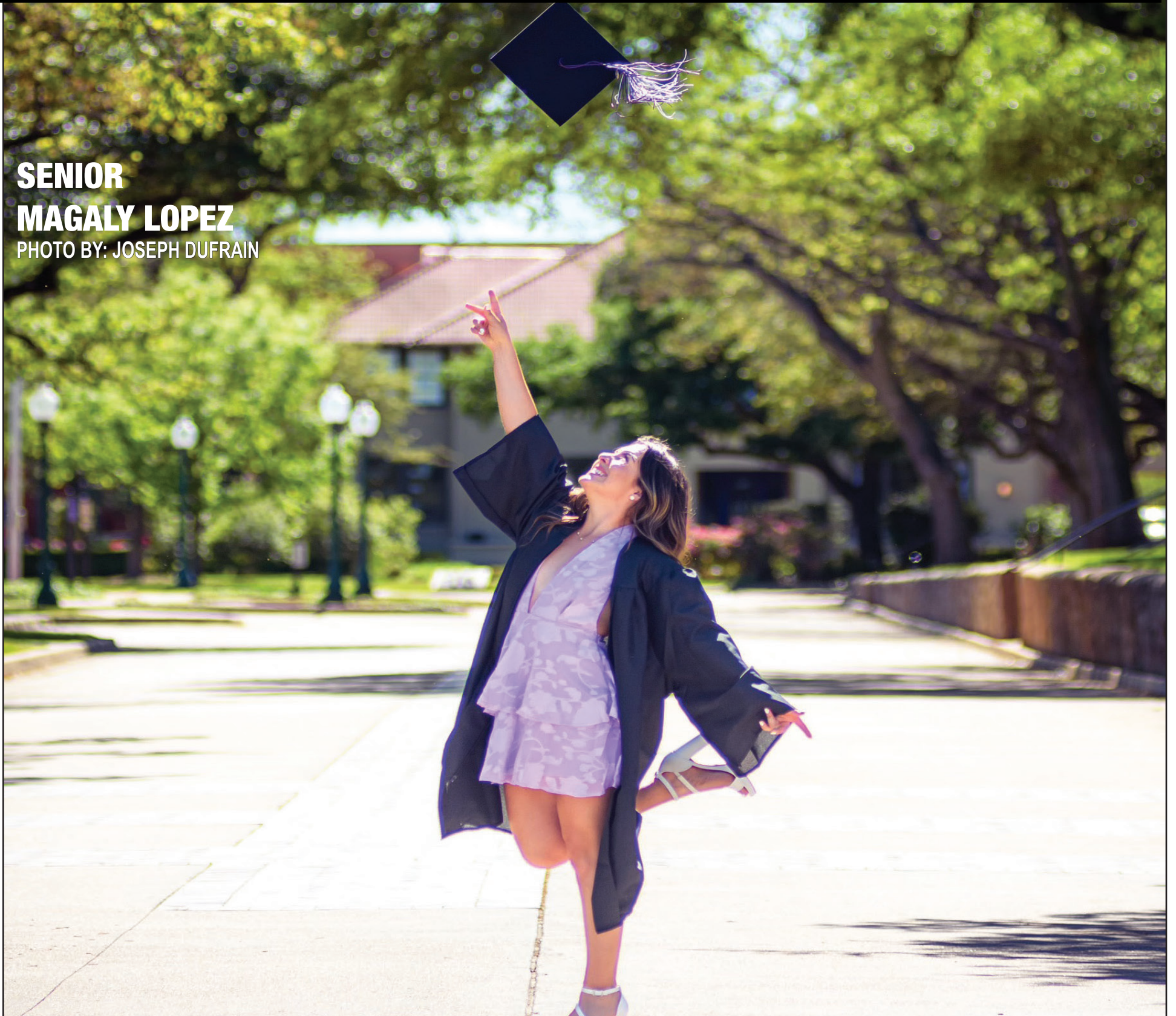




Texan News Service

INDEPENDENT STUDENT JOURNALISM FOR TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

SENIOR
MAGALY LOPEZ
PHOTO BY: JOSEPH DUFRAIN



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GRADUATE FEATURE

Anastasia Mounce: determined for excellence

BY JAXON HANSARD

Sports Editor

Anastasia Mounce is a digital media studies major from Granbury, Texas. When arriving at Tarleton State University in 2021, Mounce knew what degree she wanted to pursue and was sure to get it as soon as she could.

“I’m kind of one of those people that needs to be focused to do well and things,” Mounce said.

Upon becoming a Tarleton Texan, she was sure to get a job and get to her classes to learn. Mounce started working in an internship with Mr. Ireland, who is the department head of visual arts and design. She started with making graphics, setting up the gallery, managing the computer lab and assisting anyone in the fine arts building if needed.

Mounce credits her family’s mindset of hustle culture to how she was able to start working and eventually add extra classes to her semesters.

“I wanted to get a job because that’s kind of the mindset of my family, always work,” Mounce said. “I guess a little bit of the quote-unquote hustle culture.”

Because of Mounce’s help and constant presence in the fine arts building, she found herself involved in the College of Liberal and Fine Arts (COLFA) Student Council.

In the COLFA Student Council, Mounce would help by taking students’ suggestions and presenting them to the fine arts department to help improve the COLFA. It was important to her that this was helpful and to make sure that the student’s voices were actually heard. Mounce would work as an intern for the of Granbury with the communications team and economics team.

Mounce has always been independent with her goal in mind. She wants to become a 3D modeler. This has always been her end goal, and all of her choices through college have reflected that.

“I wanted to get more on a schedule that was not in a like community,” Mounce said. “I wanted to like pursue things solo.”

Anastasia has been taking extra classes to graduate sooner, while also taking an interest in the artistic design world so she could become



PHOTO COURTESY: ANASTASIA MOUNCE

Anastasia Mounce enjoying a vacation.

more prepared and familiar with a potential career she has been working to pursue. She wants to work for a company that will put her in contact with other companies so that she can learn the corporate world. The higher stakes of working in a big city at big buildings particularly interest Anastasia because of the high speeds and the cash flow of their work.

“I’m not doing anything better with my life at the moment so I kind of started adding more classes to get out earlier,” Mounce said

Anastasia has a competitive spirit of herself that stems from her family’s “hustle culture” and her sibling rivalry with her brother. As siblings do, they were always trying to beat each other in whatever they were doing. Everything from growing up doing art competitions, academically ascending and then honing on that skill through band competitions later in life. The desire to simply just compete overtakes that all, just to try something and to learn and improve on a skill or desire has motivated Anastasia to have such personal achievements as having a great GPA.

“Your skills equal to time equals to money

that you get or how useful you are in this industry” Mounce said.

Having such great grades isn’t seen as much of an achievement because of her competitive mindset and belief in herself to be excellent.

“I would say it is not my achievement because in my family, it is expected, I’m not surprised because in my family we all work hard,” Mounce said.

She’s very self-aware comparing her GPA to a social achievement but claiming that it wasn’t as meaningful to her because it wasn’t creative. Being self-aware of her own personal growth and realization of her life is something she is proud of.

Every class she has taken has been with the intent of becoming a 3D modeler at her own pace. She did not want her goals and aspirations to be pushed to the side because of a class group, something she learned in high school.

“In the real world, you’re going to have to manage yourself and you’re going to have to know how to manage a group and be a part of groups and manage others,” Mounce said.

The flexibility of graphic design is a great

thing that Anastasia is looking forward to when furthering her education in graphic design.

“The other day I went to the bank, and that’s exactly what they were doing,” Mounce said. “It was designing everything that they needed, which I thought was cool. It’s just that’s why I chose this occupation because it’s in any industry sort of but no industry at the same time,” Mounce said.

Mounce believes that her studies will allow her to be flexible and have a variety of options to choose from when it comes to her career.

“I don’t think that my career path has to be set in stone in only graphic design. It can be anything from illustration, communication, editing, game design or you know 3D modeling,” Mounce said.

Mounce plans to go to Texas A&M University and get her master’s degree in 3D modeling.

“Overall I think my time here was well spent, I’m thinking about my next steps, not immediately after, but I guess they’re linked somehow,” Mounce said.

Stitching Success:

The couple behind most Tarleton graduation stoles

BY JOLEE SKINNER
Editor-in-Chief

The 2024 graduation season is here. High school and college students are getting ready to walk across the stage and receive their diploma. Many of the students graduating this semester at Tarleton State University have accomplished so much in just four years. Tarleton athletes received trophies and medals, students made it to the Dean's or President's list for their grades, some students received their white coats for nursing or some students became president in their clubs or chapters.

Whatever the accomplishment, Tarleton students have so much to be proud of and a popular tradition at Tarleton is students embroider their accomplishments onto their graduation stole. But who designs these stoles? Well, many Tarleton students chose "In Stitches" to embroider their stoles.

"In Stitches" is owned and operated by Gil and Susan Ayers. Gil and Susan bought "In Stitches" on October 1, 2019 after their daughter came across an ad one day on Facebook Marketplace.

"I still had my job in Fort Worth and my husband worked for, at that point, the county," Ayers said. "I'm not a real big risk taker but decided to check into it for some reason."

Susan at the time was working for PDX which was a pharmacy software development company. Eventually, the company was sold and Susan was laid off. But decided to ride with her daughter down to Stephenville to check the business out.

"I had never had anything to do with embroidery but I love art and crafts and all that sort of stuff," Ayers said.

Growing up in Jacksboro, Texas, Susan's mom was an oil painter and taught art lessons and her dad was the local telephone man. Susan said

her first job was at 15 years old at a restaurant taking orders at the window.

"My mom and dad, they were very hard workers, me and my sisters went to work pretty early," Ayers said. "It was just something our family always did."

Susan reflected and said her mother told her growing up that at 15 you could either work in their garden or get a job.

"It was her way, you know, making sure that we were responsible," Ayers said.

Susan graduated from Jacksboro high school with only 43 people in it. Then decided to go to Texas A&M University for college but then transferred to Tarleton. Susan said she decided to transfer because she just felt like a number on a big campus.

"It was big compared to where I was from," Ayers said. "That's why I ended up leaving."

Susan majored in general business at Texas A&M and then transferred into a double major in general business and marketing at Tarleton.

"I had always been interested in business classes, we had one in high school, and I always loved doing that more than anything," Ayers said. "I just wanted to work, I'm really sure where that came from but it was just something I really wanted to do."

Susan and her family ended up moving to Stephenville after she and her husband had bought "In Stitches" from Sylvia Smith, the previous owner. Susan said the business was and is only an embroidery business.

"She [Smith] never did stoles at all, she mostly did shirts and jackets," Ayers said. "At some point somebody was wanting a stole done and we were just doing regular embroidery and stuff. It's just kinda grown from there."

Susan said "In Stitches" is still mostly embroidering business based logos on

jackets and shirts. She said they also do athletic bags for Henderson Junior High. The stole's have become more recently popular requests from them.

"I just kinda started doing these [stole's] and it takes a lot more design work, obviously, because I have to spend the time to design every one of them," Ayers said. "It's sort of like an art project to me in a way. I really like creating and embroidering the stole designs for such a special time in someone's life."

Susan said she has lost count of how many stole's they have gotten this semester.

"I've taken in a lot of stole's, I don't know how many we've done," Ayers said.

When asked how the business grew so quickly, Susan said it's really been through customers recommending them to other people.

"A lot of it's just been referral business," Ayers said. "We didn't really try to build the business a whole lot in the beginning just cause we really didn't know what we were doing exactly. It takes a lot of research."

Susan said Smith, the previous owner, did help them a lot but then Smith had other things going on.

"It's been a long learning curve, especially when you have different kinds of materials and products," Ayers said.

Susan talked about the creative process behind making the stole's. When a customer approaches them with a stole, Susan doesn't limit herself on what they can do. She uses a program to design what people want on their stole. She is able to take any logo or design and can even re-create a particular logo onto a stole.

"I just try to do anything that anybody wants," Ayers said. "A lot of people are creative enough to get a stole on an app or something. Whenever I get it, I try to

do it kinda like what they want it and then sometimes I'll sometimes give them another option."

Once a design is finalized, Susan gets the design approved by the customer before the stole goes under the machines. Then design goes into the machines then sewn onto the stole. Susan sets the settings on the machines for each individual stole.

"I have to go in and manually set all the settings to make it look good, because if it doesn't have enough stitches, it just looks real sparse," Ayers said. "And if it has too many then it's gonna look real bulky."

When asked about any particular stole's that they've done that stand out, Susan mentioned a student who asked for something she thought was unique.

"One girl, she just had names and dates put on there and I was like 'what is this?' and it was all the people in her family that had graduated from Tarleton and the years they had graduated," Ayers said. "It is always kind of interesting to see."

When asked what advice she would give to a new business owner or someone who wants to start a business, Susan emphasized having a CPA or someone to help with bookkeeping and to have a plan.

"Set up a good working plan for all your bookkeeping because I think that's where most small businesses struggle," Ayers said. "And have to have a business plan in place before you buy a business or create a business."

Susan and her husband are happy to have a good successful business that they feel was led to them.

"We do feel that God led us to buy this business, there is no other explanation for the way it all worked out," Ayers said. "We are very happy to have a successful family business that can bring people's vision to fruition."

GRADUATE FEATURE

Music student credits Tarleton for finding her career

BY MICHAELA DENNIS

Executive Producer

Halani Harber is a senior at Tarleton State University. She is officially walking the stage on May 10, 2024.

Harber's story is unique as she is not a traditional student and was able to find a profession she loves through her experiences at Tarleton.

Harber came to Tarleton as a transfer student. She transferred from Webster University in Missouri. Additionally, her college journey was extended for six years due to changing her major. However, this did not stop Harbor from pursuing her education.

Harber joined Delta Phi Epsilon at Webster to gain more of a connection with her campus and student body.

"It was really important to have that support with similar values as me," said Harber.

Harber instantly fell in love with her sorority and chapter members. Due to COVID-19, most events were on Zoom. This limited her experience to celebrate major milestones like her induction ceremony.

Harber enjoyed her experience with her sorority, but she eventually began longing for another major. She embraced her newfound passion which was teaching.

"I decided I wanted to teach theater and go through a traditional teacher education program," said Harber.

Finding a new school was complicated for Harber. She wanted to change her major to Fine Arts Theater Education but the options to further her education were slim. Only five schools in Texas have her major and only two chapters in Texas accompany her sorority.

After eliminating, Harber chose Tarleton as her alma mater. A choice she has not regretted. Harber embraced the spirit of, "Bleeding Purple," by being active in more than three organizations on campus and holding officer positions in two of the three.

She enjoyed Tarleton's initiative to embrace their traditions because she believed it made the place feel more like a home. Harbor compares this to family traditions that set each family apart.

"Going to a school that has a strong sense of



Halani Harber poses for her sorority photos.

PHOTO COURTESY: HALANI HARBER

traditions makes us unique compared to others and even while our school is growing, it has that tight knit feel because of those traditions," said Harbor.

Despite this, Harber enjoyed her experience as a member of the theater program the most. She was active in Tarleton's theater arts program since joining the university her junior year working as a lighting technician.

Her fondest memory at Tarleton was when the program's production of Lizzie Borden went to regionals. It gave her a sense of pride and belonging. Especially since she got to experience this moment with her favorite friends.

"Although we are not known as an arts school it was nice to know we can hang with the bigger universities," said Harber.

Because Harber attended Tarleton, she found herself more in educational theater. For instance, she wants to teach because she loves working with children, having an impact on their lives, being able to be silly and not

have the added stress of what a typical stage performer would go through.

"I get paid to have fun and hang with kids," said Harber. "I think it is the best job ever."

Luckily for Harbor, she was the Director of the Fine Arts Program at Ennis High School. She attended a job fair at Tarleton and eventually was awarded the head position. She is a burst of positive emotions as she explains how excited she is about her career.

"I'm so excited with the district that chose me and I chose them," said Harber. "I get to inspire kids through art."

After participating in the high school tour with the school's president and administration, Harber knew this was the school for her. She even mentioned how her future coworkers have been reaching out to check on her well-being as she preps for graduation.

This excitement has also led her to plan her future around our director position. Harber mentioned her plans for her first year, how she plans on continuing practicing her skills as an

actress and what she hopes to accomplish with the students.

"I want to participate in programs in the summer, so I don't become out of touch and narrow minded towards my students," said Harber.

Harber gives credit to her past Fine Arts instructors for her eagerness for teaching. For her, those figures served as strong mentors and left a positive impact on her life. A gift she is trying to return to her newfound students.

Reflecting on her freshman year, Harber would have never thought she would have ended her college journey like this.

"Eighteen-year-old me would have thought I would have graduated in four years, gotten a job on a touring show, and would be working concerts," said Harber.

Although Harbor is elated to have the director position, she admits it does not matter to her. She fell in love with the school district and that was all that mattered.

Lily Martin: A true cow girl

BY HAELEY CARPENTER

Digital Media Director

Lily Martin found her place at Tarleton State University. The graduate student from Fort Worth, Texas, came to Tarleton because she had heard about it from friends, family and teachers.

“Whenever I toured, I actually did fall in love with it because it was a small campus,” Martin said. “I’m not a big campus girl.”

Her agriculture teacher, dad and older sister attended Tarleton, so Martin had a big push from her family to apply and she agreed because she also knew about the successful agriculture programs.

Martin majored in animal science with a concentration in science during her undergrad. When she had taken her first dairy production class in her second year, she really clicked with the reproduction and welfare aspect of the material. She also did the dairy challenge, where she and other students traveled and judged other dairy farms.

“I came to Tarleton thinking I wanted to do sheep and goats but found out that wasn’t for me and then I took a dairy class and fell in love with dairy cows,” Martin said.

In between her undergraduate and graduate time, she worked at Fossil Rim with black rhinoceroses before she got an internship then a job at the Fort Worth Zoo working in the aviary department. While at the zoo, she got to work with her favorite animal, the penguin.

“I never thought I was gonna be working with birds or wanted to, but I actually fell in love with it so I’m still a big bird nerd,” Martin said.

Martin took a break after graduation, which was needed. But her goal is to be a professor and teacher, so she was looking forward to the idea of the graduate program. She had been thinking about going back to school but wasn’t sure about when would be the best time. Her professor answered that question for her.

“I knew it was time to come back whenever my professor called and was



PHOTO COURTESY: LILY MARTIN

Lily Martin outside the Southwest Regional Dairy Center.

like ‘Hey, I have a spot open’ so I came back,” Martin said.

Even though Martin loved birds, she knew that dairy was where she wanted to be. Martin accepted the spot that Dr. Barbara Jones offered her and is currently majoring in animal science, focusing on dairy reproduction and wellbeing through her thesis project.

As a graduate assistant under the Southwest Regional Dairy Center at Tarleton, she started off by giving tours, helping with outreach programs, events, proctoring exams, grade assignments and assisted with other research projects. During tours, people get to learn about how the dairy center is run, fun facts about dairy cows, stick their arm in a cow that is cannulated and sometimes get to make butter.

When Jones left at the start of the fall 2023 semester, Martin stepped into a new title as interim co-director of the Southwest Regional Dairy Center. In this new position, she took on more responsibility including organizing tours, classroom use and other administrative duties.

Even though Martin is away from the department since she spends most of her time out at the dairy center, she enjoys her time out there.

“I love it over there,” Martin said. “It’s nice to be away and work and have my own office and be surrounded

by cows. I go out and take 30-minute cow breaks when I have the time.”

On campus, she was a teaching assistant for the dairy production class. She was also a teaching assistant for anatomy and physiology in domestic animals for a while.

This past semester she and Anna (Lily) Ollinger co-taught dairy production.

“So, we had to collaborate on who was going to teach what,” Martin said. “It was an interesting experience, teaching with someone else for the first time.”

All master’s program students must complete a thesis. Jones had started a project and thought Martin would be the perfect fit.

“She knew that I was into [reproduction] and welfare and so she actually had a project already drawn up using IceQube pedometers so it’s like little fitbits to put on cows and so her proposal was track lying time, how long they lie down, and then if there’s any way it relates to reproduction,” Martin said.

This project could not have been a better match for Martin. She was excited to take it on, however it came with its challenges.

“Starting my project was a little bit rough because she left, so I had to start it on my own and figure everything out

to get it started,” Martin said. “It wasn’t perfect by any means, but I defended it and passed.”

During this project, she also had to read other research papers, specifically in her topic and collaborate with professors that have experience or connections with dairy cows along with working with other people like producers. Building these relationships is not only important for the thesis but also for learning how to work with and deal with other people in a professional work environment.

Martin is technically taking classes. Her thesis hours, which is her time researching and working on her project, a general seminar class, and a post-secondary class, which is her time teaching a college level course which was dairy production this semester.

This semester was easier on her compared to other classes she had taken like growth and development and experimental design. Even though it was easier, it doesn’t mean it was a piece of cake.

“It was also hard to make time for myself and actually have that ‘R and R’ time and just relax,” Martin said. “That was something that I should have done a lot more during my thesis.”

Outside of school, Martin likes to go to places like the Twisted J and country music concerts in Fort Worth.

She also enjoys and takes advantage of her time outdoors. Her boyfriend is into spartan races, so she goes out with him and tries to keep up.

After she graduates, Martin is going to take the time off to relax and take another break before going back to school for her PhD.

“My goal is to be a professor in animal science,” Martin said. “I want to take time after I graduate to teach and get into the college academia level type stuff before I go back for my PhD.”

She is on the right track because she accepted a position at Tarleton teaching a couple of classes. She will also still help run the Southwest Regional Dairy Center and her goal is to bring back the dairy challenge.



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GRADUATE FEATURE

Claire Welch reflects time spent at Tarleton

BY PAYTON MARKS

Multimedia Journalist

Claire Welch is a senior wildlife major at Tarleton State University.

When asked why she chose to come to Tarleton, Welch made it clear that for her it was an important and easy decision.

“I toured Tarleton, and I loved the fact that they had traditions and all these fun things to learn about and it was a community that I definitely wanted to be a part of,” Welch said.

Welch was also eager to share her favorite thing about Tarleton.

“I think my favorite thing about the school, if I had to choose one, is how many opportunities the campus offers, there are plenty of ways to get involved on campus,” Welch said.

Welch also talked a little bit more in-depth about her major, what she’d like to do with it and how she ultimately decided that that was what she wanted to major in.

“Well, I was more into the veterinary route in elementary school, and in middle school I got the chance to go and shadow over at a vet clinic but some of the vets weren’t so thrilled that I was a middle schooler watching them so I kind of decided to do something different after working with them,” Welch said. “So then I thought more about zoology and found out more about what it is because I thought it was just you go work in zoos and study animals and that’s it but it’s a lot more than that.”

She talked about the amazing experiences that she had on her study abroad trip to South Africa.

“Three years ago, I did study abroad and I actually got to meet a zoologist and the interesting thing about them is their whole study was based around mice and fleas,” Welch said.

Welch was super eager and passionate about discussing her time studying abroad.

“It was through an outside program it wasn’t necessarily through Tarleton, and it was during Covid,” Welch said. “At that time, I was still associated with the Pre-Vet Society and had seen a post on their Facebook about a study abroad and I just randomly sent it to my mom, and she was like ‘go for it’. But we were there for three weeks and it was branded as vets in the wild but it wasn’t as veterinary oriented as I thought it was going to be. It was definitely an undergrad-oriented class,”

She talked about her favorite thing about the experience as well.

“My favorite thing that I got to experience while there was definitely game capture and the best way I can explain it is you may have thirty Impala on one person’s property and they may want Impala on another person’s property so the guy we were shadowing would go to the one property and collect as many as they needed then transport them to the other property,” Welch said. “It was cool because a big part of it was learning about animal behavior and studying what the animals do since it is an enclosed space, and they can’t just roam wherever they want. And it just became a weekly thing that we did.”

Welch loves Tarleton and being involved so much that she is involved in five on-campus organizations.

“I’m a part of five currently and I don’t sleep anymore,” Welch said. “I’m in Tarleton Activities Board, PHOS College Ministry, Tarleton Equestrian team, P.A.N.K.U.S and Sigma Alpha and I just love how the organizations keep me busy and allow me the chance to stay connected and create relationships with people.”

Welch also discussed how she thinks being involved in these five organizations has had an impact on her as a person.

“I’ve definitely gained a lot of professional skills, for instance, Sigma Alpha is all about cultivating professional women in agriculture and it’s taught

me how to shake a hand or have a good interview. Then organizations such as P.A.N.K.U.S have taught me how to carry myself with more confidence as well,” Welch said.

When asked if any professors at Tarleton have had an impact on Welch, she said Dr. Sudman. “He teaches etymology and is retiring this year but he really knows his craft and it was such an intensive subject, but he taught it in such a way that it made it easy enough to follow. Besides that, I think everyone in the wildlife department is super welcoming,” Welch said.

To close out the interview Welch gave a piece of advice to any soon-to-be graduates or new students.

“Do your research, see what you can find that you enjoy but always be planning and preparing for the future. If you’re about to graduate think of it as ‘I’m getting closer to graduating so I’m going to start finding a job.’ Look for your opportunities and you’ll find them,” Welch said.



PHOTO COURTESY: CLAIRE WELCH
Senior Claire Welch posing in TSC.

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GRADUATE FEATURE

Daisy Robeson's journey as an educator and leader

BY JOLEE SKINNER
Editor-in-Chief

Daisy Faith Robeson, born in Grapevine, Texas, is graduating from Tarleton State University this year. As Daisy prepares to walk the stage, she takes a moment to reflect on her college experience and what has led her to this moment. Daisy has always wanted to be a teacher and while she was in high school, she had a moment where she realized this.

“Me teaching the students and it was the light bulb moment in their head when they finally were understanding is what got me to be like ‘Wow I could do this forever,’” Robeson said. “That was the trip that really, like, changed everything for me.”

But before Daisy had this moment of realization, she grew up in Hurst, Texas for the majority of her childhood with loving parents and a family who was super close to her growing up. But life for Daisy took a turn when her dad became disabled when she was in elementary school.

“His spine slid off his pelvis and they had to open him up from the front and move all his vital organs out of the way,” Robeson said. “They said he was probably going to be in a wheelchair by the time he was like 45. Well, he’s 53 and walks with a cane so that’s really great.”

Daisy credits her mom for helping her and her dad get through everything that had happened.

“Things were a little bit of a struggle at first,” Robeson said. “But my mom persevered through it all.”

Daisy also loved serving in ministry growing up. Her grandmother was the first one to start bringing her to church when she was little and was taught the importance of giving everyone grace.

“The lord gave us grace, we should give grace to others too,” Robeson said.

These values carried Daisy through

high school as well. Daisy graduated high school in spring of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. She says COVID-19 did take some special senior events away like prom but her and her friends didn’t that stop them from making memories that last semester.

“It really brought a damper on things because Covid hit in March and I didn’t get to go to prom,” Robeson said. “But we ended up having a little fake prom and it was all of my friends from different schools. Like, how often do you get to do prom with your very best friends who go to different schools? Which is never.”

After Daisy graduated, she began her first semester at Tarleton. She did get offers from schools like Abilene Christian University, but it was the great education program at Tarleton that led her to being a Texan.

“Tarleton’s education program was truly what sold it for me,” Robeson said. “They [Tarleton] had just actually told us that they were about to launch the residency program. And that was the best decision I ever made.”

Daisy also knew she wanted to get involved while at Tarleton, so her freshman year she decided to go through sorority recruitment and ended up getting and accepting a bid from Phi Mu.

“I just felt like I really connected with them especially because of their values, love, honor and truth,” Robeson said. “And I really appreciated that, from what I saw, it wasn’t the typical sorority girl experience that I didn’t know I really wanted or really needed.”

While being in the chapter, Daisy served as parent/alumni chair, then served as reference chair which is the assistant to membership director, then became membership director then finally became chapter president. Daisy said holding all these positions taught her valuable lessons and skills.

“It taught me a lot of communication



PHOTO COURTESY: MADDISON FALLIN

Daisy Robeson posing with graduation stole.

skills, it taught me a lot of leadership skills,” Robeson. “It taught me how to make hard decisions even whenever I didn’t want to make them. It really taught me how to be a strong person and a strong leader.”

While at Tarleton, Daisy worked in the math department and really appreciates her bosses for helping her become better at teaching.

“Dr. Riggs and Dr. Smith, the department head and the associate department head of the math department, really awesome ladies, awesome bosses, they helped me really become a really good teacher,” Robeson said.

Daisy also got involved in a college ministry program in Stephenville called Paradigm and became a challenge group leader.

“My faith I think really guided me to the right people and I’m really honestly hoping everybody got to see God through me more than anything, just because that’s the way I wanna live my life,” Robeson said.

Daisy accredits Tarleton with helping her prepare for her future career, specifically the teacher residency program.

“Yes, you’re with another teacher in a classroom for this [program] but I feel like I’m not coming out as a first

year teacher,” Robeson said. “I feel like I’ve already had my first year which I think is so beneficial going into a place completely new and completely by myself.”

Daisy already has plans for her future as she wants to eventually go back to school to get her master’s degree in administration.

“I want to be an instruction specialist, so like working on curriculum, we’re working with other teachers to help them get better in their classrooms,” Robeson said. “But I truly believe good admin, spend time in the classroom first, so I wanna spend as much time in the classroom as I can.”

Summing up her college experience at Tarleton, Daisy describes it as life-changing. She reflects on how when she came to Tarleton as a freshman, she was shy but now is completely different.

“I truly do not think I would be the person I am today without all the little things that made me throughout my college career,” Robeson said. “Being in Phi Mu broke me out of my shell completely, whether it be through Paradigm and me growing more in my faith, in the math department, growing more in my people skills. There’s not a single thing that I regret about my college experience.”

GRADUATE FEATURE

Borrowed time and answered prayers

BY COPELAND WELCH

Managing Editor

According to The Recovery Village, 70% of adults experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime. For Marlie Tucker, a Tarleton State University graduate of the class of 2024, this traumatic event occurred when she was 17.

While Tucker's classmates were gearing up to take their SATs, attend junior prom and start applying for colleges, she found herself in a very different reality.

It was a typical day for Tucker. School had just let out and she was headed to her after-school job. She recalls suddenly deciding to turn around and drive back in the direction of her high school, for a reason she can't remember.

This is when Tucker's life took a complete turn.

In a matter of seconds, she had been hit by a freight train on the passenger side of her car and pushed 450 yards. Tucker remained in a coma following the accident for 14 days.

"There were definitely times when myself, my mom, my family included didn't think I'd see today, so I was extremely discouraged like 'Oh my gosh, how could this happen to me, I'm 17, I can't even swallow a drink without putting thickener in it,'" Tucker said. "But also it's like how lucky is it that I'm 17 and this gets to be my problem, like thank God I get to be able to have to do all of these things. So that was really hard to deal with for a while, just mentally. You know I should be grateful I get to live on all this borrowed time and answered prayer."

Tucker describes the rehabilitation process as humbling at the least.

"There are things I still struggle with today," Tucker said. "When you have a traumatic brain injury, that doesn't just go away... It affects my reaction time, my emotions and lets me get overstimulated sometimes."

Although the accident was a traumatic event for Tucker, she credits her optimistic attitude to the experience.

"Driving myself to work, all of these things that were foreign concepts to me at 17 or even 18, they're not something I have to do, they're something I get to do, which is just awesome," Tucker said. "It [the accident] has completely made me more grateful and I just feel so much gratitude and I love being present."

Tucker often struggled with understanding the reason this accident happened to her.

"Everyone kept on telling me everything happens for a reason, and I'm like 'What was the reason for this?' I can't do anything," Tucker said.

Tucker has worked as a waitress at Grumps Burgers in Stephenville for three years while she was a student at Tarleton. She has developed relationships with the customers and the connections she has made have become one of the things she cherishes most from her time in Stephenville.

"I have loved being at Tarleton and I think my favorite thing is just the community, aside from school, I love Stephenville," Tucker said. "I've made so many good connections and working in Stephenville at Grumps and waiting tables I've met so many profound people that I can use as references and let me know about job opportunities, and I just met some great people that were just customers and they come in there and get burgers. Now I am getting invites to their kid's high school graduations, so it's just so cool to feel so involved in the community."

Following graduation Tucker has aspirations of pursuing a career in community outreach and the nonprofit industry. After her accident she felt inspired to give back to the community that cared for her and her family so deeply.

"I am here because of the power of prayer," Tucker said. "It's crazy how the community really just wrapped their arms around my brother and my mom and me in that time and that's what motivates me so much to work in a nonprofit and community outreach. I think that's kind of the reason all of that happened honestly. I keep on trying to think 'Everything happens for a reason.' And I think that is one of the biggest reasons. I am here to do something for my community who



PHOTO BY: RACHEL ROBERTS

Marlie Tucker, a senior communications major from Tolar, Texas.

did so much for me and my mom and my brother."

Tucker is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in communications and a concentration in public relations and social engagement.

"Making it this point, to graduating college as a first gen is just huge," Tucker said. "There were times that we didn't know if I was going to make it through the year."

Tucker has battled with telling her story in the past, but she now views it as an opportunity to help inspire others and she realizes that being hit by a train happened for her, not to her, and it has allowed her to discover what she was called to do.

"I want to be a voice of hope," Tucker said. "I used to have such a negative connotation around telling my story because I was over it. I was over being the train girl, being the miracle girl. I didn't remember how it happened, I didn't have something inspirational to say, I just got hit by a train and I lived, that was it. But now it's become my testimony and it's been a mindset shift and I've been able to turn it into something so positive. We're all living in borrowed time and answered prayer and we're just walking each other home. It's just been completely humbling and made me so grateful for this life. I just want to continue to share that message and work in the community and work in nonprofit and help where I can."

GRADUATE FEATURE

A collegiate experience led by faith

BY SARA FARMER

Contributing Writer

Angie Roa, a senior graduating from the College of Education, was raised in Miami, Florida, until she was 11 years old and Justin, Texas, since then. She has been a full-time student at Tarleton State University since 2021 and has made a lasting impact on the campus and the people she has met.

Angie was raised by loving parents. The Roa family is a loyal, strong Catholic family. Angie owes the introduction to her faith, along with her fun-loving personality, to her family, especially her dad, Marlon Roa.

“My family is amazing,” Angie said. “I love my dad a lot. I am definitely most like my dad. He is very blunt and straight-forward and loves the Lord. I have always loved my dad because he has always been there for me and has done so much for me.”

Angie is known for her outgoing, talkative personality, which she gets from her father.

“My dad talks to everyone, anyone,” Angie said. “He sees someone on the street, they probably know him.”

Talking to others is like second nature to Angie.

“I like to get to know others and then once I get to know others, I get to tell them about Jesus, and that is my goal, I just want to tell everyone about Jesus.”

Angie is close with her siblings and is constantly trying to bring them to God. Angie has a close relationship with her sister, Isa. The two often go to mass and religious retreats together.

Angie also loves and admires her mother, Aida Roa. She describes her as a sweet and caring woman who is everything a mother should be.

The call to teach was something Angie felt from an early age. She has always been an outgoing individual, eager to spark up a conversation with anyone and everyone, in hopes to lead them to Christ.

“All my life, I always wanted to be a teacher,” Angie said. “I have always tried to orient my life around teaching others because I want to make better people. It is our duty to bring others to Christ.”

Angie admires the open-mindedness and purity of children, which is why she wants to teach fourth through sixth grade.

Her teaching experience began early. In high school, Angie was a ‘Confirmed in Action’ at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton youth group. Working with the younger children helped her grow in her faith herself because she was helping others grow in theirs by

educating them on right and wrong.

Along with teaching, Angie also wishes to pursue a lifestyle of becoming a religious sister.

“I want to join the CFR sisters (Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal),” Angie said. “Serving the poor and serving the children, I think it is so beautiful to help God’s people through that way. We are feeling lonely a lot of the time and their whole message is to show love to others even when they do not feel loved.”

Payton Williams and Angie are close friends, having met five years ago at Northwest High School. The two had a humorous way of meeting considering their close friendship present day.

“She was my baseball manager and ended up being my boss at Hawaiian Falls,” Williams said. “I didn’t have my license, so she was my driver.”

“[Angie is] a wonderful creature that is very extroverted and very outgoing. She is willing to stop at nothing to get to know everyone around her,” Williams said.

Karlee Vinklerek, Angie’s roommate, has grown very close to her over these past few years.

“I would describe Angie Roa as a selfless friend,” Vinklerek said. “She has so much spirit and passion inside of her, no matter what it is. She was the one person in my life that truly brought me out of my shell.”

Angie and Vinklerek met before praying the rosary with the Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM.) Vinklerek asked the group for bible recommendations and Angie was the first to respond. She then stayed after, helping Vinklerek find the bible online, which is where their friendship formed.

“Ever since then, we just had a really good connection and kept running into each other at events,” Vinklerek said.

Angie has had a lasting effect on those she is close with, but she also has the ability to make her mark on those she doesn’t know.

“I was at a bar one time,” Angie said. “I was sitting there and my phone was down and my phone case says ‘missionary’ on it. A guy said, ‘Oh you’re a missionary? So what are you doing at a bar?’ And I said, ‘well, I’m just here to hang out.’ He said, ‘Oh so you love Jesus?’ and I was like ‘yeah I love Jesus!’ Then we had an hour long conversation about Jesus inside a bar. I never thought that would actually happen to me. I thought it was so beautiful, he was very open to listening to what I had to say and I loved that conversation. His name was Will by the way,



PHOTO BY: KARLEE VINKLAREK

Angie Roa with her beloved Purple Poo outside the dining hall.

shoutout Will!”

Angie has a special relationship with the Purple Poo. Her close Poo friends are Brother Nature, Sister Speedy, Brother Chuck and Brother Slip. Angie’s outgoing nature led to her and the Poo’s interacting on a regular basis.

Many see the Purple Poo as a fun tradition on campus, but Angie views them in a deeper way and recognizes their dedication to Tarleton.

“They’re not wanting anything from anyone, they are just here to support others on campus,” Angie said.

Angie has and continues to leave a lasting impact on those she interacts with. She is a loyal friend who sticks by her pack for the long haul.

“I see her being a friend, a part of my family, a future aunt, and a bridesmaid,” Vinklerek said. “I hope she is going to be in my life forever.”

GRADUATE FEATURE

The remarkable journey of Martha Makantasi

BY THOMAS ENGELBERT
Multimedia Journalist

Martha Makantasi, a 21-year-old native of Athens, Greece, has made an indelible mark on the Tarleton State University community as a standout athlete and engineering scholar.

Makantasi's journey to the United States began with her passion for tennis.

"I was in my last year of high school, thinking about what I wanted to do," Makantasi said. "The option of playing sports and studying simultaneously isn't common in Greece. They told me about how they did here in the American universities and it sounds like a great idea honestly."

Recruited to the Tarleton tennis team, Makantasi also secured a scholarship, ultimately choosing Tarleton over other universities for its location in Texas, reminiscent of her homeland's climate.

"I didn't want to go somewhere where it snows all the time," Makantasi said. "Tarleton won for a lot of reasons, the fact that it's in Texas, was a big part of my decision made mostly because in Greece, the weather is similar to Texas."

Engineering was a natural choice for Makantasi, influenced by her father's profession. Initially starting as a mechanical engineering student, she later switched to electrical engineering, aiming to broaden her career prospects both in the U.S. and Greece.

Makantasi's Academic Advisor, Dr. Denise Martinez is proud of her and the work she has accomplished while



PHOTO BY: THOMAS ENGELBERT

Martha Makantasi posing with her tennis equipment in the Tarleton Tennis fields.

at Tarleton.

"As her instructor for courses in which engineering problem solving and design are significant components, I have observed Martha to be a fast and independent learner who thinks outside the box," Martinez said. "She is a dedicated student who enjoys putting theory into practice. Beyond the classroom, this is demonstrated in her work with Karagianis Company to learn about the solar energy industry and her internship with KKM Photovoltaics. Martha has a diligent work ethic and has great intellectual ability. This is evidenced by the fact that she has been on the President's List or Dean's List every semester for the last four years."

During her time at Tarleton, Makantasi also pursued internships, gaining hands-on experience at KKM Photo Voltaic, a company specializing in solar energy.

"It was interesting to follow around actual engineers and see how they work," Martinez said, reflecting on her internship experience.

Balancing academics, athletics and

extracurricular commitments was no small feat for Makantasi, but she thrived in a rigorous environment.

"It was demanding, but it helped me be more on schedule and productive," Makantasi said, emphasizing the importance of time management.

Makantasi's contributions extended beyond the tennis court, earning accolades such as the All Western Athletic Conference First Team honors and playing a pivotal role in Tarleton's historic conference win during her sophomore year.

"It was one of the best memories I will forever have," Makantasi said.

Despite facing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Makantasi embraced her collegiate experience wholeheartedly.

"I haven't had one bad moment in my last four years," she declared, expressing gratitude for the supportive community at Tarleton.

Reflecting on her upbringing and the values instilled in her by her parents, Makantasi underscores the importance of resilience, perseverance and

kindness.

"My parents, they were always there for me since, the first day," Makantasi said. "They pushed me to accomplish more and more, I told them I wanna keep going, and they were always there for me, trying to find solutions, help me with the whole process of coming to America and everything. I really look up to them. They're always there for me when I need them even if they're an ocean away right now."

Looking ahead, Makantasi plans to continue pursuing her passion for engineering while cherishing the friendships and memories she's made at Tarleton.

"It's been a remarkable journey," Makantasi said, "and I'm grateful for every moment."

Dr. Martinez says Martha will be successful and is a dedicated.

"Martha is very personable and polite," Martinez said. "She's both a leader and a team player. She is passionate about her field and her future and I am confident she will be successful in her pursuits."

The last run in the purple vest: Searching for a National Title

BY KILEY MORGAN

Multimedia Journalist

Most college students have one goal in mind when starting college, getting a diploma. For a student-rodeo athlete like Rayme Jones, there was so much more to prove than achieving that one goal. For her, there were three goals: bachelor's degree, master's degree, and a qualification to the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR).

Jones was raised in the small town of Lamesa, Texas, with her brother, Hunter and her parents, Kirk and Kembra Jones. She showed pigs during her younger years, but in fifth grade she wanted horses.

"My dad rodeoed for Howard College and my mom grew up on a ranch. She never competed but she had horses. They had horses up until I was born. Then when I was in fifth grade, I wanted horses, so we got some and I stopped stock showing. I started junior rodeoing and it all started from there," said Jones.

Throughout her junior high and high school rodeo career, she did it all.

"I competed in pole bending, goat tying, barrels, breakaway roping, and team roping," Jones said. When her high school rodeo days ended, Jones decided that this was not the end to her rodeo career.

Junior college or University? Jones had to ask herself when trying to make the best decision, not only for her rodeo career but more importantly, her education.

She toured Weatherford College the same day that she toured Tarleton State University, but ultimately knew that Stephenville was right where she needed to be.

"After touring Tarleton, I fell in love with it. I loved the rodeo program and the coaches and I absolutely loved the

campus. I just knew this was where I wanted to go," Jones said.

Jones traded West Texas for the "Cowboy Capital of the World" in the fall of 2019 to put on the famous purple Tarleton Rodeo vest and pursue a kinesiology degree at Tarleton.

Ultimately, every cowgirl and cowboys' dream are to make the CNFR while college rodeoing, but very few can make that dream a reality. Jones, however, was determined to make it happen.

"Why is making it to the College National Finals Rodeo a huge deal?" some might ask. 16 of the best colleges in the nation make up the Southwest Region, Tarleton being one of them. These 16 colleges go to 10 rodeos throughout the year and their best athletes compete against one another.

At the end of the year, the top three athletes in their respective events get to move on to the big event in Casper, Wyoming, which is the College National Finals Rodeo.

Here, the athletes compete against regions from all over the United States. The CNFR is the greatest accomplishment a college rodeo athlete can achieve, and after five years of competition, Jones finally punched her ticket to Casper this year.

While it was a relief to earn a spot at the CNFR, Jones had been in the pressure cooker since the Western Texas College (WTC) Rodeo at the beginning of April. She sat on the bubble, in third place in the Goat Tying, throughout WTC, Howard College Rodeo and the Tarleton Stampede.

"This is my first time to make the CNFR since I started here in 2019," Jones said. "Big Spring rodeo [Howard College] was right before the Tarleton rodeo and I won that rodeo. So, that helped me a lot, but I didn't even know

where I was at going into Tarleton. I knew I was close to making it, and I knew I had a chance. But I didn't know who was in front of me in the standings, or who was behind me. I knew if I knew, I would let the stress get to me and it would affect how I competed."

She split the long go at the Tarleton Stampede with a six second run and came back to the short go Saturday night making a 6.6 second run. Any other college goat tier would love to have a 6.6 second run in the short-go, but for Jones, this run could make or break her dreams of going to the CNFR.

"I had a good run in the short go, but it wasn't what I wanted. I was upset about it," Jones said. "I was unsaddling my horse afterwards and my mom just kept calling and calling and calling and calling. I was not going to answer because I just didn't want to know. Then, she texted me and said- 'Get over it... you're going to the college finals.'"

Going into the college finals, Jones' goal is to obviously win, but to stay consistent. She will get three runs and then hopefully a short go.

"I just want to be smooth, consistent, and enjoy the experience," said Jones.

Jones attributes a lot of her success to God and her great support system that has followed her around to college rodeos for the last five years.

"In everything I do, I go to God. He is who gets me through everything. I don't want to say that sets me apart from others but, he is a huge part of my success and I want to tell people about it," Jones said.

Throughout her college rodeo career, Jones has had 46 college rodeos. Out of those 46 rodeos, her grandparents, Gary and Judy Jones (Papa and Mamajuju), have been to 41.

"They missed one rodeo because she [Judy] was shooting an elk in Utah. The other four was because she was diagnosed with cancer, this February. Since we live so close to Snyder, she was able to make that one this semester, but it was so hard at the Tarleton rodeo without her being there this year. I had a lot of people there to support me, but my number 1 not being there was very hard for me," Jones said. "My other great supporters are my brother, Hunter and his wife Lindsey and my grandparents, Johnny and Nancy Kemp (Gammy and GunGun) and of course, all of my aunts and uncles and cousins."

While rodeoing for Tarleton has been everything Jones could have dreamed of, she also has big dreams to become a chiropractor.

She walked across the stage in Memorial Stadium last year, where she graduated with her undergraduate degree and she will take the stage again this month, to receive her master's degree in kinesiology.

After graduation, Jones will head to Dallas, Texas, where she will attend Parker University Chiropractic school in the fall. Unfortunately, she will have to put her Goat Tying career on hold while attending school in Dallas.

"Chiropractor school will take three and a half years, but once I get out of school completely, I would like to continue to rodeo and raise my kids to rodeo," Jones said.

Once a cowgirl, always a cowgirl. Rayme, congratulations on your academic and athletic success at Tarleton and best of luck representing Tarleton Rodeo at the CNFR in June.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Charles Howard retires from Tarleton after 33 years

BY ASHTYN HANSARD
Multimedia Journalist

As the spring semester at Tarleton State University is coming to an end, senior students are getting ready to start their adventure in the world, while undergraduate students are getting ready to have a few months off from homework. However, Dr. Charles Howard is getting ready for something different.

Dr. Howard is a communications professor at Tarleton. He has been a working faculty member for the past 33 years.

“I came here in the fall of 1991,” Howard said. “I came here as an assistant professor in the fine arts and speech department. I eventually became the department chair when we created the Communication Studies Department for 11 years and then stepped down. I’ve been a professor here ever since then.”

In his 33 years here at Tarleton, Howard has been able to teach hundreds of kids in many courses.

“When I came here [Tarleton], I pretty much taught everything,” Howard said. “I started mostly with Basic Speech, which I have done for 33 years. I’ve also done Honors Speech, Communications Law, which I’ve taught for the past 20-something years.”

Over the time of his career, Howard has been able to scale down which courses he teaches.

“I’ve taught journalism, I’ve taught PR and I’ve taught interpersonal,” Howard said. “I’ve taught a ton of different courses over the years until we started our own department and expanded the curriculum. I mainly focused on things like public speaking, communication law and other courses similar to those.”

When asked why Howard chose to work at Tarleton, he responded that it was just simply a choice he made.

“I applied to work here in the summer of ‘91 when I was still at the University of Kansas,” Howard stated. “I got offered the job and I took it. I honestly didn’t expect to stay here for so long. I thought it would be a very temporary position, but then I just stayed and stayed.”

With Howard working here for so long and having taught so many different communications classes, he mentions which class had been his favorite to teach to his students.

“Communications Law has always been my favorite,” Howard said. “It’s so many different issues and it’s always current, it’s always something new. There’s always something that you have to think



PHOTO BY: HAELEY CARPENTER

Dr. Charles Howard addressing guests at his retirement reception earlier this month at Tarleton.

about. It involves a lot of important issues, not only societally but also for people individually.”

When asked about his favorite part of Tarleton as a whole, Howard said it was always the people.

“Whether it’s interacting with colleagues, students or people in the community, it’s always been the people that I’ve worked with,” Howard said.

“I’ve been very, very lucky with working with people who wanted to do a good job and who wanted to build things. It’s always been the most important thing to me.”

Howard opened up and talked about his old professor, Dr. Steve Smith, and how he created an impression on him while in school.

“He was a very good teacher, but he was also a person who had done a lot of different things,” Howard said. “He had been the Chief-of-Staff when Bill Clinton was the Attorney General of Arkansas. He had been on Bill Clinton’s staff when he was Governor of Arkansas. He was in the State Legislature. He had just done a lot of different things. He showed me that you could be in academia and still be a part of the larger community and the larger conversation. I think he was the one that made the biggest impact on me and how I wanted to live my

career out and what I wanted to do with my career.”

Howard has been a teacher at Tarleton for over three decades, but he was once a student just like us here at Tarleton. Howard pondered on what piece of advice he would give his younger self.

“I think the most important thing is to find out what you really want to do, what really makes you fulfilled,” Howard said. “If you follow that and not worry about things like money and ‘climbing the ladder,’ you’ll do much better. Generally speaking, money and achievements will follow if you do something you love. You want to focus on working hard, doing a good job and improving the community around you. If you can do those things, the rest will be okay.”

When asked about what he would miss about Tarleton, he knew his answer immediately.

“The people,” Howard said. “My colleagues, the interactions I have with people and the interaction of ideas and talking about ideas. I think that’s what I’ll miss the most about Tarleton.”

When working a job for as long as Howard has, he reflects on how teaching has impacted his life.

“It’s obviously helped me see that there’s a bigger world out there and I’m just a part of it,” Howard said. “When you leave this world, the only thing you’re going to leave behind is the impact you’ve made on people. Everything else is just, well, junk.”

After hearing his philosophy of leaving a good impact on the world and doing the best you can, I asked him what kind of impression he was hoping to leave on his current and past students.

“I hope they have been empowered,” Howard said. “If they were in my public speaking class, I hope I taught them how to articulate their ideas. I hope they’ve been empowered to express their ideas and to express their passions. I want them to think for themselves, do the work to support themselves and sustain themselves. If you can do that, that’s the first step to helping the community.”

Howard reflected about if he were to start his journey over again knowing everything he knows now, would he do it?

“You can only walk the path that’s in front of you,” Howard said. “I don’t regret any of the decisions I’ve made in terms of the big picture.”

Howard wishes his students the best of luck in the world and hopes they will live the rest of their lives leaving a good impact on their community and the people around them.

Thank you TNS for everything

BY JOLEE SKINNER

Editor-in-Chief

Two in a half years ago, I transferred to Tarleton State University from Tarrant County College. I transferred as a Broadcast Journalism major and didn't know where to begin in terms of what clubs or organizations to join for my major. On my very first day of class, I found out about Texan News Service (TNS) and immediately applied.

And now, almost two years later, it's time for me to say goodbye. TNS has brought me so many opportunities and brought me people I never knew I needed. And TNS has taught me so much about myself as a journalist.

I've always been passionate about journalism and reporting the truth and was super excited to be hired on as a multimedia journalist. I really wanted to grow as a writer and a journalist. And I did exactly that during my time at TNS and I was given so many wonderful opportunities during my time here.

I was given the opportunity to travel and learn more about the journalism world. I met really phenomenal people in the industry and developed new skills. I was given the opportunity to meet and interview so many incredible people. From Dr. Hurley to local business owners to students who have the most heartfelt stories. I was given the opportunity to grow as a journalist. I grew so much as a leader, especially under pressure, making hard decisions and so on. I grew in my editing skills and have learned so much more about the industry.

There are so many countless things I could say that TNS has given me,



PHOTO BY: KILEY MORGAN

Editor-in-Chief, Jolee Skinner says goodbye to TNS.

but the most amazing thing TNS gave me was new friendships. I got to work with the best people you could have asked for. Seeing everyone for SMAC meetings, traveling with everyone, eating countless meals together, I was given the opportunity to know the most hard working, smart and talented group of students I've seen.

Michaela, thank you for laughing with me all the time and killing it at the broadcast. Jaxon, thank you for all the jokes and suffering with me in a particular class this semester. Haeley, thank you for nailing the website and

always showing up for everyone.

Kiley, thank you for hard work and kindness to everyone. Payton, thank you for always being a sweet soul and being there to talk about Taylor Swift. Thomas, thank you for always being there to edit broadcasts and you have come so far and will do great things at TNS. Ashtyn, thank you for jumping in on broadcast and you are going to kill it next semester as executive producer.

Copeland, thank you for always being a listening ear when I needed to rant and being a great friend who cares so much about everyone. You are

going to do great things in life. Reese, thank you for being my best friend, my confidant, my ride or die, my travel buddy and my sister. You are going to be the best editor-in-chief next year.

To Mr. Lewter, thank you for everything. Thank you for all the opportunities, the ability to travel to new places, your insights into the industry, being a cool teacher, your guidance as a leader and for always supporting us no matter what. Thank you for pouring into your students.

TNS, you were the best part of my college experience, farewell.

GOODBYE LETTER

Finding my passion

BY COPELAND WELCH
Managing Editor

Texan News Service, to some it's just the newspaper at Tarleton State University, to others, it's a place to work. For me, it's been a place to learn, laugh, grow and find myself and my passions.

There are simply no words to describe the experience that I have been privileged enough to have at not only Texan News Service, but Tarleton as a whole. So, I will use a metaphor instead.

I think of myself and everyone else at Tarleton like a pencil. We are all different shapes, sizes and colors, but at the core, we are all the same. With that said, we all have a different purpose, some pencils are used to take tests, but some are used for more artistic things like sketching portraits.

My favorite part of working at Texan News Service has been seeing everyone find their unique purpose.

Thomas, Ashtyn and Michaela found their passion in the control room executing the broadcast. Reese and Jaxon thrived while covering sports events. Kiley was most often found at a rodeo arena producing on-camera interviews. Jolee found her passion while focusing on bettering our team and leading Texan News Service. Haeley found passion in always lending a helping hand and never being afraid to use her voice. Payton was always willing to take an idea and run with it, regardless if she felt qualified to write about a topic. Lastly, our advisor, Austin Lewter was always there to answer our questions and he found his passion in helping us succeed as young journalists.

Although each of us at Texan News Service will likely follow a different path after graduation, I know that at the core we all have a deep passion for journalism, helping others and highlighting the stories of those in our communities.

As a journalist, you encounter lots of people every single day. Just like pencils, some of these people are wrapped in a hard metal shell, others are wrapped in something lighter like wood or



PHOTO COURTESY: MADDISON FALLIN

Copeland Welch posing with the March tabloid TNS edition.

plastic and their shells are easier to break. The most important thing to remember is that if you dig deep enough, I think you'll find that we are all the same.

My time at Texan News Service will never be forgotten and can never be erased. As I trade

in my pencil for something more permanent, I hope each of my coworkers knows the impact they have had on my life and never forget that it's okay to go off the beaten path to follow your true passions.

I will close with final words for my coworkers, friends and classmates. Remember

that the tough days don't define you, and we will often feel like you're at your breaking point. In the words of Tony Robbins, "Your breaking point is your breakthrough point." And remember, even broken pencils can be sharpened and restored.

GOODBYE LETTER

Michaela Dennis signing off

BY MICHAELA DENNIS

Executive Director

My goodbye to Texan News Service. Wow. I'm actually quite surprised I made it this far. When I joined the organization, I remember being uncomfortable all the time. There was a consistent lack of diversity and honestly articles written about diverse groups or people were more than likely written by me. I found myself constantly having to push for diversity. And not because my coworkers didn't want to produce that kind of content, they just didn't make an effort to include a diverse audience that was outside of their social group.

The moment I really started to love my job was when my peers in the black community, LGBTQIA+ and Hispanic started to let me know how much they appreciated me for writing an article about them that spotlighted them. And for me, it was not just writing about "my people," I genuinely wanted to see different stories be released by our organization.

Being in a small town it is easy to fall into the limbo of writing the same stuff. Although we're college students and it's easier to do what's convenient, I always had the most fun writing an article about a group I never interacted with. It makes it easier for me to come up with questions and make the story interesting when I have no knowledge coming into it.

Now, I am three years into my job position. I will be graduating with the title of Executive Director. I have changed the broadcast tremendously from where it was when I was first introduced to it, to where it is now. I am so happy with the work that me and my coworkers have put into it. It looks a lot more professional and consistent.

My final words to everyone and to future members of Texan News Service would be to stay in if you're willing to continue to push the boundaries. And that's not to say to start writing outrageous stories that could get you in legal trouble, but don't be afraid to change the layout of the paper like how Reese did or add new



PHOTO COURTESY: ZEMONI HOPKINS.

Michaela Dennis poses for graduation photos at Tarleton State University's alumni house.

features and designs to the website like Haeley or always pitch new ideas like Copeland.

I think that's why I have loved my job so recently this year. Everyone truly wants to do new things. When I joined it was absolutely

not like this. We stayed in our bubble and we did what was passed down to us. And not just because I worked here but Texan News Service truly is a consistent source for students to read articles or watch a broadcast about what's happening on or around campus. I genuinely

hope we never lose sight of that.

I truly enjoyed my experience here. The crew I'm graduating with really are some good people and I truly hope that everyone continues to have a prosperous year.

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