

Fall 2006

# Nova Quarterly: The University of Texas at El Paso

The University of Texas at El Paso University Communications

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Fall 2006

# NOVA

Q U A R T E R L Y

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

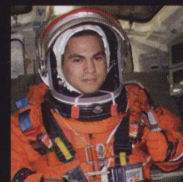
## Ready to Launch



**HOMECOMING**  
10 Calendar of Events  
12 Distinguished Alumni  
14 Gold Nuggets



**2 Researching**  
health across  
borders



**16 UTEP alumni**  
at NASA

University  
Bookstore  
Catalog  
Inside



# Reaching beyond the stars

## Homecoming time to celebrate Texas-size achievements

Come November, a joyful noise will fill the UTEP campus as thousands of alumni join us to celebrate Homecoming 2006. It seems that each celebration is bigger and more exciting than the one before, and this one promises to be especially memorable: a week filled with parades, pep rallies, special events and the jump-to-your-feet exhilaration of Miner football.

Homecoming also provides a wonderful opportunity for returning alumni to experience firsthand the phenomenal growth of the UTEP campus. We've come a long way since our early days as a mining school serving a small but dedicated group of students; building on our traditional strengths in engineering and the sciences, UTEP is now a major research-intensive university with an enrollment of 20,000 students.

This summer, we received a Texas-size endorsement of UTEP's commitment to academic and research excellence: \$124 million in funding to construct and renovate science and engineering research and teaching facilities in the heart of our campus.

This is the single largest construction and renovation program in the University's history.

The unprecedented investment in UTEP comes from The University of Texas System Board of Regents, which approved an allocation from the Permanent University Fund; and the Texas Legislature, which authorized the use of Tuition Revenue Bonds.



President Diana Natalicio with UT System Chancellor Mark Yudof and Chairman James Huffines

Thanks to the Board and the Legislature, we will be able to provide much-needed additional teaching space to accommodate UTEP's fast-growing enrollment of undergraduate and graduate students in science and engineering, and

state-of-the-art laboratories for the university's expanding research agenda.

The construction program will transform our campus facilities, including:

- A spacious new teaching and research laboratory facility for engineering and the physical sciences. This new facility

will be designed to foster interdisciplinary collaborations among faculty in several departments and colleges who have related interests and expertise. It will be built at the south end of the Engineering Building.

- Completion of two new facilities under construction on the UTEP campus: the Biosciences Research Building and the Engineering Building addition.
- Extensive renovations and infrastructure upgrades to several current facilities, including the Engineering, Biology, Classroom, and Physical Science buildings. They will be reconfigured and equipped to meet today's increasingly interdisciplinary research and teaching expectations.

In 2003, the Washington Advisory Group (WAG) reviewed research activity at UTEP and three other UT System institutions: Dallas, Arlington and San Antonio. UTEP received high marks for building a research portfolio that now ranks us fourth among all Texas public universities in federal research funding, after UT Austin, Texas A&M and Houston.

Today, as the United States faces the challenge of maintaining global competitiveness, there is an ever-increasing demand for highly skilled professionals in the sciences and technology. I am proud to tell you that UTEP is at the forefront in educating America's next generation of scientists, innovators and technology leaders.

We thank UT System Chancellor Mark Yudof, Chairman James Huffines and all the members of the UT System Board of Regents for their strong vote of confidence in UTEP's bright future. Their investment in our campus infrastructure will enable us to continue producing outstanding science and engineering graduates such as those we honor as this year's Distinguished Alumni: Reese Rowling and John "Danny" Olivas, whose stories of extraordinary accomplishments appear elsewhere in this issue of NOVA.

In telling the story of UTEP, I often state that our alumni can be found in every corner of the world. With a UTEP astronaut about to launch on a NASA shuttle mission, I'm now well positioned to expand my bragging to include outer space as well!

Great things are happening at UTEP. With so much to celebrate, I hope that you will join us for Homecoming—and for all of the many exciting campus events planned for the coming year.

**Diana S. Natalicio**  
UTEP President



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Contents © 2006 by  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
NOVA Quarterly (ISSN # 1041-6900)  
is published quarterly by:  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
University Communications  
100 West University Avenue  
El Paso, TX 79968-0522  
Periodicals Postage Paid at  
El Paso, Texas.  
Volume 44, No. 3; No. 167.

POSTMASTER:  
Send changes of address to:  
NOVA Quarterly  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
100 N. Stanton Street, Suite 201  
El Paso, TX 79902

NOVA Quarterly is sent without  
obligation to alumni and friends  
of the university.

## ON THE COVER

UTEP grad and NASA astronaut John  
"Danny" Olivas, who will make his first-  
ever flight into space in February 2007,  
flies a T-38 supersonic jet trainer. Olivas  
has been selected as a 2006 Distinguished  
Alumnus.

## COVER PHOTO

Courtesy of John "Danny" Olivas

## COVER DESIGN

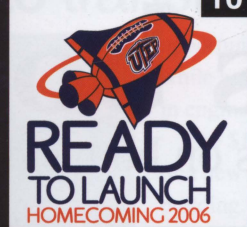
John Downey

## • CONTENTS •

### 10 COVER FEATURE

#### Ready to Launch

Our alumni are proof that the sky is not the limit here at UTEP. Homecoming 2006 honors those graduates who are inspiring students to reach beyond the stars.



#### 10 Homecoming Calendar

#### 12 Distinguished Alumni

We recognize two remarkable alumni for their hard work, perseverance and spirit of giving with the university's highest honor — and share their stories of success.

#### 14 Gold Nuggets

Our outstanding alumni, representing each of the university's colleges, share words of wisdom.

## FEATURES

### 6 Yaba-daba-doo!

Meet Randy Van Horne, the El Paso native and UTEP alumnus behind the ensemble who sang the theme songs to many iconic cartoons.



### 16 Miners Soar at NASA

For decades, UTEP grads have made their mark at NASA as engineers, computer scientists and more.



## DEPARTMENTS

### 2 Innovations

Students research the health and well-being of residents in colonias on both sides of the Rio Grande.



### 3 Highlights

Historic \$124 million allocation to boost UTEP's research portfolio in science and engineering; UTEP named the nation's No. 1 graduate engineering school for Hispanics



### 8 Profiles in Giving

Increased research in molecular and cell biology is on the way thanks to a grant from one of the nation's top medical institutes.





# Health across borders

Students research health of colonia residents on both sides of Rio Grande

by Laura Cruz

A fine dust hangs in the air as UTEP students make their way down an unpaved road scarred by potholes and littered with trash in the Felipe Angel colonia of Juárez, Mexico.

"We're seeing life from this side of the Rio Grande," says sociology major Celene Martinez.

With clipboards in hand, Martinez and nine other College of Health Sciences students interview residents of the impoverished community about their physical and mental health.

The seven-page survey is part of a study comparing the health and well-being of residents in Juárez colonias to that of those living in similar conditions in San Elizario in far east El Paso County. Surveys were conducted there in 2005.

Randomly selected residents of both colonias are asked about their exercise habits, drug use, the frequency of family violence and other issues. The data will be used to create and implement new health programs that better address the needs of small communities along the border.

**"We're living with families in Juárez, so it's a different experience for us."**

— student Celene Martinez

One of several efforts under the U.S.-Mexico Border Interdisciplinary Research Training Project, the study is funded by a \$1.26 million grant from the National Institutes of Health – National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The project, now in its first year, runs through 2009.

"It's been exhausting, but interesting," says Isela Garcia, a clinical laboratory sciences major.

As part of the project, students planning to enter the medical field live and work in Juárez for six weeks in the summer, gaining experience in research and data collection.

"We're living with families in Juárez, so it's a different experience for us," says Martinez, noting that the surveys were sometimes conducted through wood-pallet doors and gates.

"People work very hard for very little money," Martinez says.

"Residents say police officers don't come out here to the colonias, so there's a lot of violence."

The students work under the supervision of professors from UTEP and the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ). The Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, or Mexican Health Services department, is collaborating on this study.

The unique opportunity to work with renowned researchers from UTEP and UACJ has not gone unnoticed by students, who say the experience is helping them shape their futures.



Sociology major Celene Martinez asks a 35-year-old Juárez woman about her health as part of a Hispanic health disparities study.

"I've taken courses on research, but being out in the field is a new experience," says senior Llubia Corella. She works alongside UTEP professor Delfina Dominguez, studying the prevalence of diarrhea in Juárez children ages 5 through 7.

The research training project takes on more personal meaning for Israel Omar Galindo, an El Paso native raised in Juárez.

"I was able to observe firsthand diseases affecting people living in Juárez," says Galindo, a kinesiology graduate student whose parents work as a nurse and an X-ray technician with Mexican Health Services.

Galindo is also researching the impact of additional nutritional therapy in tuberculosis patients with UTEP professors Rodrigo X. Armijos, M.D., and Megan Weigel, Ph.D.

"It's very important for our students to get this kind of hands-on experience that they wouldn't get in a classroom setting," Weigel says. "It's also really important because they are the future of this community."

Francisco Javier Llera Pacheco, scientific research director at UACJ, says the program gives both universities a chance to strengthen academic collaborations.

"It gives UTEP students an opportunity to evaluate and learn how research in tuberculosis, diabetes and obesity is conducted and addressed in Juárez," he says. "We in turn learn about how research is conducted and data is collected by our U.S. counterparts."

Robert Anders, Ph.D., principal investigator of the project and dean of the School of Nursing, says projects like these encourage local students to become researchers who will address border needs.

"There is a shortage of researchers interested in minority health issues," Anders says. "This grant affords us the chance to expose students to this kind of research with the ultimate goal being that they'll pursue careers in Hispanic health disparities." ■



# \$124 million to transform science, engineering



The UT System Board of Regents has approved \$124 million for new and upgraded science and engineering buildings at UTEP, a major step in boosting the University's research portfolio.

The largest single construction investment in UTEP's history, the funding will create new

opportunities for interdisciplinary research while accommodating the growth in enrollment in engineering and science programs.

The \$124 million will fund construction of a new science and engineering laboratory building. Construction is to start in 2007 and could be completed by 2009. The allocation will also help complete the Engineering Building addition and the Biosciences Research Building.

In addition, the funds will pay for extensive renovations and upgrades to other facilities. UTEP's allocation is part of a \$2.5 billion package approved by the Regents to increase competitiveness in key scientific areas. It is the single largest financial commitment in the system's nearly 125-year history. ■

## We're No. 1!

For the second consecutive year, the University of Texas at El Paso has been named the No. 1 engineering graduate school for Hispanics by Hispanic Business magazine.

The magazine's September 2006 issue ranks the top 10 graduate schools for Hispanics in a variety of disciplines under its Diversity Report.


"Promoting and encouraging a diverse community where Hispanic students can thrive was a key element that set this year's schools apart," states a magazine online press release.

Hispanic Business used graduate enrollment and number of degrees awarded to determine schools' rankings. UTEP ranked above Purdue University, Georgia Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

UTEP's College of Engineering consistently ranks as one of the top 5 schools in the continental United States in awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanics, and has been named a Model Institution for Excellence by the National Science Foundation.

The college has received numerous prestigious recognitions and awards, including selection to PACE, the Partners for the Advancement of Collaborative Engineering program. The PACE designation brought with it a \$169 million in-kind donation of computer-engineering software and equipment from General Motors and other PACE corporate partners.

For more information on the rankings, visit

 <http://www.hispanicbusiness.com>

## Putting graduation on the horizon

A group of UTEP students is celebrating a milestone in their college careers and the history of the university.

During a special ceremony in August, 38 students became the first graduates to earn the Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies degree. The program allows students to combine credits from multiple academic disciplines into a single degree.

The students ranged in age from 22 to 60 and had taken between four and 39 years to complete their degrees. ■

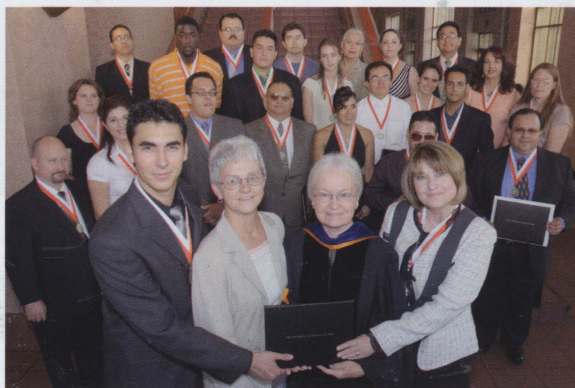


photo by Chad Puerling

## Other ongoing construction projects at UTEP:

- The \$30.5 million, five-story Biosciences Research Building is expected to open by mid-October.
- The second floor of the Engineering Building Annex will be completed this fall.
- The first phase of the university parking garage should be completed by April, accommodating more than 820 vehicles; and nearly 1,700 when complete.
- The Hilton Garden Inn, built under a ground lease agreement with the university, is slated to be completed in October.

## Programs awarded major grants

- UTEP's School of Nursing received more than \$900,000 to enhance the Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) master's program and increase the number of students it graduates. The three-year grant from the Health



Resources and Services Administration will fund training seminars for nursing students and create several new positions.



- The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence has been awarded \$1 million by the Texas Education

Agency to improve instruction and academic performance in science- and math-related subjects. The two-year grant under the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics initiative calls for the collaborative to become a regional T-STEM center. ■

photo by J.R. Hernandez



NOVA Quarterly is following three students – Joe Lomeli and twin sisters Claudia and Carla Ochoa – through their first years of college. In just four semesters, the students have overcome their freshman fears and sophomore struggles. This semester, they are confident they will find

# Success

in the middle years

## Bouncing back: Blessings in disguise

*UTEP junior Joe Lomeli says he feels like he ran into a wall during his first year of college. But it hasn't taken the 19-year-old long to rebound, and he says he's well on his way to overcoming the obstacles he faced. An English and American Literature major who aspires to become a teacher, Lomeli shares some thoughts about his college experience through this first-hand account.*

Starting college is hard enough without having to deal with losing a relationship you strongly believed in and a job you worked hard at. But as all of us know, life never turns out the way you expect.

Last fall, during my second semester at UTEP, I had to deal with breaking up with my girlfriend.

Despite everything I had to deal with emotionally, I put on a stern face and made sure that I kept life as normal as possible. I never wanted to let anyone see how I was feeling on the inside.

Thankfully, that semester did not overwhelm me. The majority of my classes were basics, and though there were a few tough exams, I managed to get good grades in all my courses.

By the end of the semester, many of my raging emotions had subsided, and I was well on my way to feeling better. I was eagerly anticipating my new set of classes – junior-level courses.

But I hit another roadblock the following semester. I was laid off my job at a warehouse – my first job – where I worked nearly 30 hours a week to help support my studies, my family and myself. It was my sole means of



Joe Lomeli

“I now feel more open to express myself.”



financing my vehicle and obtaining anything that I needed.

I was in utter shock. I was left with feelings of failure and worthlessness. In addition, I was taking on a larger course load of 15 hours. Being laid off could not have come at a more inopportune time.

One thing that helped ease my financial situation was my Presidential Excellence Scholarship. It was a blessing because without it, my parents would not have been able to send me to college. And I met all the academic requirements again, so my scholarship has been renewed for this year.

The search for a new job was very difficult. I found a job working at a grocery store, but that did not pay enough, and the hours really hurt my time for school assignments. Eventually, I found a job as a sales representative for a local cellular company that meets my needs financially and works around my busy class schedule. I thank God for getting me through this rough period.

But I am also grateful for the help and advice my professors provided during this time.

*I am also grateful for the help and advice my professors provided.*

One of my greatest inspirations was the advice that my philosophy professor, Dr. Jules Simon, gave me in regards to my writing. In an almost surreal moment, he told me, "Joe, you will never be a great writer until you realize that all writing is personal."

From that moment on, I have never looked at writing assignments the same. I now feel more open to express myself.

I hope to finish college in the spring of 2008 and then start my teaching career. However, if things do not happen like I plan, I'm sure that another solution will present itself.

Life may seem scary at times, especially when everything seems to be crumbling in front of you. But the best part of being young is that we can still "watch all of our dreams fall apart at the seams," to quote an old Sinatra tune.

Whatever life brings, I look forward to the challenge. ■

# Students find success, themselves

by Laura S. Ruelas

From an early age, Claudia and Carla Ochoa were determined to succeed. They were inseparable during their time at Fabens High School, taking the same classes and participating in the same clubs. They even earned the top two spots in their graduating class.

Today, both are juniors at UTEP and are on track to graduate in two years. They say they've learned to be more independent and confident.

"I've become more responsible and diligent," says Carla, who spends her days studying to maintain good grades and serve as a role model for her nearly 2-year-old son.

Carla is seeking a bachelor's in education and looks forward to becoming a math teacher in Fabens. She recently received UTEP's STEP UP scholarship, awarded to students who commit to teaching in high-need schools.

"Unlike high school, you have to try very hard to make it here, not because someone is on your back, but because you want to do it for yourself," says Carla.

*I feel much more confident about college, and I'm ready to take on whatever comes my way.*



Carla Ochoa



Claudia Ochoa

*Unlike high school, you have to try very hard to make it here.*

Differing course schedules and family and work responsibilities mean the twins are no longer inseparable. Instead, they've had to grow as individuals, but always with the support of their family and advice and encouragement from UTEP faculty and staff.

Claudia lives in Miner Village, student housing on campus, and Carla lives with her family in far east El Paso County.

As a peer leader for the College Assistance Migrant Program, Claudia is helping students like herself make the transition to college life.

"It is just great to have the chance to help other students make the transition," says Claudia, who struggled to select a major before deciding on psychology. "They look up to me, and I want to give them my best."

The sisters will be the first in their family to graduate from a four-year university.

"I am definitely learning more about who I am and what my goals are," says Claudia. "I feel much more confident about college, and I'm ready to take on whatever comes my way." ■



# UTEP alum makes TV music history



By David Peregrino and Laura Ruelas

**I**t's easy to play a catchy tune. If you're like Fred and Wilma, just spin your record on a turtle's back and place a bird's beak in the grooves.

But performing an iconic piece of television music takes a special talent. And for that, we applaud Randy Van Horne, the El Paso native and UTEP alum behind the ensemble who sang the theme songs for "The Flintstones," "The Jetsons," "Yogi Bear," and other classic Hanna-Barbera cartoons.

The Randy Van Horne Singers were one of the most requested studio session groups of the 1950s and 1960s. They recorded hundreds of television and radio commercials and worked with artists like Dean Martin, Mel Tormé and Juan Garcia Esquivel, contributing to the era's jazzy, genre-bending music that has come to be known as space-age pop. The singers earned a regular spot on the Nat King Cole Show in the late 1950s.

"It was a great time for all of us. We worked with some of the biggest artists and recorded music people still remember today," says Van Horne, who now makes his home in southern California.

Van Horne's passion for music began as a teenager.

"When I heard big-band music for the very first time, I just fell in love with it," he says.

After serving in World War II, Van Horne studied music at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Md. He later attended Texas Western College (now UTEP).

In his free time, he worked as a cocktail pianist in lounges and clubs around El Paso. Soon, he began itching for a fast-paced city and packed his bags for California.

"I had to leave home. The music scene at that time was in Los Angeles, so I took a chance," Van Horne says.

Van Horne worked his way up from studio jobs, assembling vocal groups and developing a solid following. He formed the Encores, which toured with big-band legend Billy May. In the mid-1950s, he assembled the Randy

Van Horne Singers, who were signed by RCA Victor and later MGM. In the early 60s,

Hoyt Curtin, Hanna-Barbera's music composer, tapped the ensemble to sing



**"We worked with some of the biggest artists and recorded music people still remember today."**

**-Randy Van Horne**

the theme to "The Flintstones" and other cartoons that have become icons of pop culture.

Van Horne had many rewarding collaborations with dozens of composers and musicians over the last half-century.

"I tried to be creative at all times by reinventing myself and keeping things fresh," he says.

Now 82, Van Horne still has the spark and enthusiasm that keeps his creativity flowing. Lately, he's been composing music for a pop choir.

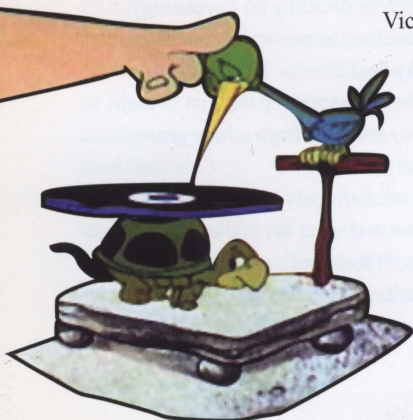
And though it's been 10 years since his last visit to El Paso, his music will soon return to his hometown.

This fall, Van Horne will donate his extensive collection of musical arrangements to the UTEP Department of Music.

"His work obviously has reached millions, and this donation will bring his music to a new generation of musicians and composers," says Lowell Graham, chairman of UTEP's music department.

"I am happy to share my work and music," Van Horne says.

"It should be fun." **N**





## Alumni leaders selected

The UTEP Alumni Association recently installed its new Board of Directors, and several chapters elected new officers. To join the association chapter nearest you, or to form your own, contact the alumni office at 1-866-GO-MINERS, 915-747-8600 or [alumni@utep.edu](mailto:alumni@utep.edu)

### Board of Directors

**President** – Norma L. De La Rosa  
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**Secretary** – Ray Medrano  
**Treasurer** – S. Duane McCune

## MINERS ON THE MOVE Kathryn Almendarez Marsman

**K**athryn Almendarez Marsman is a senior relationship marketing manager for Microsoft. The UTEP grad earned her bachelor's in marketing in 1995 and now splits her time between offices in Washington and Irving, Texas.

**You work in a people-oriented position for a technology-oriented company. How do you find a balance?**

In my past Microsoft job, I'd survey people from around the globe about their complaints, and I'd end up with reams of paper filling my office. I'd take them home, read through them and think, “Wow, we need to look and listen more.”

It made me want to be a customer advocate; it's something I have a passion for. I'm the one who stops and says, “Let's think about this from the customer's perspective.”

**Microsoft attracts a lot of talent from around the world. Did you ever feel intimidated by that?**

I work with people from a wide array of backgrounds and educational experiences — including those with degrees from prestigious ivy league universities — and while I've learned a lot from these people and their experiences, I've never doubted my



own business fundamentals and my ability to contribute to Microsoft's continued success...all things I developed at UTEP.

**What advice would you give to the UTEP student who wants to get a job with that one specific company?**

Don't give up. Sometimes you have to try more than once or twice. If there's a company you really

want to work for, think of creative ways to get people's attention. Develop relationships, join associations, and learn as much as you can about that company and its core values.

**When homesickness strikes, what do you miss most about El Paso?**

I miss my family, the mountains and going to the UTEP basketball games.

*Are you a Miner on the Move? If you're a UTEP grad and would like to be featured in this column, please send us your name, occupation/title, year of graduation and your daytime phone number and e-mail address. Please include a high-resolution color photo. E-mail us at [nova@utep.edu](mailto:nova@utep.edu) or write us at Nova Quarterly, University Communications/Hertzog Bldg., 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, Texas, 79968.*

### Fellow UTEP Alumni:

As a proud UTEP grad and new president of the UTEP Alumni Association, I am writing to invite you to become a member the association.

We have many accomplishments to celebrate as we approach the university's centennial anniversary in 2014. Our alma mater has become a major research university with a student enrollment of more than 19,000 -- and growing!

Adding to our Miner pride are the university's athletic programs, which continue to gain national recognition. The 40th anniversary of Texas Western College's 1966 NCAA Championship and the release of Glory Road, the Disney/Jerry Bruckheimer film based on the historic victory, brought UTEP attention from around the globe. We as alumni are proud to be associated with a dynamic university whose research, teaching and graduates are changing the world.

Members of the UTEP Alumni Association are vital to strengthening our network of over 80,000 alumni. We hope to include you in this special group of individuals who demonstrate their Miner pride by joining the association.

Membership enables you to join a great organization and start supporting UTEP students today!

I urge you to take advantage of the opportunities that Alumni Association membership provides. Members enjoy attending special events, providing scholarships for students and serving as mentors for both current students and recent graduates.

I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the UTEP Alumni Association. Remember: GO MINERS!



### Norma De La Rosa

Class of 1976 and '86  
 President, UTEP Alumni Association  
[ia.utep.edu/alumni](mailto:ia.utep.edu/alumni)  
**Sign-up today! It's easy!**

### Membership

Type	Individual	Joint
Annual	\$30	\$50
Lifetime	\$500	\$750
Senior Lifetime (age 60+)	\$250	\$375

A portion of Lifetime dues are allocated toward scholarships to support UTEP's talented students

To sign up, visit [ia.utep.edu/alumni](http://ia.utep.edu/alumni) or mail a check payable to UTEP Alumni Association to UTEP Alumni Association, de Wetter Center, 500 W. University Ave, El Paso, TX 79968-0724. Send us your name, address, daytime phone and e-mail address as well as your class year and date of birth.

For more information, e-mail [alumni@utep.edu](mailto:alumni@utep.edu) or call 915/747-8600 or toll free at 1-866-GO-MINERS





photo by Chad Puerling

Students like Adrian Avila and Valentina Montoya will conduct important biology research thanks to a HHMI grant.

## Biology lab to give undergrads unique opportunities

by Alejandro Erives

When a new undergraduate biology research lab funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute is completed next year, it will be more than a new room on campus.

The \$1.5 million lab will lead students and faculty to unique research opportunities in molecular and cell biology.

"The idea is to help students go through the critical thinking process and be actively involved in research," says Kristine M. Garza, associate professor of molecular cell biology in the Department of Biological Sciences. "They won't be learning just cookie-cutter techniques, but will go through and learn from the process of scientific thinking."

To help achieve that learning process, the fourth floor of the existing Biology Building will be renovated to create the nearly 4,000-square-foot laboratory.

The HHMI grant is part of \$86.4 million for undergraduate science education that the nonprofit medical research organization awarded to universities across the nation this year. HHMI received 158 applications, and UTEP was one of 50 universities selected for an award.

"Individualized mentoring and early research experiences with working scientists also are vital components of a university education that prepares undergraduates for graduate school and careers in science," says Peter J. Bruns, HHMI vice president for grants and special programs, on the institute's Web site.

**HHMI**  
HOWARD HUGHES MEDICAL INSTITUTE

At UTEP, those types of research opportunities for undergraduate students continue to grow thanks in part to grants from prestigious organizations such as the

Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

In the new lab, undergrads will conduct research in areas such as DNA sequencing, protein purification and fluorescence microscopy.

Adrian Avila, a junior biology student, says he's excited about the learning opportunities the lab will bring to his studies.

"I get to express my own ideas," says Avila, "and get to choose what direction I want to take."

With the creation of the lab also comes a notable change in course curriculum. The lab components of molecular cell biology and prokaryotic molecular genetics will be combined.

"You can see how (the classes) are integrated," says Dr. Rosa A. Maldonado, assistant professor of prokaryotic molecular genetics. "The students will see how a tool that is produced using molecular biology will support mechanisms in prokaryotic cells."

Another goal of the HHMI biology research lab is to educate teaching assistants and postdoctoral fellows to become mentors.

"In helping people become better mentors," says Garza, "we get more minority students in the track of doing research." ■



Stories by David Peregrino

## Barbee to lead men's basketball

Former University of Memphis assistant Tony Barbee has been named UTEP's 17th men's basketball coach.

Barbee, 35, spent six successful years as an assistant at Memphis, helping lead the Tigers to six consecutive postseason tournament appearances and a No. 4 national ranking in 2006. He's considered one of the premier recruiters in the nation.

Barbee says fans can expect an exciting style of play.

"I'm here to win in March, and my philosophy starts with defense," he says. "We want to limit our opponents to tough field goal attempts. Offensively, my style is different types of style—dribble, drive, kick—similar to what the Phoenix Suns do. It will be high-paced and high-energy."

Barbee succeeds Doc Sadler, who left in August to become head coach at the University of Nebraska. **N**



Barbee

photo by J.R. Hernandez

## Multi-million dollar basketball complex in the works

A new multi-million dollar basketball practice facility is on the drawing board for the Miners.

Two gifts of \$3 million each toward the construction of the complex have been pledged by Paul L. Foster, president and CEO of Western Refining, Inc., and Jeff and Sharon Stevens. Jeff Stevens is executive vice president of marketing for Western Refining. The \$10.5 million Foster and Stevens Basketball Complex is scheduled for completion in 2008.

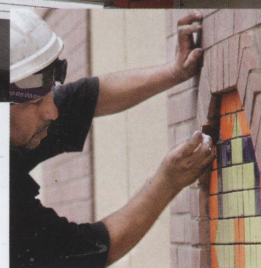


Plans call for the 41,000-square-foot complex to be home to three practice courts, a strength and conditioning center, and a sports medicine center. It also will house offices, locker rooms, an academic and film room, and a Hall of Honor. The complex is expected to be constructed just east of the Don Haskins Center, though planning is still preliminary and the design and location could change. **N**

## Press box facelift

Just in time for the football season, another splash of color has come to the Sun Bowl. The formerly gray press box has a new coat of paint and colorful Bhutanese architectural details. The renovation of the press box comes courtesy of the Associated General Contractors of El Paso, who also collaborated with UTEP Athletics last summer to give the south side of the Sun Bowl a Bhutanese-style facelift. To fund the project, the group collected nearly \$100,000 in material and labor donations from seven area contractors and subcontractors.

The new look was designed by graphic artists Phillip Flores and John Downey of University Communications. **N**



## Soccer looks to repeat success

With the season underway, the Miner soccer team is looking to build on last year's success, which delivered



Tullius



Popoff

a 20-win campaign and the program's first-ever berth in the NCAA Tournament. Juniors Jami Tullius and Brittany Popoff are "ones to watch," having been named to the Preseason All-Conference USA team. The Miner team is looking to put together a strong finish in time for the C-USA tournament, Nov. 1-5 in Dallas. **N**


## Volleyball readies for conference play

Led by new coach Ken Murphy, the volleyball team has readied for conference play with a tough non-conference schedule. Murphy replaced Scott Swanson, who led the team to a 21-10 record last season. The Miners expect to be hitting their peak as they approach the C-USA championship Nov. 16-19 in Houston. **N**



Murphy

For a complete football schedule and more athletics information, visit

 [www.utepathletics.com](http://www.utepathletics.com)





**A**t the University of Texas at El Paso, we're putting the stars within our students' reach.

We rank as one of the nation's top schools for Hispanics; and our student body of nearly 20,000 continues to break enrollment records. Construction on campus is booming, and undergrad and graduate programs are growing.

As our research portfolio expands, faculty and student researchers work on important issues that will affect this country's health, security, and energy use. Charitable gifts are taking off as more alumni, private donors and corporations and foundations pledge their support to UTEP through their generous donations.

Through all our accomplishments, we continue to prove that at UTEP, the sky is *not* the limit.

This homecoming, we celebrate more than the past. We're gearing up for the future, opening a universe of opportunities for generations to come.

We're ready to launch.

## The Big Game

**Homecoming Football Game**  
UTEP Miners vs. Rice Owls  
7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Sun-Bowl Stadium

## Events by college

Events are subject to change.  
Visit [www.homecoming.utep.edu](http://www.homecoming.utep.edu) for the latest information.

### Business Administration

Information: Shari Schwartz  
915/747-7728 or [sschwartz@utep.edu](mailto:sschwartz@utep.edu)

**Gold Nugget Reception**  
4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2  
Lobby, Business Administration Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

### Education

Information: Carmen Sanchez  
915/747-5572 or [cbsanchez@utep.edu](mailto:cbsanchez@utep.edu)

### Homecoming Gold Nugget Breakfast

8 to 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
University Suite, Union East Building

**Pre-game Tailgate Party**  
TBA

### Engineering

Information: Gabby Gandara  
915/747-5460 or [engineer@utep.edu](mailto:engineer@utep.edu)

### Civil, Industrial, Mechanical, Metallurgy & Materials Engineering Luncheon

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Engineering Lawn

### Engineering Gold Nugget Breakfast

8 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Engineering Patio (contingent on weather)  
\$10 per person

### Electrical Engineering & Computer Science Cookout

Noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Engineering Lawn  
\$5 adults, \$3 children

### Health Sciences

Information: Merced Sierra  
915/747-7201 or [msierra@utep.edu](mailto:msierra@utep.edu)

### Gold Nugget Reception

10:30 a.m. to noon Friday, Nov. 3  
Fountain Room, College of Health Sciences Building  
1101 N. Campbell St.

### Liberal Arts

Information: Estella Estrada  
915/747-7016 or [eestrada@utep.edu](mailto:eestrada@utep.edu)

### Gold Nugget Ceremony and Reception

4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2  
Wise Family Theater, Fox Fine Arts Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

### Languages and Linguistics International Breakfast

8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 3

Room 109, Liberal Arts Building  
Information: Rita Arismendiz  
915/747-7019 or [arismen@utep.edu](mailto:arismen@utep.edu)

### English Department Homecoming Reception

4 to 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Hudspeth Hall Foyer  
Information: Ceci Rhymes  
915/747-6240 or [crhymes@utep.edu](mailto:crhymes@utep.edu)

### History Department Wine and Cheese Reception

4 to 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
History Lounge, Room 321, Liberal Arts Building  
Information: Paul Edison or Edith Yanez  
915/747-5508 or [pedison@utep.edu](mailto:pedison@utep.edu) or [eyanez@utep.edu](mailto:eyanez@utep.edu)

### Communication Homecoming Brunch

10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Nov. 4  
Cotton Memorial Lawn  
Information: Dr. Witherspoon or Rosie Antillon  
915/747-6285 or [whitersp@utep.edu](mailto:whitersp@utep.edu) or [roantill@utep.edu](mailto:roantill@utep.edu)

### Political Science Wine and Cheese Homecoming Reception and Awards Ceremony

4 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
UGLC Patio  
Information: Mona Segura  
915/747-7968 or [rsegura@utep.edu](mailto:rsegura@utep.edu)

### Science

Information: Juan Camacho  
915/747-5042 or [jcamacho@utep.edu](mailto:jcamacho@utep.edu) or Dean's Office  
915/747-5536 or [science@utep.edu](mailto:science@utep.edu)

### Gold Nugget Breakfast

9 to 10:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Geology Reading Room



# LAUNCH

Oct. 30-Nov. 4

[www.homecoming.utep.edu](http://www.homecoming.utep.edu)

## Geological Sciences

### Open House

9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Geology Reading Room

## College of Science Tailgate

3 p.m. to game time Saturday,  
Nov. 4  
Bell Hall Lawn

## Mathematical Sciences

### Alumni Homecoming

### Coffee

10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Nov. 4  
Room 125, Bell Hall  
Information: Lanna Tallmon  
915/747-6754 or [lanna@utep.edu](mailto:lanna@utep.edu)

## Other Events

*Events are free unless otherwise noted.*

## Heritage House

Information: Jeannie Johnston  
915/747-5592 or [jjohnston@utep.edu](mailto:jjohnston@utep.edu)

### Exhibits:

- Class of 1956
- 1966 NCAA Championship Basketball Team and "Glory Road"
- History of UTEP Buildings by Willie Quinn

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday-  
Friday, Nov. 1-3

10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Nov. 4

## Recreational Sports

Information: Ruben Espinoza  
915/747-5103 or [espinoza@utep.edu](mailto:espinoza@utep.edu)

For information regarding  
racquetball tournaments,  
swimming-pool use, exercise-  
room use and equipment  
checkout, log on to [www.utep.edu/rsd](http://www.utep.edu/rsd)

## Student Development Center

Information: 915/747-5670 or  
[sdcenter@utep.edu](mailto:sdcenter@utep.edu)

## Homecoming Parade

12:15 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
University and Oregon

## Pep Rally

1:15 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Undergraduate Learning Center  
patio

## Weeklong Activities

*An array of student group  
competitions, including:*

## Campuswide Blood Drive

Monday, Oct. 30-Thursday, Nov. 2

## Homecoming

### Lip Synch

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday,  
Nov. 1  
Union Breezeway

## Float Making Party

7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2  
Parking lots A-9 & C-4 by Don  
Haskins Center

## Student Government Association

### SGA Homecoming

### Pageant

6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 1  
Magoffin Auditorium

## SGA Homecoming Party

9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Club Blu

## SGA Pre-Game Party

Noon, Saturday, Nov. 4  
Geology Building, front lawn

## Military Science

Information: Lt. Col. Carr  
915/747-5621 or [jcarr@utep.edu](mailto:jcarr@utep.edu)

## Army ROTC Alumni Picnic

2 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Military Sciences Building

## University Bookstore

Information: 915/747-5594 or  
toll free 1-888-747-5594

- Homecoming T-shirts  
available Oct. 1
- All Texas Western College  
apparel, 20 percent off  
Oct. 28-30
- Patio sale, Nov. 1-3
- Fashion show, Union  
Breezeway, Nov. 1

## Alumni Band

Information: Band Office  
915/747-5665 or [ctredway@utep.edu](mailto:ctredway@utep.edu)

## Marching Band

### Rehearsal

3 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Sun Bowl Stadium

## Alumni Band Party and Business Meeting

4 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Room 101, Fox Fine Arts Center

## Performance

6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Join the Marching Miners and  
perform at halftime

*Bring your instrument and wear  
your UTEP colors. If you need  
an instrument, please contact the  
UTEP Band Office by Oct. 27*

## Athletics Department

Ticket information: UTEP Ticket  
Center  
915/747-5234

## Miner Varsity Club

Honoring the conference  
champions of the year  
7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Larry K. Durham Center

## Homecoming Football Game

UTEP vs. Rice  
7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Sun Bowl Stadium

## Alumni Association/ Alumni Relations

915/747-8600, 866/466-4637

## 9th Annual Ron Harvey Golf Tournament

Wednesday, Nov. 1  
Emerald Springs Golf Course

## Homecoming Open House

Friday, Nov. 3  
Peter and Margaret de Wetter  
Center

## Distinguished Alumni Event

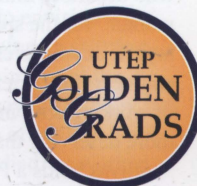
6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Don Haskins Center

## Homecoming

### Pre-Game Party

4:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4  
Peter and Margaret de Wetter  
Center

*Wear orange!*



## GOLDEN GRADS

### Campus Tour

9 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 2  
Peter and Margaret de Wetter  
Center

## Welcome

### Luncheon, Class of '56

Noon Thursday, Nov. 2  
El Paso Country Club  
Bus transportation provided

## Dinner & Dance

6:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2  
Ardovino's Desert Crossing

## Patriotic Luncheon, Class of '56

1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3  
Geology Reading Room

## Golden Grads

### Luncheon Honoring the Class of '56

Noon, Saturday, Nov. 4  
Tomás Rivera Conference Center,  
Union East Building, 3rd Floor  
*A class photo will be taken*



# Rooftop dreams shape destiny

by Kimberly A. Miller and David Peregrino

Schoolbooks alone couldn't satisfy John "Danny" Olivas' thirst for knowledge.

The best lessons often came from building model-rocket motors in the backyard or helping his dad take apart a car engine in the driveway of their El Paso home.

But eventually, this mechanical aptitude began to dovetail nicely with math and physics theories Olivas learned in UTEP classrooms.

And it produced a remarkable result: The 1989 Miner grad is now a NASA astronaut scheduled for his first flight into space aboard the shuttle Atlantis in February. He'll be part of the mission STS-117 crew that will deliver and install a truss segment for the International Space Station.

Olivas, who earned a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from UTEP, is being honored as a 2006 Distinguished Alumni.

"I'm just a guy who likes to work and happy to have technical challenges," says Olivas, who describes himself as just a "construction worker" for the space program. "I don't see myself any differently than many of the fine engineers and scientists that I've had the fortune of working with in the past ... and certainly no more deserving than they."

Olivas holds a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering and materials science from Rice University, but he says he was just a "middle-of-the-road" student during his days at Bonham Elementary, MacArthur Middle and Burges High schools in El Paso.

Still, his mother Carmen Olivas, a schoolteacher, and father Juan Olivas, a locomotive electrician, encouraged his youthful inquisitiveness.

"They got me a little kid's telescope. I remember climbing up on the top of my roof and looking at the stars and moon," Olivas says,



Olivas in front of a shuttle mockup at Johnson Space Center

adding he often thought about rocketing through space toward those stars.

Olivas and his father also worked together on the family cars. The experience gave him the confidence and skills to rebuild the six-cylinder motor in his 1969 Ford Ranger while a junior in high school. It's a truck that's still running to this day.

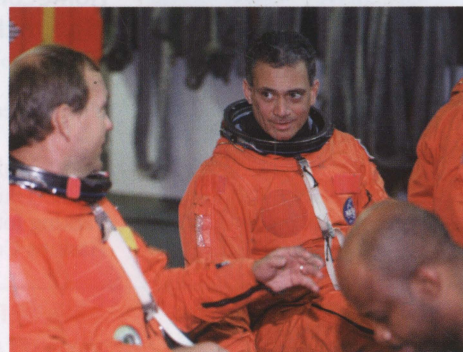
"My father was, in my opinion, the world's greatest mechanic and engineer. As a kid I would work with him to fix everything," Olivas says. "I never saw a project he was unwilling to take on because it was too hard or intimidating."

Olivas' parents also inspired him to work hard on his education. When he was in middle school, he proudly watched his mother receive her diploma at a UTEP commencement. And his father earned an associate's degree while in his 50s.

Now retired and living in El Paso, Carmen and Juan Olivas knew their son's curiosity and rambunctious energy would lead him to great places.

"This is his childhood dream. We are very happy for him," says Olivas' mother, who admits she's nervous about the upcoming space adventure. "He's still my baby."

Olivas first applied to NASA during a hiring freeze: "The recruiter told me to keep gaining experience, so I'd be ready when they started hiring."



Preparing for extreme environment training in Aquarius Underwater habitat in Florida

Olivas took an engineering position with Dow Chemical, and after earning his master's and Ph.D., became a senior research engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Through it all, he kept his eye on the goal of going into space.

He was named to NASA's astronaut program in 1998 and has worked in the Robotics Branch developing tools and techniques to repair the shuttle in orbit.

Olivas, who is married and a father of five children, is thrilled to be this much closer to fulfilling his childhood dream. But he's keeping it all in perspective.

"At the end of the day it is still just a job. I stay focused on training and learning, and being a good father to my wonderful family," he says. "Those are the things that are important." ■



Training at the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, a 6.2-million-gallon pool that helps simulate space walk

On the Web: Visit UTEP's Danny Olivas Web site at [www.utep.edu/dannyolivas](http://www.utep.edu/dannyolivas)





# Geologist finds treasures abound

Story by Cindy Ramirez  
Research by Timi Haggerty

Reese Rowling's life yielded many treasures.

"He loved the hunt for oil and gas — it was the thrill," says his youngest daughter, Katherine Klingaman. "He took some risks and he succeeded."

A 1951 graduate of the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy (now UTEP), Rowling was co-founder and principal of Tana Oil and Gas Corporation, one of Texas' most successful oil and gas exploration companies.

Though he was renowned for his vision and tenacity in the energy industry, Rowling, who died in 2001 at the age of 73, approached his personal life with an even greater passion. Business never got in the way of family.

"One of the greatest qualities about dad was that he loved unconditionally," Klingaman says, recalling the Thursday lunch appointments he always kept with his children — even when business matters summoned him.



Rowling during his Miner days around 1950

This fall, UTEP honors Rowling with a 2006 Distinguished Alumni Award.

"Daddy would feel very undeserving," says Klingaman, adding that her father was a giving man who often funded scholarships for family members — and complete strangers he met

during his lifetime.

His generosity touched UTEP as well: He established the Reese Rowling Endowed Fund for Geology, which provides stipends for graduate and undergraduate students.

"He loved UTEP," says Klingaman, a former teacher who is now a stay-at-home mom. "He talked about how fortunate he was to have been able to go to the one place that offered the best education in his field."

Rowling was honored as UTEP's Gold Nugget Award recipient for the College of Science in 1993.

Carol Grassel, Rowling's oldest daughter,

recalls her father driving through campus and pointing to the mountain where he and other engineering and science students whitewashed a giant "M" as part of the Texas College of Mines tradition. She says UTEP was a perfect fit.

"For someone who wanted to be a geologist, TCM was absolutely the best place to be," says Grassel, a former accountant who now owns small retail businesses with her husband in Corpus Christi.

Rowling was born in Waycross, Ga., in 1928 to Harry Herschel Rowling and Lily May McIntosh Rowling. His father worked for the railroad, and Rowling and his older brother Harry, grew up in a humble home.

After high school, Rowling enlisted in the Army, serving as a paratrooper. He later enrolled at the Texas College of Mines. In 1949, he married Kay Collier, with whom he had four children — David Rowling, Robert Rowling, Grassel and Klingaman.

Reese Rowling worked with several oil and gas companies at the start of his career, including Standard Oil of Texas, Signal Oil and Gas, and Evans Production. In 1959, he moved to Corpus Christi and eventually began work as an independent geologist.

Together with William E. Colson, Rowling formed Tana Oil and Gas Corporation in 1972.

His son Robert soon followed his footsteps, leaving his law career to work alongside his father.

In the 1980s, Teco Pipeline Company was formed as a sister company to Tana. Tana's portfolio of reserves was eventually sold to Texaco for \$476 million.

"Reese wasn't only a good geologist, he was a very good businessman," says Mike Popejoy, a childhood friend of Robert Rowling and past president of Tana Oil and Gas.

More success followed in the 1990s. The Rowlings formed TRT Holdings Inc., acquiring a majority interest in MBank Corpus Christi. The bank was recapitalized and then sold to NationsBank for \$131 million in stock. TRT also created TRT Development Company, a hospitality and resort properties

company. In 2002, TRT formed Tana Exploration Company, LLC, which operates in the Gulf of Mexico.

Despite his financial success, the shy and humble Rowling always told his children they should never work for money.

"His view was that if you were doing something you were passionate about, the money would take care of itself," says Robert Rowling.

Today, Robert Rowling is owner and chairman of TRT Holdings Inc., and chairman of TRT's luxury hotel division, Omni Hotels. He also serves on the UT System Board of Regents. David Rowling worked as an independent landman in the energy industry and now is involved in ranching.

Robert Rowling says his father had a special gift.



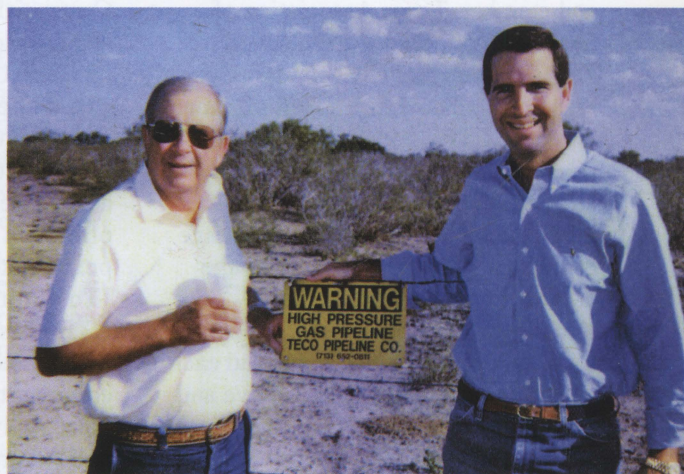
Rowling at Fort Bragg, 1947

"Achieving success as a geologist requires a 'sixth sense' which combines both art and science, and he had the ability to envision what was happening 15,000 feet below the surface of the earth," he says. "Geology was the passion of his life. Until the day he died, he worked geology, drilled wells and actually made another large discovery."

Reese Rowling wouldn't have had it any other way.

"He loved geology,"

Popejoy says. "On his business card, he could have had 'chairman of the board' or 'president,' but he put 'geologist.' That was it." ■



Rowling and son Robert Rowling



# Mined from Gold

*Each year, UTEP recognizes exceptional graduates from its six colleges who have given back to their communities and alma mater. Through their achievements and success, these **Gold Nuggets** exemplify the quality of the university.*

## GARY L. CROWELL COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES



**Crowell** retired after 36 years in public education and now works part time as an educational consultant in the Houston area.

### Education:

bachelor's in health and physical education, 1969; master's in guidance and counseling, 1972; mid-management certification, University of Houston, 1983

**Experience:** private consultant, Crowell Education Consulting; area superintendent, Fort Bend Independent School District; associate superintendent, Pasadena Independent School District; principal, Georgetown and Danbury high schools, Texas; teacher and basketball coach at various junior high and high schools, including Andress High School in El Paso

**Community service:** honorary lifetime member, Texas Association of School Administrators; past president and member, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals; honoree, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals Texas Heroes Hall of Fame; member, UTEP Alumni Association, Houston Chapter

**To students:** "Set goals and work hard to achieve them. Take advantage of every avenue given to you by the university to reach your goals."

**To alumni:** "We need to develop a tradition of supporting UTEP and each other. It's important to stay active and have a support group."

## RICHARD G. FLEAGER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**Fleager** is regional vice president for the Western Region of Texas Gas Service Company.

**Education:** bachelor's in business administration, 1972; master's in economics and finance, 1976



**Experience:** vice president, Western Region of Texas Gas Service Company, a division of ONEOK Inc.; vice president of information systems, El Paso Natural Gas

Company; credit analyst, State National Bank

**Community service:** incoming 2008 board chairman and member, Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce; loan committee chairman and board member, United Bank of El Paso del Norte; board of trustees chairman and member, Del Sol Medical Center; member, UTEP Development Board; chair, UTEP Centennial Commission Alumni Relations and Development Committee; lifetime member, UTEP Alumni Association

**To students:** "You're making an investment in yourself, and you control that investment. Challenge yourself; take advantage of what the university has to offer; and upon graduation, you will be prepared to meet your career goals."

**To alumni:** "For almost 100 years, UTEP has graduated students who have immersed themselves in the community to make El Paso a better place to live. UTEP has also continued to be instrumental in attracting

new businesses to the area. I would encourage all alumni to support UTEP and help them reach their Centennial Commission goals."

## JOE GOMEZ COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Gomez** is executive vice president of Associated General Contractors of El Paso.

**Education:** bachelor's in history, 1970

**Experience:** executive vice president, Associated General Contractors of El Paso; senior product manager, apparel division, Farah Manufacturing Company; salesman, regional manager and vice president of sales, Coats North America



**Community service:** former officer and current member, UTEP Alumni Association; past chairman and current member, UTEP Heritage Commission;

local curator, 1966 traveling exhibit honoring Texas Western College's (now UTEP) historic NCAA championship team; former member and chairman, Sun Carnival Basketball Committee

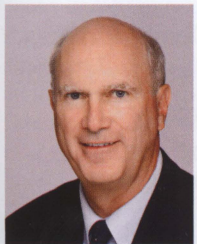
**To students:** "Take elective courses in areas that could open additional employment opportunities for you in the future."

**To alumni:** "Get involved and give to the university. Promote the fact that this university is the life and blood of the community."



# 2006 GOLD NUGGETS

## DICK MYERS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



**Myers** is vice president of planning and logistics at Coach Inc. in New York City.

**Education:** bachelor's in accounting, 1967

**Experience:** 13

years in current position; senior vice president of inventory and logistics, Farah Inc., where he worked for 20 years in several other executive-level positions

**Community service:** lifetime member, UTEP Alumni Association; former president, UTEP Ex-Letterman's Association; former member, Rotary Club; former member, Lions Club

**To students:** "Put forth hard effort on a day-to-day basis because a degree is very valuable."

**To alumni:** "It's important to remember where you came from. If you are able to give back to UTEP, you should, whether it's time or money."

## CECI MILES MULVIHILL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



**Mulvihill** is president and chief executive officer of RMPersonnel Inc.

**Education:** bachelor's in education, 1969

**Experience:** 16

years in current position; president, Integrated Personnel Services Inc.; human resource manager, The Miles Group

**Community service:** board and executive committee member, El Paso Zoological Society; member, UTEP Development Board; member, Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board; member, Rotary Club of El Paso

**To students:** "Persevere. Finish your degree, no matter what it takes, because

it really helps you succeed in life."

**To alumni:** "We should help UTEP with its continued growth and prestige. UTEP helped us get to where we are today, and now it's our turn to help the university and its students grow."

## HENRY K. NG COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

**Ng** is president of Henry K. Ng Consulting Engineers.

**Education:** bachelor's in civil engineering, 1977; master's in civil engineering, 1981



**Experience:** over 28 years of design experience in structural engineering; president, Henry K. Ng Consulting Engineers; helped design numerous

schools throughout the Southwest region, including the Helen of Troy Softball Complex, the Engineering Science Complex and the Academic Services Building at UTEP

**Community service:** member, UTEP Alumni Association; member, United Way Allocations Committee; member, UTEP Civil Engineering Department Industry Advisory Board; former director, El Paso Center of Volunteerism; past president, Alumni Academy of Civil Engineers at UTEP; past president, Texas Society of Professional Engineers, El Paso Chapter; immediate past state president, Structural Engineers Association of Texas

**To students:** "Enjoy yourself, because this may be the happiest and most carefree time of your life, but do not do it excessively. After all, the reason to go to college is to become educated and prepare ourselves for the future."

**To alumni:** "It's time to give back. Many of UTEP's graduates are all over the world, and we can all contribute in different ways to make our alma mater better."

## KLAUS C. WIEMER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

**Wiemer** is a consultant in microelectronic manufacturing

**Education:** bachelor's, 1963; master's, University of Texas at Austin, 1965; doctorate, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1969; all in physics

**Experience:** 37-year career in semiconductor industry; technical and management work, Texas Instruments Inc.; vice president of operations and president, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company; CEO, Simtek Corporation; CEO, Chartered Semiconductor Manufacturing Ltd. in Singapore



**Community service:** lifetime member, UTEP Alumni Association; active member of the Catholic Church; member of several technology boards in

the United States and abroad

**To students:** "Any ambitious student should raise his sights beyond community, state or country. He or she should acquire skills and knowledge which provides the potential to work anywhere in the world."

**To alumni:** "If you're contemplating retirement, don't. People with our experience have an obligation to pass on our knowledge and teach. It's a better way to give something back to our community." ■





# Miners Soar at NASA

We're proud of NASA astronaut Danny Olivas, the first Miner ever selected for a space shuttle mission. But we're just as proud of our many other graduates who are an important part of the country's space program. From engineers to computer scientists and others, dozens of talented UTEP alumni have gone on to successful careers at NASA.

The following pages offer only a snapshot of alumni who are reaching beyond the stars and soaring in their professions.

Stories by Kimberly Miller and David Peregrino  
Photos courtesy of NASA and UTEP alumni

## REACHING BEYOND THE STARS

Though they were born nearly 50 years apart, Glenn Ecord and Alma Stephanie Tapia have a lot in common: a love of engineering, a commitment to NASA and an alma mater.

The Miners became co-workers last year when Tapia, a 2003 UTEP graduate, landed her dream job in the Structural Engineering Division of NASA's Johnson Space Center. Ecord, who works in the same division, had found his NASA dream job 40 years earlier following a career in aircraft manufacturing.

Tapia says Ecord, a 1958 Texas Western grad, is a role model and inspiration.

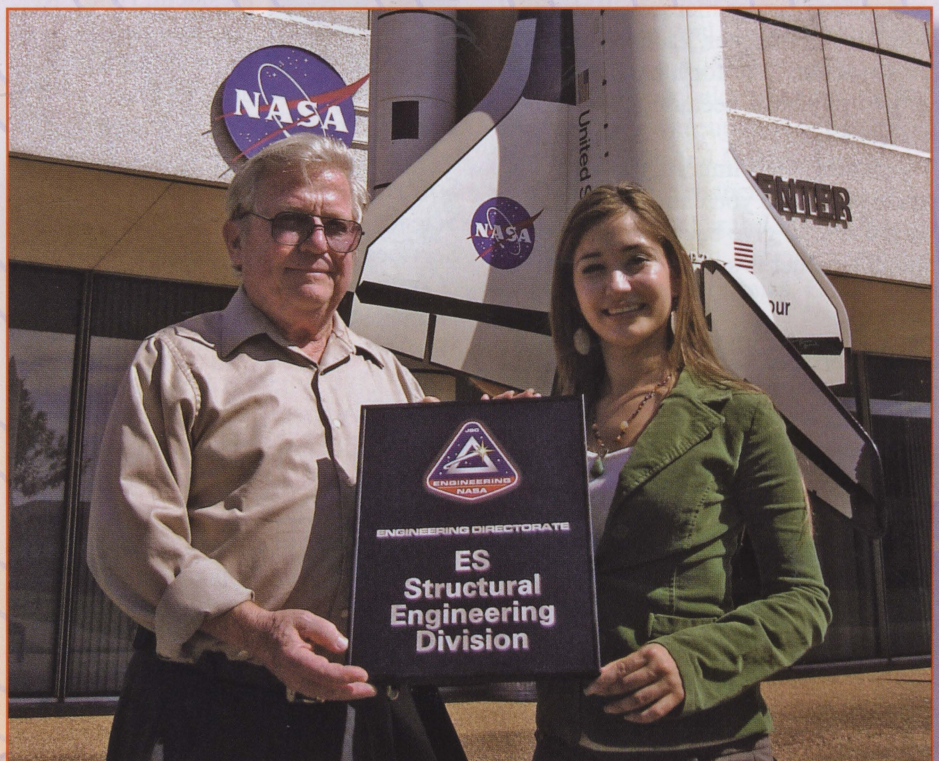
"Glenn is respected and revered at NASA," Tapia says. "It really helps me see the potential that I have when I see how far his UTEP education has taken him."

Ecord enjoys helping new engineers and recalls his days as a rookie NASA employee in 1966. He thought he wouldn't have much to contribute.

"I quickly found that I had the tools to compete with anybody," he says. "UTEP grads need to understand that they can compete with anybody, too."

A graduate of Hanks High School in El Paso, Tapia agrees and says UTEP did more to prepare her for her career than she knew at the time.

"I got a strong knowledge base, hands-on experience and confidence," she says. "You don't realize the caliber of education you're getting until you're able to compare it to something."



Both have worked alongside engineers from the nation's top-ranked schools. They are confident UTEP passes Tapia's "comparison test."

"The UTEP folks I've worked with can come in and do a job with very little training," Ecord says. "I tell them that once they're here, they can do as much as they want to do and go as far as they want to go."

Tapia says UTEP students should never

let doubts keep them from their dreams.

"When you have a goal, it might seem like you're reaching for the sky," she says, "but if you take the thousand little steps between where you are now and where you want to be, you'll get there." **N**



## MISSION CONTROL: SUCCESS ONBOARD

The computer systems used to fly space shuttles are extremely complex. That's why NASA needs talented people like Luis G. Ramirez, who graduated from UTEP in 2004 with a bachelor's in electrical engineering.

A Data Processing System shuttle flight controller, Ramirez is an expert on the shuttle's four primary onboard computers, a backup flight systems computer, and all the necessary software. In Mission Control, Ramirez is ready to support the flight director by troubleshooting computer problems and recommending the best course of action to ensure the safety of the crew.

"I love the team environment and the people I work with," says Ramirez, a graduate of Socorro High School in El Paso. "There's nothing like testing all your abilities, such as your leadership, communication and troubleshooting skills, with the pressure of time, crew safety and the unforgiving environment of space in mind."



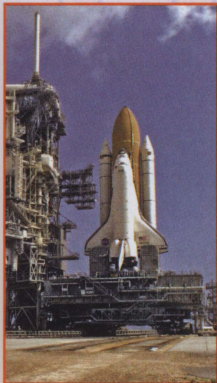
It's a thrilling opportunity for Ramirez, 25, who credits his family with supporting and encouraging his childhood interest in math and science.

"I remember always being the one to go off and try to fix things like our VCR or other electronics around the house," he says.

Ramirez says UTEP offered him the opportunity to develop the technical and academic abilities required for a

pressure-filled position at NASA. And by participating in conferences and joining engineering organizations while in college, he developed communication skills and made contacts that helped pave the way to his rewarding career.

"I call my career and undergraduate studies a success because I'm doing exactly what I wanted to do," Ramirez says. "I can't think of a better job for me!" **N**



Atlantis is rolled to launch pad



Testing space techniques underwater



Danny Olivas trains for water survival



Zero gravity testing at Johnson Space Center

## PROBLEM SOLVER FINDS NICHE AT NASA

NASA project engineer Jessica Olga Corral's love of problem solving got an early start.

From third grade through her years at El Paso's Hanks High School, she participated in the popular team-based program Odyssey of the Mind, now known as Destination Imagination.

"We did a lot of hands-on activities. We'd go to garage sales and junk-car lots to look for parts and equipment to build stuff to solve structural problems," says Corral. "When I went to college, engineering seemed like the perfect subject for me to study."

She graduated with a bachelor's in metallurgical and materials engineering from UTEP in 2003 and earned a master's from the University of Nevada, Reno.



Today, Corral works at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, creating new tools and adapting existing ones for use on the space shuttle. For example, she'll

take an off-the-shelf item like a cordless power drill and modify the battery to meet temperature requirements.

She says she enjoys the challenges of her job, which requires staying on top of multiple projects that require quick turnaround.

"It's pretty intense," she says. "The nature of the work requires us to keep a tight schedule."

Corral credits her UTEP experience for providing the strong academic background necessary for career success.

"The metallurgy and materials group at UTEP was wonderful. They immediately offered me a research position as a freshman," she says. "With five years of research experience under my belt, it was easy to get into graduate school." **N**



# MOMMY AND DADDY WORK AT NASA

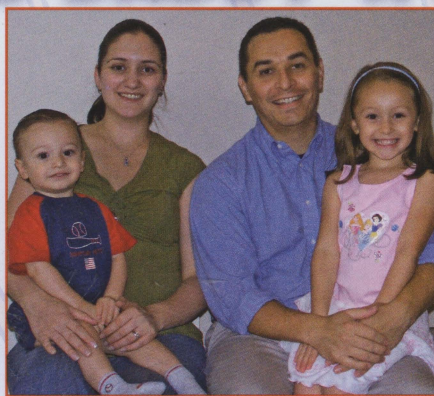
Ivan and Cristina Anchondo's passion for engineering – and each other – was born in a UTEP classroom.

The couple, who now work as engineers for NASA in Houston, met when they were students at the university in 1998. As their relationship deepened, so did their interest in engineering.

"You grow up thinking about astronauts and the planets," says Ivan, a graduate of Montwood High School in El Paso. "Engineering was a path to dealing with those things each day at work."

Ivan and Cristina married in 2002 and had their first child while participating in a NASA summer co-op program for college students in science and engineering. The full-time paid positions gave them valuable hands-on experience and contacts.

"The co-op works out for both the student and the company," says Cristina,



who graduated from Maxine Silva Health Magnet High School in El Paso. "You develop skills and grow with the company. When you graduate, NASA knows you already."

The co-op was the first step toward reaching their goals.

"I don't think you could find an engineer who didn't dream of working at NASA at some point," says Ivan.

The Anchondos say NASA has also supported their personal and family goals.

"NASA is very family-friendly," says Cristina, who had her second child in 2005. "It makes it much easier to raise a family and enjoy a job at the same time. We don't have to sacrifice family for work."

The Anchondos are expecting a third child in December. They say they miss their extended families in El Paso and the city's laid-back lifestyle, but add that they're proud to serve as role models for their children.

"My kids can say, 'My mommy works at NASA,'" says Cristina. "I'm setting the example for them. They can go to school and get good grades and become whatever they decide; they're not limited." ■

## Miners Make Mark at NASA

**W**hen the shuttle *Atlantis* lifts off in February 2007, it'll be carrying a *Miner* onboard. But behind the scenes, dozens of UTEP alumni are making their mark at NASA. Here are just a few.

**Alyssa Anderson-Bermea** (BA Journalism '93) is an exhibit operations leader at Marshall Space Flight Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Be open to unexpected career paths."

**Joaquin Andujo** (BSEE '90) is a Shuttle Mission Simulator training team leader at Johnson Space Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Go to college and see it through because it becomes harder as other responsibilities come into play."

**Michelle Arriaga** (BSEE '04) is a system safety engineer for SPACEHAB Inc., a NASA contractor at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "ALWAYS study!"

**Gabriel Baca** (BSEE '03) is an aerospace engineer at Dryden Flight Research Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Don't wait for someone to hand you an opportunity, go make your own."

**Edward Bermea** (MSEnvE '99) is a flight operations engineer at Marshall Space Flight Center. *Key to success:* "Learn to work with other people as a team."

**Melissa Boyer** (BSIE '97) is an engineer for Shuttle Communications and a payload instructor at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Establish good work and study habits, and complete your degree."

**Danny Carrejo** (BSEE '04) is an electrical engineer at Johnson Space Center. *Words of wisdom:* "You only have one career and one life; take the time to make the right choice."

**Jessica Corral** (BSMME '03) is a project engineer for IVA Tools and Diagnostic Equipment at Johnson Space Center. *Words of wisdom:* "You can do whatever you want after you've received a degree."

**William Charles Davis** (BSMME '02, MSMME '05) is a Materials and Process Quality engineer at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Do it yourself and do it for yourself."

**(Jesus) Victor Delgado III** (BSME '98) is a Reliability and Quality engineer at Johnson Space Center. *Words of wisdom:* "If it's your passion, do it, and stay the course."

**William Ewing** (BSEE '99) is an International Space Station Communications and Tracking Flight controller at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Take it one day at a time."

**John Feighery** (BSME '99) is a systems engineer of Advanced Environmental Monitoring Systems at Johnson Space

Center. *Key to success:* "Get to know your professors and the people in career services."

**Rogelio Franco** (MSME '05) is an aerospace technologist for Gas and Fluid Systems at Kennedy Space Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Learn to listen and learn from others' experience."

**William Haller** (BSME '83) is an Aeropropulsion Systems analyst at Glenn Research Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Do not take your education for granted."

**Claudia Herrera** (BSME '04) is an aerospace engineer at Dryden Flight Research Center. *Key to success:* "Plan ahead. It's never too early to start applying for scholarships, fellowships, internships and co-op programs."

**Joe Jones** (BSME '87) is a Space Shuttle Guidance and Procedures officer at Johnson Space Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Have a great time in college but always think about what you need to do now to ensure success later."

**Javier Lucero** (BSEE '89) is a project manager on the Treadmill with Vibration Isolation and Stabilization project at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Hard work and dedication are the main ingredients for success."



**John M. Lucero** (BSME '85, MSME '87) is a materials research engineer at Glenn Research Center. *Key to success:* "Never feel embarrassed to ask questions; sometimes they are the same questions that everyone else is afraid to ask."

**Osbaldo Lujan** (BS, Computer Information Systems '97) is computer science staff at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Do not give up; always know there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

**Ignacio Norman** (BSME '76) is a Space Shuttle Orbiter Thermal Analysis Subsystem manager for the Boeing Company at Johnson Space Center. *Words*

*of wisdom:* "UTEP provides a high-quality education that allows you to work alongside graduates from the highest-rated schools in the world."

**Leslie (Les) J. Quicho** (BSME '86) is a senior robotics engineer at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Work hard at whatever career that you decide to pursue."

**Ruben Ramos** (BSEE '63) is a research scientist at Ames Research Center. *Key to success:* "Find something you enjoy and pursue it as a career."

**Carlos Rodriguez** (BSME '01) works on extravehicular activity-systems at Johnson Space Center. *Key to success:* "Study hard

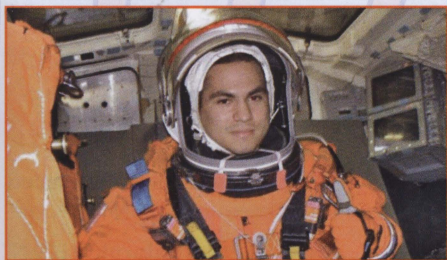
and learn as much as you can!"

**Omar Torres** (BSEE '02, MSEE '04) is an aerospace technologist at Langley Research Center. *Words of wisdom:* "Hang in there. Surviving the first couple of years in college is already a major success."

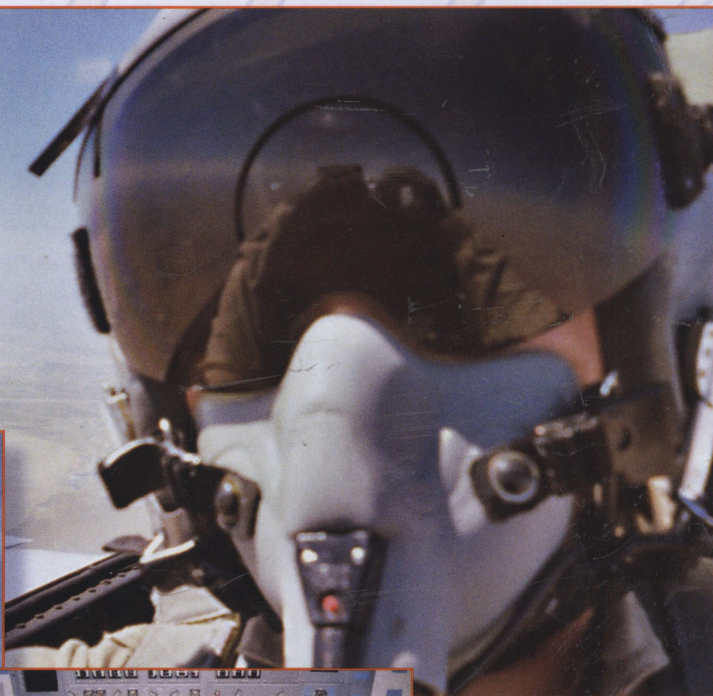


*Are you a UTEP alumnus working at NASA? E-mail your story to [kamiller2@utep.edu](mailto:kamiller2@utep.edu)*

*Visit [www.utep.edu/dannyolivas](http://www.utep.edu/dannyolivas) for stories, photos and more!*



Danny Carrejo helps with crew extraction training



Ivan Anchondo in F-18 jet



Victor Delgado and Alma Stephanie Tapia with Atlantis



Rogelio Franco with Discovery



Victor Delgado (left) and co-worker in Atlantis cockpit



Michelle Arriaga (right) and co-worker with shuttle cargo carrier



## '50s

**J. Sam Armijo** (B.S.Met. '59) is chairman of the Technical Advisory Board for Novastar Resources, a development stage mineral exploration company based in McLean, Va. Armijo lives in Spanish Springs, Nev.

## '60s

**Jack Chapman** (B.A. '64), a managing partner at law firm Kemp Smith LLP, is campaign chair for United Way of El Paso's 2006 board of directors.

**Jerry J. Esparza** (B.B.A. '67), of El Paso, is supply sales manager at Gorman Industrial Supply's packaging division.

**Toby Tovar** (B.A. '65) was recognized by the El Paso Independent School District Board of Trustees for his 35 years of service teaching mathematics.

## '70s

**Michael H. "Mike" Acosta** (B.S.E.E. '71), associate director for UTEP's Institute for Policy and Economic Development and director of the U.S. Mexico Foundation for Science, is national president of the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists.

**William A. "Bill" Brant** (B.S.M.E. '71) joined the Oxford Round Table and presented "Professional Ethics: A Must for the Global Society of the 21st Century" at Oxford University in England. He is an engineering ethics lecturer at the University of Texas at San Antonio and a continuing engineering education course provider for PDHonline.org. PDHonline.org is a continuing education provider for professional engineers and land surveyors.

**Michael A. Ludeman** (B.B.A. '78) is a general partner of Cobina Venture Fund L.P., a family-owned and managed firm in Albuquerque, N.M.

**Robert A. "Bob" Malone** (B.S.Met.E. '74), recipient of UTEP's 2003 Distinguished Alumni Award, is BP America Inc.'s chairman and president.

**Douglas Markham** (B.B.A. '78) is chief financial officer at Books-A-Million Inc., based in Birmingham, Ala.

**Harriet May** (B.S. '71), chief executive officer of El Paso credit union GECU and 2000 recipient of UTEP's College of Science Gold Nugget Award, is board chair of the United Way of El Paso's 2006 board of directors.

**Capt. John Rolph** (B.A. '78) is the chief judge of the Navy-Marine Corps Trial Judiciary at Washington Navy Yard, D.C.

**Bill Willis** (M.S. '75) received the 2006 Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award from The Washington Post. Willis resides in Woodbridge, Va.

## '80s

**Ralph Adame** (B.B.A. '80) is the new president of the Ysleta Education Foundation.

**Cynthia Bean** (B.S.Ed. '85) is principal of McArthur High School in Irving, Texas.

**Patricia Gonzalez** (B.A. '88) is UTEP's development officer for the College of Education.

**Martin Ramirez** (B.B.A. '88) joined Las Vegas-based Prime Player Inc.'s board of directors. Prime Player is a medical management consulting company. Ramirez lives in Katy, Texas.

**Sylvia Chavez Sitters** (B.A. '83) completed her training as an equine sports massage therapist. Her company, EquiSol, is in Grey Forest, Texas.

## '90s

**Gracie Aguilera** (B.B.A. '95, M.B.A. '97) is owner of Beanie Planet, which sells cards, comics and collectibles in El Paso.

**James Brown** (B.A. '95) is head football coach at Brazosport High School in Freeport, Texas.

**Martha Chew-Sánchez** (B.A. '95; M.A. '98) is the author of the newly published "Corridos in Migrant Memory," which examines the role of traditional Mexican ballads in shaping the memories and

identities of transnational Mexican groups. Sanchez is assistant professor of global studies at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y.

**Cynthia Haines** (M.A. '92) is the author of "Showtime!" a history of movie theaters and opera houses in El Paso that also reflects the city's history. Haines lives in Lawrence, Kan.

**Karla Martínez** (B.A. '98) is host of Univision's "Despierta America," a morning news and entertainment show. She lives in Miami.

**Ricardo Padilla** (B.S. '90) is an associate professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Denver, and a physician at Denver Health's Westside Family Health Center.

**Obadele Thompson** (B.B.A. '97) is ranked third worldwide by Track and Field News in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes. Thompson lives in Austin, Texas.

## '00s

**William "Will" Davis** (B.S.M.M.E. '02; M.S. '05), a material and process quality engineer at NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, is the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists' national vice president for operations.

**Samantha Dena** (B.A. '02; M.A. '05) is a technical writer in the Research and Advancement Communications Department of UTEP's University Development Office.

**Robert Lara Jr.** (B.A. '04), who attends the University of New Mexico Law School in Albuquerque, joined the staff counsel's office at the Consumer Product Safety Commission in Washington, D.C., for summer 2006.

**James M. "Jim" Murphy** (B.S.N. '01) is chief executive officer at Plaza Specialty Hospital in Houston.

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**Dr. Amador Loya** (B.S. '02) received his doctorate in medicine from the Texas Tech University School of Medicine in Lubbock. He is completing his residency in pediatrics in San Antonio.

**Rocio Rangel** (B.S.E.E. '02), assistant project engineer at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, is national secretary of the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists. Rangel lives in El Paso.

**Elizabeth Zamora** (B.I.S. '05) is a bilingual education teacher at Milam Elementary School in Bryan, Texas.

## In Memoriam

**Judith Duriez Laumbach** (B.A. '66; M.A. '69) Albuquerque, N.M.; July 29, 2005.

**Gayle Anne Bleakley Malloy** (B.S.Ed. '71; M.E.D. '72) Colima, Mexico; August 30, 2005.

**Leslie E. "Gene" Cannon** (B.S.Ed. '72) Colorado Springs, Colo.; Feb 7, 2006.

**Albert A. "Bert" Tilney** (B.S.M.I. '51) Riverside, Calif.; March 16, 2006.

**Robert Edwin Knapp** (B.B.A. '72) El Paso; March 18, 2006.

**Oscar R. Vertiz** (B.S.M.I. '37) Arlington, Va.; March 26, 2006.

**Ernest Wayne "Ernie" Hall** (B.B.A. '63) Hitchcock, Texas; March 27, 2006.

**H. Tito Blanco** (B.A. '48) Burien, Wash.; March 28, 2006.

**Martha Cano Chavez** (B.A. '71) El Paso; April 3, 2006.

**Mary Alice Steele** (B.S.Ed. '60) El Paso; April 8, 2006.

**Lt. Col. John Salomon Ylinen** (B.B.A. '65) El Paso; April 13, 2006.

**Daniel Lewis Boerger** (B.A. '97) El Paso; April 20, 2006.

**Roberto "Onti" Ontiveros Sr.** (B.A. '75) El Paso; April 21, 2006.

**Alvina "Al" Castillo** (B.S.W. '91) El Paso; April 22, 2006.

**Marguerite Anna Sherman** (B.S.Ed. '61) El Paso; April 22, 2006.

**Dr. Michael Lynwood Finerty** (B.A. '56) Lincoln, Calif.; April 23, 2006.

**Homero D. Rodriguez** (B.B.A. '74) El Paso; April 24, 2006.

**Frank Galindo** (B.A. '51) El Paso; April 25, 2006.

**Carmen Hornedo Gaudin** (B.A. '72) El Paso; April 30, 2006.

**Jose Ignacio Valencia** (B.A. '50) Norwich, Vt.; May 6, 2006.

**Lt. Col. Harry Richard Mallo** (M.Ed. '77) El Paso; May 10, 2006.

**Eugene W. "Gene" Sullivan** (B.B.A. '38) El Paso; May 11, 2006.

**James D. "Jim" Haggard** (B.B.A. '50) Arvada, Colo.; May 15, 2006.

**Dr. Daniel D. Tovar** (B.A. '69) El Paso; May 16, 2006.

**Mary "Daisy" White** (B.I.S. '95; M.Ed. '03) El Paso; May 19, 2006.

**Nell Lee "Grams" Gibson Valdez** (B.A. '40) El Paso; May 25, 2006.

**Dr. Armando García-Cantú** (B.A. '41) El Paso; June 1, 2006.

**John Edwin "Johnny" Hedrick** (B.A. '72) El Paso; June 11, 2006.

**Allan B. Josué** (B.A. '70) Lake-wood, Wash.; June 11, 2006.

**Patricia V. Galindo** (B.S.Ed. '74) El Paso; June 17, 2006.

**Claude E. Barron** (B.S.M.I. '53) El Paso; June 19, 2006.

**Norma Cordero** (B.I.S. '04) El Paso; June 23, 2006.

**Olive Harrold Stewart Yeager** (B.A. '41) El Paso; June 29, 2006.

**John K. Baird** (B.S.E.E. '54) El Paso; July 7, 2006.

**Ronald Eugene Gubis** (B.B.A. '56) El Paso; July 8, 2006.

-- Compiled by David Thomas



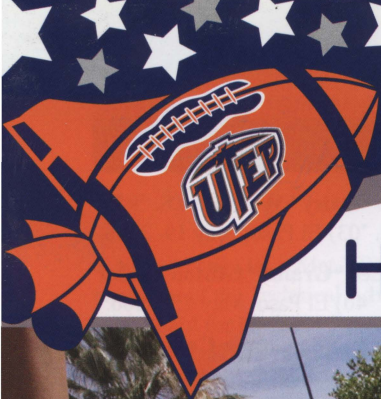
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