

BUZZ

October 2024



Left to right:
Dr. Jim Cornette,
Brenda Schroer,
Clay Stribling

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY announced its **2024 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI: DR. JIM CORNETTE, BRENDA SCHROER and CLAY STRIBLING** will be honored Oct. 10

during the annual Phoenix event during Homecoming 2024 celebrations. **DR. CORNETTE**, son of a former WT president and a renowned mathematician and paleontologist in his own right, is a professor emeritus at Iowa State University. A 1955 WT graduate, Cornette, earned master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Texas before embarking on a long career as a faculty member in Iowa State University's mathematics department. There, his research involved applying mathematics to molecular biology to develop models that benefitted the scientific community's knowledge and treatment of AIDS and COVID. He holds three patents and published 21 research articles, all in conjunction with the National Institutes of Health. In 1991, Cornette found a fossilized tooth of a phytosaur on his wife's family ranch near Palo Duro Canyon. That inspired him, after retiring from ISU in 2000, to pursue a master's degree in geology from the University of Kansas, which he earned two years later. **MS. SCHROER**, a native of Dumas and Longview, is the former senior vice president and CFO of Concho Resources and now works with Endeavor Energy Resources in Midland. Schroer earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting in 1998 from WTAMU, then a master's in accounting at Texas A&M University. She began her accounting career at Ernst & Young, spending more than a decade in the firm's offices in Dallas, London and New York, focusing on the oil and gas industry. She was recruited to work at the Fortune 500-company Concho Resources in 2013, returning her to Texas to work in its Midland offices. Within six years, she ascended to the company's senior vice president, chief financial officer and treasurer, leading its 250-person finance organization in multi-billion-dollar acquisitions and divestitures before the company was acquired in 2021 by ConocoPhillips. While at Concho, Schroer was named one of the 25 Influential Women in Energy in 2020. She then led Aris Water Solutions through an IPO in 2021 and its transition to a public company in 2022, then joined Endeavor Energy Resources as its CFO and board manager.

And **MR. STRIBLING**, a Hereford native, is the well-regarded executive director of the Amarillo Area Foundation. Stribling, who earned his bachelor's degree in general studies in 1988 from WTAMU, began his career as a lawyer in the Dallas-Fort Worth area before returning to Amarillo, where he practiced healthcare law at local firm Brown & Fortunato. In 2011, he was named the executive director of the Amarillo Area Foundation, where he "has been a central figure in supporting and reimagining education across the Texas Panhandle," said Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, president of Austin Community College, in a nomination letter. At AAF, Stribling has played a central role in the establishment of Harrington Academic Hall WTAMU Amarillo Center in downtown Amarillo; secured support and funding for Amarillo Independent School District's THRIVE scholarship program; and was at the helm when AAF launched The Panhandle Gives, the most successful ongoing fundraising efforts in the region's history, among many other initiatives.

A collaborative project between two critical components of **WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY's** research efforts is offering a permanent repository for vital regional history. **CORNETTE LIBRARY** and the **CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN WEST** are working together to flesh out the library's digital archive with photos, oral histories, maps and other articles that help tell the story of the region. "We are working to protect and preserve our region's history in a digital format so that anyone can find it," said **DR. ALEX HUNT**, CSAW director, Regents Professor of English and Vincent-Haley Professor of Western Studies. The partnership also includes Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, whose archives will store physical copies of the items. CSAW interns—funded through grants by such entities as Xcel Energy and the National Endowment of the Humanities—are cataloging items for preservation. Among them are oral histories for CSAW's ongoing **FORGOTTEN FRONTERA PROJECT**; histories of **BARREL AND INDIAN CREEK RANCH** and **BUFFALO LAKE**; and snapshots of the life of **MONTY RITCHIE**, the grandson of pivotal area pioneer Cornelia Adair. The digital archive also includes the map collection of area history teacher **J. MICHAEL HARTER**—colorful, hand-drawn renderings of the history and geography of the Llano Estacado.

Six community leaders have joined the **WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**. Each were formally voted onto the board at its recent meeting, joining 36 others. "The Foundation provides WT outstanding leadership and results in all things related to philanthropy," said **DR. TODD RASBERRY**, vice president for philanthropy and external relations and executive director of the WTAMU Foundation. New members include: **DEBBIE**



Debbie Farnum

FARNUM, serving as the representative of the WT Alumni Association: Farnum earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education from WT in 1971 and 1994 and was a longtime teacher. After leaving the classroom, she joined the meeting planning industry and worked for about a decade with the Texas Association of



Dr. Darryl Flusche

School Boards. **DR. DARRYL FLUSCHE**, superintendent of Canyon Independent School District: Flusche, a WT graduate, has 36 years of experience in public education and joined Canyon Independent School District as superintendent in July 2015. Prior to coming to Canyon ISD, he spent his career at Frenship ISD near Lubbock.

Flusche has experience as a teacher, principal, director of elementary education and assistant superintendent of curriculum. He earned a master's degree in education administration from Texas Tech University, completed his



Joseph Peterson Jr.

superintendent certification through Lubbock Christian University, and earned his doctorate in education at Texas Tech University. Flusche is actively involved in the community as a Rotarian and is a member of Canyon Noon Lions Club.

JOSEPH PETERSON JR., a financial adviser with Edward Jones: Peterson, a 2010 graduate of WT, has worked for Edward Jones for 10 years, earning his Certified Financial Planner certification in 2022. He has served on the board of directors for United Way of Amarillo and Canyon, Cal Farley's Boys Ranch, the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce and the Texas Panhandle Builders



Patrick Swindell

Association. **PATRICK SWINDELL**, an Amarillo attorney: Swindell is the owner of Swindell Law Firm, where his practice focuses on bankruptcy law and civil litigation. A 1977 WT graduate, he earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Texas Tech University in 1980. He is a member of the State Bar of Texas, the State Bar

Bankruptcy Section, the Amarillo Area Bar Association and the American Bankruptcy Institute. An Amarillo native, Swindell is chairman of the Board of Regents and Founder of Ascension Academy, a member of the Buffalo Club, past



Ben Weinheimer

president of the Board of Trustees of the Amarillo Opera and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Llano Cemetery. He and wife Roni are longtime supporters of the arts. **BEN WEINHEIMER**, president and CEO of Texas Cattle Feeders Association: Weinheimer joined TCFA in 1995, previously serving as regulatory manager from 1995

to 2005 and vice president from 2006 to 2021. An honors graduate of Texas A&M University, Weinheimer is active in several industry-related and civic organizations. **LIZZIE**

WARE WILLIAMS, director of Community Development at Amarillo National Bank: An Amarillo native, Williams graduated from Southern Methodist University. She coordinates ANB's financial education program and assists with the Ware Foundation. She founded the nonprofit Hands On Amarillo, which connects volunteers to nonprofits, and has been active on several nonprofit boards and committees.



Lizzie Ware Williams

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CHIP CHANDLER, who joined WT in 2020, is the new WTAMU Director of University Communications and Media Relations. Chandler, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Southwestern Oklahoma State University and has worked in area media outlets since 1996, previously served as Senior Communications Specialist.

In his role, Chandler assists the Associate Vice President for University Branding and Chief Marketing Officer in the development and implementation of the University's strategic communication and marketing plans. He also facilitates internal and external communication, including press releases and other media relations.



FIRSTBANK SOUTHWEST ("FBSW") announced the appointment of **SKYLAR GEIST** as Vice President, Commercial Lender at their Downtown Banking Center. Skylar, a dedicated and skilled professional with a strong connection to the community, has been with the bank for three years, specializing in

commercial credit and lending. Skylar attended West Texas A&M University where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance in 2021.

THE UNITED FAMILY is thrilled to open a **NEW MARKET STREET** in Amarillo at 8761 S. Coulter. At 80,000-square-foot, with over 300 employees, the new store is now the largest United in Amarillo; Store Director is **FERNANDO NORIEGA**. The store features a Pharmacy with Drive-Thru & Delivery, StreetSide Online Grocery Shopping, SMöK'D BBQ, Fresh Sushi, Hot Meal Bars, a Tap-House brewery, a Full-Service Floral Department, an Expansive Wine & Beer Selections and more.

MAXWELL'S PUMPKIN FARM, 12908 Bell St. is now open and offers 80 Acres of 30 Family attractions every Saturday and Sunday through November 3rd. The Giant Maze celebrating 75 years of "Peanuts" features Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Linus & The Great Pumpkin. Acres and acres of Sunflowers provide spectacular fall photo ops. Hayrides carry passengers to the Giant Maze, Pumpkin Patch and Sunflower Fields. Barnyard Ball, Green Acres, Rat Rollers, and Tube Swings top out over 30 Attractions. Fireworks will be part of the fun every Saturday in October. Fall Treats & Eats feature Brisket Sandwiches, Brisket Frito Pie, Turkey Legs, Hand-battered Corn Dogs and Chicken Baskets along with Funnel Cakes, Churros, Ice Cream Treats and more.

