

BUZZ

September 2024



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER (TTUHSC) SCHOOL OF MEDICINE officially named **BRIAN WEIS, M.D., PH.D.**, the regional dean in Amarillo. Weis joined the TTUHSC School of Medicine faculty in 2005 as an associate professor of internal medicine. He also

served as the residency program director and the internal medicine student clerkship director. In 2015, Weis joined Northwest Texas Healthcare System (NWTHS) as the chief medical officer until he returned to TTUHSC in 2023 as the interim regional dean. In addition to his leadership in academic medicine in the region, Weis continues to practice at the Northwest JO Wyatt Clinic and serves as NWTHS Chief of Medicine Services. He is the medical director for LIFESTAR, an air medical transport service, and serves as the president of Scouting America Golden Spread Council. Weis received his medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas in 1997 and remained there for his internal medicine residency.

THE TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER (TTUHSC) JERRY H. HODGE SCHOOL OF PHARMACY accepted the **2024 LAWRENCE C. WEAVER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD** from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). This honor is presented annually to one college or school of pharmacy demonstrating a major institutional commitment to addressing unmet community needs through education, practice and research. TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy Dean is **GRACE M. KUO, PHARM.D., PH.D.**

THOMAS ABBRUSCATO, PH.D., and **MIN KANG, PHARM.D.**, became the first recipients of the **DOUGLAS STOCCO RESEARCH CHAIR**, an endowment formerly known as the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center's (TTUHSC) Research Endowment. Abbruscato is a professor and chair in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy. Abbruscato's lab is currently investigating the effects of mixed tobacco product exposure on the blood-brain barrier, advancing their stroke-



Thomas Abbruscato, Douglas Stocco, Min Kang

brain drug discovery project related to testing small molecule activators of brain neurolysin and evaluating the effects of nicotine on the blood-brain barrier and cognition, memory and motor coordination. Kang is a professor of pediatrics in the TTUHSC School of Medicine and associate vice president for research. With the endowment, Kang said she intends to conduct cutting-edge research in the pediatric cancer area. During his 40-year tenure at TTUHSC, Douglas Stocco, Ph.D., served in many leadership roles including executive vice president for research and dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. In addition he received many awards from state and national organizations. Nearly 30 years ago, research conducted in Stocco's TTUHSC lab described the cloning, sequencing and naming of the Steroidogenic Acute Regulatory (StAR) protein. That research was essential in leading to the understanding of controlling steroid hormone production in steroidogenic cells.



The **TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS** approved the appointment of **VOLKER NEUGEBAUER, M.D., PH.D.**, from **THE TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER (TTUHSC) SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**, as a **GROVER E. MURRAY PROFESSOR**. The

Grover E. Murray Professorship is intended for faculty members who have attained national and international distinction in their fields for outstanding research, excellence in scholarship and creative achievement. Neugebauer, a University Distinguished Professor and chairman of the Department of Pharmacology, is the founding director of the Center of Excellence for Translational Neuroscience and Therapeutics and executive director and chief scientific officer of the Garrison Institute on Aging. In 2014, Neugebauer joined the TTUHSC School of Medicine, where he initiated collaborative basic science projects and studies in humans on mechanisms, biomarkers and interventions for pain, aging-related health issues, including mental health, dementias, Alzheimer's disease in particular and other disorders. The overall goal of Neugebauer's translational research is the better understanding of mechanisms of neurological and psychiatric disorders to improve brain health through innovative diagnostic and therapeutic strategies. Neugebauer is an internationally recognized expert in neuroscience. He obtained his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Würzburg, Germany. He received postgraduate training in physiology, pharmacology, neuroscience and neurology at the University of Würzburg and the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. Neugebauer practiced neurology before shifting his focus exclusively to translational research.



CAVINESS BEEF PACKERS CEO TERRY CAVINESS has been inducted into the **MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME**. After graduating from Texas Tech University, he returned home to work in the family business. His guidance and leadership over the past 55 years has laid a strong

foundation for the company. Due to their extensive

contributions to the meat industry, three individuals with close ties to Texas Tech and the Davis College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources were inducted to the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2023. The three inducted were Texas Tech-linked **MINDY BRASHEARS**, **TERRY CAVINESS** and **TOMMY WHEELER**. Mindy Brashears is Professor & Director/ Texas Tech International Center for Food Industry Excellence. Tommy Wheeler is Research Leader / USDA-ARS Meat Safety & Quality Research Unit, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center / Clay Center, Nebraska. He received his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics and master's degree in meat science from Texas Tech.



Local restaurateur **ROY BARA** of **LA FIESTA GRANDE RESTAURANTS** has been inducted into the **TEXAS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION HALL OF HONOR** at the Texas Restaurant Awards and Lone Star Bash this summer in San Antonio. This award is bestowed upon recipients by their peers for demonstrating more than 15 years of service and exemplary business ethics. The Association was hosting its 87th annual restaurant show that brought together more than 5,000 attendees from all over the world. The foodservice industry is now the largest employer in Texas with more than 56,000 restaurants in our state. The Texas Restaurant Association represents the state's \$106.8 billion foodservice industry, which encompasses more than 56,000 restaurant locations and a workforce of over 1.4 million employees.



NORTHWEST TEXAS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (NWTHS), announced the promotion of **CAROLYN HUDSON, MSN**, to Assistant Chief Nursing Officer. Hudson served as the Director of Nursing Operations with previous experience in the Intensive Care Unit, Surgical Recovery, Neonatal ICU and Emergency Department. She has been with NWTHS since 2004. In her new role Hudson will be responsible for the management of Nursing Services and Nursing Administration.



Born and raised in Amarillo, **MAX SHAW, DDS** has joined **DENTAL GROUP OF AMARILLO**. Dr. Shaw attended Amarillo High School and then West Texas A&M University. Dr. Shaw graduated college in 2019 and attended dental school at UT Health San Antonio School of Dentistry. He graduated in 2024 with honors in dental education.

Each year state agencies from the upper 26 counties in the Texas Panhandle are invited to select an employee or team of employees to receive a **TEXANS CARING FOR TEXANS AWARD**. For 2024, **THE TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER (TTUHSC) SCHOOL OF MEDICINE** honored **TODD BELL, M.D.**, and **THE TTUHSC SCHOOL OF NURSING** honored **DEBORAH CASIDA, EDS**. Bell, an associate professor, is trained in internal medicine

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Todd Bell

and pediatrics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Bell became the public health authority for the City of Amarillo Department of Public Health where his insight into infectious disease transmission was invaluable to the community; that same insight is currently being used today as the region monitors Avian Flu.



Deborah Casida

In his clinical practice at Texas Tech Physicians, Bell focuses on conditions of dysautonomia, rare conditions which affect the autonomic nervous system and result in severe symptoms related to loss of control of blood pressure, heart rate and vascular tone. Casida is an assistant professor and the Accelerated BSN site coordinator for the TTUHSC School of Nursing in Amarillo. She was recognized for her work supporting the Ag Safety Day program in Swisher County for more than 15 years. She has coordinated TTUHSC student and Emergency Nurses Association volunteers for the event-- one that has provided critical safety education to more than 7,600 kids in Tulia, Kress and Happy. The 2024 Texans Caring for Texans recipients were recognized Aug. 8 in a ceremony at West Texas A&M University. Other state agencies recognized included: **AMARILLO COLLEGE, CLARENDON COLLEGE, TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION AND TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE.**



EDUCATION CREDIT UNION (ECU) announce the addition of two professionals to its Senior Management Team. ECU proudly welcomes **MICHELLE WILSON** as the Senior Vice President of Human Resources and **TY COX** as the Chief Financial Officer. Michelle Wilson joins

ECU with an impressive background in education and human resources, bringing twenty-eight years of invaluable experience in the public school system and higher education. Her career spans various roles, including teacher, counselor, assistant principal, and central office administrator.

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Ty Cox brings to ECU a wealth of financial expertise, with over twenty-four years of experience in banking. His diverse career includes roles such as teller, credit analyst, Bank Secrecy Act officer, compliance officer, and commercial lender. Cox served as CFO at another local financial institution for ten years before joining ECU.

In addition, **EDUCATION CREDIT UNION (ECU)** announced the addition of three esteemed professionals to its Advisory Board: **TIM GLASS, BARBARA HOLEMAN, and SELENA FOGG.**



Tim Glass



Barbara Holeman



Selena Fogg

Glass joins the Advisory Board following his election as County Judge for Hansford County in 2023. Glass has an extensive background in law enforcement, having served as Hansford County Sheriff and Criminal Investigator for the 84th District Attorney. A graduate of the FBI National Academy (2007) and Oklahoma Panhandle State University (2016), Glass's diverse experience in public service will be invaluable to the board. Holeman brings her expertise from the technology and finance sectors. She is retired from the Canyon ISD Technology Department and has previously served as a Finance Industry Specialist with IBM for 12 years. Fogg joins the Advisory Board as the owner of Selena Fogg, CPA. Fogg who studied Public Accounting at West Texas A&M University, earned her Master's Degree and CPA designation in 2011.

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY researchers have acquired an essential new instrument that will enhance science education on campus and across the region. Thanks to a \$75,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, WT has purchased a state-of-the-art cold-stage instrument, which is used to study the solidification of liquids. "We want to use the instrument for hands-on laboratory activities demonstrating how liquids transition into solids," said **DR. SANJOY BHATTACHARIA**, assistant professor of mechanical engineering in **THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING**. "This process is essential to understand both material processing and ice formation in clouds. By taking part in the hands-on learning of experimentation, data analysis, scientific observation, technical writing and peer collaboration, students ultimately will be better educated

and better prepared for the workforce." Material processing is the designing, developing and producing of new materials for real-world applications.

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION awarded a \$331,268 Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant to support career training at **AMARILLO COLLEGE**. The grant will be used to purchase and install equipment to initially train 80 students as welders.

A state-of-the-art athletics complex and fulfillment of a long-held dream of faithful supporters has opened at West Texas A&M University. The fully complete **BAIN ATHLETIC COMPLEX**, located on Russell Long Boulevard west of Bain-Schaeffer Buffalo Stadium, opened capping off a nearly 15-year and \$12.5 million project. The complex was the dream of Dr. Barbara and the late Dr. Ray Bain, whose family is among WT's most generous supporters.



A new planned gift puts West Texas A&M University closer to establishing a \$2 million endowment for vocal scholarships. **DAVID WHATLEY**, a WT alumnus, veteran and retired businessowner, has made a \$325,000 gift to WT as part of his living trust to fund the David Whatley Vocal

Scholarship Endowment through the I Am WT- Leaving a Legacy program. Whatley earned a bachelor's degree in music education in 1959 and a master's of education in 1969, both from WT. Whatley also made a planned gift of \$325,000 to Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum and Panhandle-Plains Historical Society.

KIM MCPHERSON, owner and winemaker of **MCPHERSON CELLARS**, shared a special moment in his family's history – a moment that recognizes and celebrates the history of Texas wine and the Texas Wine Industry. Texas wine pioneer, **CLINT "DOC" MCPHERSON'S** original vineyard, **SAGMOR**



VINEYARD, located in Lubbock has received an "Historical Place" designation from the Texas Historical Commission, State of Texas. Sagmor Vineyard was planted in 1967 by two extraordinary men associated with pioneering the Texas wine industry: **CLINTON "DOC" MCPHERSON** and **ROBERT REED**, both professors at Texas

Tech University. Among the many stories associated, it was in their tiny 6 x 10 'barn' on the property where Lady Bird Johnson was served wine from Sagmor Vineyard – making worldwide headlines. Sagmor Vineyard was also where the first Sangiovese vine was planted in Texas. And it was at this special place where the research and work undertaken was documented in a 100-page plus account of practices, horticultural and geographic information that was submitted by Doc McPherson to the federal government seeking and receiving the federal designation of the High Plains AVA. *AW*

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