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Liberal Arts Building, Room 222
Rosa M. Gomez 915-747-5462

English Department Homecoming Reception
3 – 4:30 p.m.
Hudspeth Hall Room Foyer
Mitzel Garcia 915-747-5038

2016 College of Liberal Arts Gold Nugget Reception
3 – 6 p.m.
Union Building East,
Tomás Rivera Conference Center, 3rd Floor
Estella Estrada 915-747-7016

2016 College of Business Administration Gold Nugget Reception
4:30 – 6 p.m.
Geological Sciences Building
Geology Reading Room, 310
Nena Gonzalez 915-747-6050

UTEP Black Alumni Network Meet and Greet
6 – 9 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn,
Del Norte Ballroom
Kimberly McDaniel 915-777-9145

SCHEDULE
EVENT
TODAY
For more information on these events, visit alumni.utep.edu/homecoming

Friday, October 28
Military Appreciation Breakfast
Hosted by the College of Business Administration
7:30 – 9 a.m.
Geological Sciences Building
Geology Reading Room 310
Nena Gonzalez 915-747-6050

Open House at the Alumni Lodge
8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center (Alumni Lodge)
Judy Heredia-Perry 915-747-6361

College of Education Gold Nugget Breakfast
8:30 – 11 a.m.
Hilton Garden Inn,
Del Norte Ballroom
Susana Aguirre 915-747-5793

Civil Engineering Alumni Homecoming Luncheon
11:30 a.m. – 130 p.m.
Chemistry and Computer Science Bldg. Courtyard
Concha Ruiz 915-747-6943

Political Science Homecoming Celebration
6 p.m.
Tosca Stone Oven Pizzeria
4017 N. Mesa St.
Dr. Jose Villalobos 915-747-7978

UTEP Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner
6:30 p.m.
Don Haskins Center
Dr. Sandra Aguirre-Covarrubias
915-747-8600

Saturday, October 29
College of Engineering Alumni Breakfast
8 – 11 a.m.
Union Building East,
Tomas Rivera Conference Center, 3rd Floor
Ingrid Wright 915-747-5971

Communication Homecoming Brunch
9 a.m. – noon
Cotton Memorial Lawn
Stacy Sowards 915-747-8854

UTEP Black Alumni Network/African-American Studies Department Roundtable Discussion
10 a.m. – noon
Union Building East,
Templeton Suite, 313
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School of Pharmacy Tailgate
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Sun Bowl Stadium Parking Lot
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Centennial Plaza
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UTEP Alumni Tailgate
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Kidd Field
Valeria S. Sanchez 915-747-8600

Miner Varsity Club Tailgate
3 – 5:30 p.m.
Kidd Field
Miner Athletic Club 915-747-8759
TEXAS WESTERN COLLEGE GOLDEN GRADS

EVENT SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

Coffee & Check-in
10 - 11 a.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center (Alumni Lodge)

Campus Tour
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

Welcome Luncheon
1 - 2:30 p.m.
Geological Sciences Bldg.
Geology Reading Room, 310

Dinner
6 - 8 p.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

Open House at the Alumni Lodge
8:30 a.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

Heritage House Open House
9 - 11 a.m.
Heritage House

Luncheon with Dr. Natalicio
11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Union Bldg. East Tomás Rivera Conference Center, 3rd Floor

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

Brunch and Housing Tour
10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Miner Canyon

Parade and Pep Rally
1 - 3 p.m.

Reunion – Tailgate
3 - 6:00 p.m.
Kidd Field

“ONCE A GOLDEN GRAD, ALWAYS A GOLDEN GRAD”

All Golden Grads events are hosted by the Office of Alumni Relations-Golden Grads Committee. For more information and registration, visit alumni.utep.edu/goldengrads or call 915-747-8600.

JOIN TODAY

STAY CONNECTED

The UTEP Alumni Association is a nonprofit organization offering members valuable benefits and a variety of ways to stay connected. Join over 5,000 members nationwide and become part of the Miner Nation!

Stay connected through your choice of Annual, Lifetime or Centennial Lifetime memberships.

Be part of the excitement and enjoy special programs and activities throughout the year!

The UTEP Alumni Association
OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

For more information please call (915) 747-8600 or visit alumni.utep.edu
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

As is tradition, The University of Texas at El Paso sets aside a few moments during Homecoming to focus the attention of the Miner Nation on graduates who have achieved excellence in their chosen fields and serve as examples of what can be accomplished through integrity, dedication and determination.

The University has selected three outstanding UTEP graduates whose achievements serve as an inspiration to present and future Miners. They join the distinctive ranks of Distinguished Alumni because they balanced big dreams with a confidence in the knowledge and skills that were honed at this institution.

We salute the 2016 Distinguished Alumni for raising the bar now and forever.
“I treasure my education from UTEP. It taught me the basic fundamentals to be an entrepreneur.”

Eric J.C. Chan
BBA Accounting, 1978
by Christina Rodriguez

It is Eric J.C. Chan’s resilience and ability to take risks without fear of failure that has led to his success as an entrepreneur, developer and investor since earning his bachelor’s degree in accounting from The University of Texas at El Paso in 1978.

Chan is the founder or co-founder of four companies in Hong Kong and China, including one that sells American rice in Hong Kong and another that deploys a citywide free wireless mesh network in Guangzhou City, China, by turning moving vehicles like taxis, buses and trams into hotspots.

Chan was born in Vientiane, Laos and grew up in Hong Kong. In 1973, he left Hong Kong to attend Riverside High School in El Paso through an international exchange program. After graduation, he decided to stay and attend UTEP.

Chan credits his UTEP education as the foundation for his success in business.

“I treasure my education from UTEP. It taught me the basic fundamentals to be an entrepreneur and taught me to develop a sense of completeness,” Chan said. “It has definitely broadened my mind and taught me new approaches to analytically think through problems and define predicaments.”

Shortly after graduation, Chan moved back to Hong Kong and, with help from his father and a few business partners, started his first business – a contracting company for fitting out interior spaces in buildings, making them suitable for occupation.

After just a year and a half, Chan’s business partners backed out, leaving him on his own and desperate to keep the business afloat.

“When I started my business as an entrepreneur at the tender age of 25, I did not have a lot of life experience,” Chan said. “My father, who was a successful businessman, became my mentor and helped me with strategic decisions and problem solving, but I had to be independent and analyze the situation as an adult.”

That first challenge didn’t faze Chan; instead, he reevaluated his business plan and moved forward. He diversified his business to include building products, landscape amenities and technical products. Later, he developed Lotus Hill Golf Resort and Sun Valley golf course in China.

Chan’s business career has been a roller coaster ride of ups and downs that have helped to propel his businesses to the next level and helped him grow as an entrepreneur.

“I have had many successes and failures in my investments and I try to learn every time from any inadequacies in business planning,” he said. “Learn from your failures and go on to the next challenge. If you have not failed before, you are not growing up.”
“My parents saw education as a means to get a good job ... They were very aware that education was the key to success.”

Catalina E. García, M.D.  
B.S. Biological Sciences, 1961  
by Christina Rodriguez

Catalina E. García’s success story is a testament to the American dream. Her grandparents came to El Paso with only what they could carry from Chihuahua, Mexico, to escape the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. García’s parents — a mechanic and a seamstress — settled in a housing project in the segundo barrio neighborhood in south El Paso, where García grew up as the oldest of six siblings.

Today, García, M.D., is a highly regarded anesthesiologist with Dallas Anesthesiology Group, P.A., as well as a mentor and advocate for education and women’s issues, particularly those of Latina women.

García’s dream of becoming a doctor was initiated through regular visits to her pediatrician, a female whom her parents respected and revered. Since the age of five, she kept her dream to herself and began to work toward making it a reality.

Fortunately for García, education was always important in her household.

“My parents saw education as a means to get a good job,” García said. “Mother completed fourth grade and my father graduated from a technical high school, but they read a lot and were both mainly self-educated. They were very aware that education was the key to success.”

García graduated from Texas Western College, now UTEP, in 1961 with a Bachelor of Science degree in biological sciences. She remembers fondly how her professors and fellow TWC students were always willing to lend a hand.

“I used to sleep on the padded easy chairs in the student union during the day between classes,” García recalled. “I would pin a note on my shoulder stating what time I had a class, with the request, ‘Please wake me.’ And you know what? Someone always did!”

The success García enjoys today did not always come easy. The newly married medical student faced adversity as a Mexican-American woman when discrimination was common in the United States, as well as the added challenges of adjusting to marriage and homesickness after leaving her hometown to attend medical school in Dallas.

“Failure is a very good teacher; a painful teacher, but a good one,” García said. “I didn’t do well in medical school the first time. I had a difficult time, but I grew up, got back on track and convinced the medical school administration to give me a second chance. From that point on, I just ignored the outside world and people who didn’t like me and worked like the dickens to get the job done.”
Mario T. García, Ph.D.
by Christina Rodriguez

Mario T. García’s history professors at Texas Western College, now The University of Texas at El Paso, inspired him on his path to become a distinguished university history professor, historian, researcher, author and trailblazer for Chicano studies.

García, Ph.D., is an El Paso native who, since childhood, had a love of history but wished to pursue a career in politics like former El Paso Mayor Raymond L. Telles, the first Hispanic mayor of a major American city. Telles was a leader with whom García could easily identify: they were both Mexican-American and graduates of Cathedral High School. He looked up to Telles and would later write a biography of the iconic mayor and U.S. ambassador.

As a student at Texas Western, García majored in political science but soon found himself taking more interest in his history classes.

“I particularly enjoyed courses with Professor Wayne Fuller on late 19th and early 20th century American history,” García said. “My professors were all very dedicated to their work. Seeing how they were excited about history added to my own excitement.”

During García’s senior year at TWC, he thought, “I can do that!” while listening to one of Fuller’s enjoyable lectures. He started on the path to become a college professor, earning a master’s degree in history from UTEP and a doctoral degree in history from the University of California, San Diego.

While at UC San Diego, García assisted in the development of a Chicano studies program. He later was appointed as distinguished professor of history and Chicano studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, were he has remained a faculty member for 41 years.

“The Chicano Movement provided the context for my decision to study history and apply learning and knowledge to my people [Mexican-American] because it hadn’t been integrated in U.S. history,” García said. “My goal in life is to be the best Chicano historian in the country.”

García has written numerous books and biographies on Chicano history, received awards and fellowships for his teaching and research including the distinguished Guggenheim Fellowship, and served as history and American studies professor and director of ethnic studies for Yale University from 1990-92 before moving to his current position.

“I have come a long way from thinking in Professor Fuller’s class that I could become a college professor, but the foundation that the history department gave me at UTEP was fundamental for me in achieving my goal,” García said. “I fulfilled my love of history at UTEP and I am thankful for the professors I had and the support the department gave me.”
Gold Nugget

The University of Texas at El Paso and the UTEP Alumni Association are proud to present the 2016 Gold Nugget Award recipients. These outstanding alumni are recognized by each of the University’s colleges and schools for their achievements and dedication.

We recognize them because they inspire others – including the current students who will follow their paths, guided by their bold examples.
Armando Aguirre, Ed.D.
College of Education
B.S. Health and Physical Education, 1985
M.Ed. Educational Administration, 1989
Ed.D. Education Leadership Administration, 2004
By Daniel Perez

Armando Aguirre, the youngest of six children, said he attended a dozen K-12 institutions before graduating from high school because the family needed to move around for economic reasons. The El Paso native said the experience taught him to be adaptable and to make the best of every situation. Those lessons have helped him navigate a 30-plus year career in education where he has taught or administered at every level from elementary to higher education.

His goal is to make a positive difference in the lives of students and to involve families in academic decisions. “I see myself in the kids of this community and my parents in their parents,” he said.

Since 2014, he has been executive director of Education Service Center-Region 19, an organization that assists area teachers and administrators to better serve students.

Aguirre earned his bachelor’s (1985), master’s (1989) and doctoral degrees (2004) in education from The University of Texas at El Paso. He said UTEP equipped him with the skills and beliefs that, as an alumnus, he owed it to his community to pay it forward. “Understanding the value of diversity at UTEP has helped me leverage diversity as a business imperative,” the 30-year veteran banker said. “Having the rich cultural foundation for valuing differences and multiple perspectives has allowed me to effectively lead myself, my teams and my business.”

Always passionate and committed to community involvement, Bell also leads several community outreach programs and serves as an active volunteer in her community of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Mary E. Bell
College of Business Administration
BBA Finance, 1983
by Esmeralda Treviño

Regional President and CEO for Indiana and Ohio at Wells Fargo Bank, Mary E. Bell received her degree in finance from UTEP before landing her first job as a management trainee for the State National Bank of El Paso in 1983.

Bell recognizes UTEP’s role in her success; living in El Paso, studying at UTEP and working in the community allowed her to appreciate cultural, ethnic, gender and other diversity dimensions.

“Understanding the value of diversity at UTEP has helped me leverage diversity as a business imperative,” the 30-year veteran banker said. “Having the rich cultural foundation for valuing differences and multiple perspectives has allowed me to effectively lead myself, my teams and my business.”

Always passionate and committed to community involvement, Bell also leads several community outreach programs and serves as an active volunteer in her community of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Brian Cloteaux, Ph.D.
College of Engineering
B.S. Electrical Engineering, 1993
M.S. Computer Science, 1997
by Chyanne Smith

Brian Cloteaux, a researcher at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), said one of the most rewarding aspects of his job is working with undergraduate students who come to the institute on summer fellowships. At NIST, Cloteaux investigates characteristics of real-world networks such as the Internet and social media to help predict what will happen with them in the future.

Alongside his research, Cloteaux works with students in the NIST Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship, which aims to inspire them to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Many of the students Cloteaux has mentored have gone on to pursue graduate degrees in computer science.

The native El Pasoan began his academic career at UTEP as an undergraduate in electrical engineering and then gravitated toward computer science for his master’s. He later earned a Ph.D. in computer science from New Mexico State University.

“Understanding the value of diversity at UTEP has helped me leverage diversity as a business imperative,” the 30-year veteran banker said. “Having the rich cultural foundation for valuing differences and multiple perspectives has allowed me to effectively lead myself, my teams and my business.”

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Barbara Divis  
**College of Liberal Arts**  
B.M. Music Performance, 1987  
by Leonard Martinez

The University of Texas at El Paso provided the foundation for a singing career that took Barbara Divis across the U.S. to perform lead roles in well-known operas. Divis performed professionally in 35 productions, most of them lead roles, around the United States between 1984 and her retirement in 2011.

Born in Alabama, Divis attended Eastwood High School in El Paso. She chose UTEP for college because she wasn’t ready to leave home, she said.

“UTEP awarded me a music scholarship and academic scholarship,” she said. “... If it were not for UTEP, I am not certain I would have even achieved my bachelor’s degree at all.”

She said her experience at UTEP eventually led her to earn a master’s degree.

Of all the operas in which she performed, Divis loved the works of renowned composer Giacomo Puccini best. She performed the title character Cio-Cio-San in Puccini’s “Madama Butterfly” in seven productions.

Music from her CDs are featured in the book, “Operaville” by Michael J. Vaughan, available online.

Karen Lyon, Ph.D.  
**School of Nursing**  
B.S. Nursing, 1974; M.S. Nursing, 1978  
by Laura L. Acosta

Karen C. Lyon, Ph.D., executive director of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, shares a long and distinguished history with the UTEP School of Nursing.

Lyon was one of El Paso’s first baccalaureate prepared nurses to graduate from The University of Texas System School of Nursing in 1974.

After the nursing school system disbanded and the school became part of UTEP in 1976, Lyon was one of the first students in the new Master of Science in Nursing program at the UTEP College of Nursing. She earned her graduate degree in 1978.

Her mentor, College of Nursing Founding Dean Eileen Jacobi, Ed.D., encouraged Lyon to join the UTEP faculty a year later.

In 2004, Lyon was named assistant dean of graduate nursing. She subsequently developed the graduate degree in nursing systems management and UTEP’s Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing Fast Track Program.

“It’s such an honor to be part of the School of Nursing’s 40th anniversary this year because I was there at the start,” Lyon said. “I’ve seen how much UTEP has changed. Just to feel that in some small way I contributed to that change through my roles at UTEP is incredible.”

Freda Mowad  
**College of Health Sciences**  
M.S. Speech-Language Pathology, 1995  
by Laura L. Acosta

Freda Mowad learned the value of teamwork as a student in UTEP’s Master of Speech-Language Pathology program.

Mowad’s classes fostered an environment of teambuilding and support. As president of Senior Rehab Solutions (SRS), a rehabilitation management company with facilities in Texas, Louisiana, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, California and New York, Mowad has encouraged a similar culture of collaboration among the more than 2,000 therapy professionals under her leadership.

“The spirit of UTEP was not about competition or outdoing your classmates,” Mowad recalled. “It was about helping each other get to where you were going together.”

Mowad graduated from UTEP in 1995. In 2013, the El Paso native led efforts to open the first SRS facility in El Paso, where UTEP students in the speech-language pathology, physical therapy and occupational therapy programs receive clinical training. The majority of therapists employed at SRS in El Paso are UTEP graduates.

An avid UTEP supporter, Mowad also helped establish the Senior Rehab Solutions Excellence Endowment in the College of Health Sciences.

“I am so proud to be affiliated with UTEP once again,” Mowad said, “and to be able to give back to the school that gave so much to me.”

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
MINER DASH  
Register at minerdash.utep.edu.
Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni
College of Science
B.S. Biological Sciences, 1975
by Lisa Y. Garibay

Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni, Ph.D., credits outstanding UTEP educators in biology, genetics and cytology for getting her where she is today: professor and head of Texas A&M University’s Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences.

“The most outstanding science teacher I’ve ever seen or had was [former UTEP Professor of Biological Sciences] Peter Chrapliwy,” she said. She has striven to follow Chrapliwy’s example for the numerous students she has guided through undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies.

Her undergraduate lab work at UTEP on lead contributed to what is now her main research focus: the neurotoxicity of lead. Her work in veterinary medicine contributes to greater advancements in environmental, animal and human health.

Tiffany-Castiglioni received her bachelor’s degree from UTEP in 1975 as a second-generation graduate of the University.

“At one point, my mother, father and two brothers and I were all taking classes at the same time,” she recalled.

Tiffany-Castiglioni was grateful that the University provided an opportunity to pursue her love of music alongside her scientific training. She was frequently in the Fox Fine Arts Center studying concert harp and played in the UTEP Symphony Orchestra.

Unforgettable for the alumna is the beauty and uniqueness of her alma mater’s campus, which she shares with anyone she knows who is traveling to El Paso.

MINER DASH
& Family Fitness Fiesta

Kick off UTEP’s Homecoming festivities at the 7th Annual Miner Dash 5K Run/3K Walk and Family Fitness Fiesta on Sunday, Oct. 23, 2016 at Centennial Plaza.

The race and noncompetitive fun walk will start at 8 a.m. and wind through the UTEP campus, giving alumni and other participants an opportunity to marvel at how much the campus has transformed over the past few years. Both events will feature a wheelchair division.

Spectators can join the fun at the Family Fitness Fiesta from 9 to 11 a.m. Bungee jumping, a tricycle track for toddlers and an inflatable obstacle course are a few of the entertaining activities for children and adults. Participants also can demonstrate their stamina in the fiesta’s Passport to Fitness challenge.

The event is open to the public. Early registration for the Miner Dash 5K Run/3K Walk is $25 through Oct. 11; late registration is $30 and ends Oct. 20. Registration for the Family Fitness Fiesta is $5.

Register at minerdash.utep.edu. Proceeds will benefit programs in UTEP’s College of Health Sciences.
1940s

Nancy Corinne Hamilton (B.A. '49; M.A. '54), one of the field’s best known and most knowledgeable experts of Mexican folk art and religious artifacts and a lifelong El Pasoan, donated her still-growing collection of Mexican retablos to the El Paso Museum of Art. The Hamilton Collection is comprised of some 500 retablos depicting a wide variety of saints and the holy family. The acquisition brings the museum’s total number of retablos to around 900, making it the world’s second-largest repository of Mexican retablos.

1960s

Pat Ellis Littledog (B.A. '69; M.A. '76), Austin-based author, had her book, “Afoot in a Field of Men,” republished by Slough Press. The book was first published in 1983 by Slough Press, then picked up by Atlantic Monthly Press where it was repackaged and additional stories added for a national audience.

Pat Mora (B.A. '63; M.A. '67), a widely known writer of poetry, nonfiction and children’s books, received a 2016 Skipping Stones Honor Award for her bilingual picture book, “The Remembering Day / El Dia de los Muertos” (Arte Publico Press). The Skipping Stones Awards promote understanding of the world’s diverse cultures, nature and ecological richness. In October 2015, Mora received the Texas Writer Award. Mora has written more than 30 books for children and young adults.

Mary W. Railey (B.S. '66) was elected president of the Women’s Club of El Paso in May.

Leslie H. Taylor (B.A. ’68), retired Army officer and president/CEO of Taylor-Oden Enterprises, a defense IT company, was elected to serve on the advisory board of the College of Health and Human Services at George Mason University in Virginia.

1970s

Victor Arias (BBA ’78) received The Stanford Medal from Stanford University. The medal honors volunteer leaders who have given decades of distinguished volunteer service to Stanford.

Katherine Brennand (MBA ’79) was nominated for El Paso Inc. newspaper’s 2015 El Pasoan of the Year award. Brennand is co-founder of the El Paso Community Foundation and former vice chair of El Paso Water Utilities’ Public Service Board.

Joe F. Cardenas (B.S. ’74), president of planning, engineering and project management firm Moreno Cardenas, was named a life member of The American Society of Civil Engineers. The designation honors a lifetime of dedication and service to the profession.

Julie Chiu (B.S. ’74), president of Seisa Group, a medical device manufacturing company in Juarez, Mexico, was named co-chair of The Borderplex Alliance, a regional economic development organization in El Paso.

J. Stephen DeGroat (BBA ’72, MBA ’75) was reappointed as chairman for the University Medical Center of El Paso Board of Managers for his second term. His new term ends in March 2017.

Gaspar Enriquez (B.A. ’70), internationally renowned El Paso artist, was named a recipient of the Father Rahm Segundo Barrio Person of the Year Award. The award recognizes a commitment to the betterment of El Paso’s Segundo Barrio, also called the Second Ward, and its inhabitants, values and unique experience. He also was one of 43 finalists selected out of 2,500 applicants for the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition who had the opportunity to display their work at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.

Joe Manuel Gomez (B.A. ’70) showcased his vast collection of memorabilia of the historic 1966 Texas Western College basketball season through an exhibit dedicated to fandom, called “50 Years of Loyalty,” at the El Paso Museum of Art.

Armida H. Hernandez (B.S. ’74; M.Ed. ’76) was elected president of the board of directors for the Assistance League of El Paso, a nonprofit organization that operates four philanthropy programs.

Debra C. Hester (BBA ’77), a Realtor with ERA Sellers Buyers, was recognized as the No. 1 Agent in the firm. She also is ranked No. 1 in the Broker Council out of 268 agents and is nationally ranked in the top 1 percent of all ERA agents. Hester is rated one of the best agents in the U.S. by Real Trends.

Shelby Lee McCue (B.A. ‘75), who has 30 years of experience with ExxonMobil Corp. as an international petroleum negotiator, has joined Ortega, McGlashan, Hicks & Perez law firm and will focus on commercial business transactions, probate and general civil litigation. He also will serve clients on oil and gas matters, including energy transactions in Mexico.

Bernie Olivas (B.S.Ed. ’79; B.S. ’81), who has overseen the growth and development of the Hyundai Sun Bowl since 2001, was named Football Bowl Association chairman.

Guadalupe Myriam de la Vega (BBA ’81) of Almacenes Distribuidores de la Frontera in Juarez, Mexico, was elected as a new member of the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation Board of Directors.

1980s

Anthony P. Benitez (BBA ’80) was appointed to the El Paso City Planning Commission District 4.

Russell Broadus, M.D., Ph.D. (B.S. ’87) was awarded the 2016 John P. McGovern Award for Outstanding Teaching by The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The award is voted on by the graduate students and given to one faculty member each year, from a pool of nearly 600 graduate school faculty. Broadus is a professor in the Department of Pathology at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Manual Castruita (B.S. ’88; M.Ed. ’92) was a 2015-16 graduate from the REALIZE Leadership program, a Paso del Norte Health Foundation program that aims to inspire leaders to become transformational leaders for the region’s health. Graduates participated in a 10-month experience that prepared them to address regional health needs.

Timothy R. Collins (B.A. ’83) was promoted to vice president at insurance brokerage HUB International. He also was recognized for the highest customer retention in the HUB El Paso office during the past fiscal year and received the top honor as Outstanding Small Business Producer in Texas, having exceeded his annual sales goal by more than 300 percent. Collins has achieved nearly 100 percent client retention and has exceeded budgeted goals by more than 10 percent.

Irma Alvarado Samaniego, Ph.D., (BSN ’79; MSN ’98) was appointed assistant professor with the School of Nursing at The University of Texas Medical Branch.

Manuel Castruita (B.S. ’88; M.Ed. ’92) was selected as acting CEO of the Borderplex Alliance in El Paso beginning Sept. 1, 2016 while the organization conducts a national search for a permanent CEO.

Pauline Anne Dow (B.A. ’84, M.A. ’87, M.Ed. ’89) has been named to the newly created Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments.

Continued on page 54
5th Annual Alumni PICK-NIC

Thousands of University of Texas at El Paso alumni, family and friends gathered together from coast to coast and border to border to share food, fun, laughter and a heavy dose of Miner pride at the 5th annual Alumni PICK-NIC on Saturday, July 16.

This year 29 locations took part in the celebration, from the local El Paso PICK-NIC held at Memorial Park to Los Angeles, New York, and even Bhutan. Each location added their own flair to the PICK-NIC, but the common thread among all who participated was the outpouring of orange and blue spirit in true Miner fashion.

See more photos and learn about each of the PICK-NICs at utep.edu/magazine

1. Tucson, AZ
2. Huntsville, AL
3. Yuma, AZ
4. El Paso, TX
5. Phoenix, AZ
Hilda C. Galvan (B.S. ’88) has been promoted to partner-in-charge of the global law firm Jones Day for the firm’s Dallas office. She is a partner in the firm’s Intellectual Property (IP) Practice and has been recognized as a top IP attorney nationwide.

Kirsten Guthrie Harvey (B.A. ’83, M.Ed. ’93), president and owner of High Desert Medical, Inc. and Larry Harvey (B.S. ’88), vice president of sales for Life Spine, Inc. recently celebrated their 27th wedding anniversary. They reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Miguel Juarez (B.A. ’85; M.A. ’12), a graduate student at The University of Texas at El Paso, was selected by The Organization of American Historians for a grant from its travel fund for emerging historians.

Dana Mark Jurick (M.S. ’89) was appointed to the Governors’ Technical Advisory Committee to The Bureau of Economic Geology (Texas BEG) by the office of Gov. Greg Abbott.

Eliza Sylvia Martinez (BSN ’80), owner of Altomar Home Healthcare and Medical Equipment, was the recipient of the Small Business Association’s Women in Business award for El Paso and the region. She also serves on the board of directors for Hospice El Paso.

Carolyn Leticia Mora (BBA ’84) was elected chair of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation Board of Directors. She is a certified public accountant and owner of Carolyn L. Mora Financial Services.

Anthony J. Morgan (B.S. ’87) was inducted into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. He coached 10 years at Parkland High School and won seven district basketball titles.

Raul Ordaz (BBA ’89), chief financial officer with High Desert Capital, was elected to serve on the board of directors for Hospice El Paso.

Irene Rico (B.S. ’84) was promoted to head of the Virginia division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). She oversees the state’s use of more than $1 billion in federal aid and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for highways and bridges and serves as the FHWA’s local representative to state and local officials, as well as numerous stakeholder groups. Rico is the first Hispanic woman in the agency’s history to hold such a position.

James A. Schichtl (B.S. ’87) was promoted to vice president of regulatory affairs with El Paso Electric (EPE) Co. He will continue to oversee EPE’s economic and rate research, economic research groups and regulatory case management group.

Jorge Vielledent (BBA ’86), a financial services, retirement planning and wealth management adviser, was elected as one of four new board members for Project Amistad’s board of directors.

Veronica Vijií (B.S. ’86) was appointed as associate superintendent for the Canutillo Independent School District. She has 19 years of experience as an English teacher, science teacher, assistant principal, principal and director of data management and compliance. Vijií also has served as adjunct professor at Sam Houston State University.

1990s

Dana Kristin Boyd (BIS ’99; M.Ed. ’05), principal of El Paso’s East Point Elementary School, received the Texas National Distinguished Principal Award from the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association. She was recognized for her campus leadership and contributions to the profession.

Michelle Maldonado Casillas (BIS ’97; M.Ed. ’01), assistant principal at Ascarate Elementary School in El Paso, was named Assistant Principal of the Year for Region 19 by the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association.

Carlos Castillo (BSN ’99; MSN ’04) was promoted to assistant chief nursing officer at Providence Children’s Hospital in El Paso.

Chrystat Lea Davis (B.A. ’97; MBA ’14) was one of the 2015-16 graduates from the REALIZE Leadership program, a Paso del Norte Health Foundation program that aims to inspire leaders to become transformational leaders for the region’s health. Graduates participated in a 10-month experience that prepared them to address regional health needs.

Sally Anne Hurt Deitch (BSN ’90; MSN ’94), market CEO with Sierra Providence Health Network, was the recipient of the 10th annual Corris Boyd Leadership Award by The Federation of American Hospitals. The Corris Boyd Leadership Award is given annually and honors an individual or company that has made an outstanding contribution in fostering leadership in the health care industry.

Veronica Escobar (B.A. ’91), an El Paso County judge, was elected to serve a two-year term as chairwoman of the Texas Conference of Urban Counties. She will serve on the organization’s board of directors, which focuses on legislative and policy issues for its 38 member counties.

Mary Ann Friesen (MSN ’92), nursing research and evidence-based practice coordinator for the Inova Health System of Northern Virginia, was elected to serve on the advisory board of the College of Health and Human Services at George Mason University in Virginia.

Alicia Lawrence Gacharna (B.S. ’90; MBA ’12) was selected as one of 11 professional women from El Paso to participate in this year’s Leadership Texas program, the oldest women’s leadership program in the country. Each year, a class of about 75 Texas women visit four cities across the state to see how they can address critical issues.

Robert Charles Moore (B.A. ’98), an editor with the El Paso Times, was one of three El Paso journalists recognized with School Bell Awards for excellence in public education reporting by the Texas State Teachers Association. This is the fourth consecutive year he has won the award honoring an outstanding collection of editorials. He is also one of three El Paso Times journalists who took first place honors for Star Investigative Report of the Year for the Times’ ongoing investigation of problems in city government at the annual Texas Associated Press Managing Editors convention.

Amy Annette Nichols (B.A. ’97), an attorney with Kubinski & Nichols, has been elected as a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. Fellows must be members of the State Bar of Texas and are selected for their professional achievements and commitment to the improvement of the justice system in the state.
GREAT DAY FOR A PICK-NIC!

5th Annual Alumni PICK-NIC

6. Portland, OR
7. Dallas, TX
8. San Diego, CA
9. Raleigh, NC
10. Miami, FL
11. San Francisco, CA
12. Denver, CO
Irazema Solis Rojas (B.S. '95; M.S. '10) was selected as one of 11 professional women from El Paso to participate in this year’s Leadership Texas program, the oldest women’s leadership program in the country. Each year, a class of about 75 Texas women visit four cities across the state to see how they can address critical issues.

Tracy Jo Yellen (MPA ’99) was named CEO of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation and its foundations. She has about 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and was previously the president of the Paso del Norte Foundation, the fundraising charity for the health foundation and CEO of the Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso for almost seven years, helping one of the city’s major foundations grow.

Jessica Kristen Margherio-Alvarez (BBA ’02) was named as vice president of commercial lending for WestStar Bank. She has 16 years of commercial banking experience, is a member of the Junior League of El Paso, the Westside Rotary Club, and a board member of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, Business Development Division.

Rafael Arellano (BMS ’09; MPA ’12) has been named senior economic development specialist for Downtown El Paso, a new position that is part of an inter-local agreement between the city of El Paso and the Downtown Management District approved by City Council. He will be in charge of guiding economic development efforts related to Downtown, tracking projects, recruiting and retaining private investment and coordinating and being the lead liaison on specific projects such as the upcoming streetcar route.

Jennifer Marie Barnhouse (B.A. ’10) joined MIMCO’s marketing team as a graphic artist who will assist with designing both digital and print marketing material. She is a native El Pasoan and has more than 10 years of experience in the graphic design and marketing fields.

Tessa Marie Caldarella (BBA ’05; M.Acc. ’10) and her family members were the recipients of the Small Business Association’s El Paso Family Owned Small Business of the Year award for their business Caldarella’s Restaurant Supply. The award is one of eight SBA awards given to El Paso-area business owners and business advocates.

Estela A. Casas (B.A. ’05), Channel 7-KVIA anchor, was one of the recipients of the School Bell Awards for excellence in public education reporting by the Texas State Teachers Association for outstanding television program series, Estela’s Escuelas.

Raul Caudillo (B.S. ’06, BSN ’04) was awarded one of Del Sol Medical Center’s Daisy Awards. Nurses are nominated by patients in the medical oncology unit for their ability to keep patients calm during stressful situations.

Michelle Rene Conklin (B.A. ’03; M.Ed. ’07), associate professor of education and psychology at El Paso Community College, was a recipient of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Excellence Awards.

Joe Calvin Devance (BMS ’06) was selected as outstanding ex at El Paso’s Burges High School. He has played the past 10 years in the Philippines Basketball Association (PBA), the NBA of the Philippines, winning six league championships.

Trevor Thomas Duarte (B.S. ’07; Ph.D. ’14) is one of three co-founders of Veliz Books, El Paso’s newest independent press that attempts to bridge cultural and language differences through literary projects. He currently teaches biological sciences at UTEP.

Bruce Carlos Edmunds (M.Ed.’00) has been named director of physician engagement at the Paso del Norte Health Information Exchange. He will provide on-site assistance to physicians and other medical providers and organizations with electronic health record systems, and help implement clinical quality program initiatives. Edmunds will also facilitate marketing to encourage physicians to participate in the regional health information exchange, operating in El Paso County, rural counties in West Texas and in southern New Mexico.

Norma Patricia Fernandez (M.A. ’06; Ph.D. ’10) was a 2015-16 graduate of the REALIZE Leadership program, a Paso del Norte Health Foundation program that aims to inspire leaders to become transformational leaders for the region’s health. Graduates participated in a 10-month experience that prepared them to address regional health needs.

Javier Ferrer (MBA ’07) opened a PostNet center franchise in the Shops at Dieter Village in El Paso. PostNet provides customized printing, marketing and shipping services for small businesses.

Jennifer Elizabeth Han (B.S. ’07) was inducted into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. She is the current international and world boxing featherweight women’s champion and is the only El Paso boxer to hold a world boxing title.

Joseph Gabriel Isaac (B.A. ’04) was promoted to partner for Scherr-Legate Law firm. He specializes in personal injury, non-subscriber negligence claims, products liability and employment law.

Minerva Amada Laveaga (B.A. ’01; MPA ’04) established Veliz Books, El Paso’s newest independent press that attempts to bridge cultural and language differences through literary projects where she serves as founding editor and publisher.

Erica M. Loya (BIS ’03), a fourth grade teacher at Dr. Sue Shook Elementary School in El Paso, was one of two teachers recognized by the Socorro Independent School District as Elementary Teacher of the Year.

Joel Martinez (BFA ’04) and Iris Morales (BFA ‘06), owners of El Paso-based EME Design Studio, won their second national American Advertising Federation ADDY Award for their small firm. The American Advertising Awards is the advertising industry’s largest competition, recognizing the best designs nationwide. EME was awarded a silver ADDY for a branding campaign it created for Tin Man, a craft beer “filling station” in east El Paso where patrons can fill to-go jugs with craft beer fresh from the keg. At the district level, their firm received gold and best in show.

Stephanie Marie Nebhan (BBA ’08) and Nayef Joseph Nebhan (BBA ’15) were featured on the television reality show “Hotel Impractical” for the renovation of the family-owned Gardner Hotel in downtown El Paso. The show takes struggling hotels and gives them a makeover and advice from veteran hotel operator and hospitality expert Anthony Melchiorri. The brother and sister duo took on management duties of the hotel upon their father Joe Nebhan’s retirement.

Christopher Robert Olivas (B.S. ’07) was named as laboratory manager for the City of El Paso’s Public Health Department. He has eight years of experience as a clinical laboratory scientist and previously served as lead medical technologist in the microbiology department at the Hospitals of Providence East Campus.

Francisco Javier Ortega (B.A. ’03) was reappointed to the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso’s board by El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser. The appointment is a two-year term. Ortega is an attorney in the commercial litigation, appellate, labor and employment departments at ScottHulse.

Eva Marie Padilla (B.A. ’08) was appointed as a multimedia journalist for the City of Corpus Christi. She previously worked as a radio producer and TV production assistant.

Paul Pedroza (B.A. ’05) recently published his new book, “The Dead Will Rise and Save Us” (Veliz Books). He is an El Paso native and teaches in the English department at New Mexico State University.

Mara Portillo (BBA ’06, MBA ’12), compliance risk manager for WestStar Bank, has earned the Certified Regulatory Compliance Manager certification. The designation is the recognized standard of excellence for regulatory compliance professionals working in the financial services area.

Jill Elisabeth McGee (M.Ed. ’07), a second grade dual-language teacher at El Paso’s Mesita Elementary School, was named an Elementary Teacher of the Year by the El Paso Independent School District.

Continued on page 58
5th Annual Alumni PICK-NIC

13. Philadelphia, PA
14. Austin, TX
15. San Antonio, TX
16. Lubbock, TX
17. Juarez, Chih.
William H. Robertson, Ph.D. (B.A. ’09), a UTEP associate professor of teacher education also known as Dr. Skateboard, presented at the annual World Science Festival in New York City. He participated in a stargazing event at Brooklyn Bridge Park and a series of street science demonstrations at Washington Square. Robertson and other athletes showcased physics and math concepts through their science and skateboarding presentations.

Adrian Alberto Santiago (BBA ’06) was promoted to business lender with WestStar Bank. In his new role, he will develop and manage business banking relationships within the El Paso community. Santiago joined WestStar Bank in 2009 as a Business Loan Analyst, and was promoted to Senior Loan Analyst in 2013.

Christian Servin (B.S. ’05; M.S. ’09; M.S. ’12), assistant professor of computer science with El Paso Community College, was a recipient of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Excellence Awards.

Lisa Marie Tomaka (MPA ’07) is a graduate of the 2015-16 REALIZE Leadership program, a Paso del Norte Health Foundation program that aims to inspire leaders to become transformational leaders for the region’s health. Graduates participated in a 10-month experience that prepared them to address regional health needs.

2010s

Zita Smith Arocha (MFA ’12), associate professor in the Department of Communication at UTEP, was inducted into the National Association of Hispanic Journalists Hall of Fame in Washington, D.C., during the association’s national convention.

Alyssa D. Cervantes (MPA ’12) was selected as one of 11 professional women from El Paso to participate in this year’s Leadership Texas program, the oldest women’s leadership program in the country. Each year, a class of about 75 Texas women visit four cities across the state to see how they can address critical issues.

Sara Elena Chavez, DPT (B.S. ’12) joined the physical therapy staff of El Paso Physical Therapy Services. Her therapy interests are manual therapy, geriatrics, orthopedics and women’s health.

Laura Cesaro Eglin (MFA ’10) is one of three co-founders of Veliz Books, El Paso’s newest independent press that attempts to bridge cultural and language differences through literary projects.

Oscar Francisco Garza (B.A. ’13) has been named creative associate for the programming and promotions team at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema-Montecillo in El Paso. He works as a brand ambassador, books films and plans promotions.

Shane Griffith (MBA ’11), former public information officer with the Canutillo Independent School District, has rejoined the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso as housing eligibility supervisor for the Section 8 housing choice voucher program.

Fernando Ortega (MBA ’10), senior vice president and chief information officer at GECU, was elected to serve as president for the board of directors for Hospice El Paso, the city’s only nonprofit hospice providing specialized care, comfort and support to patients and their families.

John Adam Smith (B.S. ’10) was inducted into the El Paso Biological Sciences Southwest Committee; he is serving as treasurer.

Message from the UTEP Alumni Association President

Dear Alumni Family:

This has been a special year for UTEP as we continue to receive national recognition for the great accomplishments of our alumni, faculty, staff and students. The UTEP Alumni Association prides itself on being an integral partner that engages with the entire campus community to ensure our students become successful alumni. Homecoming 2016 is the perfect opportunity to show your Miner Pride as engaged alumni by returning to UTEP and participating in what is sure to be a memorable week. Your involvement on campus will definitely add to the overall experience and ambience of the UTEP family.

As we grow our Miner Nation, I am honored to serve as president of the Alumni Association and the Board of Directors, and I look forward to meeting you this year.

What an exciting time to be a Miner!

Picks up ... GO MINERS!

John Aranda ’97
President
UTEP Alumni Association
Artie Lou Metcalf, Ph.D., professor emeritus of the Department of Biological Sciences at The University of Texas at El Paso, died in his home state of Kansas on Jan. 31, 2016. He was 86.

Metcalf began his career at UTEP in 1962, where he taught until his retirement in 1995. He served as curator of malacology (mollusks) for the UTEP Biodiversity Collections until 2010.

Born near Dexter, Kansas on July 5, 1929, Metcalf was highly educated yet very humble. He attended Cowley County Junior College, Kansas State University at Manhattan and Kansas University at Lawrence. He also studied in Germany as a Fulbright Scholar and began his teaching career in 1949 at Glenwood, a rural school near Dexter. He joined the Air Force in the early 1950s and served his country in England and Germany.

Metcalf received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas in 1964, majoring in zoology with a specialization in ichthyology, a branch of zoology that deals with fishes, along with a minor in geology.

He was so involved in the world of mollusks that colleagues at UTEP often referred to him as Artie Snailcalf, according to Cindy Crews, project director at the Mosquito Ecology and Surveillance Department in UTEP’s Department of Biological Sciences. Crews said Metcalf would get so focused on getting to the field to “snail,” that he nearly always left the gas cap on top of the pump when filling up.

Two snail species are named after Metcalf: the Sonorella metcalfi, commonly known as the Franklin Mountain talus snail, and the Holospira metcalfi, a type of air-breathing land snail.

His collections of mollusk specimens date back to the 1960s. In April 2016, a researcher visited the UTEP collections as part of a project to determine if certain mussels required protection under the Endangered Species Act.

“The historical perspective provided by Dr. Metcalf’s collection is an important part of making that determination,” said Teresa J. Mayfield, manager of the UTEP Biodiversity Collections. “The collections made by Dr. Metcalf are informing policy today.”

-Esmeralda Treviño
In Memoriam

1930s
Elizabeth Ferguson (B.A. ’38)
El Paso, Texas; March 3, 2016

1940s
Kenneth G. Ares (B.S. ’49)
Franklinville, North Carolina; March 26, 2016
Francis Alan Ehmann (B.A. ’48)
Houston, Texas; February 13, 2016
Ruth Mann Giles (B.A. ’44)
Arlington, Texas; February 13, 2016
Harold Eugene Buttram (B.A. ’50)
Fort Worth, Texas; January 14, 2016
Lloyd A. Hughes (B.A. ’47)
Abilene, Texas, April 23, 2016
Ruth Mann Giles (B.A. ’44)
Houston, Texas; February 13, 2016
Eleanor Black (B.A. ’54)
El Paso, Texas; May 7, 2016
Ann Ayres (B.A. ’57)
El Paso, Texas; May 7, 2016

1950s
Dora Marilyn “Cookie” Adams (B.A. ’52, M.A. ’74)
El Paso, Texas; October 27, 2015
Jose D. Alva (B.A. ’56)
El Paso, Texas; April 24, 2016
Irene Araiza (B.A. ’54, M.A. ’57)
El Paso, Texas; May 7, 2016
Ann Ayres (B.A. ’57)
El Paso, Texas, May 5, 2016
Eleanor Black (B.A. ’58)
El Paso, Texas, May 5, 2016
Harold Eugene Buttram (B.A. ’50)
El Paso, Texas; May 5, 2016

1960s
Sergio S. Guerrero (B.A. ’59)
El Paso, Texas; May 29, 2016
Jane Hudspeth (B.A. ’57)
El Paso, Texas; September 30, 2015
Ernest L. Hunsaker (BBA ’56)
El Paso, Texas; April 5, 2016
Prescillano “Percy” Mares (BBA ’50)
El Paso, Texas; April 5, 2016
John Nelson Muhn (BBA ’55)
El Paso, Texas; January 9, 2016
Raul Rivera (B.A. ’56)
El Paso, Texas; January 9, 2016
Hector Rosales (B.A. ’57)
El Paso, Texas; January 11, 2016
Reynaldo Salazar (BBA ’57)
El Paso, Texas; April 28, 2016
Joe Harris Scales (B.S. ’56)
Portland, Texas; November 17, 2015
Robert T. Schwarzbach (BBA ’59)
Bedford, Texas; June 7, 2016
John A. Taylor (BBA ’59)
Dallas, Texas; October 22, 2015
Ofelia Terrazas (B.A. ’53)
El Paso, Texas, April 18, 2016
James O. Vigerust (B.S. ’53)
Las Cruces, New Mexico; March 23, 2016

1970s
Uwe F. Agness (BBA ’70)
El Paso, Texas; March 25, 2016
David Joseph Becerra (BBA ’79)
Pflugerville, Texas; March 17, 2016
Kenyon G. Cleveland (B.A. ’77)
El Paso, Texas; March 3, 2016
Maria Ester Fernandez (B.S. ’72)
El Paso, Texas; May 28, 2016
Alfred “Big Al” Frances (BBA ’74)
El Paso, Texas; March 6, 2016
Raul Galindo (BBA ’75)
Richwood, Texas; March 17, 2016
Gary Edward Garahan (BBA ’78)
Odessa, Texas; March 15, 2016
Gilbert S. Gill (M.Ed. ’70)
Houston, Texas; February 17, 2016
Renee R. Gravatt-Hinman (B.A. ’71, M.A. ’94)
El Paso, Texas; May 13, 2016
Evelyn A. Harbour (B.S. ’70)
El Paso, Texas; April 10, 2016
Michael Jenkins Hutson (BBA ’79, B.A. ’80)
El Paso, Texas; November 26, 2015
Dennis R. King (BBA ’71)
San Diego, California; February 7, 2016
Elbert L. Maxwell (BBA ’72)
El Paso, Texas; April 1, 2016
Jimmy N. Porter (B.S. ’71)
El Paso, Texas; March 29, 2016
Dereld G. Quillin (BBA ’73)
Las Cruces, New Mexico; March 23, 2016
Patricia E. Respondek (B.A. ’71)
El Paso, Texas; April 4, 2016
Renee R. Gravatt-Hinman (B.A. ’71, M.A. ’94)
El Paso, Texas; May 13, 2016

1980s
Jose Guadalupe Armendariz (MRC ’13)
Las Cruces, New Mexico; December 30, 2015
Arturo Dominguez (B.A. ’10)
Cary, North Carolina; November 13, 2015
Adolfo Flores (B.S. ’02)
El Paso, Texas; June 23, 2016
Thomas John Prezioso (MBA ’02)
El Paso, Texas; May 9, 2016
Christopher Michael Weems (M.A. ’11)
El Paso, Texas; June 4, 2016

1990s
Rosie Castillo (BIS ’93, M.Ed. ’99)
El Paso, Texas; February 6, 2016
James David “J.D.” Rathjen (Ph.D. ’98)
El Paso, Texas; February 6, 2016
Luis A. “Freddie” Rocha (B.A. ’69)
El Paso, Texas; April 8, 2016
Luis A. “Freddie” Rocha (B.A. ’69)
Dallas, Texas; April 8, 2016
Lydia Roess (B.A. ’61)
Blacksburg, Virginia; February 27, 2016
James P. Sorensen (B.A. ’67)
El Paso, Texas; April 7, 2016
Margaret S. Tolbert (B.A. ’63, M.Ed. ’74)
San Antonio, Texas; April 10, 2016
William L. Weddle (B.S. ’68)
Bastrop, Texas, April 19, 2016

2000s
Jose Guadalupe Armendariz (MRC ’13)
Las Cruces, New Mexico; December 30, 2015
Arturo Dominguez (B.A. ’10)
Cary, North Carolina; November 13, 2015
Adolfo Flores (B.S. ’02)
El Paso, Texas; June 23, 2016
Thomas John Prezioso (MBA ’02)
El Paso, Texas; May 9, 2016
Christopher Michael Weems (M.A. ’11)
El Paso, Texas; June 4, 2016
1. Edna Rodriguez (BSN ’08) and Tim Booth were married on Feb. 6, 2016 in Tucson, Arizona.  
2. Monica Rodriguez (BBA ’15) and Jose Castro (B.A. ’16) were married on May 28, 2016 in El Paso, Texas.  
3. Brandon Lee Arroyo was born to Emmanuel and Kim Lee Arroyo (B.A. ’10; M.Ed ’12) on December 4, 2015 in Okinawa, Japan.  
4. Zarina Michelle Herrera was born April 24, 2015 to Alexis Herrera (B.A. ’07; M.Ed ’11) in El Paso, Texas.  
5. Victoria Esther Carmona was born Feb. 9, 2016, the second child to parents Roberto F. Carmona (B.S. ’03; M.S. ’06) and Patsy Y. Saldivar (B.S. ’04).  
6. Madeline Andrea Payan was born Sept. 9, 2015 to Andres Payan Jr. (BBA ’13) and Rossie Benitez (B.A. ’14) in El Paso, Texas.  
7. Twins Carol and Clara Franco were born Dec. 11, 2015, two days before Renee Franco’s (B.A. ’15) commencement ceremony.
UTEP President Diana Natalicio has named Maribel Villalva as assistant vice president for alumni relations. Since 2013, Villalva has been director of UTEP’s Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Desert Gardens. In addition, in 2014, she served as executive director of the University’s Centennial Celebration.

“Maribel Villalva’s contributions to the University have been extensive and impactful,” President Natalicio said. “We are very pleased to be able to bring her community-building experience to Alumni Relations.”

Villalva received her bachelor’s degree in journalism from UTEP in 1997 and joined the staff at the El Paso Times as an arts reporter. She also served as a multimedia reporter for the Times and was a sports and features writer at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.

In 2008, Villalva became executive director of the El Paso Holocaust Museum, where she oversaw the museum’s day-to-day operations, fundraising, coordination of local and traveling exhibits, year-round programming, and promotion of the institution and all of its activities.

“As a proud graduate of UTEP, I am thrilled to step into this role at Alumni Relations,” Villalva said. “I welcome the opportunity to engage with UTEP alumni around the world so that they can remain a part of the UTEP community.”

Villalva replaces Richard Daniel, Ph.D., who led UTEP Alumni Relations for nearly 10 years and has accepted a position as the Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Saint Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont.