

Winter 2010

# UTEP Magazine: The University of Texas at El Paso

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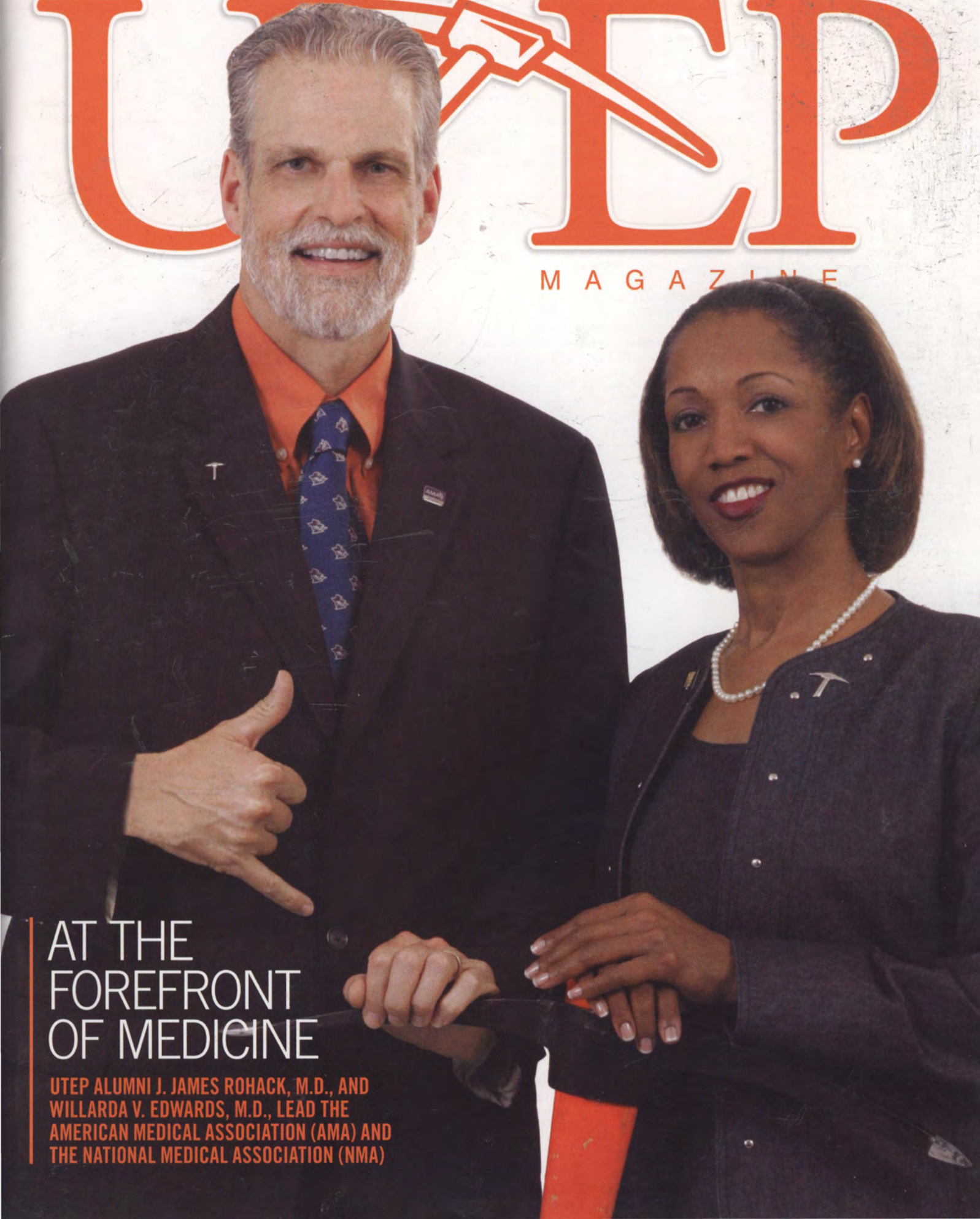
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# UTEP

MAGAZINE



## AT THE FOREFRONT OF MEDICINE

UTEP ALUMNI J. JAMES ROHACK, M.D., AND  
WILLARDA V. EDWARDS, M.D., LEAD THE  
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (AMA) AND  
THE NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (NMA)





# REMARKABLE PROGRESS LED BY ALUMNI, FACULTY ON TRACK TO TIER ONE

When UTEP opened its new Bioscience Research Building on a typically beautiful El Paso day in early September, among the guests on campus to celebrate this magnificent five-story, 140,000-square-foot home of the Border Biomedical Research Center (BBRC) were Dr. James Rohack, UTEP alumnus and current president of the American Medical Association, and Dr. Willarda Edwards, UTEP alumna and president of the National Medical Association.

The return to campus of such accomplished alumni for this momentous occasion—an occasion made all the more memorable by its relevance to the professions of service to which both noted physicians have dedicated their talents—adds another entry to a growing list of affirmations of UTEP's progress in becoming the institution envisioned by so many dedicated faculty, administrators and staff.

As we celebrated UTEP's dynamic trajectory toward Tier One status on Sept. 3, another exceptional alumnus orbited Earth, a specialist on NASA's mission STS-128 aboard the International Space Station and a symbol of UTEP's boundless potential and the grasp of each Miner willing to take on its challenge. Danny Olivas, self-described "average kid from El Paso," accepted the challenge and walked in space.

As this issue of *UTEP Magazine* attests, UTEP's fast-growing bioscience research community accepts big challenges as well. We're putting grant money to work on real-world initiatives toward understanding cancer and other diseases, and the extraordinary scientists in the BBRC are preparing a new generation of investigators dedicated to the improvement of quality of life. This issue features several such studies utilizing emerging scientific applications of pharmacogenomic therapies and diagnostics. Among these are projects targeting leukemias and lymphomas, colorectal cancers and hormone-resistant cancers such as cancer of the prostate,

as well as a promising inquiry into the cell-division mechanisms that play a role in cancer-cell growth. UTEP's research teams, including many bright, talented students led by their accomplished mentors, are working at the vanguard of scientific achievement.

As we work diligently to reach and exceed the research funding levels that will secure UTEP's future as a Tier One institution,

our success will be amplified by state matching funds under the newly enacted Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP), which matches the private research-designated gifts that have already begun to multiply in response to the state's affirmation of our future potential. For their invaluable support, we thank our generous friends and donors.

UTEP's remarkable progress rests on the sustained efforts of so many who believe in our dual mission of providing accessible education to this border region's future leaders while achieving world-class excellence in research and academic inquiry. This University will remain an institution able to boost a first-generation college student to unimagined achievement, to broaden the cultural outlook of a talented high achiever, and to launch an "average kid" who likes to tinker with machines to unlimited heights. James Rohack, Willarda Edwards, Danny Olivas and many thousands of alumni and future graduates are both beneficiaries and creators of the greatness that is fostered every day on The University of Texas at El Paso campus.



UTEP President Diana Natalicio, center, is flanked by Superintendent Nicho Peña, left, and Assistant Superintendent Dusty Gallas of Vaughn Construction at the "topping out" ceremony for the new College of Health Sciences/School of Nursing Building in December 2009.

*Diana Natalicio*  
UTEP PRESIDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
PRESIDENT > DIANA NATALICIO

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The Economist

Reprinted from The Economist November 7th 2009

## Closing the gap

Improving performance is linked in part to immigration policy

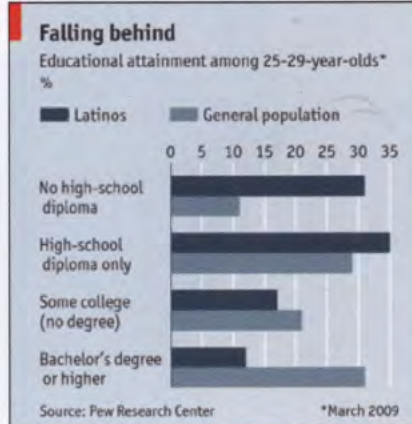
THE University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) is one of the most binational of America's big universities. Some 90% of its students come from the borderplex—the Texan city of El Paso and its much larger sister-city, Ciudad Juárez, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. More than 70% of its students are Mexican or Mexican-American.

students are more likely to drop out of high school than Anglos, and those who finish are less likely to go on to college. Those who go are more likely to enroll in two-year community colleges, which have lower rates of completion than four-year universities. In 2007, according to the National Centre for Education Statistics, only 7.5% of bachelor's degrees were awarded to Hispanic students, even though Latinos made up about 15% of the American population that year.

Most Latino college students are native-born Americans, but the Mexican-born students have a hard time, and youngsters without the right documents have the hardest time of all. Stella Flores, of Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, argues that the best thing that can be done at the state level is to adopt policies that allow all of a state's high-school students to pay fees at its public universities at the discounted rate that normally applies to people from that state, regardless of their legal status.

Such policies already exist in a number of states, including California and Texas, where the Latino population is so large that few like the idea of denying a proper education to crowds of undocumented youngsters. A federal bill called the DREAM Act would expand that approach and provide some undocumented students with a path to citizenship, but it is hardly at the top of the long to-do list now facing Congress. Separately, measures are afoot to expand federal financial aid to students, and over the summer President Barack Obama announced that the federal government is to put about \$12 billion into community colleges.

In the meantime, Deborah Santiago of Excelencia in Education, a non-profit research group, says that some good steps are free. For example, El Camino College in California holds pronunciation classes for staff who might otherwise struggle with Hispanic names. When students are crossing the stage to get their diplomas, they should not have their names butchered in front of the gathered family and friends. ■



And that, in turn, means that the El Paso campus is rather different from the University of Texas's flagship campus in Austin. More than half of UTEP students are among the first in their families to go to college, and roughly a third come from families with incomes below \$20,000 a year. Diana Natalicio, UTEP's president, says that for many of her students trouble at work, or an unexpected expense, can derail a whole year of college. UTEP tries to help, offering after-hours advice and instalment plans for tuition fees. Such measures have helped it to become one of the country's leading sources of degrees for Hispanic students.

UTEP's experience provides pointers for college administrators elsewhere, who are looking for ways to close the gap in achievement between Hispanic and "Anglo" students. According to a report in October from the Pew Hispanic Centre, 89% of Latino high-school students say that a college degree is important, but only 48% plan to go to university themselves. Hispanic

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"Closing the Gap," Nov. 7-13, 2009



# THE WAIT IS OVER

## UTEP'S NEW STUDENT HEALTH CENTER OPENS



The new facility boasts four examination rooms, each one designed to provide practical experience for students pursuing medical careers.

UTEP's new Student Health Center is another progressive move toward a healthier lifestyle and academic success among University students, UTEP President Diana Natalicio said during the center's ribbon-cutting ceremony on Jan. 25.

Elected state officials and University staff, students, faculty and administrators attended the event inside Union Building East that included tours of the facility and healthy refreshments.

Natalicio called the center, with its distance-learning classroom, additional health care equipment, therapies and treatments, along with opportunities for health-related research, another cog in UTEP's efforts to become a Tier One (national research) university.

"Wellness, as we all know, enhances achievement," she said.

A few minutes later, she was among a group, including State Rep. Dan Branch, R-Dallas, chairman of the House committee on higher education, that together cut the ribbons extending from an orange and white bow outside the center's front door.

The group, which included members of the El Paso contingent of state representatives, was among the first to tour the center with Amalia Dudzienski, center director. She de-



UTEP President Diana Natalicio, center, cuts the ceremonial ribbon to open the new Student Health Center with, from left, State Reps. Dan Branch, Joe Moody, Marissa Marquez and Norma Chavez along with UTEP Vice President for Student Affairs Richard Padilla and Kathleen Curtis, dean of the College of Health Sciences.



Particia Chon, Pharm.D., prepares prescriptions for a customer in the pharmacy, a feature of the new center that will make visits more convenient for students, staff and faculty.

scribed the purpose of each room and special piece of equipment.

The center's spacious hallways soon filled with UTEP family who asked questions of the 14 staff members, including a nutritionist and therapists.

Kathleen Curtis, Ph.D., dean of the College of Health Sciences, proudly emphasized the center's multifaceted potential to serve students either as patients or as a practical arm to honing their skills.

For example, students from the College of Health Sciences will have opportunities to gain practical experience through the center, and pharmacy students will serve part of their clinical rotations there.

"This will be the cornerstone of the University's wellness program," Curtis said.

The center's size—6,512 square feet—accessibility and capabilities spoke volumes to Branch, author of last year's House Bill 51, which will help UTEP and six other state universities on their way to becoming Tier One institutions. He said it showed the University's commitment to its students, including those who think they are "invincible."

University officials dedicated \$841,250 to renovate an area formerly used by the UTEP Bookstore for storage to house the center. Construction began last July.

Other benefits of the new, expanded center include more patient privacy, a larger pharmacy and more storage space for medications and medical records. There also will be dedicated space for physical and occupational therapy services. ❏





UTEP faculty members who earned Outstanding Teaching Awards this year are, L-R: (back row) Juan Noveron, Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry; Rockie Pederson, Ph.D., clinical associate professor of kinesiology; William Robertson, Ph.D., assistant professor of teacher education; Mary Stevens, senior lecturer, accounting; Steven Varela, lecturer, English; (front row) James Becvar, Ph.D., professor of chemistry; Beth Brunk-Chavez, Ph.D., associate professor of English; Art Duval, Ph.D., professor of mathematical sciences; and Patricia Nava, Ph.D., professor of electrical and computer engineering. They are pictured with UTEP President Diana Natalicio, standing far right.

## REGENTS RECOGNIZE INNOVATIVE UTEP FACULTY

Faculty members from The University of Texas at El Paso received high marks from The University of Texas System Board of Regents.

**N**ine UTEP faculty members were presented with the Board of Regents' Outstanding Teaching Awards recognizing their performance, innovative teaching techniques and commitment to teaching at the undergraduate level.

UTEP earned almost 25 percent of the 38 awards given to instructors at eight universities. The Board of Regents honored the recipients in August 2009 with a recognition dinner in Austin, Texas.

The winners received an award of \$30,000 for tenured faculty, \$25,000 for tenure-track faculty and \$15,000 for contingent faculty.

The tenure awards were bestowed upon James Becvar, Ph.D., professor of chemistry; Art Duval, Ph.D., professor of mathematical sciences; and Patricia Nava, Ph.D., professor of electrical and computer engineering.

The tenure-track winners were Beth Brunk-Chavez, Ph.D., asso-

ciate professor of English; Juan Noveron, Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry; and William Robertson, Ph.D., assistant professor of teacher education.

The contingent faculty honorees were Mary Stevens, senior lecturer, accounting; Steven Varela, lecturer, English; and Rockie Pederson, Ph.D., clinical associate professor of kinesiology.

"It underscores our commitment to excellence in both teaching and research, and that is the hallmark of a great research university," said Richard Jarvis, Ph.D., UTEP provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Candidates were nominated at the campus level, then evaluated on several criteria, including student and peer evaluations, teaching portfolio and student learning outcomes. ▣



# THIS IS ROCKET SCIENCE

## NASA AWARDS \$5 MILLION TO DEVELOP SPACE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The University of Texas at El Paso has been awarded a five-year, \$5 million grant by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to create a Center for Space Exploration Technology Research.

UTEP was one of six universities selected from 35 applicants to the NASA Group 5 University Research Center award program, which fosters new aerospace science and technology concepts with a goal of increasing the number of underrepresented minorities who receive degrees in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D., an expert on aerospace propulsion and space system design, will direct the facility.

The center will work closely with other NASA research facilities, including Johnson Space Center in Houston and the White Sands Test Facility in Las Cruces, N.M., on environmentally friendly propulsion technologies and the use of natural resources on other planets and the moon to create spacecraft fuel and other materials. UTEP faculty from the College of Engineering and the Department of Geological Sciences will collaborate on the research.

"With the additional growth of the aerospace industry in southwestern Texas, as well as in southeastern New Mexico, UTEP's research capacity is expanding to meet the needs of this region," Choudhuri said. ▣

Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D.



BY DAVID PEREGRINO

# Voyage of Discovery

UTEP GRAD JOHN "DANNY"  
OLIVAS' SECOND SPACE  
MISSION IS A SUCCESS

**OLIVAS HUMBLY DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS "JUST A MECHANIC IN SPACE."** So the University of Texas at El Paso graduate and NASA astronaut John "Danny" Olivas packed his toolbox and rocketed to the stars aboard shuttle Discovery last August, on a mission to deliver new science experiments and a well-known treadmill to the International Space Station (ISS).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NASA





**O**livas and his crewmates returned to Earth on Sept. 11, 2009 after a successful 14-day journey that took them nearly 6 million miles around the planet.

Mission STS-128 was Olivas' second trip into space. The 1989 UTEP mechanical engineering graduate made his inaugural flight in 2007 aboard Atlantis, earning a reputation as a skilled space-walker when he made an important repair to the shuttle's exterior.

NASA's space shuttles are scheduled to be retired in 2010, and Olivas is aware that he may not get the chance to walk in space again. But that thought wasn't on his mind when he stepped out of the airlock.

"(It is) an honor and a privilege to be up here to support our country and to support this agency doing this kind of job," Olivas said during an interview aboard the space station. "I have no regrets and I'm looking forward to what's next."

During his spacewalks with crewmates Nicole Stott and Christer Fuglesang, Olivas helped install on the station a new ammonia tank, which at 1,800 pounds, was the most massive object ever handled by astronauts during the assembly of the ISS.

The Discovery astronauts also delivered several experiments to the station involving both materials science and life science. The ISS crew will study the behavior of metals,

glasses, crystals and ceramics in low gravity. A new laboratory freezer brought up by the shuttle crew also will help support experiments by preserving samples of blood, saliva and microbial and plant samples for later return and analysis on Earth.

Also delivered to the ISS was the Combined Operational Load-Bearing External Resistance Treadmill, or COLBERT, named after comedian Stephen Colbert, who hosts "The Colbert Report" on Comedy Central.

Olivas said being a veteran shuttle astronaut helped make things go smoothly on this mission.

"I knew a lot about the living situation up here and how things were conducted on the space station," Olivas said. "Shuttle missions are very, very busy missions, very much like a sprint, whereas the (mission) on the space station is more like a marathon. You need to understand that kind of stuff if you want to try to integrate the two crews."

On the rare occasions that the crew had some time off, Olivas said he took the time to enjoy the views of space and Earth from the station.

When it came time for his spacewalks, however, he stayed focused on the task at hand.

"We had such a strong team, with Nicole Stott and Christer Fuglesang at my side," Olivas said. "We conducted three safe and successful EVAs (Extra Vehicular Activities) and hopefully left the station in a better posture for future missions." ☑



**Top:** Olivas playfully flexes his muscles during STS-128's second spacewalk. He and astronaut Christer Fuglesang installed a new ammonia tank on the space station.

**Left:** The STS-128 and International Space Station Expedition 20 crew members: Front row, from left in red are astronauts Rick Sturckow, Jose Hernandez and Patrick Forrester; behind them in red are astronauts Kevin Ford, John "Danny" Olivas and European Space Agency astronaut Christer Fuglesang; at bottom left is Tim Kopra; surrounding the Discovery crew, in clockwise fashion, are astronaut Nicole Stott, Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk, cosmonaut Roman Romanenko, European Space Agency astronaut Frank De Winne, cosmonaut Gennady Padalka and astronaut Michael Barratt.

## LETTERS TO SPACE

**BHUTANESE SCHOOL CHILDREN WROTE TO DANNY OLIVAS BEFORE HIS LAUNCH IN AUGUST. HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR LETTERS:**

Dear Sir John Danny Olivas, I am from Bhutan, wishing you safe journey into the international space. We hope that your dreams come true without any difficulty. We also pray that you will not face any kind of obstacles in reaching your destination and hope that you will come to light as a popular person in the future in this world. Good luck.  
Thanks.  
Kencho Wangdi

Dear Sir John Danny Olivas, It is amazing and wonderful to know that, when someone could not entirely roam his or her own country, sir is leaving this Earth as a whole and putting forward action to wider investigate the further space, which is very happy to know for us, especially the students the future controllers of the universe, therefore I would like to wish sir a very happy journey and pray for a safe journey. We are all very eager to learn the information sir would bring very soon. Therefore I would like to submit all my luck and wishes to sir.  
Indra Bahadur and Sanga Phuntsho

Dear Dr. Danny Olivas, I on behalf of my country, I pray and wish you a safe and successful mission to space to snatch victory from the hands of adversity. I pray with great hope to achieve your aim and meet with adventurous discoveries; so that you will again play great role in transform-


ing the human life beyond all imagination and change the face of the Earth with its bright glow in the future.  
Sonam Jamtsho

Have a safe journey as you go far away from the Earth, Give true and new discoveries a birth, I will pray for you and your courage, Though we have no bondage to each other, We are one as earthlings, So believe in yourself and do what you've got to do and make us proud.  
Abhinaya Chhetri

Hello Danny Olivas, I am Chime Dorje from Mongar who is very interested to learn science. I want to become in the future like you. The message that I want to give is safe journey when you are moving towards space. Come back with good knowledge. Come back as soon as possible.  
Chime Dorje

Hi! Sir Danny, I am very happy for your achievement. You are one of the inspirations to all the youths of the world. Safe journey to space. Hope you will share your experience with us. Have a wonderful flight to space and we will remember you in our prayers.  
Your followers from Bhutan,  
Yeshoda Bajgai

TO READ MORE LETTERS FROM BHUTAN VISIT:

 [UTEP.EDU/DANNYOLIVAS](http://UTEP.EDU/DANNYOLIVAS)



Olivas carried Bhutan's national flag into space in recognition of the country's celebration of the "Year of Science and Technology."

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**Ranked #3 in the Nation!**  
by *Hispanic Business Magazine*

**COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING**  
2009 Best Graduate Engineering Schools for Hispanics

[mba.utep.edu](http://mba.utep.edu)





# COLLEGE OF BUSINESS OPENS

In its first expansion in more than 25 years, The University of Texas at El Paso's College of Business Administration recently established a downtown location for several of its Master of Business Administration programs.

BY JENN CRAWFORD

**T**he college completed the first phase of the Graduate Business Center in the Chase Bank building in downtown El Paso in October 2009. The second phase was completed in early 2010.

The new center creates classrooms for existing programs and space for new MBA programs, provides a learning environment appropriate for managers and executives, contributes to the revitalization of downtown El Paso and advances regional access to the college's graduate programs.

"We are grateful to UTEP's leadership for recognizing the growth and success of our MBA programs with the establishment of our Graduate Business Center," said College of Business Administration Dean Robert Nachtmann. "The mission of the Graduate Business Center is to provide a state-of-the-art physical environment for our students and faculty, where alternative MBA program formats will serve the career advancement needs of our students and where innovative business education programs will support corporate enterprise in the region. The near and long-term growth of business and of the College of Business Administration is now merged in the Graduate Business Center."

The Graduate Business Center occupies almost 12,000 square feet on the first and fifth floors of the Chase building at Mesa and Main streets. The building houses three MBA programs and several UTEP research centers: the Center for Hispanic Entrepreneurship, the Border Region Modeling Project, and the Centers for Entrepreneurial Development, Advancement, Research and Support. It also can accommodate the proposed Center for Hispanic Marketing.

The first classes started in the building in October

when about 70 students from the Accelerated MBA program moved into the first floor classrooms.

For Erica Mejia, a student in UTEP's Accelerated MBA program, the new location offered benefits besides accessibility from her downtown job.

"It puts us in a business environment. We might get the opportunity to network," she said.

"It's centrally located and easily accessible," added Danny Aguilera, another AMBA student. "You don't have to park and then walk to campus."

The new location offers convenient parking and can accommodate up to 120 masters students and their professors.

"The investment in this facility can be attributed to the wonderfully motivated graduate students that have, and will, participate in our academic programs and the dedicated effort of the college's faculty and staff in delivering quality graduate business programs to the El Paso community," commented Steve Johnson, the college's associate dean for academic affairs. "Without the effective collaboration of these groups—students, faculty and staff—and Dean Nachtmann's vision, this building would still be an empty shell."

The move also allows the college to expand its MBA programs. In January, the College of Business Administration launched an 18-month Executive MBA program for experienced managers. The full-time International MBA program is set to start in the fall of 2010.

"The Executive and International MBA Programs will allow us to offer graduate business education to professionals at all stages of their careers," said Laura Uribarri, director of UTEP's MBA programs. "We anticipate that these programs will be as successful as our Accelerated and Flexible MBA programs are today." ☞



College of Business Administration  
Dean Robert Nachtmann, D.B.A.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

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**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**  
2009 Best Graduate Business Schools for Hispanics

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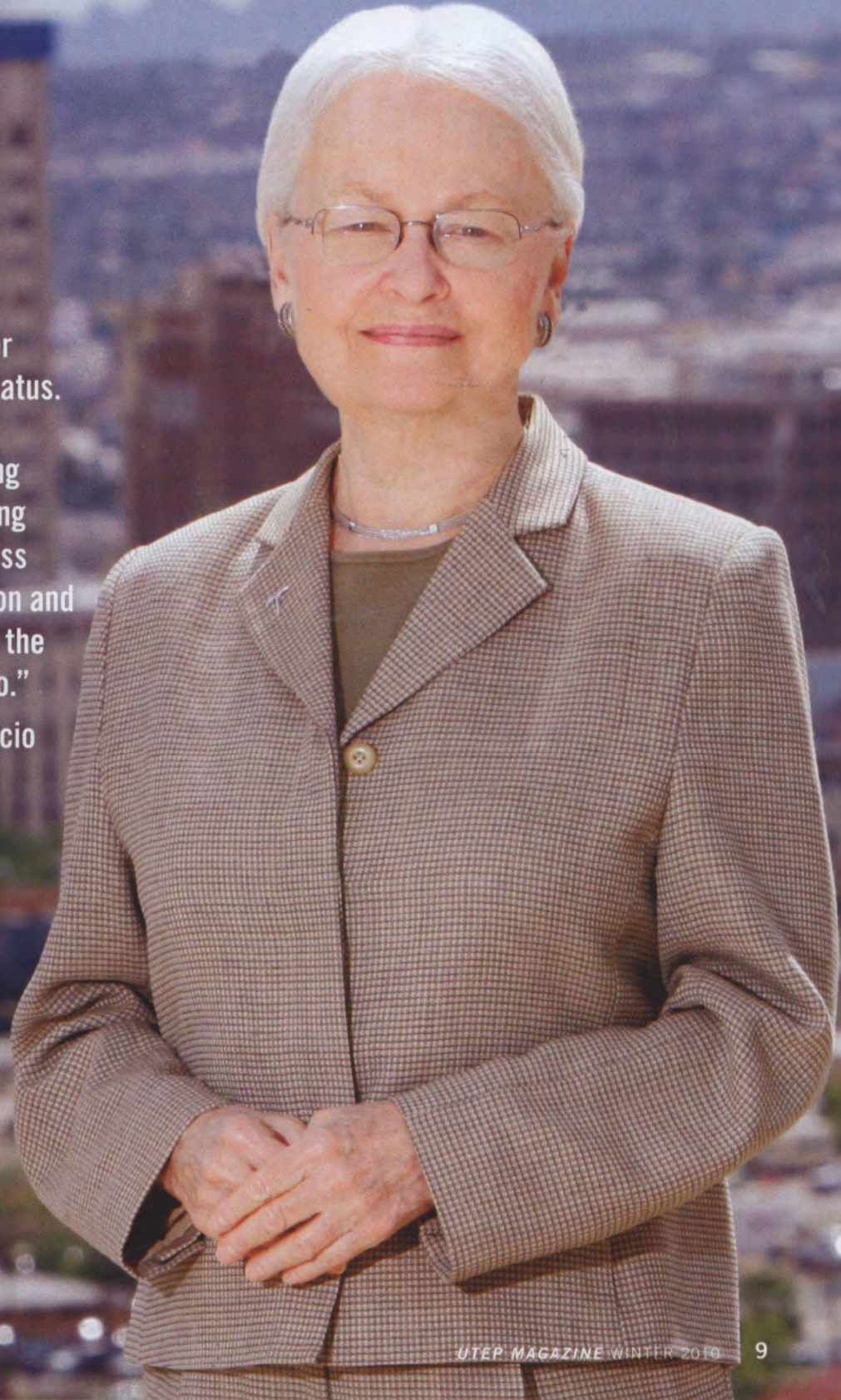




# ADMINISTRATION DOWNTOWN LOCATION

“The expansion of the College of Business Administration is another step on UTEP’s path to Tier One status. By moving our graduate business programs downtown and expanding our MBA offerings, we are providing better access to advanced business degrees for residents of this region and beyond, as well as contributing to the revitalization of downtown El Paso.”

~ UTEP President Diana Natalicio





# WELCOME TO UTEP



**José Reyes Ferriz**

Juárez Municipal President

UTEP, in conjunction with prominent community leaders, hosted "The Global Public Policy Forum on the U.S. War on Drugs" on Sept. 21 and 22, 2009. The conference united policy experts and leading scholars from the United States and Mexico to analyze past policies and consider new options. Notable speakers included Juárez Municipal President José Reyes Ferriz; Sigrid Arzt, former national security advisor to Mexican President Felipe Calderón; Sergio Fajardo Valderrama, Ph.D., former mayor of Medellín, Colombia; and El Paso Mayor John Cook.



**Sidney McNairy**

Director of the Research Infrastructure Division of the National Center for Research Resources at the NIH

Several distinguished guests were in attendance at the grand opening of UTEP's Bioscience Research Building on Sept. 3, 2009, including Sidney McNairy, Ph.D., D.Sc., of the National Center for Research Resources at the National Institutes of Health. McNairy was the keynote speaker for a panel on Hispanic and border health issues titled "Investments in Minority-Institution Capacity-Building." He is well known for his commitment to enhancing the nation's biomedical research capacity, especially at institutions that serve large numbers of Hispanic and black students.



**Janet Napolitano**

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary

For two days in August 2009, The University of Texas at El Paso became the center for passionate and illuminating discussions on border security issues, with topics ranging from drug violence to long lines at ports of entry. The talks were part of the sixth annual Border Security Conference at UTEP, held Aug. 10 and 11. Speakers included U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy R. Gil Kerlikowske and U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes.



**Larry Palmer**

President of the Inter-American Foundation

Larry Palmer, president of the Inter-American Foundation and former U.S. ambassador to Honduras, spoke Oct. 8, 2009, at the opening reception for *Picturing Grassroots Development: An Exhibit in Celebration of the Inter-American Foundation's 40th Anniversary* at the Centennial Museum. The exhibit included more than 30 photographs depicting the successes of communities throughout Latin American and the Caribbean that have partnered with the foundation to assist those living in poverty.



**Carlos Pascual**

U.S. Ambassador to Mexico

As part of his first trip to Juárez after being confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico in August, Carlos Pascual stopped at UTEP on Oct. 9, 2009, to talk about border issues. Pascual, who spent 23 years working for the United States Department of State, the National Security Council and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) before his appointment as ambassador, spoke about how to achieve security at the border and promote greater competitiveness and interaction between the United States and Mexico.



**Héctor Marcos Timerman**

Argentinian Ambassador to the U.S.

Héctor Marcos Timerman, ambassador of the Argentine Republic to the United States, visited UTEP on Aug. 27, 2009, in conjunction with *The Disappeared* exhibition. The exhibit, which spanned several venues at UTEP, included works inspired by the disappearance of resistance fighters, political activists and their families and friends who were kidnapped, tortured and killed by military juntas in South America. Timerman, a Buenos Aires native and human rights lecturer who was exiled in the United States from 1978 to 1984, shared his personal experiences.





## •• Sam Donaldson

Media icon and UTEP alumnus Sam Donaldson made a special visit to UTEP on Nov. 2, 2009, to share how UTEP is addressing changes in the news industry. Donaldson, former chief White House correspondent and World News Sunday anchor for ABC News, announced the University's new Bachelor of Arts degree in Multimedia Journalism and talked about how technological advances had changed journalism during his career.

"You can't do it the old ways," Donaldson told an audience of about 100. "You can't go and take video and television or print, and then say I'm educated in the business that I'd like to pursue. You have to have the whole range.

"This degree will enable you, and this University, to be in the forefront of looking at all these different platforms," he added. "You will be prepared when you graduate to look for a job."

Donaldson also spoke via webcast with student journalists from Borderzine.com, a UTEP-based online magazine that publishes the work of students around the country. ▣

Sam Donaldson, ABC News reporter, anchor and UTEP alumnus



# UTEP SELECTED FOR DOE RESEARCH

PROJECTS FOCUS ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING FOSSIL FUEL EMISSIONS

The Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded the College of Engineering nearly \$1.3 million in grants for research that could benefit the environment by improving efficiency of engines and creating technologies for detecting, capturing and storing carbon emissions.

Engineering Dean Richard T. Schoephoerster, Ph.D., said the grants reflect the college's strengths in energy research.

"We expect more and more of these kinds of opportunities to come our way, as the United States and the rest of the world look for ways to reduce fossil fuel emissions while exploring alternative energy sources and technologies," Schoephoerster said. "An additional benefit to these programs is that they provide outstanding training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students that will help add to a skilled workforce in these fields."

Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering Chintalapalle V. Ramana, Ph.D., and Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D., will investigate improved materials for thermal barrier coatings, which help protect engine components and improve the efficiency of engines by allowing them to operate at higher temperatures. Ramana will develop nanostructured (submicroscopic) coatings for hydrogen turbines that have improved resistance to heat and heat-related corrosion, as well as nanostructured sensors designed to detect low levels of toxic hydrogen sulfide gas in advanced power systems.

The research is supported by a \$491,081 award from the DOE's University Turbine Systems Research (UTSR) Program.

The DOE also awarded \$200,000 to support a project for which Ramana will develop nanostructured sensors designed to detect low levels of toxic hydrogen sulfide gas in advanced power systems.

Two other studies will explore technologies that hold promise for protecting the environment by capturing and storing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a fossil-fuel emission. Choudhuri, director of UTEP's Combustion and Propulsion Research Laboratory, will lead research on the combustion of gaseous fuels with nearly pure oxygen instead of air. Known as oxyfuel combustion, the technology may help significantly lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from coal-fired power plants. Burning coal in oxygen rather than air produces mainly water vapor and CO<sub>2</sub>, making the CO<sub>2</sub> easier to capture for transport and storage. This research is supported by a \$299,991 DOE grant.

The second project, directed by Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering Vinod Kumar, Ph.D., will use computational analysis to study the effectiveness of storing captured CO<sub>2</sub> in coal seams, which are unmineable layers of coal below ground. UTEP researchers will collaborate with experts from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Shell Oil Company on this investigation, which is funded by a DOE award of \$288,861. 📧



Chintalapalle V. Ramana, Ph.D.



Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D.



Vinod Kumar, Ph.D.



## ASSISTANT DEAN NAMED VISIONARY LEADER



Leticia Paez

Assistant Dean Leticia Paez of The University of Texas at El Paso's College of Health Sciences has been honored as a Visionary Leader by Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande for her dedication and commitment to the community.

Paez, who specializes in community affairs, was recognized for 10 years of volunteer service with the organization.

Workforce Solutions Upper Rio Grande is a workforce development board focused on creating opportunities in education, employment and economic development.

"The community effort and collaborative spirit, not to mention the fabulous staff that makes all the work seem so effortless in helping those most in need of employment and job skills" make her efforts worthwhile, Paez said.

Selected for the award by the staff and board members of Workforce Solutions, she was chosen for the time, encouragement and expertise she has offered to those seeking employment assistance and job skill development. ☞



## GARDEA-TORRESDEY RECEIVES TOP SACNAS AWARD

**Above:** Jorge Gardea-Torresdey, Ph.D., and postdoctoral researcher Martha Laura López-Moreno, Ph.D.

Jorge Gardea-Torresdey, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Chemistry, was honored with the 2009 Distinguished Scientist Award by SACNAS, the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science.

SACNAS recognized Gardea-Torresdey for his research in phytoremediation, the use of plants to clear polluted soil and water of toxic elements such as lead and arsenic. Gardea-Torresdey also was recognized for his efforts to promote diversity in the sciences. While at UTEP, he has been faculty advisor to 18 students who have earned their Ph.D.s, 15 of whom are Hispanic.

"This is a very special honor for me," said Gardea-Torresdey, who received the award at the SACNAS national conference in October 2009.

Gardea-Torresdey's scientific contributions have

earned him worldwide recognition as an expert in environmental chemistry. He serves as an editor of the *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, a leading publication in the field of civil and environmental engineering.

Gardea-Torresdey also is directing research on the environmental impact of nanomaterials—micro-sized particles that are increasingly being used in consumer products such as cosmetics, clothing and electronics. He is the principal investigator for UTEP's work with the Centers for the Environmental Implications of Nanotechnology, a \$38 million research initiative sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Environmental Protection Agency. ☞



## UTEP PROFESSOR HONORED FOR CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT WORK

Anthony P. Salvatore, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at The University of Texas at El Paso's College of Health Sciences, was honored by the Texas Education Agency-Region 19 for his contribution to the health and wellness of El Paso-area students through services offered by the UTEP Concussion Management Clinic.

As director of the clinic, Salvatore and his team of graduate students have led efforts to protect student athletes throughout the city through the innovative ImPACT concussion management program.

"Concussions are serious injuries, and if athletes return to play before they have recovered from a concussion and get hit a second time, they might develop cognitive problems that interfere with their academic achievement and social development," Salvatore said.

The clinic has screened more than 500 athletes, from middle school to university level, during the three years it has been in operation, Salvatore said. His team conducts a baseline assessment of each athlete that provides valuable information for a concussion management and recovery plan in case an athlete is injured.

Salvatore, a professor of speech-language pathology, also received certificates of recognition from the City of El Paso, State Sen. Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso) and U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-Texas). 📧



Anthony P. Salvatore, Ph.D.



Irene Chavez



Gabriel Gaytán



Elvia Hernandez



Ray Hernando



Paul Moreno



Tita Yanar

## LOCAL LEADERS AND UTEP GRADS HONORED

Kindness and compassion have long arms, reaching out to embrace every segment of the community, including hospitals, schools and businesses.

Nobody knows that better than the sponsors of the Ronald McDonald Hispanos Triunfadores Awards ceremony, which recently recognized six members of the community, all of whom are UTEP graduates.

The six were honored in October 2009 not only for their success in their fields but also for their dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the Paso del Norte region.

The honorees were Irene Chavez, the CEO of El Paso Specialty Hospital; artist Gabriel Gaytán; LULAC official and former City Council member Elvia Hernandez; Ray

Hernando, who runs a local truck brokerage firm, RHO Logistics Inc.; former state Rep. Paul Moreno; and Tita Yanar, who heads the Upward Bound program for the University.

Launched 12 years ago, the awards were designed to honor local residents who achieved success in their chosen fields and through their community work.

"The whole idea was to honor people who could serve as inspirations to our youth," local McDonald's representative Joe Lopez, who received a bachelor's degree in business from UTEP, said. "These are individuals who have succeeded in their own business and worked hard to give back. Youth look at them and say, 'I can do it, too.'" 📧

## Faculty Must-Reads

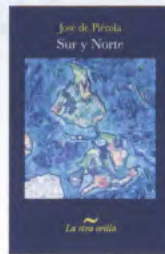
The Collections and Bibliographic Services department of the UTEP Library features numerous new titles by faculty, including:



**Drug War Zone:** Frontline Dispatches from the Streets of El Paso and Juárez by Howard Campbell, Ph.D., professor, anthropology



**Last Night I Sang to the Monster** by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, professor, creative writing



**Sur y Norte** by José de Piñola, Ph.D., assistant professor, creative writing



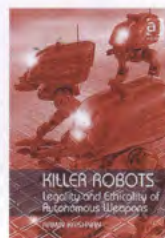
**Public Speaking:** Concepts and Skills for a Diverse Society edited by Sherry Lewis, lecturer, communication



**Guide to Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Legumes, and Spices** by Armando Gonzalez-Stuart, Ph.D., research assistant professor, UTEP/UT Austin Cooperative Pharmacy Program



**Pop Culture with a Purpose:** Edutainment Media for Social Change by Arvind Singhal, Ph.D., professor, communication, and Virginia Lacayo



**Killer Robots:** Legality and Ethicality of Autonomous Weapons by Armin Krishnan, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor of security studies



**Human Rights along the U.S.-Mexico Border:** Gendered Violence and Insecurity co-edited by Kathleen Staudt, Ph.D., professor, political science; Tony Payan, Ph.D., associate professor, political science; Z. Anthony Kruszewski, Ph.D., professor, political science.



# When Science and Fun Collide



**M**ore than 3,500 eighth grade students from El Paso watched skateboarders and BMX racers catch some air as they demonstrated basic scientific theories at the GEAR UP National Day Sept. 17, 2009, in the Don Haskins Center. The Action Science Team, including UTEP's Bill "Dr. Skateboard" Robertson, Ph.D., assistant professor of teacher education, used high-flying maneuvers to demonstrate physical science concepts such as the relationship between acceleration and velocity. Nick Happel (pictured above), a member of the Action Science Demo Team, demonstrates a "no-handed back flip" which shows the physics concepts of center of gravity and the moment of inertia. Robertson's goal was to get the students to explore the scientific principles that were demonstrated by members of Dr. Skateboard's Action Science team. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a five-year program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It was developed to expand educational opportunities and to assist students in becoming college eligible and then academically successful in higher education. ❏



Bill "Dr. Skateboard" Robertson, Ph.D.



# STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR EFFORTS TO HELP HOMELESS

Business administration students at The University of Texas at El Paso are using their accounting and finance skills to help homeless women in El Paso get back on their feet.

In August 2009, they won a national award for their efforts.

The 25 students in Beta Alpha Psi, a community service-oriented accounting honor society, are working with three homeless shelters for women and their children—La Posada, Via Maria and the YWCA—to provide financial workshops and answer questions to help the women control their finances and become self-sufficient.

The students won first place for Best Practices in Developing Life Skills at the honor society's national competition in New York in August. They received a framed certificate, now on display in the accounting office, and \$1,000.

"The national judges were overwhelmed by what our students had

accomplished," said Beta Alpha Psi Faculty Advisor Mary Stevens.

"The students were passionate about this service. They cared about these women (and their children) and gave freely of themselves to make a difference in their lives."

The students tailored their workshops to what the women wanted, but they included topics such as budgeting, credit cards, tax returns, savings and how to get out of debt, along with résumé and interviewing tips.

They also organized a Halloween party and brought Christmas presents for the children at the shelter.

They used their \$1,000 prize money to purchase special items for women in the shelters, shoes and Halloween costumes for the children, and shelter kitchen supplies.

Beta Alpha Psi members must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher and complete Accounting I with a grade of B or better. ☒

Photo courtesy of Esther Robinson



Members of Beta Alpha Psi attend the closing ceremony at a national competition in New York after winning first place. They are, from left: (back) Luisa Reyes, Esther Robinson, Ada Paniagua, Rosa Villa, Susi Barron, Nadia Abugalyon, Mayela Soto, Wendolyn Rios, Sharon Im, (front) Haruka Sakuma, Carlos Natividad-Licon, Eric Cordero, advisor Mary Stevens and Daniel Moriel.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BETA ALPHA PSI, VISIT THEIR WEB SITE AT  
 [ORGANIZATIONS.UTEP.EDU/BAP](http://ORGANIZATIONS.UTEP.EDU/BAP)

## UTEP OFFERS 3 NEW DEGREES



### Master of Social Work

UTEP's new Master of Social Work program is designed to prepare students for practice in child welfare, family violence, substance abuse, medical social work, criminal justice and related jobs, with a focus on social work in a border region.

The program's first class will start in the summer 2010 semester.

MSW applicants will have three options: the traditional program (20 months), the part-time program (up to 36 months) and the one-year advanced standing program (11 months), designed for individuals who already have a bachelor of social work degree.



### Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Journalism

A new multimedia journalism major in the Department of Communication will "integrate the department's current traditional journalism education with new media storytelling skills and hands-on multimedia production experience," said Thomas Ruggiero, Ph.D., associate professor of communication. "Web publishing software, digital cameras, audio, video and interactive tools are all part of the program."

Students will receive training in multimedia writing, reporting, editing, Web publishing, digital photography, audio, video and interactive tools, as well as conventional newsgathering and writing techniques. The program started in the fall of 2009.





### Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media Production

The Department of Communication's new digital media production degree is aimed at helping students prepare for the changes taking place in the mass media industry. It includes courses in production and film studies.

"Our goal with this degree is to help students understand how to create video content, as well as to help them understand how their work may influence viewers," Frank Pérez, chair of the Communication Department, said. "The film studies courses help with this aspect of the program."

The program started in the fall of 2009.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MSW PROGRAM PLEASE VISIT:  
[WWW.UTEP.EDU/SOCIALWORK](http://WWW.UTEP.EDU/SOCIALWORK)  OR CONTACT CANDYCE BERGER,  
 COORDINATOR OF THE MSW PROGRAM, AT [CSBERGER2@UTEP.EDU](mailto:CSBERGER2@UTEP.EDU)  
 OR 915-747-5737. 



FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW COMMUNICATION  
 MAJORS, CONTACT FRANK PÉREZ AT 915-747-6287  
 OR THE COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT OFFICE  
 AT 915-747-5129.



MINER

# VATARS

BY DAVID PEREGRINO

WHILE MANY UTEP STUDENTS EXPERIENCED THE MOVIE **AVATAR** AND VISITED **PANDORA** FROM BEHIND 3-D GLASSES, THESE MINERS TELEPORT DAILY TO AN ISLAND IN CYBERSPACE KNOWN AS **EVE GALÁPAGOS**.



At home in pajamas or tucked in a comfy chair at Starbucks, students in a distance-learning course at The University of Texas at El Paso transformed into field scientists, teleporting to an island in cyberspace to study how weather and the availability of food affect bird populations.

The exercise taught the students basic biological science, but it also represented the cutting edge of education today: learning through virtual worlds.

Known as Experience Virtual Evolution (EVE) Galápagos, the island was created by a team from UTEP's Instructional Support Services (ISS) office. Led by Director Sunay Palsole, ISS promotes the use of technology in teaching and learning. EVE Galápagos serves as the lab component of UTEP Adjunct Professor Michael Kolitsky's online Human Biology course.

Palsole, who has long been eager to introduce virtual worlds in University curriculum, presented the idea of an interactive island to Kolitsky, Ph.D., who eagerly agreed to adopt it for his course.

"I'm probably a very different type of faculty member—any mention of a new technology, and I'm ready to give it a try in the classroom," said Kolitsky, who retired from full-time work at UTEP in 1998 as associate vice president for instructional technology.

Kolitsky now lives in Ocean City, N.J., and teaches part-time through the distance-learning program.

"Our idea was to make the lab in this biology course a bit more interactive and interesting," Palsole said. "And it also serves as a 'proof of concept' so that we may sometime in the future create many more virtual worlds for use in teaching at UTEP."

Recent UTEP computer science graduate and ISS staffer Saul Gutierrez took on the task of building the virtual island using Second Life, a three-di-

mensional online community where residents are represented by their computer-generated selves, known as avatars. Gutierrez taught himself the special programming language necessary to create Second Life worlds, as well as the 3-D modeling program for creating the birds, trees, cacti and other objects for a realistic field science experience.

As Gutierrez developed the island, ISS Database Analyst Emily Rehmeyer and her avatar acted as quality-assurance personnel. She spent hours exploring the cyber-Galápagos, testing its features and making sure the virtual experience met the high standards set by the team.

Once transported to EVE Galápagos, students count populations of birds, identifying them by the length of their beaks: Depending on the number of generations exposed to rainy or dry conditions, the birds, which feed on seeds produced by grasses and cacti, may struggle or thrive.

The laboratory exercise echoes Charles Darwin's own experience on the Galápagos Islands, which shaped his theory of natural selection.

Second Life and other online virtual worlds are gaining popularity in the educational community—many K-12 schools and universities have created virtual campuses for marketing and informational purposes, and it is common for students to file into virtual classrooms to listen to a professor's lecture.

But it's the potential for learning science, engineering and other fields in an interactive way that has Kolitsky and his partners at ISS energized.

"What we are doing is a little edgy—our students were field scientists in a very real simulation," Kolitsky said. "It gives us a sense for what's over the horizon and how this technology will change the educational experience." ☑



Above: Screen grabs of the virtual environment  
Left: The real people involved in the creation of EVE Galápagos and their avatars are, from left, Saul Gutierrez, Emily Rehmeyer and Sunay Palsole.



# GOING

Salvador Flores has traveled through Mexico as a tourist, but going to another country with a study abroad program offered by The University of Texas at El Paso was a completely different—and life-changing—experience.

Flores was one of 12 UTEP graduate and undergraduate students who traveled to Indonesia for three weeks in June and July 2009 with an environmental communication class. Stacey Sowards, Ph.D., associate professor of communication, led the trip to several of the country's islands.

The students traveled from cosmopolitan Jakarta to small, rural villages in Java, Bogor and Borneo, and then to the tourist resorts and forests of Bali. In each place, they talked with non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives and saw firsthand how environmental campaigns were structured in different communities.

Flores, who earned a bachelor's in communication from UTEP in 2006, is working toward his master's in intelligence and national security.

"I've been on different kinds of trips where it's just a tourist trip," Flores said. "(This trip was) richer in that you see how things actually happen, you see the process of things, you see the effects on people. If you're just reading about it, you're not going to see all of that."

Studying abroad is an opportunity to learn a foreign language, meet students and families from a different culture and visit important historical sites.

The experience also broadens students' perspectives of the world, helps them better understand their own communities and gives them the tools to participate in an increasingly global society.

At UTEP, professors are finding ways to make study abroad an even richer experience. In addition to encountering the sights, sounds and smells of another place, UTEP students are becoming actively involved in the countries they visit. They are working with poor aboriginal children in Australia and teaching them to read and write. They are engaging with local organizations to encourage sustainable farming in the forests of Indonesia. And they are networking with Shakespeare scholars in London before seeing plays performed in Shakespeare's original theater.

"Study abroad provides another good example of UTEP's efforts to create new models rather than attempt to emulate those which, for a variety of reasons, primarily socioeconomic, simply do not work well in our setting," UTEP President Diana Natalicio said in her fall Convocation address. "Understanding the importance of globalizing our students' education by creating unique international experiences that are both more accessible and likely to be life-changing for them, we've worked hard to re-invent study abroad at UTEP."

Overseas study was not always a focus at the University. Less than a decade ago, the prevailing thought was that UTEP students didn't have the interest or the money to go to school in another country, said Ron Weber, an associate



# GLOBAL

STORIES BY JENN CRAWFORD

professor of history who leads an annual summer study abroad trip to Rome.

"Real, prolonged study outside the country was not something many people did," Weber said. "We all know how geographically separated El Paso is from the rest of the country, and there was the feeling that this separation had isolated our students, cut them off from things that would stir their imaginations, and that our first-generation college students were just too concerned with getting over that first hurdle of getting an education to think of 'extras' such as going to another country.

"As UTEP has grown in the past nine or 10 years, attitudes have expanded and new resources have developed which are much more global in their perspective.

And the opportunities to travel beyond West Texas and Mexico are vast.

Many study abroad programs are exchanges, where a UTEP student travels to another university while a foreign student spends a semester at UTEP. While abroad, students pay their regular UTEP tuition, room and board fees. The only additional costs are travel expenses and spending money, said Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies Donna Ekal, who oversees the University's study abroad program.

During the fall of 2009, UTEP students studied in France, Scotland, Finland, Poland, Korea, the Czech Republic and Canada.

In addition to the semester- and year-long exchanges, students have the opportunity to accompany faculty members on trips that range in length from 10 days to a month, often as part of a summer course. The trips are shorter and more focused than a full semester or year abroad. They may include participating in a faculty research project or tackling a particular study topic.

But for all study abroad experiences, the goal is to enhance the student's educational experience, Ekal said.

"We want to tie their experiences to their degree," she said.

For UTEP graduate student Elizabeth Zubiate, her entire two-week experience in London was preparation for a professional career.

Zubiate, who is working toward her master's in English literature, traveled with English Department Chair David Ruiters, Ph.D., as

part of his summer 2009 class "Performing London: Shakespeare and the Theatre." The students watched five Shakespeare plays performed either in Shakespeare's hometown of Stratford-Upon-Avon or at his Globe Theatre in London. Before each play, they heard a

unique perspective from a different Shakespeare scholar on the play they were about to see.

The students also attended a Shakespeare conference at Roehampton University, where they were able to network with the Shakespeare scholars they had written about in class papers.

But more than just making contacts for the future, the students learned to make their way around a foreign place and adapt to a new culture.

"I think exploring and broadening your horizons makes you more confident in yourself," Zubiate said. "I think it's important to know other cultures, to

travel. There's so much to see out there."

During a summer trip to Rome, students in Weber's course "Layers of Rome: From Classical to the Christian" had to write daily journals reflecting on what they saw.

"I have been traveling with students since 2002," Weber said. "While our trips do have the benefit of free time that allows for a tourist experience, that is not all that they are about."

Rome becomes a historical laboratory, and the students the inquisitive researchers, he said.

Study abroad experiences can be equally enlightening for the faculty members who lead them, noted Ellen Courtney, Ph.D., associate professor of languages and linguistics. She took four UTEP students to

aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory of Australia over the summer.

The trip was part of a growing collaboration between Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia and UTEP.

"For me, it was the opportunity of getting to know four UTEP students extremely well," Courtney said. "We go to a classroom and we do the best we can to get to know our students. This was really different. Getting to know four students that well and understanding the way they think and where they're coming from, that's going to enrich my teaching." ❏

Photo courtesy of Stacey Sowards, Ph.D.



UTEP students stopped at the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan, on their way home from a study abroad trip to Indonesia.

Photo courtesy of Stacey Sowards, Ph.D.



UTEP students studying environmental campaigns in Indonesia spent time at an orangutan rehabilitation center in Tanjung Puting National Park in Central Kalimantan.



## Learning Exchange

One of the benefits of student exchange programs is the exchange itself. While students from The University of Texas at El Paso travel around the world to study foreign cultures, students from other countries come to UTEP to experience life in the Borderland.

Each semester, study abroad administrators in the Office of Undergraduate Studies work with their counterparts around the world to arrange the exchanges. In the fall of 2009, 26 students came to UTEP from Canada, China, the Czech Republic, England, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Latvia, Mexico and Spain.

"UTEP students who study abroad are great representatives of our University, and by sharing their experiences, it encourages international students to apply for exchange programs at UTEP," said Niamh Minion, UTEP's study abroad coordinator. "Many come here because of our border, to work on their English and their Spanish."

Anna Karina Gentgen of Germany said she is studying both languages, so El Paso's border location was an ideal place for her to spend a semester. The difficult part, she said, was adjusting to the August heat when she arrived.

But it helped to be with other exchange students who were making the same adjustments to the climate, the language, the culture and the food.

The group of 26 has become quite close. Most lived together in Miner Village. Since they did not have cars, they took advantage of the free and inexpensive activities for students on campus, said Petr Kortanek of the Czech Republic.

Their top complaint about the United States was the food; they missed fresh market produce and bread from their home countries and wished they had more non-fast food options, they said.

But, in general, they enjoyed their time in El Paso.

"We like it here," Kortanek said. He was especially impressed by UTEP's attractive campus. At Czech Technical University, his home college in Prague, the university buildings are spread throughout the city.

"Everyone's so helpful and energetic here," commented Jing Chen, a Chinese citizen who attends college in Sweden. Chen has studied around the globe and planned to travel to Africa next.

"I have always loved the (American) culture," she said. "My dream is to travel all of the world and experience many cultures." ❏

**Top of Page:** Some of UTEP's fall 2009 exchange students included: 1. Zbysek Zalis, Czech Republic; 2. Petr Kortanek, Czech Republic; 3. Eva Redinova, Czech Republic; 4. Jing Chen, China; 5. Anna Karina Gentgen, Germany; 6. Pavel Kortanek, Czech Republic; and 7. Eva-Maria Gross, Germany.



# Bhutanese Students Donate Profits to Earthquake Victims



**S**tudents from The University of Texas at El Paso's Bhutanese Student Association donated a portion of their profits from the annual International Food Fair to victims of an earthquake in their home country.

The Bhutanese students won first place for their booth at the food fair in October 2009, said Khendum Choden, a UTEP doctoral student studying information systems.

"We decided to donate part of our profits in addition to personal donations from some members to help people, especially in the rural areas, who lost everything," said Choden, one of 16 UTEP students from Bhutan and the president of the Bhutanese Student Association. "Our contribution may not be much, but we feel it can make a difference to the lives of a few people back home. Our Majesty has always stressed that the future

of Bhutan lies in the hands of the youth. Therefore, we feel a strong sense of duty towards our country during such unfortunate times."

At least a dozen people were killed in the 6.3 magnitude quake on Sept. 21, 2009, which damaged homes, schools, government buildings and monuments.

Family members of the UTEP Bhutanese students were not affected by the quake, but because Bhutan is a small country, the students felt emotionally connected to the victims, Choden said.

More than a dozen student organizations participated in the Oct. 21, food fair. They set up booths in the Union breezeway with samples of food, photos and crafts from around the world. Each booth was judged based on overall presentation.

"Coming in first this year was simply awesome," Choden said. "All of us were very excited and extremely happy." ❏

# LIBRARY UNVEILS NEW BHUTANESE TAPESTRY

**A** partridge, a rabbit, a monkey and an elephant quietly moved into the University Library this summer.

The animals are part of *The Four Harmonious Friends*, a hand-sewn Bhutanese tapestry unveiled in August 2009 in the library's atrium. The artwork is based on a folk tale of love, respect for elders and living amicably.

The *thangka*, a Buddhist banner, replaced another piece informally titled "The Bhutanese Tapestry" that had graced the wall above the Bhutanese altar near the library entryway since March 1987. The older tapestry, commissioned by former UTEP President Haskell Monroe, now hangs in the Bhutan Lounge in Union Building East.

UTEP graduate student Sonam Wangmo delivered the new drapery—15 feet at the top, 16 feet at the bottom and a little more than 23 feet in length—from Bhutan. She said the library is the perfect place for the artwork because it symbolizes wisdom.

"We, the Bhutanese students, get immense pride whenever we see it," said Wangmo, who added that the tapestry reflects the culture and tradition of her country, which is located between China and India.

The ties between the Kingdom of Bhutan and The University of Texas at El Paso date to UTEP's origins. Kathleen Worrell, wife of the college's first dean, suggested that the Bhutanese architecture featured in the 1914 *National Geographic* article, "Castles in the Air," was well suited for the new college being built at the foot of the Franklin Mountains. ❏



The *Four Harmonious Friends* tapestry is on display in the University Library atrium.

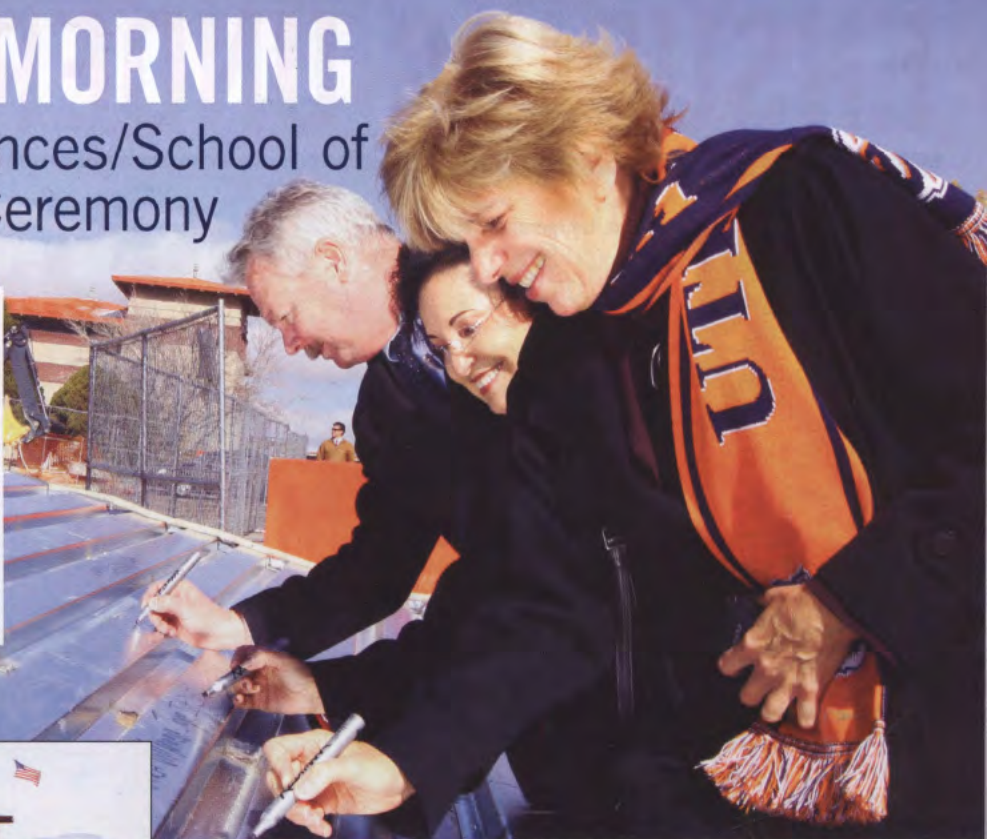


# TOP OF THE MORNING

## College of Health Sciences/School of Nursing Topping Out Ceremony

**O**n Dec. 4, 2009, UTEP celebrated the “topping out” of the building that will house the College of Health Sciences/School of Nursing. Crews hoisted the final beam of the roof, securing it in place to the cheers of University officials and spectators watching from the ground. The \$60 million, 130,000-square-foot facility is expected to open in the spring of 2011.

“This is a really big day for us,” President Diana Natalicio said after the event. “It makes us very, very happy that this topping out has occurred as quickly as it has because this is a building that is so important to us for a variety of reasons.”



**Above:** From left, Mark Lusk, associate dean of the College of Health Sciences; former interim School of Nursing Dean Esperanza Villanueva-Joyce, Ed.D.; and College of Health Sciences Dean Kathleen Curtis, Ph.D., sign the new College of Health Sciences/School of Nursing roof before it is lifted to the top of the building.

**Far Left:** President Diana Natalicio thanks two construction workers for their efforts.

**Left:** In honor of the holidays, the new College of Health Sciences/School of Nursing Building roof was adorned with a Christmas tree.



## Snow Blankets the Sun City

**C**haracterized by clear, blue skies that make weather reports seem superfluous, El Paso is known as the “Sun City.”

On Nov. 30, 2009, however, it was anything but sunny. The sky was overcast, and it deposited a generous amount of snow on the city, including the University. From the Sun Bowl to the Student Union Building, the campus was covered with a shimmering white carpet, a phenomenon rarely seen in El Paso, where the sun shines more often than not.

UTEP officials shut down activities at 2:30 p.m. that day, and the students took advantage, enjoying the winter wonderland with a series of impromptu snowball fights. The cold weather proved heart-warming. It was as if Christmas had arrived three weeks early.



While Mother Nature provided UTEP students with a rare respite from class, snowballs filled the air from one end of campus to another.





# ENSURING UNDERGRADUATE



DONNA E. EKAL, PH.D.

The University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP) mission of access and excellence is a worthy focus for all educators in our community and, as an educator at UTEP, it is my responsibility to support fulfillment of that mission for

our students. The Office for Undergraduate Studies (OUS) is one of the places on campus that is making a big difference in turning that mission into the reality of a college education for thousands of area undergraduates. OUS is a grouping of eight departments and centers that have a common goal of providing high-quality academic programs that foster success for students prior to their entering UTEP through the entirety of their undergraduate education. Our faculty and staff work with others throughout the University community to provide opportunities that enrich the academic experience at UTEP and work with students to encourage them to reach for success. We aim to accomplish this through the programs about which you will read in these pages as well as many others that we look forward to telling you about in the future.

There are so many people at UTEP and OUS who believe in the students of El Paso, believe in the importance of education, and believe that our portfolio of programs connects students to higher education in a way that changes not only their lives but the lives of their families and friends for generations to come. Thank you for your interest in UTEP and the Office for Undergraduate Studies. If you would like to find out more about OUS and the many innovative ways we work with our students, please contact me and I will be glad to tell you more about what we do.

**DONNA E. EKAL, PH.D.**  
ASSOCIATE PROVOST  
OFFICE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES  
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## LONE STAR JOURNEY HELPS PRE-MED STUDENTS PLAN THEIR FUTURES

**YOU CAN MEASURE A JOURNEY IN MILES. OR YOU CAN MEASURE IT IN MILES. KNOWLEDGE AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.**

UTEP pre-med students know that a real journey is not just about geography; it is about reaching a place where dreams intersect with reality.

Every summer, about 50 UTEP students hop on a bus to visit medical schools throughout the state, from Lubbock to Dallas to College Station to Houston to Galveston to San Antonio—more than 2,000 miles worth of networking.

The venture, offered through the Medical Professions Institute on campus, is the only one of its kind in Texas, said Donna Ekal, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies.

"I do not know if universities in other states do this," Ekal said. "But I know we are

the only institution in Texas that does it."

"The students have to put their best foot forward when they visit the medical schools," Ekal said. "The medical schools get to see the students with their intelligent questions and a clear interest in the profession."

The students range from freshman to seniors, although incoming seniors have preferential consideration because they are closer to graduation.

"They come back from the trips rejuvenated," Ekal said. "They work hard to be successful applicants to their number one choices for medical school."

The trips are important because the University is attracting more students interested in the medical field. UTEP is ranked second among U.S. universities for the number of Mexican-American students applying to med-



# SUCCESS

STORIES BY ROBERT L. SELTZER

perspective, the trip is a very rewarding, informative and motivating experience," Daniel De Los Santos, a UTEP grad attending the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio, said. "You're an undergrad knowing you want to be a doctor, but you are far from actually realizing how much work goes into being one. You idealize what it might be to be a doctor, resident or medical student from the information you read online or watch on television. Not until you actually step onto a medical teaching campus do you start to form that idea into a reality."

If the bus trip helps the students decide on a medical school, a new prep course for the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) helps them get into the school.

"I'm optimistic," Ekal said. "I'm always optimistic."

Judging from the success of the Medical Professions Institute, she has reason to be.

## ENTERING STUDENT PROGRAM HELPS NEWCOMERS ADJUST TO UNIVERSITY LIFE

**THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL CAN BE INTIMIDATING AT ALL LEVELS, FROM KINDERGARTEN TO COLLEGE.**

The Entering Student Program helps guide freshmen and other new students at UTEP through their first months on campus.

"Starting college can be an intimidating experience," Dorothy Ward, director of the program said. "Just think—the University is a whole new environment."

To help students transition successfully into the University and to increase their opportunities for academic success, the Entering Student Program offers two Core Curriculum courses—UNIV 1301 and UNIV 2350—and learning communities, which enroll students in two or more linked classes.

Launched in 1999, the Entering Student Program helps students develop their critical thinking and academic success skills, practice the habits of scholarship, and take advantage of campus resources that include everything from the University Writing Center to the UTEP Library.

The instructors range from engineering to English professors, with course themes tailored to their specific disciplines.

Part of the beauty of these classes is that professors are assisted by student leaders who understand what their peers are experiencing and who can serve as role models and guides for entering students.



"Students can hear about the importance of time management or the effectiveness of study groups from a professor and, gifted though the professor may be, the advice doesn't have as much impact as it does coming from a peer," Ward said.

Peer leaders must be full-time sophomores with a minimum GPA of 3.0, said Shawna Clemente, who coordinates the program for UTEP. The leaders often learn as much as the students they assist, Clemente said.

ical school, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.

"From a student's

"Peer leaders are really teaching assistants," she said. "They have their own office hours ... It's so much fun to watch the peer leaders grow, to watch them progress."

As coordinator of the program, Clemente hires about 100 peer leaders every summer, one for every class taught during the fall semester.

"Some want to pursue teaching, but many others don't," she said. "They do it because they want to provide the same kind of help they received as freshmen. They want to give back."

Giving back, as Clemente has discovered, helps the giver as much as it does the recipient.

"I think the enthusiasm everyone feels is contagious," she said.

Sandra Enriquez, a former peer leader who recently received her bachelor's degree in history, is a prime example.

"I am a people person," Enriquez, who is pursuing her master's degree in U.S./Mexico borderland history, said. "I love to work and interact with different people. Being a peer leader gets you to interact with students from different backgrounds, as well as be a mentor figure for their college career."

As a peer leader, she helped herself by helping others.

"The largest satisfaction I received was seeing some of the students I worked with get involved not only at UTEP, but also in the community," she said. "Many of the students have done many great things, including becoming peer leaders themselves."



## GLOBAL LEARNING COMMUNITY LINKS UTEP TO AUSTRALIA

**THE ENTERING STUDENT PROGRAM OFFERS ITS STUDENTS THE WORLD—LITERALLY.**

As part of the program, the University features a Global Learning Community in which UTEP students share notes, data and experiences with students at Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia.

The class is UNIV 1301.

Through a Web site and two video conferences, the students erase the thousands of miles between them, turning the globe into a community of learning and understanding.

The global initiative addresses all the concerns of the Entering Student Program in general, including connecting students to the campus and easing their transition to higher education.

At the same time, however, the Global Learning Community broadens the horizons of students in both institutions, helping them bond through shared information about their culture, their history and their aspirations.

"The GLC is an important initiative that expands the walls of the classroom for first-year students, and it is an initiative that required significant collaboration among units on the UTEP campus as well as collaboration between UTEP and VU," said Irma Montelongo, UNIV 1301 course instructor.

The initiative does what all great classes do: it helps students travel the world, via their imaginations and intellects.





## MAD DOG MATH HELPS STUDENTS SOLVE THE PUZZLE

**FOR SOME STUDENTS, MATHEMATICS IS A MAZE OF NUMBERS, A SERIES OF TWISTS AND TURNS WITH NO EASY EXIT.**

However, at UTEP, developmental math courses make the puzzle easier to solve.

The program's official name is Mastering Developmental Math, but students have unofficially dubbed it Mad Dog Math.

The student-friendly classes are required for incoming students whose scores on the ACCUPLACER placement exam indicate they are not ready for college-level math courses.

Mad Dog Math, launched in 2007, offers three courses—beginning algebra, intermediate algebra and a lab for college-level math.

The program utilizes two labs in the University Library, where students are allowed to go at their own pace through an online course. If they make a mistake, they must go back to rework the problem until they get it right—a tactic that ensures they will learn math.

While the courses are flexible, the students must attend the lab a minimum of four hours per week, while working an additional 10 hours per week on their home computers.

"There are no lectures," Denise Lujan, director of Developmental Math at UTEP, said. "The instructors are there to answer questions and monitor progress."

The professors, however, do have a role beyond facilitating the work in the lab.

"They're more like counselors," Lujan said. "They know which students work, which students have children, which students take the bus to class. They know what problems might affect their grades, and they help them deal with those problems."

That personal touch, along with the flexibility of the computer math program, is working.

Between 500 and 1,000 students take the courses each long semester, and their success rate as they move on to college-level courses is

## HARD WORK PAYS OFF FOR HONORS STUDENTS

**THEY CALL IT THE HONORS PROGRAM FOR A REASON.**

The 600 students active in the program each year represent a hard-working group who enjoy the additional intellectual engagement provided by an honors curriculum.

And that status has a positive impact on their futures.

"Many of our students have shared stories about how their participation in the Honors Program and the resulting recognition they earned made a difference during the interview process for acceptance to graduate school, medical school or law school and in the job market," said Theresa Ramirez, who directs the University Honors Program.

Freshmen may enter the program as Honors Admissions students through the UTEP Office of Admissions and Recruitment or by applying directly to the program, but they must have been in the top 10 percent of their high school class and have received at least a 1030 on their SAT or a 22 on their ACT.

Upperclassmen may apply to the program if they have a minimum GPA of 3.3 or if they are transferring from universities where they were part of an honors program.

All honors students must enroll in at least one honors course per year and maintain a 3.3 GPA.

One of the main benefits honors students enjoy is smaller classes that allow for more dialogue and discussion.

"Honors sections have a maximum enrollment capacity of 18 to 20 students," Ramirez said. "Because class size is limited, instruction tends to be more interactive between the professor and the students and among the students themselves."

As with other UTEP programs, however, administrators realize that true education transcends the classroom, so they encourage—and promote—participation in organizations off campus, including Habitat for Humanity, Casas por Cristo and the El Paso Senior Games.

Nicole Martinez, a senior with a double major in philosophy and sociology, is among the students striking a healthy balance between school and community.

"We challenge ourselves because we want to succeed," she said.

Martinez belongs to several campus and community organizations, a commitment to leadership so strong that she was one of only three students asked to meet with State Rep. Dan Branch, R-Dallas, who chairs the House Select Committee on Higher and Public Education Finance, during his visit with UTEP President Diana Natalicio in 2008.

"I must admit it gets hectic at times but it's my motivation to keep going, and I like to challenge myself every day," said Martinez, who participates in the UTEP Law School Preparation Institute. "I've learned to take the opportunities I have and run with them."



encouraging, Lujan said.

Of the Developmental Math students who went on to take Math 1319 in the fall of 2008, for example, 85 percent passed the class.

"Our job is not just about teaching," Lujan said. "It's about paying attention to every single student in class. It's about finding out what they need to succeed."

This approach reflects the notion that academic achievement is not just about intelligence or determination; sometimes, it is about the external forces—work, transportation, single parenthood—that keep students from achieving higher grades.

"The success rate among these students as they move on to college-level math courses is dramatic," Lujan said. "And it makes us proud."

Dana Alvarez, now a sophomore majoring in music education, took a developmental math course last summer.

"I was nervous at first, but, then, while the subject didn't necessarily become easier, I knew I would get the help I needed," she said.

She took her first college-level course in the fall, Math in the Modern World, and got a B.

"It felt good," she said.





## STUDENTS CREATE CYNERGY THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

**OFFICIALS AT UTEP'S CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT KNOW THAT EDUCATION TRANSCENDS THE CLASSROOM; THEY KNOW THAT THE REAL CLASSROOM IS THE WORLD ITSELF, THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE STUDENTS LIVE.**

Launched by Political Science Professor Kathleen Staudt in 1998, the center created a forum allowing students to work in the community—in schools, courtrooms and senior citizens' centers—and apply what they learned on campus.

In the 12 years since the center opened, more than 12,000 students have participated in the programs, totaling more than 300,000 hours of community service.

"Civic engagement opens their eyes to issues they might not have been aware of," Azuri Ruiz, the current director of the center, said. "It builds networks, and it sometimes creates career paths the students may not have considered before."

The center works jointly with about 40 classes spanning all departments, including business, political science, criminal justice and university studies.

One of the programs for which students may volunteer—*Ni Una Mas*, a phrase derived from the mass murder of women in Juárez—affords students the opportunity to sit in on domestic violence trials, monitoring the proceedings for the El Paso Center Against Family Violence.

"The students observe the trials and report on them objectively," Ruiz said. "They then give the data to the Center (Against) Family Violence. One student noted that a judge fell asleep during the trial. That judge wasn't re-elected."

One of the most dynamic programs offered by the Center for Civic Engagement is CYnergy: Civic, Youth, Energy. It follows the same principles as the other programs—trying to engage students with their community—but there are no grades involved. And the students are the teachers, although their efforts are supervised by University professors.

The students sponsor what one former participant calls a "pleasant boot camp" designed to engage their counterparts in high schools throughout the area. The UTEP students teach the high school students how to improve the quality of life in their communities.

The high school students, selected by their principals, attend the "boot camp" during the summer, staying in Miner Village for a week. They learn the art of public speaking, often attending City Council and County Commissioners meetings. When they return to their schools in the fall, they apply what they learned during their UTEP experience.

"I think it helps their critical thinking, and they learn to appreciate their community more," Jennifer Rodriguez, the service learning coordinator for the center, said.

Frank Rodriguez, now a senior political science major at UTEP,

attended the "boot camp" before his senior year at Americas High School in 2005.

"I thought it would get me away from my parents for one week in the summer, and that was cool," Rodriguez said, laughing. "But, then, I got excited about helping my community. I was into science and engineering, but now I'm interested in public policy, because I want to give back. The program changed my life."

Rodriguez, who wants to pursue a master's in Public Policy, served an internship with the U.S. State Department last summer. His focus was on the Merida Initiative, designed to help Latin American countries deal with raging drug violence. He would not have been there without the CYnergy program. One individual gives, and the other gives back—that is what CYnergy is all about.

## ENGLISH PROGRAM ENHANCES LEARNING IN OTHER AREAS

**FOR STUDENTS AT ANY LEVEL, THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS THE ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE.**

Accurately interpreting and effectively conveying information are skills necessary for students in all areas of study.

All educators recognize the connection, but the faculty of the Developmental English Program is focused on helping students improve those key foundational skills.

"Students have to read for every subject they take, whether it's math, science or English," Cheryl Baker Heller, the director of the program, said. "They will all have to be able to read and write in their personal lives, too. And when they are not able to do that, when they use incorrect English, they are judged in a very personal way that affects their self-esteem."

A total of about 700 students enter the Developmental English program every year, most of them freshmen.

Launched in 1989, the program offers two courses and one lab, which are required for incoming students whose scores on a placement exam, called the ACCUPLACER, indicate they are not ready for college-level English classes.

Some students must take Developmental Reading, 0310, or Developmental Writing, 0311, before moving on to college-level courses.

Other students may take a Developmental Writing lab, 0111, concurrently with their freshman composition course, English 1311.

"If students placed into the program, it doesn't mean they are not smart," Heller said. "It may just mean that they did not take the test well that day, or that their reading skills just were not quite up to it at that moment."

The program maintains smaller class sizes to provide more individualized attention.

"We're very student-centered," she said. "We believe they're smart and that they can succeed. They just need some strategies to help them become more proficient readers, and it helps that our classes are very small, capped at 15 or 20 students."

Some of the students are also involved in "learning communities," which link two or more classes, allowing their Developmental English class to use textbooks from other courses such as history, sociology or political science.

Students may also get additional support online. The overall strategy is paying off. Heller said approximately 80 percent of the students pass their Developmental English courses, and they go on to succeed in their college-level classes as well.

"I was nervous about taking the class because I thought it would make me seem less intellectual in the eyes of my peers," Rebecca Jauregui, a sophomore, said. "It was more about the pressure to impress my friends than actually taking the course."

Jauregui need not have worried—she earned a B in her first college-level English course.

"The study and note-taking skills have helped me a great deal in other courses such as anthropology," she said. "I am glad I had the opportunity to take part in the program and work with the professor I had." ❏



# PASO del NORTE

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### HISPANIC BUSINESS OWNERS SHARE THEIR SUCCESS STORIES

HISPANIC ENTREPRENEURS ALWAYS HAVE PLAYED AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN EL PASO'S BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

BY JENN CRAWFORD

Often rising from humble beginnings, these passionate entrepreneurs relied on hard work and integrity to reach what some told them were unattainable goals.

The Paso del Norte Entrepreneurship Oral History Project, funded by the entrepreneurship-focused Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, identifies some of these prominent Hispanic business owners and tells their stories of overcoming expectations to become successful role models.

Project organizers hope the testimonials from the 36 entrepreneurs, including 16 UTEP graduates, will inspire future business leaders.

Graduate and undergraduate students from The University of Texas at El Paso worked under the leadership of Irasema Coronado, Ph.D., asso-

ciate provost, and Kristine Navarro-McElhane, director of UTEP's Institute of Oral History, to seek out first-generation Hispanic entrepreneurs who have owned their businesses for at least five years. In one-on-one interviews, the men and women talked about growing up—often in poverty—to become business owners and community leaders.

The interviews were audio-recorded and will be preserved for future generations through the Institute of Oral History.

Fermin Dorado, owner of Dorado Engineering and one of the 36 entrepreneurs, described his peers: "We all came from very humble places and we fought and we worked hard in order to go up the ladder," he said. "We probably did it different ways, but we always have the same story."

The entrepreneurs shared several characteristics: hard work, persistence, flexibility and an

optimism that hard times are not permanent.

Hector Holguin, owner of Secure Origins, a company that develops supply chain software to track items from origin to destination, said even successful business owners encounter bumps in the road.

"I don't care how big you are, being an entrepreneur you're still going to struggle with the ups and downs of the economy, especially today," he said. "But in the worst of times is when the best ... opportunities come forward."

Richard Castro, owner of 21 McDonald's franchises in El Paso and West Texas, said he never gave up when others believed he would fail.

"I had a couple of people along the way in high school that doubted that I would be able to be successful in college," Castro said. "In fact, one counselor told me that I was better suited to be in the maintenance profession, and another individual told me that I wasn't college material. The satisfaction is proving them both wrong."

# THE ENTREPRENEURS

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE 36 ENTREPRENEURS ARE FOUND BELOW. THE PICKS (X) IDENTIFY UTEP GRADUATES. FOR TRANSCRIPTS AND AUDIO FILES OF THE FULL INTERVIEWS, VISIT [HEHO.UTEP.EDU](http://HEHO.UTEP.EDU) OR CONTACT THE INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY AT 915-747-7052.

**1. Armando Alvarez**  
**Viva Creative Group**  
Alvarez worked as a graphic designer at several companies before starting his own jobs on the side. The side jobs turned into a full-time business.

**2. Juan Barcena**  
**A & B Labels & Printing, Inc.**  
Juan Barcena worked in printing at a manufacturing company for 20 years before opening his own business printing labels for food products, computers, clothing and other items.

**3. Hector Barragan**  
**Pipo Academy of Hair Design and El Pipo Barber College**  
Barragan describes himself as the first hair stylist in El Paso. He owns a barbershop and beauty school.

**4. Moe Beltran**  
**El Paso Key Fitting**  
After working for his father's

locksmith and key business, Beltran bought El Paso Key Fitting from another family. When he retired in 1994, he gave the business to his children.

**5. Tanny Berg** X  
**The Shalom Group El Paso**  
Berg owns at least 10 companies. The most profitable is The Shalom Group El Paso, which controls about 1 million square feet of real estate.

**6. Alfredo Borrego**  
**Alco Machine Tool & Steel Inc.**  
Borrego started his business after he was laid off from another job. He does industrial machine work, turning metal and other raw materials into products for other companies.

**7. Leroy Candelaria**  
**Biotech Pharmacy Inc.**  
Candelaria saw an opportunity to open a

nuclear medicine pharmacy in El Paso, where one company monopolized the market. Now, he owns pharmacies throughout the Southwest.

**8. Richard Castro**  
**Castro Enterprises, DBA McDonald's in El Paso**  
After 14 months of training, Castro bought his first McDonald's franchise in El Paso. He now owns 21 franchises.

**9. Alejandra Chavez**  
**Thyme Matters Inc.**  
Chavez traveled to Italy for a year to study her true passion—culinary arts. Her original catering business has evolved into a casual dining restaurant.

**10. Fermin Dorado** X  
**Dorado Engineering**  
Dorado was appointed as city engineer, where he worked to spread business

among all of El Paso's engineers, including Hispanic firms, before starting his own company.

**11. Carlos Gándara**  
**Pencil Cup Office Products Inc.**  
With only a high school education and experience working in office supply sales, Gándara opened his own office furniture and supply company.

**12. Teresa Gándara** X  
**Pencil Cup Office Products Inc.**  
As the youngest daughter of eight children, Teresa Gándara was expected to stay home and take care of her parents. Instead, she got a college degree and now co-owns Pencil Cup Office Products Inc. with her husband.

**13. Miguel Guerra** X  
**Total Orthotic and Prosthetic Solutions Inc.**

Guerra earned a degree in prosthetics and orthotics with the encouragement of a mentor and eventually started his own business providing orthopedic body braces and artificial limbs.

**14. Susan Guerra** X  
**Total Orthotic and Prosthetic Solutions Inc.**  
Guerra worked in the medical field before opening Total Orthotic & Prosthetic Solutions Inc. with her husband.

**15. Mamie Salazar Harper**  
**M Rentals Inc.**  
Salazar Harper worked for several ColorTyme Inc. franchises, a rent-to-own electronics and furniture store, and eventually purchased the franchise in El Paso. It is now called M Rentals Inc.

**16. Rick Hernandez**  
**Mustang Express**

Hernandez started as a city delivery and pick-up driver. Now, he owns Mustang Express, a trucking company that specializes in two-person driving teams.

**17. Ray Hernandez** X  
**RHO Logistics**  
After Hernandez lost his job as a traffic manager, he bought a cell phone and a fax machine and started what became a successful trucking logistics company.

**18. Hector Holguin** X  
**Secure Origins**  
Holguin has sold his computer-aided design software around the globe. His current company develops software to track items from origin to destination.

**19. Fred Loya**  
**Fred Loya Insurance**  
A friend talked Loya into becoming an insurance



agent more than 30 years ago. Today, his insurance company spans four states and employs 2,500 people.

**20. Rudolph Miles Sr. Rudolph Miles Customhouse Brokers Inc.**

Rudolph Miles worked in a customs brokerage firm before obtaining certification as a customs broker and starting his own company.

**21. Mario Montes Urban Associates**

A friend convinced Montes to join a small group starting its own construction company. Now his youngest son, Michael, owns the successful business.

**22. Cecilia Miles Mulvihill RM Personnel Inc.**

Mulvihill started a business to handle payroll, benefits and HR services, and to provide temporary employees for other companies because she saw the need for those services.

**23. Richard Najera El Paso Lone Star Homes Inc.**

Najera opened a home building and electrical business, El Paso Lone Star Homes Inc., helped start a bank and co-founded KINT Channel 26, a Spanish-language TV station.

**24. Maria Antonietta Orrantia Julio's Café Corona**

Growing up in the family restaurant business, Orrantia dreamed of owning her own restaurant. Her parents opened Julio's in 1985 and put her in charge.

**25. Raymond Palacios Bravo Cadillac & Hummer of El Paso, Bravo Cadillac & Chevrolet of Las Cruces**

After working in accounting, Palacios bought a car dealership. He now owns Cadillac, Chevrolet and Hummer dealerships in El Paso and Las Cruces.

**26. Arnold Peinado Jr. Wildwood Developers LLC and Franklin Self-Storage LLC**

Peinado started a residential land development company with his brothers. Most recently, they built a rental business called Franklin Self-Storage.

**27. Gary Porras The Garick Group Inc.**

Porras grew his company from \$300,000 its first year to \$50 million today. The Garick Group offers electrical, mechanical and construction services.

**28. Antonio Rico Electrosystems Engineers Inc. (ESEI)**

Rico's business focuses on telecommunications engineering and IT services for clients around the Southwest.

**29. Joe Rosales JAR Concrete Inc.**

Rosales started his first construction business making concrete slabs for houses. He expanded to do curb and gutter work, highways, airport taxiways and runways.

**30. George Saenz Cielo Vista Insurance**

Saenz worked for Farmer's Insurance for five years before starting his own insurance company.

**31. Basilio Silva Vistacon Inc.**

Silva worked odd jobs to help his parents support their large family before starting a commercial construction business, Vistacon Inc., with a friend.

**32. Robert Torres Robert Torres and Co.**

Torres worked as a public accountant in several firms before starting his own accounting firm.

**33. Oscar Venegas Venegas Engineering Management & Construction (Vemac) Inc.**

Venegas founded the engineering firm Vemac Inc. in El Paso, which was ranked as the fastest growing Hispanic business in the United States in 2008.

**34. Rick Villarreal Villarreal and Sons Enterprises**

Villarreal turned down a job with NASA and started his own company to train electricians and troubleshoot electrical problems.

**35. Cesar Viramontes International Garment Processors**

Viramontes started out doing repairs at a laundromat. He has since built a plant in Mexico, where his employees wash, press and package denim for companies such as Levi's.

**36. Lorraine Wardy Sarabia's Portable Jons and Blue Sanitation**

Wardy designed and sold clothing under the brand name Opal before purchasing Sarabia's, a portable toilet rental business.



**Above:** Irasema Coronado, Ph.D., associate provost (left) and UTEP President Diana Natalicio greet Hispanic business owner and keynote speaker Oscar Venegas at a reception honoring the entrepreneurs. **Left:** Kristine Navarro-McElhane, director of UTEP's Institute of Oral History, thanks the entrepreneurs for contributing their stories to the project.





**FALL  
CONVOCATION  
2009**

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ABRIDGED  
VERSION OF THE 2009 STATE OF THE  
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS PRESENTED  
BY UTEP PRESIDENT DIANA NATALICIO  
ON SEPT. 24, 2009.

“ OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT AND HARD WORK OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS HAS PLACED UTEP AT THE FOREFRONT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION IN TEXAS AND NATIONALLY. WE NOW HAVE ANOTHER VERY SPECIAL SET OF OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE US AND POWERFUL MOMENTUM BEHIND US. WORKING HARD, WORKING SMART AND WORKING TOGETHER, WE WILL COMPLETE OUR JOURNEY TOWARD NATIONAL PROMINENCE AS THE FIRST TIER ONE UNIVERSITY IN THE U.S. WITH A 21ST CENTURY STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC. IN 1966, WE CHANGED THE FACE OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS, TODAY WE ARE CHANGING THE FACE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND TOMORROW WE WILL CHANGE THE FACE OF TIER ONE UNIVERSITIES. ”

# PRESIDENT'S CONVOCATION ADDRESS



**A**lfredo Corchado, UTEP alumnus and highly successful journalist with *The Dallas Morning News*, tells a story about his arrival for his first professional job, in the Philadelphia office of *The Wall Street Journal*. At first, Alfredo was intimidated by the perceived luster of the academic pedigrees of the other journalists, and he even tried to emulate them in a variety of ways. His editor noticed, pulled him aside and told him that he valued Alfredo for who he was personally, culturally and professionally, not for how well he might be able to imitate others from more traditional backgrounds.

This lesson is also one that has to be learned and re-learned by UTEP as a higher education institution with a distinct profile. We are at our best when we are who we are, doing what we do in our own way, rather than trying to imitate others. We clearly aren't Harvard on the Border, nor should we ever aspire to be that. We are no longer the small mining school of our origins, no longer the self-deprecating regional institution into which we evolved. Instead, we've discovered that we are unique—the only research University in the entire United States with a Mexican-American majority student population. And as we approach our 100th birthday, we are at the very forefront of major trends in U.S. higher education. We have also learned that we will make the greatest contribution to this region and to higher education in the United States not by imitating others, but by being the best and proudest UTEP we can be.

We should have considerable confidence that we can achieve this goal, because we have been successfully making major strides in moving toward it over the past 20 years. We successfully defined ourselves and established an authentic institutional identity. Recall with me a couple of good examples of this success:

- We sought to achieve both access and excellence, despite the insistence of skeptics that there had to be a trade-off between these two goals, and we've gradually gained widespread respect and financial support for our success in developing a new higher education access and excellence model.

- We challenged graduation rates because their calculation—which is based entirely on students who begin university enrollment as first-time, full-time freshmen in a fall semester and who graduate from the same institution 4, 5 or 6 years later—fails to capture 70 percent of UTEP's graduates, and, I might add, a majority of graduates of most large, urban universities. Although it was initially quite difficult to provoke a broad-based conversation in higher education about the inadequacy of this widely accepted graduation rate metric, our efforts have gained considerable traction. For example, the State of Texas shifted the metric it uses to calculate its undergraduate student success incentive awards from graduation rates to growth in the number of graduates, and,

consistent with its "Closing the Gaps" goals, giving special weight to "high-risk" graduates and those who earn degrees in high-priority fields such as science, engineering, nursing and teaching. This shift resulted in UTEP's earning a total of \$3.9 million in State Incentive Funds during the past biennium. Metrics matter! We're also pleased that a number of other major partners have stepped forward at the national level to join UTEP in this effort to expose the misleading graduation rate metric and develop more meaningful alternatives.

Clearly understanding our context and our strengths has prepared UTEP well to step with

**DURING THE PAST YEAR, UTEP STUDENTS EARNED A TOTAL OF 3,795 BACHELOR'S, MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL DEGREES, A 7.5 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR. SO SIGNIFICANT HAS BEEN THE GROWTH IN DEGREES AWARDED THAT WE'VE HAD TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF GRADUATION CEREMONIES FROM FOUR TO SIX EACH YEAR TO ACCOMMODATE THE LARGE NUMBER OF GRADUATES, THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.**

increasing confidence into a leadership role in the transformation of U.S. higher education. We've moved from emulating inappropriate models to finding our own voice, striving to do things our way, the UTEP way. And with the major demographic shift currently under way in the U.S., UTEP has become the model that others seek to learn from and emulate.

- Enrollment this fall grew once again to a new record high of more than 21,000 students, an increase of 2.7 percent over last year. That means more of this area's young people are opting to pursue higher education—a very positive trend in this undereducated U.S.-Mexico border region—and that most of them are bringing their higher education dreams and aspirations to UTEP.

Most of the new entering freshmen this year came from area high schools, and we are particularly pleased that a record number of top 10 percent high school graduates, who by state law are automatically admitted to all Texas public universities, once again chose UTEP. There was a 19 percent growth in new transfer students this fall and, not surprisingly, most of them came from the El Paso Community College, with which UTEP has developed increasingly strong ties through our longstanding participation in the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence and the College Readiness Initiative, which themselves have been recognized as state and national models for pre-K through 16 educational partnerships.

- UTEP's progress in ensuring access to opportunities for students who have historically been underrepresented in U.S. higher education has increasingly been paired with progress in fostering the success of these students once they enroll. During the past year, UTEP students earned a total of 3,795 bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees, a 7.5 percent increase over the previous year. So significant has been the growth in degrees awarded that we've had to expand the number of graduation ceremonies from four to six each year to

accommodate the large number of graduates, their family members and friends. What a great problem to have!

- We are also very proud that in becoming more competitive in recruiting new faculty, we've also been successful in increasing faculty diversity. With a student population that is 55 percent female and 75 percent Mexican-American, UTEP has a special responsibility to recruit and retain a faculty that increasingly reflects those demographics. Although competition for minority and female faculty members is often intense, primarily because their

representation in the national Ph.D. pool continues to be far too small, we have implemented a number of strategies to identify and attract them to UTEP. One particularly effective set of tools was developed over the past five years with a grant from the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE program, focusing on faculty gender diversity, especially in science and engineering.

- UTEP's special capacity, and thus our responsibility, to contribute significantly to addressing the serious underrepresentation of Hispanics and women in the pool of U.S. Ph.D.s, particularly in science and engineering, is one of the reasons that expanding doctoral education continues to be another of this University's high priorities. But there are many other equally compelling justifications, all of which demonstrate that access and excellence are inextricably linked. First, we understand that UTEP's commitment to access cannot be achieved by focusing exclusively on undergraduate education. Many residents of this region have higher aspirations, and many others with talent should be encouraged to raise theirs, to continue their education well beyond a bachelor's degree. Second, strong doctoral programs are a key element in recruiting and retaining competitive faculty, who, in addition to their research and graduate teaching, also teach and mentor UTEP's undergraduate students. Third, UTEP's undergraduates also benefit immensely from the expanded opportunities for learning and on-campus employment offered to them in this more robust doctoral/research environment, and their aspirations for graduate education are nurtured by it. Finally, competitive doctoral programs will also attract to UTEP talented students from across the U.S. and beyond, who can contribute to and learn from participation in UTEP's active research agenda and interactions with the increasingly competitive faculty who lead it. Moreover, UTEP's location and demographic profile can be valuable differentiating assets in recruiting Hispanic doctoral students from other parts of the U.S., Mexico and throughout the Western Hemisphere.

- UTEP's doctoral programs are growing in both number and size. We awarded a record 59 doctoral degrees this past year, a nearly 70



percent increase over the previous year, and enrollment in UTEP's doctoral programs this fall totals 473 students, another new record and an increase of 12 percent over last year. UTEP launched two new Ph.D. programs—in Computational Science and in Teaching, Learning and Culture—which brings to 16 the total number of doctoral programs at UTEP, with seven proposals moving through the authorization process in Austin, and many others being developed in colleges across the campus.

...

As all of this new construction and renovation is completed over the next couple of years, the UTEP campus will become even more efficient and attractive than it is today. What's exciting is that our Bhutanese architectural tradition is not only being maintained in all these new projects, but also is rising to another level as architects who work with us learn more about and seek to capture new Bhutanese features in their designs.

Our architecture also serves as the foundation for an increasingly rich relationship between UTEP and the Kingdom of Bhutan. If you haven't already seen it, we have a beautiful new tapestry in the library atrium that was made for us by highly skilled artisans in Bhutan, and which was personally delivered—all 66 pounds of it!—by Sonam Wangmo, one of the nine newly enrolled Bhutanese students at

• We installed a mass notification system on the campus to enable us to send real-time audible alerts in the event of an emergency.

• In response to a request from Texas Tech, the Languages and Linguistics Department developed and taught a special Spanish course for their new cohort of first-year medical students at the Paul Foster School.

• The Center for Civic Engagement celebrated its 10th anniversary of student service learning in this region, involving more than 13,400 students and 125 faculty and a total of 318,613 hours of community service.

• Our commitment to recycling continued to grow. More than 100 additional recycling containers were placed on the campus and 395,000 pounds of paper and cardboard, 81,000 pounds of steel, and 6,000 pounds of scrap copper were recycled last year.

• The Medical Professions Institute, which has been highly successful in supporting UTEP pre-med students' aspirations to attend medical school, reports that UTEP ranks second (after UCLA) among all U.S. universities in the number of Mexican-American students who submit medical school applications.

Undergraduate student success is also greatly enhanced by UTEP's strong commitment to achieve excellence in research and graduate education. Our investments in research infrastructure, especially in science,

versity) and the University of Houston, helped earn us this Emerging Tier One designation.

The opportunity to capitalize on our Emerging Tier One designation was extended to us last spring during the 81st session of the Texas Legislature with the passage of HB 51, which creates a pathway toward a major transformation of Texas public higher education. The Legislature has confirmed its intention to support the long-needed development of additional Tier One universities in Texas, and UTEP's success over the past 20 years has ensured that we are one of the seven universities whose progress will be accelerated through this state investment. So, even as we celebrate our many achievements of the past year, we recognize that what is most exciting is that we have successfully reached a critical milestone in UTEP's development and are now faced with perhaps the greatest set of opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, in our long and distinguished history.

Becoming a Tier One University not only means that UTEP will do more externally funded research, develop more doctoral programs, award more doctoral degrees, and gain the national stature associated with that level of activity. It also means that UTEP's undergraduate students will have access to an enriched campus environment that will provide them with the skills and confidence to com-

“ BECOMING A TIER ONE UNIVERSITY NOT ONLY MEANS THAT UTEP WILL DO MORE EXTERNALLY FUNDED RESEARCH, DEVELOP MORE DOCTORAL PROGRAMS, AWARD MORE DOCTORAL DEGREES, AND GAIN THE NATIONAL STATURE ASSOCIATED WITH THAT LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. IT ALSO MEANS THAT UTEP'S UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO AN ENRICHED CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH THE SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE TO COMPETE WITH GRADUATES OF PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY, AND THAT THE DEGREES EARNED BY ALL UTEP ALUMNI WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE IN VALUE. EL PASO AND THE SURROUNDING REGION WILL ALSO BENEFIT FROM OUR TRANSFORMATION, AS UTEP BECOMES AN EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE CATALYST FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, COMMERCIALIZATION, BUSINESS START-UPS AND OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ”

UTEP this year. Thank you, Sonam! These new arrivals have increased the size of UTEP's Bhutanese student family to 16, 12 of whom are enrolled in graduate programs, including one at the doctoral level. We're also very pleased that recent UTEP Liberal Arts graduate, Xochitl Rodriguez, departed this week for Bhutan, where she will work this year with a children's art program. We hope that Xochitl will be the first of many UTEP students who will help us develop a more robust student exchange with Bhutan.

...

There are many other examples of accomplishments that are mostly unsung but contribute to our well being and quality of life. They help make us more secure, more comfortable, more productive and increasingly proud of UTEP's service to this region. I'll share just a few examples with you:

• The H1N1 Flu Task Force mobilized quickly last spring to develop a response to the threat of that disease, and they continue to work this fall on the many current H1N1 issues.

• The Office of International Programs helped respond to the huge demand for U.S. passports this year by volunteering to serve as a processing center for nearly 3,500 passport applications from residents of this region.

health science and engineering, and in faculty recruitment and retention, have resulted in increased competitiveness in the pursuit of external funding for research. UTEP faculty and staff submitted a total of 582 proposals this past year, requesting more than \$327 million in total grant funding.

UTEP received more than \$57 million in new grant awards during FY 2009. Especially encouraging is the number of grants that involve interdisciplinary teams, comprising departments across the campus as well as external partners.

...

We all fully understand that our many accomplishments, however satisfying they may be, serve mainly to raise our expectations for the new opportunities that lie ahead. And at no time in our history have those opportunities been more apparent than right now. With our designation by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Legislature as one of seven Emerging Tier One universities in the state, UTEP is poised to step to the forefront of U.S. higher education. Our faculty and staff's success in competing for research grants, ranking UTEP fourth among all Texas public universities in federal research funding, after UT Austin, TAMU (Texas A&M Uni-

pete with graduates of prestigious universities across the U.S. and internationally, and that the degrees earned by all UTEP alumni will continue to increase in value. El Paso and the surrounding region will also benefit from our transformation, as UTEP becomes an even more effective catalyst for technology transfer, commercialization, business start-ups and overall economic development.

As we step up to compete to become one of Texas' next Tier One universities, we know that there will be a temptation to adopt tried and true models from other institutions that are already in this category. I think we all know from our experience of the past 20 years, however, that the pathway to UTEP's success is not achieved by emulating models that aren't well aligned with who we are and whom we serve. Just as Alfredo Corchado erred in trying to become like his new peer group at *The Wall Street Journal* in Philadelphia, UTEP would make a serious mistake in trying to be like the traditional Tier One peer group. Beware of Harvard on the Border!

Once again, our primary challenge is to be confident in creating a new model, to transform UTEP into a Tier One University by leveraging our authentic strengths: doing Tier One the UTEP way. We must attain the ex-



pected level of research and graduate program excellence while at the same time never losing sight of our commitment to undergraduate student access and success, and to the future human and economic development of this region. Although there will surely be skeptics, and those who will identify us as underdogs,

come one of Texas' next Tier One universities has coincided with reaching this major milestone in UTEP's history and the fundraising opportunities associated with it.

Finally, we must ensure that all of us on the UTEP campus—faculty, staff and students—think and talk about, and actively participate

ergies that will be required to attain our Tier One goal.

This engagement by everyone on the campus will not only foster coordination, efficiencies and progress toward Tier One. It will also ensure that we remain fully grounded in and committed to UTEP's strong institutional

“ WITH OUR DESIGNATION BY THE TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD AND THE LEGISLATURE AS ONE OF SEVEN EMERGING TIER ONE UNIVERSITIES IN THE STATE, UTEP IS POISED TO STEP TO THE FOREFRONT OF U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION. ”

we know that we can become a truly successful Tier One University only by doing it our way.

Our second challenge will be to continue building confidence and investments of the UT System, the Coordinating Board and the Legislature in UTEP's vision, and the many positive student success and research outcomes that regularly validate it. The continued support of these Texas stakeholders, ranging from approval of new doctoral programs to capital funding for facilities, will be absolutely critical to accelerating our journey to Tier One.

We must also turn to our alumni and friends, and to partners in the Paso del Norte region, for additional support in an effort to raise all UTEP programs and activities to a Tier One level. Their support has already ranked UTEP second among the nine academic institutions in the UT System in annual giving, and the announcement of a special fundraising initiative this summer to earn state matching funds for philanthropic gifts to Emerging Tier One Universities once again demonstrated their strong commitment. Generous UTEP friends responded enthusiastically, and over a few weeks, donated \$4.2 million in cash gifts which, once certified, will qualify us to earn approximately \$3 million in state matching funds. What a powerful validation of our vision and what a splendid way to end a highly successful year at UTEP!


This emphasis on fundraising will accelerate during the next several years as we conduct UTEP's Centennial Campaign, which will culminate in 2014, our 100th birthday. We are fortunate indeed that this opportunity to be-

in our Tier One transformation. Achieving this goal will require far more than the work of a small subset of faculty involved in grant writing and doctoral education; or the engagement of a few administrators in speechmaking or fundraising. It will only occur when we've all successfully answered the question, "What does becoming a Tier One University mean to me and my department and how can I and my department contribute to achieving it?" A good example is Christine Roquet's work in Facilities Services to complete the first campus-wide research and instructional space survey, which helped support a 1.5 percent increase in UTEP's federal indirect cost rate. Christine's efforts will have a substantial impact on UTEP's progress toward Tier One for many years to come. All of us have the same potential to contribute to achieving our collective Tier One goal, and we'll all be asked to do just that.

During the coming year, we will engage in a series of conversations about what Tier One means for each administrative unit and individual on this campus, what must be done to accelerate our progress toward Tier One, and how every single department and each individual faculty and staff member can—indeed, must!—be a Tier One player. Guided by the University's Strategic Plan, we will develop a set of interconnected college and departmental action plans that will chart the course of UTEP's development over the next 10 years, and shape our collaborative efforts to make efficient use of often scarce resources, leverage our considerable assets, and achieve the syn-

values. Our collective commitment and hard work over the past 20 years has placed UTEP at the forefront of higher education transformation in Texas and nationally. We now have another very special set of opportunities before us and powerful momentum behind us. Working hard, working smart and working together, we will complete our journey toward national prominence as the first Tier One University in the U.S. with a 21st century student demographic. In 1966, we changed the face of intercollegiate athletics, today we are changing the face of higher education, and tomorrow we will change the face of Tier One Universities.

Go Miners! 🏈

TO READ THE SPEECH IN ITS ENTIRETY, VISIT [WWW.UTEP.EDU](http://WWW.UTEP.EDU) AND CLICK ON PRESIDENT'S WELCOME THEN ON  SPEECHES AND COMMENTARY.



“ YOU MUST BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD ”

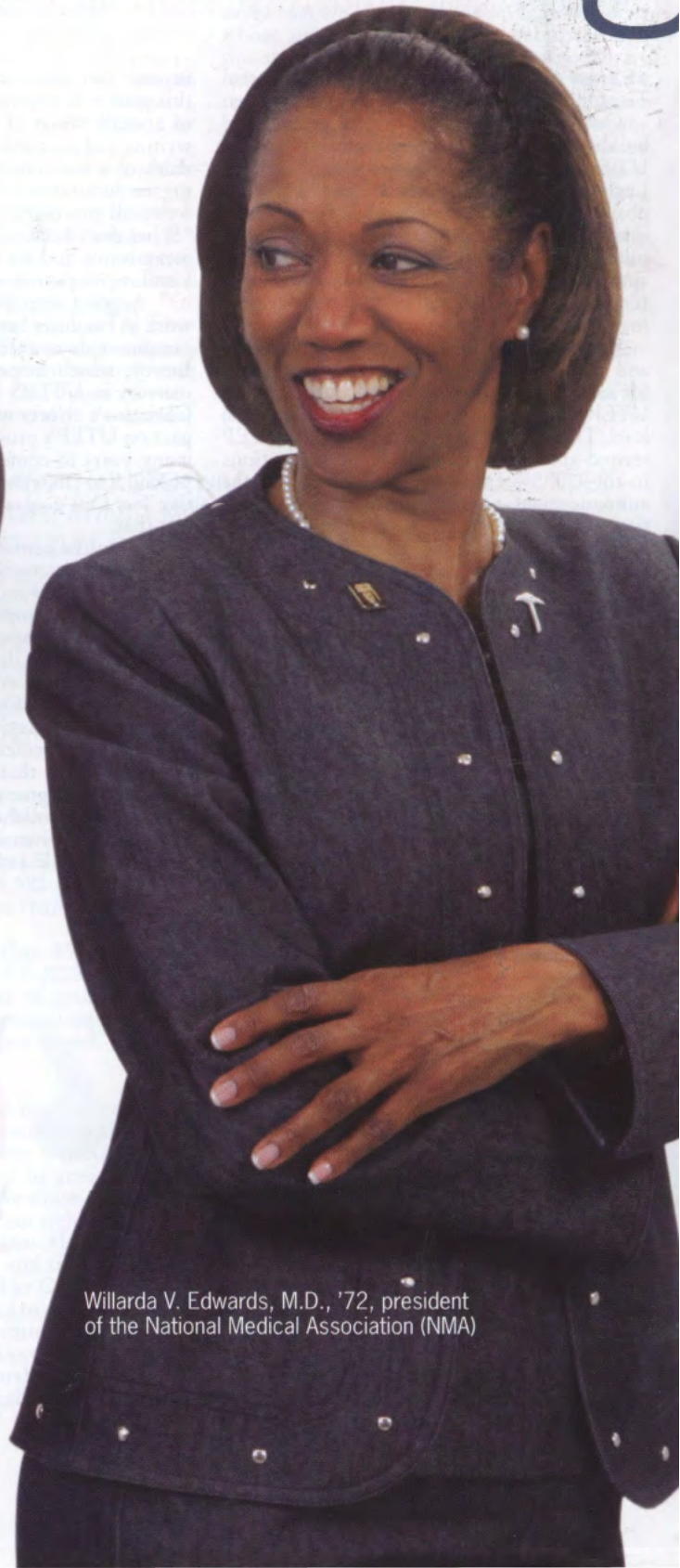
MAHATMA GANDHI



# Leading



J. James Rohack, M.D., '76, president of the American Medical Association (AMA)



Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., '72, president of the National Medical Association (NMA)



# the Way

BY DAVID PEREGRINO

Selected to head the nation's most prestigious medical associations, UTEP alumni Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., and J. James Rohack, M.D., say they will fight for Americans' health equity.

**T**wo important presidencies have their success stories deeply rooted at The University of Texas at El Paso.

This summer, two Miners took the helms of the country's top medical associations—a significant accomplishment and testament to the quality of education the University provides its students.

In July, Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., a 1972 UTEP biology graduate, was inducted as president of the National Medical Association (NMA), the oldest and largest organization representing the interests of black physicians in the United States.

J. James Rohack, M.D., a 1976 UTEP psychology graduate, assumed the presidency of the American Medical Association (AMA), the largest association of physicians and medical students in the country, in June.

That two Miners will simultaneously lead two of the nation's most influential physician organizations at such an important time is not lost on Edwards and Rohack, close colleagues who first met years ago through their participation in the AMA.

A cardiologist who lives in Bryan, Texas, Rohack asked Edwards to give the invocation during his installation as AMA president.

"We really solidified our relationship when I knew he was going to be elected president of the AMA," said Edwards, who earned her M.D. from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1977 and currently practices internal medicine in Baltimore.

"We said, 'We've got to do something together,' and so our focus will be the elimination of

health disparities," added Edwards, who also was selected as a 2009 Distinguished Alumna by the UTEP Alumni Association. Rohack was a 2008 recipient of the award.

## INEQUITIES IN HEALTH

Rohack and Edwards plan to address inequalities reflected not only in the alarmingly disproportionate rates of disease among minorities, but also in the low number of minority physicians practicing medicine across the nation.

On the patient-care side, the government's 2007 National Health Care Disparities Report concludes that there has been no improvement in some of the country's biggest health disparities:

- Blacks have a rate of new AIDS cases 10 times higher than whites, and Hispanics are contracting AIDS at a rate more than 3.5 times higher than non-Hispanic whites.
- American Indians and Alaska natives are twice as likely to lack prenatal care in the first trimester as whites.
- Low-income children are nearly a third more likely to experience poor communication with their health care providers than children from high-income families.

On the other side of the stethoscope, blacks made up 13 percent of the population in 2006, yet only 3.5 percent of physicians are black, according to the AMA. Hispanics made up almost 15 percent of the population, yet represented only 5 percent of physicians.





**Top:** J. James Rohack, M.D., is sworn in as president of the American Medical Association (AMA) in June 2009.  
**Above:** Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., is sworn in as president of the National Medical Association (NMA) in July 2009.  
**Left:** UTEP alumni J. James Rohack, M.D., and Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., are honored as pioneers of El Paso health care.

## A TIME TO HEAL

The friendship between Edwards and Rohack also will send a message of healing between the two organizations. The NMA was established in 1895, at a time when the AMA stood silent while its affiliated state and local medical associations excluded blacks from membership. Even through the early 1960s, as the Civil Rights Act was being debated and shaped, the AMA remained on the sidelines as many affiliates continued to discriminate.

AMA membership, which brought with it hospital privileges, specialty training and invaluable professional support and mentoring, was nearly impossible for blacks to gain until the late '60s.

In July 2008, the AMA formally apologized for its history of racism against black doctors. In years prior to the apology, however, the AMA, NMA and other minority medical associations had been making solid progress, opening lines of communication and launching health equity initiatives.

"Our relationship will help with the healing over the association's past discrimination problems," Rohack said. "It's an honor to work with Dr. Edwards."

## REVERSING TRENDS

The desire to reverse health disparities also is a priority among UTEP educators and researchers who live and work in the predominantly Hispanic Paso del Norte region.

In collaboration with The University of Texas at Houston School of Public Health—El Paso Regional Campus, UTEP operates the Hispanic Health Disparities Research Center, which supports a number of important health disparity studies and research programs. Many others aim to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the medical field, drawing on the strengths of the student population it serves: bicultural,

bilingual and well-prepared professionals ready to make a difference.

At the national level, the AMA, NMA and other minority medical associations have launched a number of health equity initiatives, which Edwards and Rohack said are critical to improving the health of all Americans, no matter their racial, ethnic or economic background.

In 1992, the AMA created the Minority Affairs Consortium to liaison with the major minority medical associations and launch initiatives to put more minorities in the medical education pipeline. In 2004, the AMA, NMA and National Hispanic Medical Association created the Commission to End Health Care Disparities. That same year, the AMA Foundation Minority Scholars program was created, awarding \$10,000 scholarships to 12 students in 2008.

Another initiative close to Edwards and Rohack is the AMA's Doctors Back to School program, which brings minority physicians into elementary and high school classrooms.

Edwards said it is important for children from minority and low-income backgrounds to see firsthand that it is possible to overcome adversity and become a physician.

"Don't just look for talented students in college, look for them in grade school—make sure they know they can achieve this kind of goal," Edwards said.

Rohack said he's excited about the year ahead, working with Edwards to build upon the success of Doctors Back to School and many other initiatives that will help solve the problem of health disparities.

"We'll be focusing on the issues of covering the uninsured, improving the value of what is being paid for in health care, and continuing to improve health care quality while finding ways to decrease administrative waste," Rohack said.

"We hope that during our presidencies we'll have opportunities to have joint visits, perhaps even to the UTEP campus, to speak about the importance of making sure all Americans have access to quality health care," he said. ☑



J. James Rohack, M.D., '76



Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., '72





L-R: UT System Board of Regents Chairman James Huffines, UT System Regent Paul Foster, UTEP President Diana Natalicio and Sidney McNairy of the National Institutes of Health participate in the official ribbon-cutting for the new Bioscience Research Building.

## NEW BIOSCIENCE RESEARCH BUILDING OPENS BY DAVID PEREGRINO

THE 140,000-SQUARE-FOOT, \$45 MILLION FACILITY HOUSES UTEP'S BORDER BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER

The University of Texas at El Paso welcomed several special guests for the grand opening of the five-story, 140,000-square-foot Bioscience Research Building.

The \$45 million structure houses the Border Biomedical Research Center (BBRC), supported by the Research Centers in Minority Institutions program of the National Institutes of Health, and a Biosafety Level 3 laboratory, where faculty scientists are conducting research on infectious diseases.

The celebration took place Sept. 3, 2009, in front of the new building, located on Wiggins Road next to the University Library. Special guests included James Huffines, chairman of The University of Texas System Board of Regents, and his wife, Patty; Dr. David Prior, executive vice chancellor for academic affairs for the UT System; UT System Regent Paul Foster; and Sidney McNairy, Ph.D., D.Sc., of the National Center for Research Resources at the NIH.

Also attending were the presidents of the three major national medical associations: James Rohack, M.D., of the American Medical Association (AMA), Willarda Ed-

wards, M.D., of the National Medical Association (NMA), and Elena Rios, M.D., of the National Hispanic Medical Association. Rohack and Edwards are UTEP alumni.

"This celebration symbolizes both the enormous progress that UTEP has made during the past 10 years in expanding its research agenda, especially in the biomedical and health sciences, and the UT System's significant investment in UTEP's capacity-building," said Huffines.

The facilities will enable UTEP to recruit and retain highly competitive researcher-teachers, while enriching the learning experiences for UTEP's graduate and undergraduate students.

The UTEP Biological Sciences Department serves 3,500 students and approximately 850 biology majors. Students and faculty have access to six core facilities in the BBRC.

The state-of-the-art equipment

will advance inquiries into important health issues along the U.S.-Mexico border, including neuroscience and metabolic disorders such as obesity and diabetes; infectious diseases such as influenza, HIV/AIDS and West Nile virus; and health disparities among different population groups.

The BBRC was recently awarded a five-year, \$12.4 million NIH grant, which will be used to sustain

the laboratories and to hire more faculty and post-doctoral researchers.

"This new facility aligns with UTEP's mission to serve the needs of our Paso del Norte region and moves us toward our goal of serving as a model for U.S. higher education in the 21st century," UTEP President Diana Natalicio said during the grand opening ceremony.



L-R: Huffines, College of Science Dean Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Ph.D., Assistant to the President Estrella Escobar, and Biological Sciences Department Chair Robert Kirken, Ph.D., celebrate the new building's opening.

The new building reflects the growing significance of biomedical research on the UTEP campus. The Biological Sciences Department had 19 tenured or tenure-track faculty in 1992, and fewer than half of them participated in biomedical research. Today, there are 32 tenured or tenure-track faculty members, with approximately 70 percent of them engaged in new research—a figure that should keep climbing as the University attracts more investigators and students. 📌



The new Bioscience Research Building



Georgialina Rodriguez, Ph.D., a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Biological Sciences, and Robert Kirken, Ph.D., chair of the department, work together in the Border Biomedical Research Center's High Throughput Screening Drug Discovery Core Lab.

# TARGETING CANCER

UTEP SCIENTISTS TAP GENETIC DATA  
TO DEVELOP NEW THERAPIES

BY DAVID PEREGRINO

The concept of “personalized medicine”—diagnosing and treating disease based on a patient’s individual genetic profile—is driving a number of cancer research investigations in the Border Biomedical Research Center (BBRC) at The University of Texas at El Paso.



**T**he mapping of the human genome, completed in 2003, has advanced the field of molecular diagnostics—the identification of defective genes and faulty protein-to-protein signaling that lead to uncontrolled cell division.

“We now have tools that let us study a particular person’s DNA, allowing us to screen for cancer biomarkers (molecules that indicate disease) and find the biochemical pathways that could be effective targets for drugs,” said BBRC Director Robert Kirken, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Biological Sciences at UTEP.

This personalized approach to diagnosis and treatment promises to be an improvement over traditional cancer therapies, which often involve a trial-and-error approach to finding the right drugs and dosages for a patient. Because of variations in his or her genes, a patient may sometimes experience unpleasant side effects or even toxic reactions from drugs.

Molecular profiling offers a more precise alternative to traditional medicine’s “one-size-fits-all” approach, Kirken said.

“You’re not just given a drug and left hoping for the best,” he said.

The field of study that examines an individual’s genetic makeup to develop tailored drug therapy is called pharmacogenomics. BBRC researchers are using pharmacogenomics to investigate therapies for an array of cancers. Several of these projects are highlighted here.

## TARGETED THERAPY

Novel drug holds potential for treatment of T and B cell leukemias and lymphomas

Kirken heads a research team that is testing a promising new drug for treating leukemias and lymphomas of T and B cells, white blood cells that play an important role in the immune system. Leukemia and lymphoma cause some 43,000 deaths annually, according to the American Cancer Society.

The compound studied by Kirken’s team targets a protein enzyme that plays a critical role in the uncontrolled division of cells characteristic of these types of cancers. The drug inhibits the enzyme’s activity, disrupting its ability to send cell-growth signals down the biochemical pathway, but not affecting other enzymes or cell types. In laboratory testing, the researchers have had encouraging results—the compound was successful in reducing the growth of certain human leukemia and lymphoma cell lines.

“This inhibitor selectively targets an enzyme that is not found in other tissues, such as the stomach, heart, liver, kidney or brain,” Kirken said. “This means cancer patients may be able to avoid problems with the side effects associated with drug toxicity.”

## FATTY ACIDS AND COLON CANCER

Studying the link between Omega-6 and inflammatory immune response

Researchers led by Biological Sciences Professor Siddhartha Das, Ph.D., hope to develop effective drug therapies for colorectal cancer by understanding the biochemical responses triggered by certain dietary fats.

“American diets, typically high in processed

foods and low in fresh fish, often have an imbalance of Omega-6 fatty acids, which promote an inflammatory immune system response that leads to a variety of health problems, including colorectal cancer,” Das said.

Colon cancer leads to nearly 50,000 deaths annually, according to the American Cancer Society. Among Hispanic men, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death, behind lung cancer.

Das is studying a particular Omega-6 fatty acid, arachidonic acid, and its role in an enzymatic process that leads to the production of inflammatory molecules responsible for uncontrolled cell growth. He hopes to discover drug compounds that effectively target the enzymes and reduce the production of the inflammatory molecules.



## A NOVEL APPROACH

Compound may be effective in treating hormone-resistant cancers

Marc Cox, Ph.D., an assistant professor of biological sciences, is investigating a drug compound for prostate cancer that inhibits the biological effects of male sex hormones known as androgens.

Patients with prostate cancer are often treated with hormone therapies to lower levels of androgen, a key stimulator of prostate tissue growth. These androgen-deprivation strategies may be effective in controlling the disease for several years, but prostate cancers eventually develop resistance to hormone therapy, enabling tumors to progress, Cox said. Patients with hormone-resistant prostate cancers have limited treatment options.

Prostate cancer causes about 27,000 deaths annually, according to the American Cancer Society. It is the third leading cause of cancer death among Hispanic men.

“There is a need for effective anti-tumor drugs for hormone-resistant cancers,” Cox said.

Cox’s drug compound targets a molecular mechanism associated with the regulation of the androgen receptor in cells. The compound shows promise as an effective and efficient inhibitor of the androgen receptor, with less toxic side effects. ☒

L-R: Former undergraduate student Amparo Hernandez, who earned a degree in microbiology in June 2009, and post-doctoral fellow Jeremy Ross, Ph.D., conduct studies in UTEP’s new Bioscience Research Building.

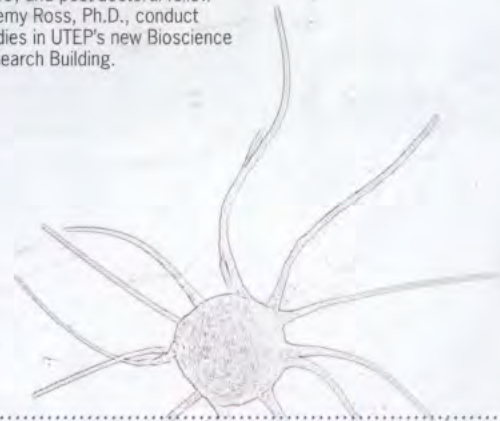
## WHEN CELL DIVISION GOES WRONG

Chemical pathways may be effective drug targets

Research Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences Sukla Roychowdhury, Ph.D., is investigating the mechanisms of cell division to find biochemical pathways that could become effective drug targets for controlling cancer cell growth.

She is studying the chemical interactions of microtubules, protein filaments that play a key role in cell division. Microtubules participate in the organization and function of the mitotic spindle, a cellular structure necessary for separating chromosomes. If something goes wrong with the chemical signaling of the mitotic spindle, it could cause problems with cell division and lead to the production of cancerous cells.

Roychowdhury is focusing on these chemical signals and pathways with an eye for developing a targeted, “anti-mitotic” drug for cancer therapy.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PROJECTS AT UTEP’S BORDER BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER, VISIT



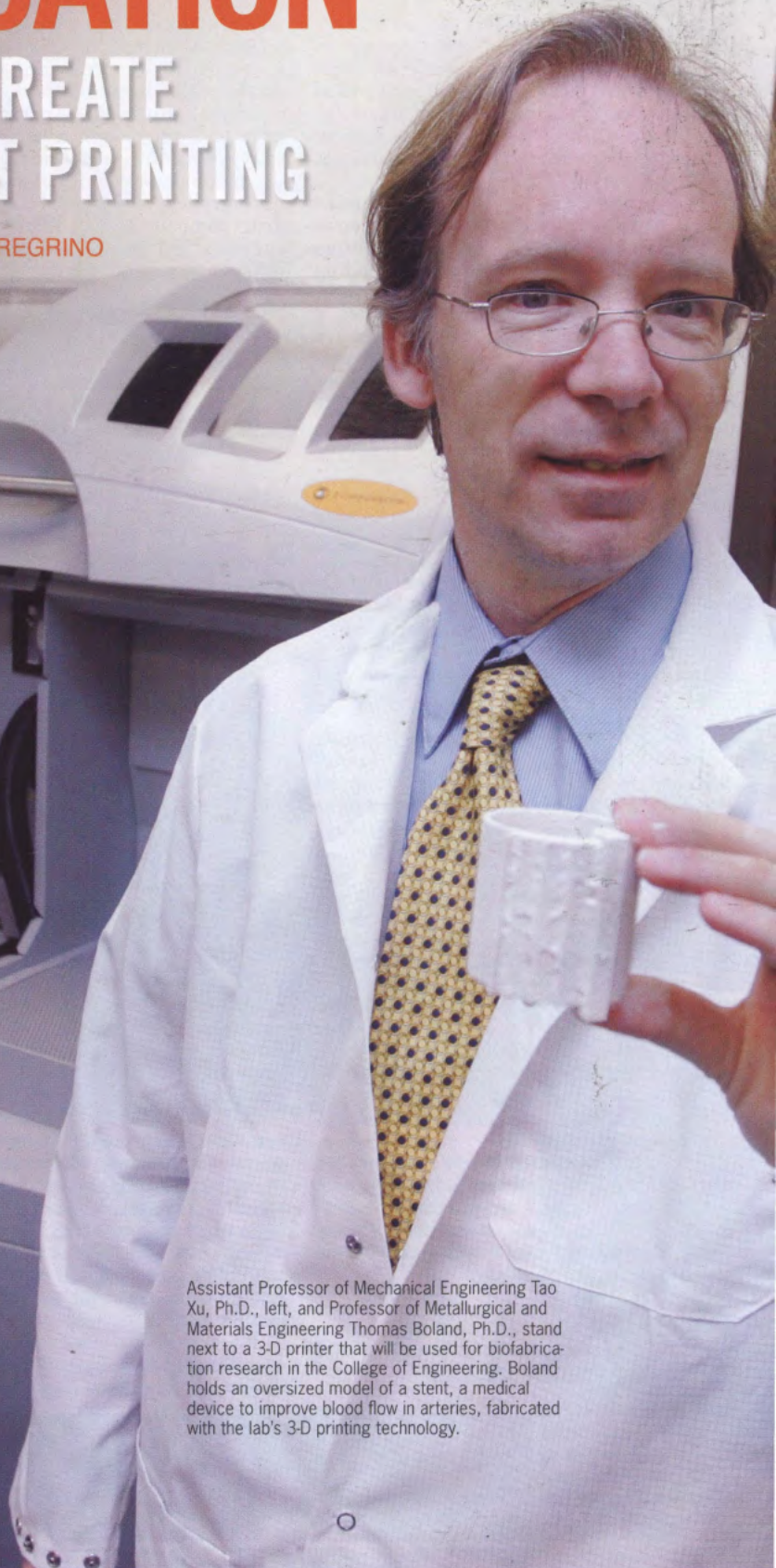
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# BIOFABRICATION

## UTEP SCIENTISTS CREATE TISSUE WITH INKJET PRINTING TECHNOLOGY

BY DAVID PEREGRINO



Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering Tao Xu, Ph.D., left, and Professor of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Thomas Boland, Ph.D., stand next to a 3-D printer that will be used for biofabrication research in the College of Engineering. Boland holds an oversized model of a stent, a medical device to improve blood flow in arteries, fabricated with the lab's 3-D printing technology.



We hope the day will never come, but it may. You could get ill and require a kidney or heart transplant. Or maybe you will need a skin graft after a bad accident. Today, this often means a long wait on an organ recipient list; or in the case of the skin graft, some significant scarring at the donor site.

In the not-so-distant future, however, doctors may be able to print your new organs or skin using the same kind of technology used by the inkjet printer on your desk.

The University of Texas at El Paso recently welcomed two new faculty members to the College of Engineering who are conducting research in this field of tissue engineering, known as bioprinting.

Thomas Boland, Ph.D., joined UTEP as a professor of metallurgical and materials engineering in the fall of 2009. Boland came by way of Clemson University, where he was instrumental in developing Clemson's bioengineering program.

Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering Tao Xu, who earned his Ph.D. in bioengineering from Clemson in 2005, joined UTEP in the summer of 2008. Like Boland, Xu is an expert in bioprinting and medical-device fabrication.

The professors will conduct their bioprinting research using state-of-the-art three-dimensional printers that spray layers of living cells onto biofriendly structures called scaffolds that help keep the cells alive and organize them into viable tissue.

In concept, it seems simple. But it will likely be many, many years before complex organs such as kidneys can be printed for implantation into humans. The use of bioprinting for regenerative medicine is still in its infancy, according to the professors.

"We still have the challenges of finding reliable cell sources for tissue and effective cell delivery methods for complex tissue systems," Xu said.

Boland said another challenge, particularly for thick tissue structures, is creating the microvasculature—tiny blood vessels—to supply enough oxygen, nutrients and waste-removal capability to keep the tissue alive. Boland and Clemson scientist Xiaofeng Cui recently published a paper in the journal *Biomaterials* describing a microvasculature-printing technique they developed that uses a unique bio-ink of human capillary cells and a scaffolding material made from a fibrous protein.

"We found that we could use the printer to simultaneously deposit the human microvascular cells along with biomaterials to create a structure with remarkable integrity," Boland said. "The approach shows promise for engineering human microvasculature."

## RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

Now that he is at UTEP, Boland is looking forward to continuing his lines of tissue-engineering research. Also, as head of UTEP's biomedical engineering programs, he is working on the development of new master's and doctoral biomedical engineering degrees.

Boland and Xu said they were attracted to UTEP by the possibilities of collaboration with faculty researchers at the new Paul L. Foster School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso. The cooperative spirit between the two institutions has been strengthened under the leadership of College of Engineering Dean Richard Schoepferster, who has made great strides in devel-

oping the college's biomedical engineering laboratories and programs since arriving at UTEP in 2007.

Already, Xu is working with Daniel Terreros, M.D., professor of pathology at the medical school, on a tissue-engineering project that aims to reduce the cost and improve the performance of medical devices called nerve guidance conduits. Xu is using a device called an electro-spinner to weave nano-sized fibers into implantable tubes that could be used to repair severed nerves.

"We also may be able to use the technology to create improved, cost-effective stents for arteries," Xu said. Stents are tubular devices used by surgeons to improve the blood flow in coronary arteries and other vessels.

Terreros said he is delighted to see bioengineering projects between the medical school and UTEP well under way in just the first year of the school's operation.

"For this kind of research, UTEP has the engineers that we don't have, and we have the patients that UTEP doesn't have ... we're looking forward to even larger scales of collaboration," Terreros said.



Xu holds a metal vascular stent, left, and an example of his research on the right: a nano-fiber technology that could be used to manufacture improved stents and nerve conduits.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Boland is also excited about what the future offers for students and faculty at UTEP who will now be able to plunge into the fascinating fields of bioprinting and other tissue-engineering technologies, thanks to the growth of these programs.

"We're interested in using bioprinting to create human skin. Engineered skin could have immediate applications for things such as drug discovery and cosmetics testing," Boland said.

Boland also is interested in starting some cutting-edge bioengineering projects in collaboration with cancer researchers at UTEP's Border Biomedical Research Center and the College of Engineering's W.M. Keck Center for 3-D Innovation, which has specialized equipment for making micro-sized devices.

"We've been discussing the possibility of engineering tumors with nano-sized sensors so that we can test the efficacy of anti-tumor drugs," Boland said. "That's something we are starting to look into." ❏





The Green Roof atop UTEP's Biology Building is among the first of its kind in El Paso.





# Green Roof

The University of Texas at El Paso is taking science and engineering research to new heights.

BY LAURA L. ACOSTA

**T**his spring UTEP grew its eco-friendly initiatives by constructing a green roof atop the Biology Building—among the first of its kind on a public building in El Paso.

Approximately 9,200 square feet of the building's roof is covered in regal mist, white evening primrose, sun gold gazania, red yucca and South African bulbine plants. The vegetation not only improves the building's energy performance but also creates an outdoor laboratory where UTEP researchers from different disciplines can combine their knowledge and conduct intensive studies on the environment.

As such, the green roof has become home to the University's Cyber-ShARE Sensor Testing facility, which is part of UTEP's Cyber-ShARE Center of Excellence.

Funded by the National Science Foundation, the outdoor facility is being used by engineering, computer science and bioscience faculty and students to develop and test new sensors to gather vital information on climate change, national defense and border security.

"In our daily lives, we use sensors without actually knowing it," said Craig E. Tweedie, Ph.D., assistant professor of biology in UTEP's environmental science and engineering programs. "When we look up the weather on the Internet, all of that data is being collected automatically by sensors that measure temperature, sunshine and the amount of rain that's fallen in the last few hours."

Tweedie and his team of student researchers are using the eco-friendly facility to test sensors on plants and soil before going out to remote locations in the Chihuahuan Desert

and Alaska, where the sensors will be used to collect data on greenhouse gases and climate change.

Tweedie said the new sensor testing facility has the potential to test equipment for the departments of defense and homeland security.

The idea for a green roof was introduced by Ed Soltero, UTEP's campus architect and director of the Planning and Construction department.

The roof consists of a pre-planted modular tray system that sits atop the roofing membrane. It is expected to reduce heat gains and losses, decreasing the building's energy costs.

"UTEP will hopefully serve as a catalyst to encourage the city and other developers to create these roofs," Soltero said. 🌱





# *RENT* WAS DUE AT THE UTEP DINNER THEATRE

BY ROBERT L. SELTZER

"I PICKED THE SHOW BECAUSE EVERY STUDENT OF THE LAST 12 YEARS HAS BEEN BUGGING ME TO DO THIS," GREG TAYLOR, HEAD OF THE UTEP DINNER THEATRE, SAID. "WHEN *RENT* CAME OUT, IT WAS THAT GENERATION'S *HAIR*. IT WAS *THE* SHOW. THEY JUST RELEASED THE RIGHTS LAST YEAR. WE HAD OVER 100 PEOPLE AUDITION FOR IT, AND THERE ARE 15 ROLES."

Sharon Kim plays the role of Mimi, a character fighting AIDS and drug addiction, in UTEP's production of *Rent*.



## WITH ITS COURAGEOUS PORTRAYAL OF CHARACTERS CUT DOWN BY DRUGS AND STRUGGLING WITH AIDS, *RENT* REDEFINED THE BROADWAY MUSICAL.

The Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning show, a rock musical loosely based on the opera *La Bohème*, brought the band out of the orchestra pit and onto the stage, addressing topics such as drug abuse, AIDS and cross dressers.

It was so popular that people camped on the street outside the theater, participating in a lottery for reduced-price seats, and when the Grammy-nominated original cast recording came out, residents could hear it blaring from New York City apartments.

While times have changed, and what was shocking in the mid-1990s may no longer seem controversial, the UTEP Dinner Theatre captured some of the same gritty magic that enthralled audiences all those years ago.

With HIV and AIDS still infecting an estimated 1 million people in the United States—and more than 40,000 new cases diagnosed each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—the show proved no less relevant today.

The UTEP Dinner Theatre staged *Rent* Oct. 9-31, 2009 with the producers extending the play one week beyond its original schedule due to the overwhelming response.

“The subject matter is set in a certain time, the 1980s, but the themes are just as relevant today as they were then,” said Jaime Barba, who directed the UTEP production. “Normally, when we do a show, we don’t expect to add another weekend, but we did with *Rent*. It was a surprise, a nice surprise.”

Strikingly different from past Dinner Theatre productions, the musical attracted new viewers while still welcoming the loyal theatre following.

“I picked the show because every student of the last 12 years has been bugging me to do this,” Greg Taylor, head of the UTEP Dinner Theatre, said. “When *Rent* came out, it was that generation’s *Hair*. It was the show. They just released the rights last year. We had over 100 people audition for it, and there are 15 roles.”

Barba, a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts, was fortunate enough to see *Rent* on Broadway, where it played for 12 years before closing in 2008, becoming the seventh-longest-running Broadway show in history, according to *The New York Times*.

“You’re always trying to attract the next generation of theater-goers,” Barba said. “I think it’s important to do something like *Rent* because it will appeal to a younger crowd. It’s also important for theaters to stay topical. You have to keep doing new things and trying new things.”

Sharon Kim, a senior music major at UTEP, played Mimi, the female lead who battles both drugs and AIDS.

“It’s a musical that’s very accessible to people who are not into musical theater,” she said. “It’s a different kind of musical. Mimi is so young. She’s about my age. She’s 19, and I’m 22. She’s fighting AIDS and drugs, and I always thought it was an awesome role.”

Judging from the response, the audience felt the same way.

“It’s hard to let go of a role sometimes, but as many plays as I’ve done, I thought I had gotten used to it,” said Tanisha Lewis, a senior majoring in multidisciplinary studies who played Joanne. “Still, I know I won’t be playing Joanne anymore, and it was such a beautiful role, so, yes, it was hard to let go. People have come up to me and said, ‘This is the best show I’ve ever seen at UTEP.’”

Don Cieslik, who played Mark Cohen in the production, agreed.

“I think *Rent* covers a lot of topics that people don’t necessarily expect to see in traditional musical theater—homosexuality, AIDS, drug addiction,” said Cieslik, who graduated from UTEP with a degree in fine arts last May. “But the play is also about love and freedom and a celebration of life, and that resonated with our audiences. We did what we were supposed to do—we made them feel.”

The UTEP theatre has staged daring productions before, including *The Producers* and *The Full Monty*, but *Rent* is more than daring; it is stark and tragic.

“At least once a season, we try to do something new,” Barba said. And, while the story is dark, the music is powerful and poignant, and Barba thought the combination would attract new theatre-goers while retaining the regular crowd.

“It’s important that you do everything,” Barba said. “You do the *Oklahoma*. You do *The King and I*’s, but you also do *Rent*.”

One person who realizes the importance of staging such groundbreaking productions is Daphne Rubin-Vega, who originated the role of Mimi in the Broadway production of *Rent*.

The musical made its debut in 1994, but for Rubin-Vega, the journey to stardom began long before.

When she was 9, Rubin-Vega discovered her first audience—her single mother and two older brothers.

Even a 9-year-old needs a stage, however, and she found that as well—a table in their tiny New York City apartment.

With spectators—and a stage from which to spellbind them—this young girl started to work her magic.

Short on experience but long on talent, a star was born during those shimmering moments, and the delivery room was that New York City apartment.

“My mother (Daphne Corina Tappin de Rubin-Vega) created an environment in which it was totally cool to read and sing and dance on the table,” Rubin-Vega, a native of Panama City, Panama, who emigrated to New York as a child, said during a telephone interview from her home in New York City.

“We knew the difference between a French horn and a tympan. How cool was that?”

It was a small venue, but her dreams were bigger than her environment; they would take her to wonderful places—places that were geographically nearby but artistically distant.

They would take her to recording studios, Broadway theaters and the big screen, where she has worked opposite the likes of Matt Dillon and Kevin Bacon, plus Academy Award winners Robert De Niro and Philip Seymour Hoffman.

Most of all, they would take her to stardom, that place where dreams become reality.

“She’s a significant role model for Hispanics,” Barba said. “Someone from El Paso can look at her and say, ‘Hey, there’s a Hispanic on Broadway. I can make it, too.’ And she’s a role model for everyone, male or female, because, ultimately, you admire individuals for their talent, not their gender or ethnicity, and she’s a very talented performer.”

While the UTEP production did not feature Rubin-Vega, the cast and crew produced the same spirit that captivated Broadway—and the world—when she starred in the hit musical.

“After our last show, I walked backstage during the final curtain call, and most of the cast members were in tears,” Barba said. “I told them, ‘You guys are ridiculous. There’ll be other shows.’ They responded, ‘But it won’t be *this*’



Photo by Barron Claiborne

Original *Rent* cast members Adam Pascal and Daphne Rubin-Vega

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**"[RUBIN-VEGA IS] A SIGNIFICANT ROLE MODEL FOR HISPANICS," SAID JAIME BARBA, DIRECTOR OF UTEP'S PRODUCTION OF *RENT*. "SOMEONE FROM EL PASO CAN LOOK AT HER AND SAY, 'HEY, THERE'S A HISPANIC ON BROADWAY. I CAN MAKE IT, TOO.' AND SHE'S A ROLE MODEL FOR EVERYONE, MALE OR FEMALE, BECAUSE, ULTIMATELY, YOU ADMIRE INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR TALENT, NOT THEIR GENDER OR ETHNICITY, AND SHE'S A VERY TALENTED PERFORMER."**

show with *these* people.' They knew it was special."

While Rubin-Vega preceded the Latina role models of today, she did admire Irene Cara, who played Coco Hernandez in the movie *Fame*.

"I thought she was fantastic," she said. "It wasn't that she was Latina. She was just lovely, a great singer."

She also looked up to an artist of an earlier generation, Rita Moreno, the star of *West Side Story* on Broadway and film—and, again, not because she was Latina.

"I love her," she said. "She has a beautiful sense of grace and power, and she has a body of work that's impressive regardless of where she came from."

Her greatest role model, however, was the woman who watched her perform on that table.

"My mother was very brave, very courageous," she said. "Like a lot of immigrants, she came here to find a better life for her kids. She had this thick Bohemian streak about her. She pursued her dream, and she made a nest upon

which I could cultivate my dream."

The dream, vague and indistinct at first, began to focus when she asked David Bowie and Arif Mardin—the star and producer of the fantasy film *Labyrinth*, respectively—to let her record

a song for the movie's soundtrack. They said yes. That was in 1986.

Before the recording session, however, the bold, ambitious teenager landed another gig with Bowie, singing "Happy Birthday" with him at a party. It was an impromptu engagement she quickly and happily included on her résumé. The move paid off, leading to her work with Pajama Party, a Latin female group that scored a pop hit with "Yo No Se" in 1988.

"I think that item on my résumé *did* help a lot," she said, laughing. "But, if it got me the job, I wanted to make sure I earned it. My stubbornness, my tenacity paid off. I was going to keep working at my craft until I got good, *very* good. I did not want to be filled with *vergüenza* (shame). That's a good motivator."

There was no reason to worry. There would be no shame in her future—just the *orgullo* (pride) that comes from a sense of accomplishment. Pajama Party broke up in 1992, and two years later, she began her three-year run with *Rent*, the Broadway musical that established her as a major talent.

*Rent* was a phenomenon, its story so gut-wrenching that it would prove emotionally exhausting for some of its cast members, including Rubin-Vega. She played Mimi, a junky with AIDS who worked as an exotic dancer, performing the role as if *she* were the one with the disease, then often fatal. Manic one moment, contemplative the next, she was a woman in pain, desperately clinging to the life that was slowly, tragically disappearing.

"I grew up in the (New York City's Greenwich) Village, and I knew the people in the play," she said. "There was nothing like it, *really* like it, before. I felt I had a right to tell this story. I had a sense of ownership about it. I was *there*."

Like the other cast members, Rubin-Vega memorized her lines, but the drama transcended the script; it was *real*.

"I knew those people," she said. "They were more than characters. They were real people, born from composites of Jonathan's real friends."

Jonathan was Jonathan Larson, the man who wrote the ground-breaking play, which won a Pulitzer Prize. He died of an aortic aneurism the night of *Rent*'s final dress rehearsal. It was the cruelest irony that Larson and the cast could face—the actors, dealing with a tragedy on stage, now had to deal with one in real life.

"It was such a horrible time," she said. "It was very painful. I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, some of these people are coming to the show because they want to get close to a tragedy, a train wreck.' It was very disconcerting.

"But it was a galvanizing experience. All of us, at one point or another, felt we were delivering a message. We were ambassadors of theater, because we knew how different this play was."

After *Rent*, for which she earned a Tony nomination, Rubin-Vega turned to Hollywood, performing in *Wild Things* (with Dillon and Bacon) and *Flawless* (with De Niro, Seymour Hoffman and her *Rent* castmate Wilson Jermaine Heredia, who played Angel and earned Tony and Drama Desk Awards as best featured actor in a musical for the role). Then she returned to Broadway, receiving another Tony nomination for her role as Conchita in *Anna in the Tropics*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Nilo Cruz, in 2004. She also came back to one of her first loves, music, recording pop, rock, reggae and Latin folk for *Redemption Songs*.



Actress Daphne Rubin-Vega poses for a portrait during the 2010 Sundance Film Festival held in Park City, Utah.





Photo by Matt Carr

The cast of *Jack Goes Boating* L-R: John Ortiz, Amy Ryan, Daphne Rubin-Vega and Philip Seymour Hoffman (Academy Award Winner for *Capote* and director of *Jack Goes Boating*) at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival

Vienna Festival this summer) founded LAB in the early 1990s," Rubin-Vega said. "It has expanded and become more diverse. But Lab was never *specifically* Latino. It was just majority Latino. We were proud to be Latinos, but we were also proud to be good."

And that provides us with a clue as to why she is such a good role model, for those who choose to confer that status upon her. She is Latina. She is proud. And she is good—very, *very* good—at her craft.

"At the time Rubin-Vega starred in *Rent*, there were really not a lot of Hispanic stars on Broadway," Barba said. "Yes, you had Chita Rivera and Rita Moreno, the uber-famous Latina women of the '50s and '60s, but they were from an

"I call that my Mommy album," said Rubin-Vega, who is married to Tommy Costanzo, the brother of her former singing partner with Pajama Party, Marialisa Costanzo.

earlier generation. Rubin-Vega brought the face of a brown performer to a new generation, which I think is great." 📧

**"IF PEOPLE SEE ME AS A ROLE MODEL, AS A LATINA WHO HAS ATTRACTED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ATTENTION, I EMBRACE THE NOTION," RUBIN-VEGA SAID. "I TRY TO LIVE MY LIFE AS HONESTLY AS I CAN. I TRY NOT TO HURT ANYONE, EITHER BY MY ACTIONS OR MY WORDS. I MAKE CHOICES THAT OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT NOT MAKE, BUT I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DO THAT, BECAUSE IT IS MY LIFE."**

Tommy Costanzo, a 1988 graduate of Yale University who played on the soccer team that won the Ivy League Championship two years earlier, is now vice president of Vornado Realty Trust, one of the largest publicly traded real estate companies in the country.

"I recorded the album when I was pregnant with Luca," Rubin-Vega said.

Luca, their son, is now 4 years old.

Motherhood has helped Rubin-Vega recognize the importance of role models, although she does not see herself as a role model for Latino artists or others.

"You don't decide you're going to be a role model," she said. "Someone else confers that status upon you."

She recognizes, however, that young Latino artists may look up to her for inspiration.

"If people see me as a role model, as a Latina who has attracted a certain amount of attention, I embrace the notion," she said. "I try to live my life as honestly as I can. I try not to hurt anyone, either by my actions or my words. I make choices that other people might not make, but I reserve the right to do that, because it is my life."

And what a life it has been. In addition to her two Tony nominations, she received the Theatre World Award for her debut performance in *Rent* and the Blockbuster award for Best Supporting Actress in *Wild Things*. She has also portrayed Fantine in the revival of *Les Misérables*, Magenta in the Broadway production of *The Rocky Horror Show*, and Martirio in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, the last play by Federico Garcia Lorca.

Rubin-Vega appears in a new film, *Jack Goes Boating*, reprising her role in the 2007 Broadway play. It features Seymour Hoffman, who also directed the movie. Seymour Hoffman is a fellow member of LAByrinth Theater Company—a multicultural collaborative of actors that produces new plays reflecting the voices in the New York community.

"John Ortiz (who starred as Othello on the stage in the

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT FUTURE PRODUCTIONS AT THE UTEP DINNER THEATRE, CALL 915-747-5234 OR VISIT [WWW.UTEP.EDU/TICKETS](http://WWW.UTEP.EDU/TICKETS)**



Photo by Fernando Leon

Daphne Rubin-Vega and her husband Tommy Costanzo.





Reprinted from Sports Illustrated November 23, 2009

# EARLY STEP ON THE ROAD TO GLORY

## THE UNLIKELY GENESIS OF TEXAS WESTERN'S HISTORIC NCAA TITLE

BY ALEXANDER WOLFF

With Hollywood's enshrinement of the 1966 NCAA basketball champion Texas Western in the 2006 film *Glory Road*, the Miners' story would seem to have been mined down to its last vein. The first title team with five black starters subdued all-white Kentucky to deliver a new day, with Don Haskins the accidental agitator, a coach who wanted only to play his best

players. But on the eve of a new college hoops season an obscure footnote to that story has surfaced, and it provides a worthy new insight into how a predominantly white school in the old Confederacy came to recruit a bounty of black players, even before passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

Turns out the answer begins in the spring of 1962 with the friendship of two men, both from the El Paso barrio and neither of them Hispanic: Bert Williams, a white city alderman and former Miners basketball captain, and Nolan Richardson, an African-American hoops player then in his junior year at Texas Western (now known as UTEP). Richardson, who would go on to coach Arkansas to the 1994 NCAA title, was a good enough outfielder to be offered a contract by the Houston Colt .45s, and Williams roped him into ringer duty on his softball team. After a game the two swung by the Oasis, a restaurant owned by former mayor Fred Hervey. Richardson knew exactly how they'd be received, but Williams dared their waitress to deny them service. "She looked me in the eye—she wouldn't look at Nolan—and said, 'I can't serve him,'" says Williams, now 83. "I went into my whole 'Don't be that way, these are different times' mode. Jack Kennedy had just come into office pushing civil rights. She didn't budge. I said, 'I'll be back.'"

In mid-century El Paso, nonwhites wanting to eat out had to go to so-called "black-and-tan" places on the South Side. Growing up during the Depression, Williams learned Spanish while being reared by a single mom on \$12 a week. Mishearing his first name Bert, kids called him Pájaro, Spanish for bird, and the name stuck. In college in the 1940s, "seven of the top 10 guys on the team were [Hispanic]," says Williams, who as a result got a taste of discrimination: After road games players had to take all-night bus rides home because few motels around the Southwest would accommodate them.

At the time of the Oasis incident, Williams held a job in the city attorney's office, where he had already sketched out an antidiscrimination ordinance. At the next city council meeting he thumped a draft on the table and persuaded the other three aldermen to sign it. Mayor Ralph Seitsinger vetoed the measure, but despite threatening phone calls and the ostracism of purported friends, Williams led a unanimous override.

Only weeks later Haskins, who had just finished his first season as the Texas Western coach, signed the nation's top recruit, a black junior college star named Jim (Bad News) Barnes. In local lore Barnes signed because Haskins beat him in a free throw shooting contest. (According to Haskins, Barnes made 17 of 25; after sinking his 18th straight without removing his sport coat, the coach said, "Sign.") Less known is that during his campus visit Barnes had a chance to meet Williams and told him that he wouldn't attend a four-year college where he couldn't go to the movies. That wasn't a problem in El Paso, thanks

to Williams's ordinance, and Barnes went on to anchor Haskins's first two NCAA tournament teams and become the top pick in the 1964 NBA draft. As a result every black ballplayer in the country knew of the unlikely basketball power on the Rio Grande. It's a straight line from Williams's indignation, to Jim Crow's exile, to Barnes's arrival, to the signing of players such as Willie Cager, Bobby Joe Hill and David Latin, the nucleus of the 1966 title team.

Williams became mayor in 1971 but was ousted after one term by none other than Hervey, the Oasis's proprietor. But the Oasis incident—and Williams's fierce and principled work in its aftermath—had built the on-ramp to *Glory Road*. Indeed, today Williams and his wife, Barbara, a former host of the children's television show *Romper Room*, live on East Baltimore Drive, the thoroughfare that, as it reaches the Don Haskins Center, now goes officially by *Glory Road*. The couple is bewildered by this year's explosion of recognition, including Bert's name on a new bus station. "So often politicians take what's popular and try to make it right," the current mayor, John Cook, said at one ceremony. "You took what was right and tried to make it popular."

Adds Rus Bradburd, a former Haskins assistant whose forthcoming biography of Richardson,

*Forty Minutes of Hell*, highlights the Oasis incident, "This wasn't like Rosa Parks, who had the entire civil rights movement behind her. This was a Power of One kind of story."

Or a Power of One Thing Leads to Another kind of story. As Richardson says, "You could say Pájaro was ahead of his time. And you could say that he was right on time." □



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# UTEP ATHLETES TRIUMPH ON AND OFF THE FIELD

BY ROBERT L. SELTZER

**O**n a cold, drizzly night in the Sun Bowl, only one thing fell harder than the rain.

That would have been the Houston Cougars. And when they landed, it was not on their feet, as would have befitted their feline mascot. No, these cats ended up on their backs, flattened by a proud UTEP football team that paid no attention to predictions or odds makers or national rankings.

The Cougars hit the field the night of Oct. 3 ranked No. 12 in the nation, but the only numbers that mattered three hours later were on the scoreboard—58-41. It was an epic victory, one of the biggest wins in school history—the first triumph over a ranked opponent since the Miners defeated No. 25 BYU in 1997. And it happened on Homecoming night.

It was just one of the many thrilling moments for UTEP athletics during the fall. The football team ended the season with a 4-8 record, but in



UTEP wide receiver Kris Adams leaps for a pass in a game against Tulsa.



**Left:** Amy Sanders (left) led the volleyball team with nine kills.  
**Center:** Jo Radcliffe executes a header for the Miner soccer team.  
**Right:** UTEP women completed a successful year in cross country.

addition to Houston, the Miners defeated Tulsa, another powerful team, 28-24. The game also represented a victory for cancer awareness, with players wearing pink shoelaces and the University honoring four breast cancer survivors: Kim Stull, the wife of UTEP Athletic Director Bob Stull; Pam Stevens, the wife of former UTEP quarterback Billy Stevens; and two women representing the El Paso Chapter of national breast cancer foundation Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Dolores Armendariz and Gabi Staiger.

Three Miner football players were named first-team Conference USA—senior offensive lineman Mike Aguayo, junior running back Donald Buckram and senior defensive back Da'Mon Cromartie-Smith. Buckram led the conference in rushing, averaging 132.8 yards per game, while setting a school season record with eight 100-yard games. In five seasons as a member of the conference, UTEP has had 16 first-team selections.

In volleyball, the Miners finished 11-18 overall and 4-12 in the conference. El Pasoan Catherine Chavez ended her career with 1,229 digs, the second best mark in school history. Fellow El Pasoan Amy Sanders, also playing her last match for the Miners, led the team offensively with nine kills, while junior Jennifer Nolasco paced the defense with 12 digs.

The soccer team finished 13-6-1 overall and 7-4 in conference play. In a Conference USA quarterfinal match on Nov.

4, the Miners battled through two overtime sessions before falling to the University of Alabama at Birmingham, 3-0, on penalty kicks. The close match should foreshadow a bright future for the Miners.

In cross country, freshman Risper Kimaiyo was named Conference USA Female Cross Country Athlete of the Year, the first freshman to win the award in conference history. The men, meanwhile, defeated Tulsa in the closest race in conference history. UTEP finished with 30 points, one more than the Golden Hurricane—the fourth conference title for the Miners in the last five years.

It was also a good year for Miner athletes beyond the playing fields. Graduation rates for UTEP student-athletes continued to increase, based upon figures released by the NCAA in November. The Graduation Success Rate for UTEP student athletes—which tracks graduation rates for freshmen enrolling in the fall of 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 and completing their degrees within six years—climbed from 61 percent a year ago to 69 percent.

All in all, it was a fall worth remembering—and being proud of. The success the student-athletes enjoyed, both on and off the fields, is a harbinger of triumphs to come. 🏆



**1:** Senior offensive lineman Mike Aguayo  
**2:** Junior running back Donald Buckram  
**3:** Senior defensive back Da'Mon Cromartie-Smith



# A NEW CHALLENGE

As the UTEP women's basketball team headed into the 2009-10 season, the players faced a heady challenge—trying to match, or even outdo, the success the squad enjoyed two years ago.

The 2007-08 team, the most successful in the 35-year history of women's basketball at the University, went 28-4, winning the conference title and earning a trip to the NCAA tournament.

That squad represents the standard of excellence the current players will strive to attain.

As the team prepared for the 2009-10 season, expectations were high, but the players and coaches knew that praise and hype in the offseason do not always lead to success once the games begin.

of the points and 75 percent of the rebounds and assists from last year.

Hughes, on track to shatter the school record for points, also should finish as part of the winningest class ever at UTEP. The native of Southfield, Mich., owns the program record for career assists and steals.

In only three years, Hughes has recorded 1,184 points, 449 assists and 223 steals. The effort makes her one of just three players in the 14-year history of C-USA to register at least 1,100 points, 445 assists and 220 steals.

Key teammates include Timika Williams and Marta Micula. Williams, who won a state championship with Hughes at Southfield-Lathrup High School (Southfield, Mich.) in 2005, has helped carry over those winning

game, her biggest threat came from beyond-the-arc, as she nailed the third-most three pointers (64) in a single season ever at UTEP.

Sviatlana Trukshanina was even more deadly. As a sophomore, Trukshanina led C-USA and nearly rated second nationally in three-point percentage (48.4), coming up just shy of the qualifying standards. A player whose range starts when she enters the gym, the native of Belarus, Russia, hit 59 three-pointers on her way to averaging 8.2 points per game.

Rounding out the returning guards is sophomore Briana Green, who would have been right there alongside Caldwell for Freshman of the Year honors had her year not been shortened due to injury. In 21 games, Green



"There has been a lot of talk about how good this team can be," ninth-year head coach Keitha Adams said. "That is great, and it shows how far the program has come. But right now, it is time to get to work."

That said, Adams understood the enthusiasm for her team, and she embraced the expectations.

"With our senior class and returning players, obviously we have high expectations," Adams said. "We've established some consistency and tradition. We're raising the bar."

"We definitely have a goal of winning the conference tournament. That's something we've never done. That, and we'd like to have a crowd fill the Haskins Center, a sellout. We've never done that."

Last year, the Miners overcame adversity to finish 18-12, staking the No. 2 seed in the Conference USA tournament. It marked a record third straight winning season, but the heartbreaking overtime loss in the league tourney was a bitter disappointment.

Senior Jareica Hughes, the two-time Conference USA Player of the Year, is the unquestioned leader of the team, which returns eight players responsible for more than 80 percent

ways since arriving in El Paso in 2006. UTEP has forged a mark of 68-24 during that time.

The 6-foot-1 post is on track to become the all-time leading rebounder in school history, while also joining the 1,000-point club. She is the only individual to pace the team in rebounds for three straight seasons.

Micula, meanwhile, is healthy after fighting through an injury-riddled 2008-09 campaign. The native of Koszyce Wielkie, Poland, managed to contribute four points and five rebounds per game in her first year with the squad after transferring from Miles Community College, but she is poised to achieve much more as a senior.

Dietra Caldwell, the Conference USA Freshman of the Year in 2009, provides a one-two scoring punch in the backcourt with Hughes. A fearless player, Caldwell rated third on the team in scoring as a rookie (9.8 points per game) while registering the second-most assists (64). While she features an all-around

contributed 9.7 points and 2.5 assists per game. She seemed to play better in the biggest moments, and that was no more evident than when she single-handedly outscored Tulane 16-12 over the first several minutes of the second half to stake UTEP to a lead it would never relinquish in a nationally televised contest.

An area that lacked depth due to injuries and, at times, foul trouble, the UTEP frontcourt should be an area of strength this year. Williams and Micula are not the only threats.





BY MARK BRUNNER

Athletic post Fannie Goodwin took a while to get things going last year as a freshman, but was a force to be reckoned with by the end of the year. The 6-foot-1 forward led the team in blocked shots (32) while checking in second in rebounds per game (5.7) and seventh in points per game (5.5). She enjoyed a stretch of four straight double-digit rebounding games, but truly put things together at the league tournament, where she established career highs for points (24) and rebounds (14).

Torrie Childs returns, and looks ready to have a solid showing. She endured a frustrating freshman season in which she donned a boot for most of the year to deal with an injured foot. The native of Trenton, N.J., appeared in only nine games, and never had a chance to get things going.


Adams brought in seven newcomers, which provides her depth across taller than 6 feet, which is a stark contrast from a year ago when injuries left UTEP with just three healthy posts.

"We've added a nice nucleus of players in some areas we needed," Adams said. "I'm excited." 📸



**Above:** UTEP women's basketball players cheer from the sidelines as their team scores on Alcorn State University.

**Right:** UTEP Women's Head Basketball Coach Keitha Adams

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**@UTEPWBASKETBALL** 📸



# Fourth Time's

BY JEFF DARBY





# a Charm Barbee's 4th Season Promises To Be Best Yet

In three seasons under head coach Tony Barbee, the UTEP men's basketball team has improved in leaps and bounds. The Miners posted 14 wins in his first year, 19 in his second and 23 in his third, reaching the championship series of the College Basketball Invitational in 2009.

Barbee's fourth team has the makings of being his best yet—a squad loaded with experience, depth, athleticism and versatility. "It's a very skilled team," Barbee said. "We have multiple guys who can do a variety of different things. This should be the best perimeter shooting team that we've had since I've been here. We have a lot of pieces in place, and now we need to put it together." The Miners return three starters and seven lettermen from a year ago. The most notable loss is Stefan Jackson (in August Jackson signed to play with the Darussafaka Cooper Tires Istanbul basketball team in the Turkish Basketball League), UTEP and Conference USA's all-time leading scorer, but five talented newcomers—four of them with Division I experience—should more than cover for the loss of Jackson's 24.5 points per game.

"Stefon was great, and we're going to miss him dearly," Barbee said. "But this team, with our ability to score from guys one through five, should be as balanced as any I've been around. If we don't have a minimum of five, maybe six guys in double-figure scoring for the season, I'll be shocked. My job is to get them to play unselfishly, play for each other and realize that one night may be your night and another may be your teammate's night."

UTEP has a veteran backcourt in juniors Randy Culpepper and Julian Stone. The only player in school history to reach 1,000 points by his sophomore year, Culpepper is the Miners' all-time leader for three-point field goals made (170) and attempted (496).

"Randy is an explosive, exciting player who can score in a variety of ways. He can shoot it and attack the rim," Barbee said. "I see him continuing to provide scoring punch if we're ever in a drought during a game."

Stone has flown under the national radar the last two years since he's not a big-time scorer, but his ability to manage a game and his defensive prowess stack up well with other point guards.

"There are not many guys at his position with his size (6-foot-6, 195 pounds) and ability to pass," Barbee said. "That's a unique combination. I think we'll see a breakout season from him offensively. He has worked diligently on it."

Forward Arnett Moultrie, the only non-senior to earn a spot on the preseason All-Conference USA team, is the only sophomore on a UTEP roster top-heavy with juniors. Moultrie averaged 8.8 points and 8.2 rebounds as a freshman, then helped the United States Under-19 team to a gold medal at the FIBA\* World Championships this summer.

"That experience has given Arnett a whole different level of confidence," Barbee said. "He has gotten bigger and stronger. He's up to 240 pounds (from 225 in 2008-09). He had a great freshman year, but this should be a breakout year where he establishes himself as one of the best players in college basketball."

Three other returnees—Claude Britten, Gabe McCulley and Wayne Portalatin—are seasoned performers who have made starts at the college level.

Joining them are five impressive newcomers, none more imposing than 6-foot-9, 275-pound Louisville transfer Derrick Character.

Character was regarded as one of the top high school players in the country before signing with the Cardinals. After averaging more than eight points per game in two seasons at Louisville, he gives the Miners an inside presence they have lacked in recent years.

"There are only a handful of guys in the game of basketball who can

move the way that he moves for his size," Barbee said. "He moves like a guard in a center's body. He has great hands, great footwork and he's light on his feet. He has a chance to re-establish himself as one of the dominant players in college basketball."

Junior guard Christian Polk joined Character in sitting out the 2008-09 campaign. Polk played two seasons at Arizona State, averaging 12 points as a freshman in the rugged Pac-10 Conference.

"Christian gives us a proven scorer at the Division I level and a guy who can play multiple positions," Barbee said. "He can score, and he has the skill and mentality to play the point guard position. I'm looking for him to have a great year."

Two other transfers—guard Myron Strong and forward Jeremy Williams—are Memphis natives who played together in high school and junior college. They have enjoyed tremendous success everywhere that they have joined forces. Strong averaged 10 points per game and Williams averaged 7.7 points in previous Division I stops at the University of San Francisco and University of Colorado, respectively.

"Myron is a talented, Randy Culpepper-like athlete at his size," Barbee said. "He's probably faster without the basketball, which is totally different from your everyday player. He can change the pace of the game at the point guard position, but he's also a talented scorer."

"Jeremy, at times, is unselfish to a fault. He has the qualities to be a dominant scorer, but he enjoys fitting in and being a part of the team. My job is not to take that selflessness away, but make him more aggressive offensively."

What is the next step for the UTEP basketball team? It's a question that Barbee can't answer without waiting for the results to play out, but he likes the direction his program is headed.

"In today's society, everybody wants something instantaneously, but it doesn't work that way in athletics," he said. "There's a process that you have to go through. Every year we have taken another step in a positive direction, and I see no reason why that shouldn't continue this year."

"I know the goals that I've established for this team, but you never know how things are going to work out until the games are played. But I do know that this team is driven to take the next big step." ❏

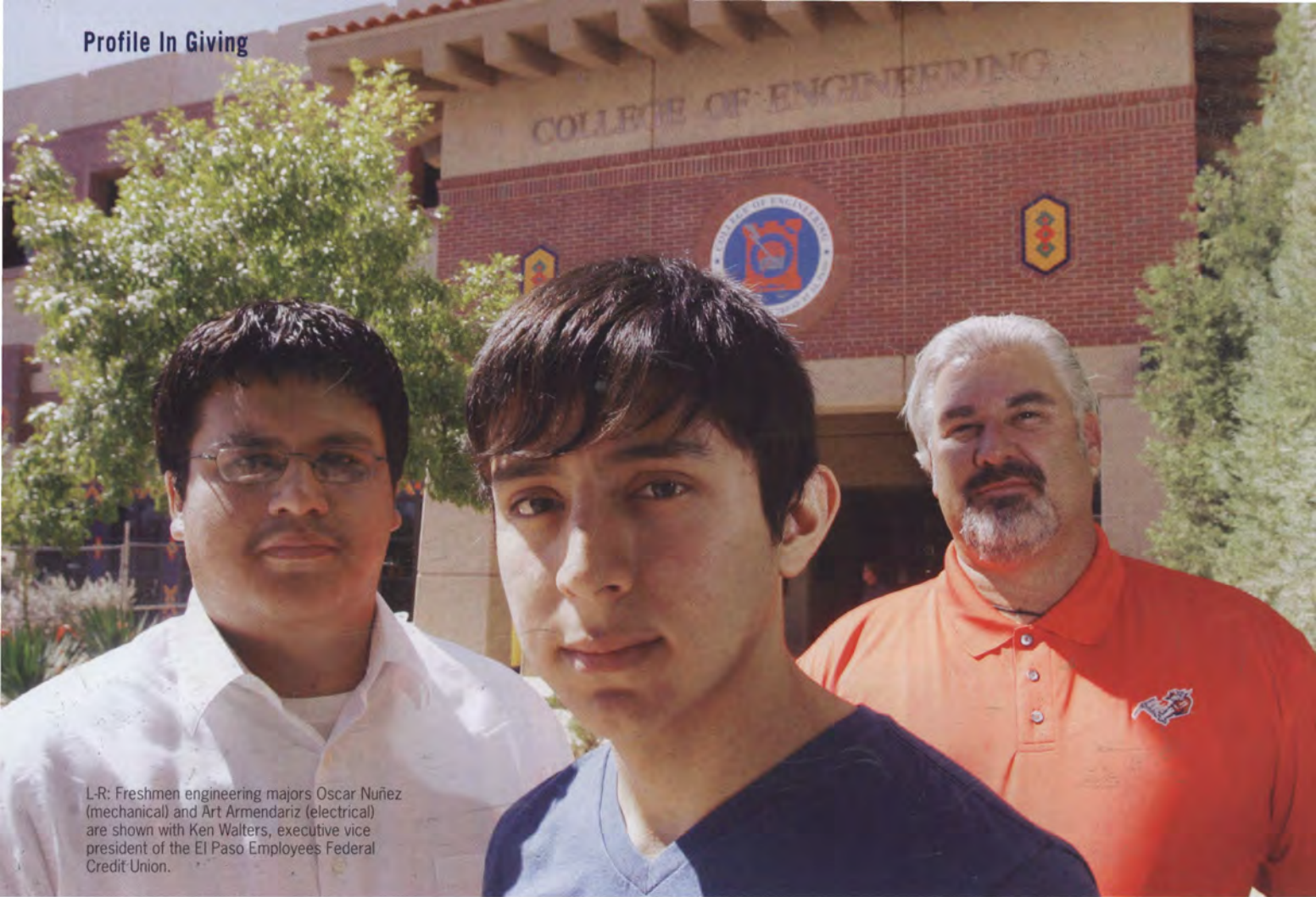


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UTEP Men's Head Basketball  
Coach Tony Barbee





L-R: Freshmen engineering majors Oscar Nuñez (mechanical) and Art Armendariz (electrical) are shown with Ken Walters, executive vice president of the El Paso Employees Federal Credit Union.

## CREDIT UNION'S CHOICE BENEFITS FUTURE LEADERS

BY DANIEL PEREZ

**T**he El Paso Employees Federal Credit Union recently established a self-named scholarship fund to benefit students from The University of Texas at El Paso with ties to their company.

The goal is simple: to help the future leaders of the El Paso community achieve their dreams.

Credit union officials, who have provided more than \$260,000 as grants-in-aid scholarships to UTEP students since 1993, decided late last year to start the new fund, said Ken Walters, company executive vice president.

"We figured UTEP (scholarship) officials were better suited than we are at finding those dynamic, energetic students who could best use the help," said Walters, who earned his undergraduate degree from West Texas State in Canyon, Texas, with the help of a football scholarship.

He said officials at the 73-year-old credit union chose to offer financial assistance because they realized the hardships many

parents face trying to send their children to college. They hope their contribution—\$1,500 per student per year—will help keep those students in the classroom.

Both recipients of this year's credit union scholarships—freshmen Art Armendariz and Oscar Nuñez—said they would have had to work part-time jobs or take out student loans if not for the financial assistance.

"The money helps tremendously," Nuñez said.

But more than that, he said the scholarship proves that hard work pays off. On top of maintaining an "A" average, the Eastwood High School graduate played alto saxophone in the school marching band and participated in civic activities such as painting and cleaning homes of the less fortunate and volunteering with the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

Nuñez wants to become a mechanical engineer and create more fuel-efficient cars that can compete against foreign models.

Armendariz, who like Nuñez, comes from a family where both parents have college

degrees, called the scholarship a blessing.

"My family is not well off, so this scholarship means a lot," he said.

Besides earning high academic marks at El Paso's Hanks High School, the electrical engineering major volunteers his time at his church and helps at its annual fall festival.

By the time the scholarship program hits its full stride in 2013, \$12,000 in scholarships will be awarded annually to eight students who meet the requirements: full-time enrollment, a 3.0 GPA and membership in the credit union by either themselves or their parents. The scholarships can be renewed if the student continues to meet the criteria.

"There are lots of people in El Paso who would love to attend UTEP, but they can't because of a lack of funds," Walters said. "We hope these scholarships can put a dent in tuition and related costs and help kick start someone's opportunity."

The credit union serves about 46,000 members at its eight branches throughout the city. ☑





**Dear Alumni,**

It has been an incredibly busy year in the Office of Alumni Relations as we continue our efforts in advancing the UTEP Alumni Association. I wish to thank all of you who returned to UTEP for Homecoming 2009. It was a pleasure reminiscing with our alumni as they engaged with our students, faculty and staff about their UTEP memories. We are truly proud of you, our alumni, and all that you have accomplished.

As you know, the UTEP Alumni Association launched the "5,000 by 2010" Membership Campaign. We are in the last year of our campaign to reach 5,000 dues-paying members by December 31, 2010. We are calling on all UTEP alumni to join the Miner Nation and become a card carrying member today. Membership in the UTEP Alumni Association demonstrates your commitment and pride while helping us provide scholarships, programs and services for alumni, students, faculty and staff. Show your UTEP Miner pride and be a part of this exciting era for The University of Texas at El Paso and our Alumni Association.

As we move forward in becoming a Tier One university, it is imperative to build the Miner Nation and generate the financial support necessary to elevate the presence of our University.

*Richard Daniel*

**Thank you and GO MINERS!**

Richard Daniel, Ph.D.  
Assistant Vice President for  
Alumni and Constituent Relations



**Left:** UTEP 2009 Distinguished Alumna Willarda V. Edwards, M.D., '72

**Top right:** UTEP students and black alumni from around the country shared stories of the past and plans for the future growth of the University's Black Alumni Network at the Homecoming ice breaker.

**Above:** UTEP graduates James "JJ" Jones, Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, and Leon Harden, representing former Miner football players, display the traveling plaque that will be given to the group organizing the next Black Alumni Network Homecoming activities.

## BLACK MINER ALUMNI STAY CONNECTED

BY DANIEL PEREZ

About 50 members of the UTEP Black Alumni Network laughed their way through a "Meet and Greet" Homecoming icebreaker Oct. 2 at the Hilton Garden Inn, but they also challenged themselves to build on the event for the betterment of the University.

Those individuals, professionals and pace-setters from around the country agreed to double their attendance at next year's homecoming, create a scholarship fund to benefit future African-American students and participate in an oral history project to detail their efforts as students.

Among the attendees was Willarda Edwards, M.D., one of UTEP's 2009 Distinguished Alumni. She graduated from the University in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in biology. She now serves as president of the National Medical Association.

"It's great to see the black alumni recognize the diverse education we got," she said to the group in the Hilton's Del Norte Ballroom, decorated with UTEP orange and blue.

The seeds of the event were planted about 10 years ago when Harold Kelley, a lecturer in the department of metallurgical and materials engineering, and a few friends wanted to reunite with classmates from the 1960s and '70s.

Kelley, a former Miner track competitor who earned his bachelor's in metallurgi-

cal engineering in 1976, didn't think many would show up. Surprisingly, about 70 attended. The group decided to meet every other year starting in 2002.

The event turned into an annual affair a few years ago with the help of the University's Office of Alumni Relations. This year's party included alumni from California, Maryland and New York, along with most major cities in Texas.

"I love what's going on," Kelley said of the organized growth among the black alumni. "You want to know your history."

Don Williams, a family law attorney in El Paso and a visiting judge in the 171st District Court, recalled his 1972 triumph as the first African-American president of what would become UTEP's Student Government Association.

Williams, who earned his bachelor's in political science in 1973, said that the diverse student population of that era was astute and active politically and socially. He was glad to see many of them at the homecoming event.

"We were involved in a lot," he said.

UTEP has six alumni chapters in Texas and in Mexico, and one academic chapter.

"We want you to feel connected," Richard Daniel, Ph.D., assistant vice president for alumni and constituent relations, told the group. "We want you to stay engaged." 📧

STAY CONNECTED WITH UTEP:







UTEP President Diana Natalicio (center) is shown with UTEP Heritage Commission Chairwoman Betty Wilkinson (far left, front row) and the other commission members.

# PRESERVING UTEP'S LEGACY The Heritage House

BY LAURA L. ACOSTA

**O**n top of a hill at the corner of Randolph and Kerbey sits a cozy, nondescript building that houses 95 years of UTEP history.

Built in 1921 as the primary residence for former Dean Steven Worrell and his wife, Kathleen, the UTEP Heritage House today is home to a wealth of University memorabilia.

From mining instruments used by students enrolled at what was then known as The State School of Mines and Metallurgy, to a display honoring the UTEP Women's 2008 Conference USA basketball championship, the Heritage Commission is helping to preserve the University's past for future generations of Miners.

The Heritage House is run by the UTEP Heritage Commission, a group of 30 alumni, former faculty and friends of the University, along with 11 emeritus members who volunteer to assemble displays, acquire memorabilia and conduct tours.

"Caring for this house is a full-time job," said alumna Betty Wilkinson, the commission chair. "You have to show a deep interest in UTEP and its history."

The commission was established in 1981 by then UTEP President Haskell Monroe. Its

**"WHEN WE HAVE OUR OPEN HOUSE AT HOMECOMING, PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS AMAZED AT WHAT WE HAVE IN HERE."**

~ Betty Wilkinson



The Heritage House

first task was to raise funds for the University regalia and college banners. Working out of the basement in the Administration Building, the commission was also tasked with organizing memorabilia stored in the library.

Its call for UTEP mementos at a Golden Grads luncheon resulted in a deluge of items that included old cheerleader outfits, 1930s football equipment, class rings and more.

University President Diana Natalicio turned over the keys to the Worrell's home, overflowing with keepsakes, to the commission in 1994.

"When we have our open house at homecoming, people are always amazed at what we have in here," Wilkinson said.

Nancy Hamilton, who earned a journalism degree at UTEP, is a long-time contributor to the research at the house—a labor of love that proved fruitful when she wrote her book, *UTEP: A Pictorial History of the University of Texas at El Paso*, which commemorated the University's 75th anniversary.

Thanks to the work of such devoted alumni, the house showcases special exhibits during the year, such as "The 1966 NCAA National Basketball Championship." The Templeton Research Center within the house stores photographs, speeches and other historic documents. All donated items are screened by a

committee to verify their authenticity.

The house also serves as a place where commission members can share their fondest UTEP memories.

Alumna Jean Miculka, a UTEP professor emeritus who taught drama and speech for 24 years, remembers when women were not allowed to wear pants on campus.

"The campus is full of so much history," Miculka said. "There are a lot of nooks and crannies around this place that you can discover." 📷





Golden Grad Bertha Toscano, class of '33, was the oldest known alumna to attend Homecoming 2009.

## OLDEST GOLDEN GRAD WOULDN'T MISS HOMECOMING

BY JENN CRAWFORD

**N**ot even knee surgery could stop Bertha Toscano from making her annual trip to El Paso for Homecoming.

Attending the Golden Grad Luncheon for The University of Texas at El Paso alumni of 50 years or more is a tradition for Toscano. She has made the trip from her home in Mexico City regularly since 1983. In recent years, she has been recognized as the oldest alumna in attendance.

But at 96, Toscano is less and less sure that she will be back next year.

"I always look forward to coming back for Homecoming, but I think this will be my last time. I'm just getting too old," she said before the Oct. 3, 2009 luncheon.

"I'm a widow with no children," she said. "I just have memories. That's what I live on."

Toscano was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, in 1913, but her parents brought her to El Paso during the Mexican Revolution when she was 3 months old. She attended Loretto Academy and earned a scholarship to Loretto Heights College in Denver, Colo.

She went to Denver for a year, but because of the Great Depression, she could not afford to stay. She returned to El Paso and finished her

last three years at the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy, now UTEP.

At the time, the University was "three or four buildings way out in the sticks," she said. "It was sort of out in the desert. It wasn't much of a campus." Toscano, whose maiden name was Fernandez, studied Spanish, English, French, German and Greek, earning her bachelor's degree in Spanish in 1933 at age 19.

**"IT'S A BEAUTIFUL UNIVERSITY,  
AND I'M VERY PROUD OF IT, I ENJOY  
SEEING EVERYBODY SO MUCH."**

~ Bertha Toscano, '33

The Asarco mining company hired her, and she stayed with them for 40 years, transferring to Mexico City shortly after she started work. She got married in Mexico City and never left.

This year, Toscano had knee surgery about a month before her planned trip to El Paso. Her nephew, Bob Terrazas, a 1951 UTEP graduate who accompanies her each year, was not sure she would be healthy enough to travel.

But sure enough, Toscano found the strength to come back to the University that has meant so much to her.

"It's a beautiful university, and I'm very proud of it," she said. "I enjoy seeing everybody so much."

This year, UTEP President Diana Natalicio made a special point to honor the woman who has come to Homecoming regularly since her 50th reunion in 1983.

"Bertha is a very special alumna," Natalicio said. "She told me she thought this might be the last year she would come, and I told her that's not acceptable."

This year, Toscano celebrated the 76th anniversary of her college graduation.

Although she no longer sees anyone else from the Class of 1933, the other Golden Grads have come to know and admire Toscano.

"She's amazing," said Edgar Jimenez, a 1957 graduate who now lives in Kansas City but has returned for Homecoming every year since his 40th reunion in 1997.

"I hope to be like her." 🍷



# UTEP HOMIE





# COMING 2009





# DOSE OF REALITY IS GOOD FOR UTEP GOLF STAR

BY ROBERT L. SELTZER



Photo courtesy of Mark Ashiman/Golf Channel

**G**erina Mendoza got a heavy dose of reality in the fall of 2008, but her fans had to wait until the following summer to see it.

Blame TV for the disconnect.

Mendoza was among the stars of the reality show, *The Big Break: Prince Edward Island*, filmed in the autumn but broadcast during the summer.

The program, aired weekly on the Golf Channel, pitted six men and six women in a competition for a grand prize of \$100,000 and thousands of dollars in endorsement fees and gift certificates.

The setting was beautiful—the island in Canada—and the competition was fierce, but the former UTEP golf star, who graduated with a degree in mathematics in 2007, appreciated both.

“It was such a good experience,” she said. “I had a lot of fun.”

With one golfer eliminated each week, Mendoza finished third and played so well that she astounded the show’s other cast members, particularly after the second week.

“From the women, Caroline (Larsson) and Gerina absolutely killed the ball, and their performance during the draw/fade challenge sent shockwaves throughout the entire cast,” T.J. Hubbard, the producer, wrote in a blog. “Everyone was talking about their ability to put the ball in play off the tee.”



Gerina Mendoza '07

Fans who followed her career at UTEP know Mendoza is just that good. She shot a nine-under-par 207 (68-68-71) in 2007, tying her career low to win the Conference USA title by five strokes. She became the first woman in UTEP history to capture a conference title—a feat that helped her win the Player of the

Year award.

“It was an awesome feeling to have just won the Conference USA individual title and then, as the icing on the cake, I got the honors of Conference USA Player of the Year,” she said.

Mendoza was 9 when she set foot on a golf course for the first time in her hometown of Roswell, N.M.

“I was out with my dad, and we played nine holes,” she said. “I shot a 72. At that point, I really didn’t have a clue as to what really was a good score until I read in the newspaper the next morning that a girl had shot 72 and won a tournament.”

So Mendoza told her father that she would stick with golf.

“In the summer, I worked at the golf course, so I met some guys that played as well,” she said. “I can remember playing at least 36 holes a day.”

While her first true love was volleyball, she strived to excel every time she stepped on the golf course.

“Even though I have been pretty successful so far in my golf career, there are bigger goals and dreams I would like to achieve, and my philosophy is that there is always room for improvement,” said Mendoza, who has competed in professional tournaments across the country since graduating from UTEP. “It’s just a sense of satisfaction when I accomplish a goal or become successful.”

Golfer Gerina Mendoza, a 2007 UTEP graduate, enjoyed her experience in front of the cameras for a reality show on the Golf Channel.





Mary Lou Valdez, '86 UTEP graduate, enjoys the challenges of her new position with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and credits her experience at UTEP for her success.

## FDA OFFICIAL MEETS GLOBAL CHALLENGES

BY ROBERT L. SELTZER

**M**ary Lou Valdez thinks about the health and well-being of the country almost 24/7, and it all began with the knowledge and inspiration she received at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Valdez, who graduated with a degree in biology from UTEP in 1986, was named associate commissioner for international programs with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in January 2009.

"I have to say it was thoroughly enjoyable," Valdez said of her UTEP education. "Like many UTEP students, I worked full-time and went to school. There was a level of teaching and commitment among the professors that was very noteworthy."

Today, she finds herself in an equally rich intellectual environment.

"This is an exciting time for the FDA," Valdez said during a telephone interview from Washington, D.C. "The FDA is truly an incredible agency, filled with committed scientists, public health experts and regulators, and I am honored to be a part of it."

Valdez has worked for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services since 1991, serving in capacities ranging from domestic to international programs. This vast experience serves her well in an agency that has expanded as the world itself has grown.

Once a department dedicated to the infrastructure within its own borders, the FDA has evolved into an organization with a broader focus. The world has become more complicated, and the mission of the FDA reflects that complexity. It is no longer possible to regulate products imported into the United States without considering the countries where they originated.

"In recent years, the FDA began to realize it had to grapple with the fact that it is truly a global agency now," Valdez said. "The overall

goal is public health. Ultimately, science-based decisions about public health are the cornerstone for a global public health policy, and sharing data helps make better decisions—not the U.S. on one side and developing countries on the other, but both working together on shared public health challenges."

In 2007, the U.S. imported more than \$2 trillion worth of FDA-regulated products, a volume that represented about 200 countries or territories, with approximately 825,000 importers using 300 ports of entry.

"We need to increase our understanding of the gaps and risks of other regulatory systems in countries where exports are increasing," she said. "Those countries include Mexico (for food and medical devices), Vietnam and Thailand (for seafood) and Canada (for foodstuffs and medical products)."

With an extensive regulatory authority that includes drugs, food, cosmetics, medical devices and animal feed, the FDA has established offices in China, India, Belgium, England, Italy and Costa Rica—with more scheduled to be opened in Mexico and Chile.

"We need better and timelier information to help the FDA make better decisions," Valdez said. "If we are going to better support our domestic mission, we need to know the types of products coming to the U.S. ... And we want to work with our regulatory counterparts in other countries to better understand their regulatory systems, manufacturing processes and transport processes."

One of the challenges the agency faces, she said, is the need to increase the number of foreign site inspections.

Valdez said the FDA is the "gold standard" among food and product regulators in the world, a status built upon transparency and decisions that are "science-based."

Efforts to bolster inspections resulted from

a series of recent problems, including the discovery of melamine, an industrial chemical that may cause serious kidney damage, in pet foods and milk-based products from overseas.

"We have a consumer-oriented culture," Valdez said. "You want to know what you eat. You want to know your food is the safest it can be, and if it's not, feel confident that your government will recognize it early and let you know as soon as possible. We are committed to improving those systems."

Reaching out to other regulatory agencies around the globe, she said, requires diplomacy.

"FDA officials in overseas offices truly represent our government as they serve as a portal to the rest of the agency back home. It is that kind of diplomacy that will serve us well as the FDA builds competence, trust and transparency about our processes. These are the things that will upgrade health standards around the world, which translate into safer food, drugs and medical devices here at home."

An El Paso native who attended Blessed Sacrament School and Andress High School, Valdez said she understands the value of bridging cultural differences.

"I come from the U.S.-Mexico border, and I recognize the incredible tapestry of cultures and interactions, as well as the complexity of a border health system with two federal governments, 10 state governments (including Texas and Chihuahua) and many local communities," she said. "And yet I know how cohesive that system can be."

It is the tapestry of her education and career in global public health that created the spirit of unity and commitment she brings to her new role to help position the FDA as a global agency—a big challenge, but one she is equipped to meet. ☒



# MARINE

BY DAVID PEREGRINO

# MINER INE

UTEP EXPERIENCE SHAPES  
SUCCESS OF MARINE BRIG.  
GEN. JUAN AYALA

A life spent immersed in two cultures—an experience well known to UTEP alumni—proved invaluable to Marine Brig. Gen. Juan G. Ayala during four tours of duty in Iraq.

Ayala, a 1979 UTEP alumnus, served as a senior advisor to the 1st Iraqi Army Division from 2006 to 2007, a particularly difficult and violent year for U.S.-led forces in the Iraq War. Ayala's mission in Al Anbar province was to build strong personal relationships between his transition team and the soldiers and leaders of the Iraqi Army as the Marines helped them take over the security of their own country. These relationships, necessary for successful counterinsurgency operations, required patience, trust, and perhaps most important of all, respect.

"We lived with the Iraqi Army soldiers, we ate with them, we fought alongside of them," Ayala recalled. "We shared dangers with them—once you do that with anybody, I think you gain their respect."

Ayala said his experience growing up in El Paso as a son of working-class Mexican immigrants in a family of nine helped him bridge the significant cultural gaps between the Iraqi and American troops.

"Oh yes, going to my aunt's house in Mexico when I was a kid, visiting some of those ranchos with dirt floors and chickens running around outside—I was well prepared," Ayala said. "To me it was no big deal—brushing your teeth in a river, having nine kids in a small house ... I step into two cultures every time I go home to El Paso."

It was a home on the West Side of El Paso, close to Sunland Park, where Ayala first dreamed of becoming a Marine. Back then, his parents, Victor and Juana Ayala, ran Victor's Cafe, an eatery near Mesa Street and Doniphan Drive.

"My father hired some of the high school kids in the area as waitresses, and some of them had boyfriends who went off to join the Marines. When they would come back to visit, I was so impressed by how much they had changed. I wanted a challenge like that—I always knew I would be in the Marine Corps."

After graduating from Coronado High



Photos courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Marine Brig. Gen. Juan G. Ayala, a 1979 UTEP business graduate, stands outside of Camp Taqqandum, near Baghdad, Iraq, in the summer of 2009.





Back row L-R: Sgt. Maj. C.R. Green, Brig. Gen. Juan Ayala and Command Master Chief Tammy R. Heap visited with local children while on a mission to help furnish a hospital in Al Kabani, a small village near Camp Taqqandum.

School in 1975, Ayala was ready to enlist. But his father had a surprise proposal for him.

“My dad came up to me and said he would pay for me to go to college. That was such a pipe dream for a kid like me back in the ’70s—I never thought I would earn a degree. I went ahead and applied, and lo and behold, UTEP—despite my not-so-impressive grades—gave me an opportunity and let me in the door,” Ayala said.

That opportunity led to a bachelor’s degree in business and a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in 1979.

As Ayala had hoped, he thrived in the challenging atmosphere of the Marine Corps. Over three decades, he rose through the ranks to his current role as commanding general of the 2nd Marine Logistics Group, overseeing 11,000 troops from his post in Camp Lejeune, N.C. Along the way, he earned an MBA from Campbell University and a Master of Arts in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College.

Ayala is responsible for seeing that the Marine fighting forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as back home, have everything they need. That includes maintenance parts, food, medical supplies, and letter and package deliveries through the postal service.

And Ayala sees to it that every troop under his watch engages in combat training, living up to the famous creed, “Every Marine is a rifleman.”

“Our distribution convoys are ready to do those things you would expect any unit in combat to do,” Ayala said.

Fortunately, thanks to the work of the Marines, U.S. Army and other coalition force

members who were part of the successful counterinsurgency campaign in 2007, there is less and less need for combat action in Iraq. Ayala said a remarkable change has taken place in many parts of the country, particularly Al Anbar province, where violence once shattered the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi.

“I came back in January of 2009, and the changes and progress were eye-watering,” Ayala said. “The cities of Fallujah and Ramadi were terrible places to be in 2006—it was almost a moonscape. But when I returned this year, the streets were full of shoppers, full of children.

“There were all kinds of little signs of normalcy: the public fountains were working, car dealerships were springing up, outdoor souks—markets—were springing up. The level of violence was very low.”

The visit was a great reward for Ayala, who worked through the darkest, most anguishing months of the Iraq War, when it seemed hope for peace and security had all but been abandoned.

“The Marines are always sent to the toughest places, the most difficult situations. I am very proud of this current generation of Marines and the other young Americans that were there. They are youngsters, 19- and 20-year-olds, and they stuck to their mission. Now the Iraqi Army is ready to take over the security of their own country,” he said.

Ayala visits his family in El Paso regularly. His father passed away in 1993, but his mother still makes her home in the neighborhood where he grew up.

“I tell my family all the time: it was UTEP that opened the door for my success. It’s something I am very happy about,” Ayala said. 🍷



Brig. Gen. Juan G. Ayala



Photo courtesy of Maj. Victor Frausto

U.S. Marine Maj. Victor Frausto (right) pictured with Texas Gov. Rick Perry.

**UTEP Magazine** would like to thank U.S. Marine Maj. Victor Frausto, who graduated from UTEP in 1994 with a bachelor’s in business administration, for making us aware of Brig. Gen. Juan Ayala’s story. We asked Maj. Frausto a few questions.

**UTEP MAGAZINE:** Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

**Maj. Victor Frausto:** I was born and raised in El Paso. My parents went to UTEP. I grew up around the school, going to the UTEP games since I was young. I just naturally went to UTEP. I joined the service when I was at the school in the reserves. I have been in the Marine Corps about 21 years now. My family lives in Virginia. I have two teenage kids.

**UM:** How has your experience at UTEP helped you as a Marine?

**VF:** I got a good solid education there. When you stack it up against any other school, you find that UTEP is no different. You’re on the same playing field as anyone else. I had an accounting degree and I found that I could compete with anybody.

**UM:** How do you know Brig. Gen. Juan Ayala?

**VF:** I met General Ayala when I was first stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C. last summer. I read his bio and saw that he was from El Paso and a graduate of UTEP (at the time he was a colonel) selected for Brigadier General). I made a point to introduce myself.

**UM:** Why do you think his story is important?

**VF:** I always enjoy reading about El Pasoans doing great things. It’s good to see a Marine general from El Paso/UTEP. Becoming a general in the Marine Corps is very difficult. Less than half of lieutenant colonels become colonels and less than 10 percent of them are selected for general. We are a small service.

**UM:** Where are you now, and what are you doing there?

**VF:** I am currently the protocol officer with II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) (aka United States Force-West) in Al Asad, Iraq. We will be departing Iraq on about Jan. 25 (finishing a yearlong deployment), as the Marine Corps’ mission ends in Iraq. We are the last force in Iraq.

**UM:** What do you miss most about El Paso when you’re in Iraq?

**VF:** The family. Home-cooked meals. I really miss my family. I have a big family. My mom has eight brothers and sisters and my dad has five. I have a whole bunch of cousins. All of them went to UTEP at one time over the last 30 years. And I miss the mountains.



COMPILED BY ALYSON ACHESON

**'50s**

**Mimi R. Gladstein** (B.A. '59; M.A. '66) professor of English at UTEP, co-edited *The Last Supper of Chicano Heroes: Selected Works of José Antonio Burciaga*, together with Daniel Chacón, UTEP associate professor of creative writing. The book, published in August 2008, received second place in the best biography in English category at the 11th Annual International Latino Book Awards, presented by Latino Literacy Now.

**'60s**

**Patrick L. "Pat" Attel** (B.B.A. '69) owns Attel & Co. PC, an accounting firm in El Paso. He was elected chapter relations coordinating officer for the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants Executive Board in July.  
**Dr. Robert G. Duchouquette** (B.S. '60) is the author of a collection of poems, *Accidental? Physician/Poet*, which was published in March. He resides in Dallas.

**'70s**

**Irene Chavez** (B.A. '79) was named chief executive officer of El Paso Specialty Hospital in June.  
**Larry K. Luper** (B.B.A. '75) was promoted in March to vice president and executive manager of international business development for Wackenhut Services Inc., a security and protective services company based in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.  
**Robert A. "Bob" Malone** (B.S.Met.E. '74), past chairman and president of BP America Inc., was

elected in May to the board of directors for Houston-based Halliburton Co., one of the world's largest providers of products and services to the energy industry. He was appointed to the Audit and Compensation committees of Peabody Energy's board of directors in July. Peabody is the world's largest private-sector coal company. Malone, a resident of Sonora, Texas, received UTEP's College of Engineering Gold Nugget Award in 2002 and the University's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2003.  
**Thomas "Tom" Meagher** (B.S.N. '77; M.S.N. '85) in June was named administrator of Durango Surgery Center in Las Vegas.  
**Juan M. Ontiveros** (B.S.M.E. '74; M.S.M.E. '78), executive director of utilities and energy management at UT Austin, was elected 2009-10 chair of the International District Energy Association in June.

**'80s**

**C. Kym Anderson** (\*), a certified public accountant with the El Paso accounting firm of Jones & Co., was elected chair of the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants in July.  
**Janet D. Johnson** (M.M. '89), a music teacher, received the 2008-09 Teacher of the Year award for South Pointe Elementary School in Riverdale, Ga. Her first CD, *Songs of Praise Vol. 1*, was released Sept. 5.  
**Pauline A. Dow** (B.A. '84; M.A. '87; M.Ed. '89; Ed.D. '08) was named chief academic officer for the Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso in July.

She also received the College of Education's Gold Nugget Award in 2009.  
**Yusuf E. "Joseph" Farran** (B.S.M.E. '86; M.S. '94), executive director for facilities and transportation for the Canutillo Independent School District in El Paso County, was reappointed in June to the Texas Fire Protection Commission. The commission enforces fire service standards statewide.  
**Hugh H. Hughes** (B.A. '82; M.A. '85), a lecturer at Texas A&M University at Qatar in Doha, is researching the resurgence and acquisitional impact of the Occitan language in southern France.  
**Josefina Lujan** (B.S.N. '83; M.S.N. '88) is regional dean of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing in El Paso. Lujan was selected in June as a 2009 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellow.  
**Eduardo "Ed" Montes** (B.A. '89) in June was named assistant sports editor for The Associated Press' west regional desk, which oversees coverage of the Western United States. Montes is based in Phoenix.  
**Cynthia D. Williams** (M.B.A. '88) is deputy director of the Dekalb County Department of Family and Children Services in Decatur, Ga.

**'90s**

**Geoffrey Nicholas Bailey** (B.S. '98), of Clarksville, Tenn., received his Ph.D. in ministry from Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, in May.

**Miguel Angel Corona** (B.B.A. '90; M.A.I.S. '98), of West Chester, Ohio, graduated from the University of Phoenix in June as a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership.  
**Rebecca E. Flores** (B.B.A. '91) owns Paupaiz Fine Coffees, a coffee roasting and wholesale distribution business in Napa, Calif.  
**Linda K. Garretson** (B.S.Met.E. '94) was named vice president of mortgage lending at El Paso Employees Federal Credit Union in July.  
**Elvia G. Hernandez** (B.A. '91) is the League of United Latin American Citizens' District IV director. She was inducted into the national LULAC Women's Hall of Fame in July for her work in the community and as a member of the LULAC National Women's Commission.  
**Haiui "Ron" Hou** (M.S.M.E. '94) is manager of information technology at WaferTech LLC, a semiconductor contract manufacturer in Camas, Wash.  
**Ashok R. Lakkavaram** (M.S.C.E. '97) in April was appointed an internal revenue agent in the Large and Mid-Size Business Division of the Internal Revenue Service in Houston.  
**Dr. Ricardo "Rick" Padilla** (B.S. '90) is a primary care physician with the Denver Health and Hospital Authority and an assistant professor at the University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center.  
**Richard D. "Rich" Praytor** (B.A. '96), an author, motivational speaker and comedian, headlined the 2009 Comedy Bus Tour in

April and May. Praytor resides in Colorado Springs, Colo.  
**Emmanuel Y. "Manuel" Raux** (B.B.A. '99), a former UTEP tennis player, competed in the El Paso Gold Open tennis tournament in August.  
**Martha G. Rodriguez-Staufert** (B.I.S. '92; M.Ed. '96) in July was named principal of Dellview Elementary School in the North East Independent School District in San Antonio.

**'00s**

**Rufus Brijalba III** (\*), a former UTEP golfer, won his second consecutive El Paso Men's City Championship golf tournament. He placed second at the Frank Redman Memorial Amateur Championship golf tournament in August and the Anthony Invitational golf tournament in July.  
**Diana L. Cordova** (B.A. '06) filmed a documentary, *Breaking Borders: Cross Dressers & Drag Queens of El Paso*, in February 2009. The film debuted Aug. 6 in the "Women on the Verge: Border Women Filmmakers" showcase for female moviemakers at the Plaza Classic Film Festival in El Paso.  
**Ricardo M. "Rick" Correa** (B.S.C.S. '04) is a research scientist for Lockheed Martin's Advanced Technology Laboratories in Cherry Hill, N.J. He was appointed director of scholastics on the National Executive Board of Omega Delta Phi Inc. in June.  
**Jennifer E. Han** (B.S. '07), a six-time national amateur boxing champion, competed in her first professional bout July 31 in Las Cruces,

N.M. She is a martial arts instructor at Han's Oriental Martial Arts in El Paso.  
**Anna M. Huerta** (M.P.T. '09) is a physical therapist at Culberson Hospital in Van Horn, Texas.  
**Stefon D. Jackson** (\*), a former UTEP basketball player, in August signed to play with the Darussafaka Cooper Tires Istanbul basketball team in the Turkish Basketball League.  
**Patricia E. Maese-Tidwell** (B.A. '00) was named public information officer for the Canutillo Independent School District in July.  
**Susan "Susie" Quintana** (B.B.A. '04), a U.S. foreign service officer, was commissioned to serve as vice consul in Mumbai, India, in May.  
**Israel R. Silvas** (B.A. '01) in August was named an associate in the commercial litigation section of Godwin Ronquillo PC, a Dallas-based trial and appellate firm.  
**Christina I. Torres** (B.A. '02) was named an associate in the labor and employment section in the Dallas office of Andrews and Kurth LLP in July.  
**Seaman Andres A. Valverde** (B.A. '04) graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Recruit Training Center in Cape May, N.J., in March.

(\* Denotes attendance at UTEP



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
ON THE ROAD TO TIER ONE





# José Cisneros

Noted author-illustrator José Cisneros, who brought centuries of Southwestern horsemen to life with his pen-and-ink drawings, died Nov. 14, 2009, just five months shy of his 100th birthday.

The artist earned local, statewide, national and international recognition during his 70-plus year career. Among his most cherished honors were the National Humanities Medal in 2001 and being knighted by the King of Spain in 1991 for his portrayal of the Spanish contribution to the settlement of the Southwest.

Cisneros shared a long history with The University of Texas at El Paso. He designed the seals for the institution when it was Texas Western College and later when it became UTEP. In 1982, he was presented with UTEP's Gran Paseño Award, the highest honor the University bestows on its friends.

His 100 "Riders Across the Centuries" drawings, completed in the 1980s, are showcased in the fourth floor atrium of the University Library, along with a bronze bust of the artist with pen in hand sculpted by his friend John Houser.

"(The Riders project) was the crown jewel for my father," said daughter Patricia Cisneros-Pride, who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at UTEP. "He was very proud of that."

She said she still smiles when she sees the University seal and thinks back to her father—a colorblind, self-taught artist with little formal education—designing it in the basement of their Central El Paso home.

Cisneros remained a shy, humble man despite his many honors and high-powered friends. He was grateful that people

were interested in his work, said Juan Sandoval, a UTEP reference librarian and friend for almost 30 years.

"He will live on through his work," said Sandoval, who last visited the artist in late September. "If that's not immortality, I don't know what is."

Jon Amastae, Ph.D., professor of languages and linguistics and former director of Texas Western Press, said it was a delight to work with Cisneros on the artist's 2007 oral history, *José Cisneros, Immigrant Artist*, edited by Adair Margo and Leanne Hedrick.

He recalled the efforts made by the Federal Bureau of Land Management and other organizations involved in the creation of the El Camino Real International Heritage Center in Socorro, N.M., to include Cisneros' art. The center opened in 2005.

"There is no question he was a revered figure," Amastae said.

Cisneros developed his unique illustrative style over many years. Each piece was painstakingly researched and historically accurate, said Miguel Juárez, a UTEP doctoral student in history who interviewed the illustrator for his book, *Colors on Desert Walls: The Murals of El Paso*.

"For a self-taught artist with no formal art education, Cisneros' persistence and evolution as an artist is a testament to the desire of Borderland artists and creative persons to go beyond their limitations, to hone their talents and skills and become successful in attaining their life-long artistic dreams," Juárez said.



Former UTEP President Haskell Monroe recalled Cisneros as a dedicated, hardworking family man who always wanted to be an artist. He commissioned the illustrator to do the "Riders" project for the library, which led to the award-winning book of the same name published by Texas Western Press.

"He used his talents so tirelessly, so capably, so faithfully, so well and for so long," Monroe said from his home in College Station, Texas. "I'm sure when he got to the pearly gates, (St. Peter) told him, 'Sir, you don't need to slow down. Come right on in.'"



# Pollard "Barstow" Rodgers

One of the last remaining graduates of the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy class of 1941, Pollard "Barstow" Rodgers died in El Paso June 9, 2009, at the age of 94.

A retired commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve and a World War II Navy veteran, Rodgers graduated with a mining engineering degree, which served as the foundation for his long and accomplished career as an engineer. His career culminated in the 1970s when Rodgers, as resident construction engineer for the International Water and Boundary Commission, worked on the historic realignment of the Chamizal channel and bridges between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez.

Rodgers was president of the Ex-Students

Association of Texas Western College (now the UTEP Alumni Association) in 1950-51, and served on the TWC and UTEP Alumni Association boards off and on for half a century. He also was a member of the UTEP Heritage Commission Board for the last 16 years of his life.

He and his wife, Patricia, endowed the Nellie Pollard Rodgers Memorial Library Fund in honor of his mother and were indefatigable supporters of a number of organizations at UTEP, including their beloved Miner athletics teams.

One of Rodgers' great pleasures later in life was the monthly meeting of the Alpha Phi Omega engineering fraternity, where he was able to keep up with old friends and colleagues.

Photo courtesy of The Heritage Commission

# Ellis Mayfield

When Ellis Mayfield, a founding partner in the El Paso law firm Mayfield and Perrenot, received The University of Texas at El Paso's Outstanding Ex award in 1986, he said, "A test of a citizen's importance is not how much the person takes but how much he gives back to his community."

Mayfield died Nov. 14, 2009, at 94.

His legacy lives on at UTEP, where he volunteered his time to numerous boards and committees, gave generously in support of many athletic and academic programs on campus, and was an emeritus member of the UTEP Development Board. An enthusiastic supporter of UTEP athletics, Mayfield was particularly proud of the fact that he never missed a Miner football or basketball game.

Mayfield attended UTEP (then the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy) before earning his law degree from The University of Texas at Austin in 1939. Like many college students hit hard by the Great Depression, he held a series of part-time jobs to help pay for his education.

Returning to El Paso to establish his legal practice, Mayfield's career was interrupted by the start of World War II. Enlisting in the U.S. Army as a private, Mayfield served three years with the 29th Infantry Division in Europe, rising to the rank of captain and winning the Bronze Star. He would later serve in the Korean War as a staff member at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center.

In 1951, Mayfield married Susan Neff Ballantyne, a woman whose commitment to public service was as strong as his own.

To ensure that future generations of UTEP students would have access to an outstanding education, the Mayfields established the Ellis Mayfield Family Presidential Scholarship, the Susan B. Mayfield Annual Scholarship, the Anna Grace Mayfield Library Fund and the Ellis and Susan Mayfield Endowed Professorship in Business Administration.

In 2005, Ellis and Susan Mayfield were presented with the highest honor UTEP bestows on friends of the University: the Gran



Paseño and Gran Paseña awards.

Mayfield is survived by his wife Susan, son Ellis O. Mayfield Jr., daughters Margaret Meyer and her husband Bruce; Carolyn Mayfield and her husband Charlie Stein; Blythe Larson and her husband Steve; sister Carolyn Driver, 10 grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.





Photo courtesy of the El Paso Times

## Richard E. Pearson

Richard E. Pearson, a man who for decades used his talents and media sensibilities to promote The University of Texas at El Paso, died Oct. 8, 2009, at age 71 after a long fight against a type of Parkinson's disease.

Pearson, an El Paso native, earned a bachelor's in English from UTEP in 1969. He served on the University's Alumni Association Board from 1973 to 1981, including a year as board president (1980). He also shared his insights as a member of the Communication Department Advisory Council from 2001-03.

He served as general manager at El Paso television stations KVIA and KTSM and helped propel both to the top of the market during his 36-year career.

The University selected Pearson as a Distinguished Alumnus in 1996.

He was a staunch proponent of the University and often offered suggestions on how UTEP could improve itself, said Henry Quintana, immediate past president of the Alumni Association.

"It was a sad day for UTEP and the UTEP

Alumni Association when (Pearson) passed away," he said.

Pat Witherspoon, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School, spoke with Pearson several times after coming to the University in 2000 as chair of the Department of Communication. The two were members of the same Rotarians group.

She recalled Pearson as being an active member of the advisory council and a strong supporter of the department, its electronic and advertising students, and the advancements in its curriculum.

Witherspoon remembered her first visit with Pearson at his KTSM office, when he communicated his depth of feeling for El Paso.

"He was funny and very sincere," she said. "It was a helpful orientation."

UTEP students benefit from the Karen and Richard Pearson Fund for Broadcast Journalism and the Marguerite Loya Pearson Scholarship Fund for the Arts, two scholarships that Pearson established through the El Paso Community Foundation.

## Maj. Libardo Eduardo Caraveo

The life of U.S. Army Maj. Libardo Eduardo Caraveo deserves a *corrido*, a Mexican ballad that often serves as a farewell.

The Juárez native knew little English when he moved with his family to El Paso as a teenager. His work ethic and desire propelled him to earn numerous academic degrees, starting with a bachelor's in education (1979) and a master's in counseling (1980) from The University of Texas at El Paso.

He became a successful psychologist and joined the Army Reserve to give back to his adopted country.

His life was cut short Nov. 5 in a hail of gunfire in the Army Readiness Processing Center

The charismatic psychologist, who lived in Woodbridge, Va., recently had been recalled to active duty with the 467th Medical Detachment, based in Madison, Wis. He was to be deployed to Afghanistan for at least one year to treat soldiers suffering from trauma. It was to be his first deployment into a combat zone.

Fort Hood officials told the family that Caraveo, 52, may have been among the first victims because he put himself between the shooter and others in the center, according to eyewitness interviews.

"You can't help but be proud of him," said Sandra Caraveo, a niece who was among 15 family members who attended a Nov. 10 tribute at the Army post. "His loss leaves a big void in our family."

The younger Caraveo, a 2007 UTEP graduate, along with other family members and friends, spoke glowingly of Eduardo Caraveo's inspiring story. They saw it as an optimistic testament to sweat equity and a lifelong love of learning.

She said her uncle, who earned another master's from Texas Tech, a doctorate from the University of Arizona, and a post-doctoral certificate from New Mexico State University, often said that UTEP was his favorite university because of what it offered its students.

Caraveo worked as a professional psychologist around the country for more than 20 years, including 16 for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, but part of his heart stayed in El Paso and at UTEP.

"He loved to talk about the Miners," said nephew Rafael Caraveo III, who is completing a certificate plan at UTEP. "The one thing he always wore was his (1979) UTEP ring. It reminded him of his roots."

Caraveo is survived by his wife, Angela Rivera, two daughters, three sons, two brothers, four sisters, numerous nieces and nephews, extended family and close friends.



## Ray Small

In a recent phone interview, *USA Today* copy editor Jonathan Briggs described Ray Small, Ph.D., professor emeritus in communication at The University of Texas at El Paso, as "a larger than life figure" who taught and mentored several generations of UTEP student journalists.

"Dr. Small gave us the basic tools of journalism and showed us how to use them," Briggs said. "I worked on *The Prospector* staff when he was the faculty adviser. We'd be in the newsroom blasting the radio all night and he'd be right there with us making sure that the work got done. He was good with young people, and he continued to teach and advise students long past the age when others would have retired."

The recipient of the Liberal Arts Outstanding Achievement Award for Exceptional Lifetime Performance, Small died on Nov. 15, 2009. He was 94.

A World War II veteran who served with distinction in both the U.S. Army and Navy, Small accepted a position with Texas Western College—now UTEP—in 1961, serving concurrent-

ly as a faculty member in the English department and as an assistant to TWC's president.

Over the next 44 years, Small would hold a number of administrative and teaching positions at UTEP. He served as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, as the first dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and as a professor and undergraduate adviser in the Communication Department.

Small is remembered, in the words of former student Max Romero, "as the kind of teacher, and the kind of man, you looked up to. He was the old-style newspaperman who taught that journalism can sometimes reach the level of literature, but to never forget it's first and foremost a craft, and you'd better learn your nuts and bolts. I still take inspiration in the way he lived his life. He never stopped working, never stopped teaching, never stopped doing."

Small is survived by his wife Victoria Small, daughter Andra Sherrill and her husband Monte, stepdaughters Lilia Ramirez de Ronquillo and Deyanira Ramirez de Leon, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



Photo courtesy of Fort Bliss

at Fort Hood, Texas. Caraveo was one of 13 people killed in what has been called one of the worst mass killings at a U.S. military installation. Dozens were injured in the shooting.



COMPILED BY ALYSON ACHESON

**Sharyn L. Nunn** (B.S.Ed. '83) El Paso; Sept. 26, 2008.

**Suzanne R. Gilson** (B.A. '51) Springfield, Va.; Oct. 27, 2008.

**Paul G. Dusenbery** (B.B.A. '77) Rowlett, Texas; Nov. 11, 2008.

**Alan D. Laird** (M.Ed. '88) Hereford, Texas; Dec. 3, 2008.

**Frederick L. Raybon** (B.B.A. '76) Dallas; Dec. 14, 2008.

**William R. Joy** (B.S.E.E. '51) Las Vegas; Dec. 29, 2008.

**Arnold Green Jr.** (B.B.A. '58) Highland, Calif.; Jan. 5, 2009.

**George A. Bryan Jr.** (B.S. '54) Beaumont, Texas; Jan. 17, 2009.

**Luz R. Perez** (B.S.Ed. '72; M.A. '81) El Paso; Jan. 26, 2009.

**Clifton R. Sutton** (B.A. '72) Montclair, N.J.; Feb. 19, 2009.

**Ricardo "Dicky" Estrada** (B.S.Ed. '75; M.Ed. '77) El Paso; March 9, 2009.

**Billie Joyce Walker Etheridge** (M.A. '66) El Paso; April 5, 2009.

**Uhland B. Melton Jr.** (\*) Oceanside, Calif.; April 5, 2009.

**Mary Louise Stevens** (B.A. '42) Friendswood, Texas; April 9, 2009.

**Louis Garbrecht Jr.** (\*) Draper, Utah; April 17, 2009.

**Kaj Alton Malone** (B.S. '82; M.A. '87) Glendale, Ariz.; April 18, 2009.

**Oliver R. Batchelor** (B.S. '56) Odessa, Texas; April 21, 2009.

**Henry Louis "Hank" Bartell** (B.S.Mi. '57) Lander, Wyo.; April 22, 2009.

**Robert John Kozlow** (B.S. '77) Lakeland, Fla.; May 7, 2009.

**Linda Sue Bohn** (\*) El Paso; May 9, 2009.

**Robert Winston "Bob" Bothwell** (B.S. '48) El Paso; May 17, 2009.

**Charles F. "Chuck" Conly** (B.A. '70) Lake Wylie, S.C.; May 25, 2009.

**Oak Cha O'Bryan** (B.S.N. '84) Safford, Ariz.; May 26, 2009.

**Herbert K. Brasseur** (\*) Wolfeboro, N.H.; May 28, 2009.

**John Sustarsic Jr.** (B.S.E.E. '62) Camarillo, Calif.; May 29, 2009.

**Charles I. Cook** (\*) El Paso; May 30, 2009.

**Col. Blaise Andrew "Biagi" "Pete" Petrello** (B.B.A. '49) Austin, Texas; May 31, 2009.

**Donald Gene Davis** (\*) El Paso; June 2, 2009.

**Agnes W. Pruska** (B.A. '46) El Paso; June 2, 2009.

**Lt. Col. Claude Eldred "Cab" Cabanillas** (B.A. '71; M.A. '75) Yuma, Ariz.; June 5, 2009.

**Horst Renz Longenecker** (B.A. '74) El Paso; June 6, 2009.

**Esther Z. Boxer** (B.A. '39) San Diego; June 7, 2009.

**Mary Margaret "Maura" Cauldwell** (\*) El Paso; June 7, 2009.

**Caprice Marie Padilla** (\*) Austin, Texas; June 8, 2009.

**Jennifer Banham Flemming** (B.A. '87; M.A. '95) El Paso; June 10, 2009.

**Kenneth D. Wyble** (B.S. '69) Houston; June 10, 2009.

**Daniel M. Sobral** (B.S.Mi. '40) Farmington, N.M.; June 11, 2009.

**Marianne K. Adams** (\*) Phoenix; June 12, 2009.

**Betty Jeanne Fast** (\*) Early, Iowa; June 17, 2009.

**Rev. Michael E. McKenzie** (B.A. '75) Las Vegas; June 18, 2009.

**Hector Ramirez** (B.B.A. '74) El Paso; June 18, 2009.

**Vernon A. Hammond** (B.A. '74) Las Cruces, N.M.; June 19, 2009.

**Gloria S. Price** (B.S.Ed. '64) Sicily Island, La.; June 21, 2009.

**James T. "Jimmy" Wood** (B.S.N. '01) Athens, Ohio; June 21, 2009.

**Jerome L. Goetsch** (B.S. '70) Mineral Wells, W.Va.; June 22, 2009.

**Laura May Stansell Timmons** (\*) El Paso; June 22, 2009.

**Winni F. Morris "Nana" Adams** (B.A. '44) Tucson, Ariz.; June 23, 2009.

**Sandra L. Alvarado** (B.S.Ed. '89) El Paso; June 24, 2009.

**Elizabeth Claire "Betty" Bates** (\*) El Paso; June 25, 2009.

**Willia Gene Hargrove Williams** (B.S.Ed. '70) Wharton, Texas; June 25, 2009.

**Pablo Segura** (B.S.Mi. '49) Houston; June 26, 2009.

**Marian H. Lipas** (B.S.Ed. '61) El Paso; June 27, 2009.

**Weldon E. Stromberg** (B.A. '55) Kerrville, Texas; June 28, 2009.

**Consuelo C. "Christy" Viescas** (B.S.Ed. '90) El Paso; June 30, 2009.

**Joseph Whitman Johnson** (B.S.Ed. '91) Hurst, Texas; July 1, 2009.

**George H. Biddle** (M.Ed. '80) El Paso; July 2, 2009.

**Ralph Warren Parham Sr.** (B.B.A. '49; M.Ed. '69) El Paso; July 3, 2009.

**Jeanne H. Allison** (\*) El Paso; July 4, 2009.

**Maj. Ralph Edwards Smith** (B.A. '62; M.A. '65; M.Ed. '72) Sackets Harbor, N.Y.; July 5, 2009.

**Miguel "Mickey" Solis** (B.S. '64) El Paso; July 5, 2009.

**James Ralph Banner** (\*) El Paso; July 6, 2009.

**Marc K. Montes** (B.A. '96) El Paso; July 8, 2009.

**Rose Marie Martinez** (B.A. '60) Scottsdale, Ariz.; July 9, 2009.

**Frances B. Downing** (B.A. '50; M.A. '51) Memphis, Tenn.; July 11, 2009.

**Col. James R. "Rion" Ervin** (M.S.M.E. '71) El Paso; July 12, 2009.

**Dulcie M. Boykin** (B.M. '58) Las Cruces, N.M.; July 14, 2009.

**James Richard Ellenberger** (B.S.E.E. '60) Hoover, Ala.; July 14, 2009.

**Roberto F. Limon Sr.** (\*) El Paso; July 15, 2009.

**F. Adrian Muñoz** (B.B.A. '56) Hacienda Heights, Calif.; July 16, 2009.

**David W. Sell** (B.A. '72; M.A. '86) El Paso; July 16, 2009.

**Victor H. Douglass** (B.A. '91; M.A.I.S. '94) El Paso; July 17, 2009.

**Dr. John C. "Jack" Melton** (\*) Albuquerque, N.M.; July 18, 2009.

**Sylvia L. Doblado-Reynolds** (B.S.Ed. '82) El Paso; July 20, 2009.

**Dr. Robert J. "Bob" Nance** (B.S. '79) El Paso; July 20, 2009.

**Javier Alcantar** (\*) El Paso; July 23, 2009.

**Charles Edward Feind** (B.S. '65) El Paso; July 23, 2009.

**Wilfred Raoul Aguilar** (B.A. '71) Austin, Texas; July 28, 2009.

**Fabio Lopez** (B.B.A. '78; M.B.A. '86) El Paso; July 28, 2009.

**Cynthia G. Quintanar** (B.S.Ed. '90) El Paso; July 28, 2009.

**Humphrey Sibal** (B.S.M.E. '73) El Paso; July 28, 2009.

**Robert J. "Jack" Allen** (B.B.A. '69) Nederland, Texas; July 29, 2009.

**Maria Vilma Baca** (\*) El Paso; July 31, 2009.

**Mary A. "Annette" Means** (B.S. '75) El Paso; July 31, 2009.

**Enrique H. Peña** (B.B.A. '58) El Paso; July 31, 2009.

**David Deane Albright** (B.S. '57) Ballinger, Texas; Aug. 1, 2009.

**Robert Jackson "Bob" Gilbert** (B.B.A. '48) El Paso; Aug. 2, 2009.

**David E. Goodman** (\*) El Paso; Aug. 2, 2009.

**Irma Fernandez Barrett** (B.A. '91) El Paso; Aug. 3, 2009.

**Sarah E. Goodwin** (M.S.C.E. '81) Alexandria, Va.; Aug. 6, 2009.

**Corina Suzanne Reza** (B.S. '98) Horizon City, Texas; Aug. 6, 2009.

**Patricia B. "Patsy" Kimball Elliott** (B.S.Ed. '72) El Paso; Aug. 7, 2009.

**Janet Lee Lumpee** (M.A. '72) College Station, Texas; Aug. 8, 2009.

**Marta Adelisa Martin** (B.A. '71) El Paso; Aug. 8, 2009.

**Gerald Lloyd "Jerry" Wisdom** (B.B.A. '71) Nassau, Bahamas; Aug. 8, 2009.

**Lavender Carl Humphrey** (B.S. '49) El Paso; Aug. 9, 2009.

**Tomas Rosas** (\*) El Paso; Aug. 10, 2009.

**Dr. Wayne Lane Lorentzen** (B.A. '47) El Paso; Aug. 11, 2009.

**Carmen P. Marrufo** (\*) El Paso; Aug. 12, 2009.

**William J. "Bill" Barone** (\*) El Paso; Aug. 14, 2009.

**Janet M. Hearne** (B.S.Ed. '66) El Paso; Aug. 15, 2009.

(\*) Denotes attendance at UTEP



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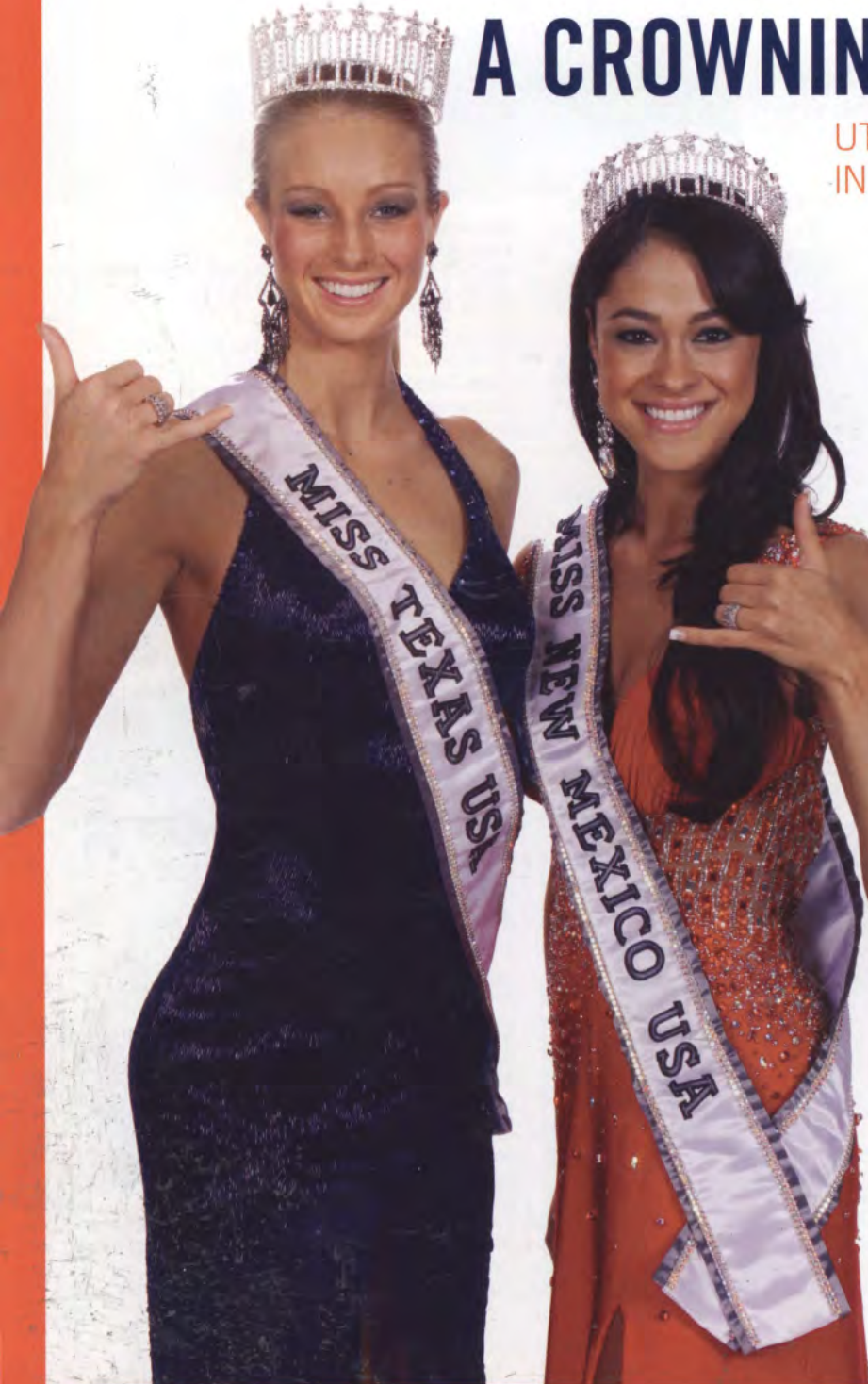
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# A CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

## UTEP BOASTS TWO CONTESTANTS IN THE MISS USA 2010 PAGEANT

BY ROBERT L. SELTZER

Known for its beautiful architecture, The University of Texas at El Paso is becoming famous for its beautiful students as well.

Regardless of what happens from this point forward, UTEP can boast two of the 50 loveliest young women in the country—Kelsey Elizabeth Moore (left), 19, and Rosanne Aguilar (right), 23.

Aguilar, a senior majoring in biology won the Miss New Mexico USA pageant in November; Moore, a sophomore majoring in general studies, captured the Miss Texas USA crown in September.

The ladies will go head-to-head—or crown-to-crown—in the Miss USA pageant April 18 in Las Vegas, Nev.

The winner of the contest will represent the United States in the Miss Universe 2010 pageant.

“Ever since I was a little girl, I grew up watching beauty pageants,” Aguilar, who commutes to UTEP from Las Cruces, said. “And it was always a dream of mine to win one.”

Aguilar finished as the first runner-up in the Miss New Mexico pageant last year, and she said she would not be able to live with herself if she did not try again.

“I did a lot of dieting and exercise to get there,” she said, smiling. “Now, I’m eating a lot of pizzas and hamburgers.”

Moore, meanwhile, did not have to undertake a drastic exercise regimen; she is a member of the UTEP volleyball team.

“I had never prepared for anything like this before,” Moore said. “There’s no makeup in volleyball. There are no heels in volleyball.”

Moore became the first El Pasoan to win the state title since Christine Friedel in 1994.

While she is originally from Chandler, Ariz., Moore said she has no trouble representing her adopted state.

“I love it here,” said Moore, a former all-state player for Valley Christian High School in Arizona. “Everyone is friendly, and it has become home to me.”

The 2010 Miss USA contest marks what UTEP officials believe is the first time two students have represented the University in one pageant.

“I think it is a great honor for both of us to represent UTEP on such a big stage,” Aguilar said. “It’s pretty awesome.”