

Winter 2009

## **Orange & white - Winter 2009**

University of Texas at Brownsville

Texas Southmost College

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# ORANGE & WHITE

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College

## A CHALLENGE MADE, A CHALLENGE MET: A LOOK BACK AT THE CHALLENGE FOR EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP

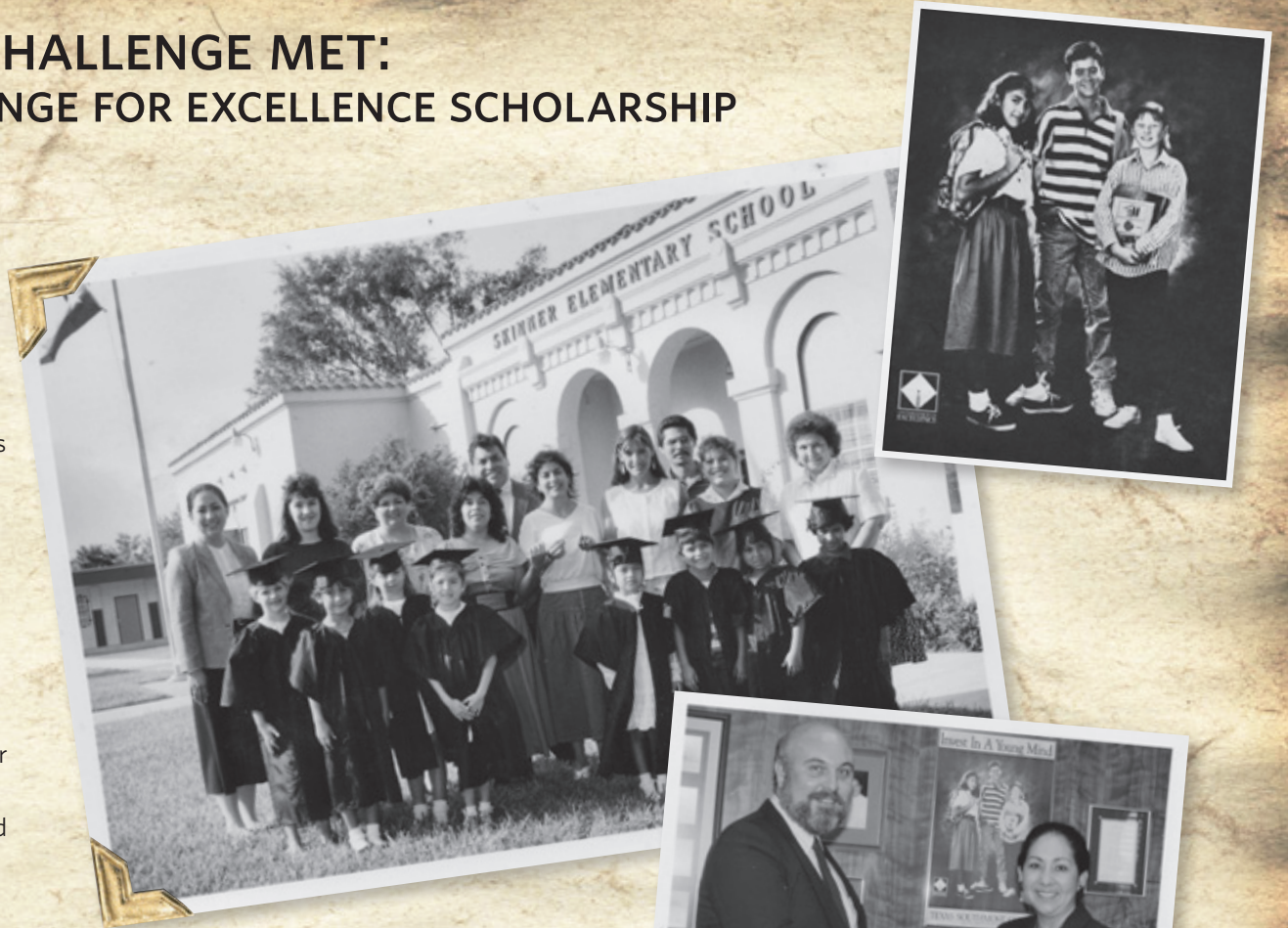
Twenty years ago, a small community college chose to dream big and set a standard for the whole country to admire, creating reverberations in South Texas higher education that continue today.

This year, Texas Southmost College marks the 20th anniversary of its Challenge for Excellence scholarship endowment, which set a new fundraising record for community colleges and created an endowment that has given thousands of deserving students scholarships to follow their own ambitious dreams.

To date, about 13,000 students in the TSC District have received scholarships totaling more than \$3.7 million through the Challenge for Excellence Endowment Program, while the corpus of the fund has grown to \$5.1 million as of September. For students like Joe Alvear, now choir director in Brownsville's Fine Arts and Teacher Academy at Lopez High School, the program provided the encouragement he needed to prepare for college and the financial help he needed to graduate.

"Looking back, it really did make a huge difference knowing that money was available," said Alvear, who graduated from The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College in 2002 with a degree in music education. "It really motivated me to get good grades because I knew early on that my future was really linked to how well I did in school."

It was back in 1989 that TSC accepted a scholarship challenge from the U.S. Department of Education: Raise \$1 million locally in only 18 months. The task was huge, but the potential payoff was huge as well. If TSC could raise \$1 million, the federal government would match it with \$2 million. [SEE "CHALLENGE" ON PAGE 2](#)



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## CHALLENGE CONTINUED

It was a daunting task for a community that lagged in average income, employment and college attainment. There was risk in aiming so high, but TSC leaders focused on the rewards that would come with success.

Over the next 18 months, with car washes and bake sales, telethon pleas and black-tie dinners, friends of the college gave generously to raise that \$1 million.

“It was a tremendous effort twenty years ago to come up with a million dollars. Probably the greatest return is the thousands of students that (otherwise) may not have been able to get the college experience,” said Gary Kimberling, past chair of the TSC Foundation. “These students go back into the community and make the community a better place. That is the return to the people who made those donations.”

Reynaldo and Ethel Cantu co-hosted a festive wine-tasting party for more than 100 of their friends in the legal community. They teamed up with other hosts and sponsors to offer prizes, such as airline tickets and vacation condos, and ended up raising close to \$70,000.

The outpouring of affection for the college was “more than we expected,” said Ethel Cantu, then a professor of behavioral science and now associate vice president for Academic Affairs at UTB/TSC.

“These were all people who value higher education,” she said. “They also realized the obstacles that students face. I think the legal community recognized the benefits they had received from higher education, and this was a way for them to give back to the community.”

UTB/TSC President Juliet V. García notes that the successful Challenge campaign created the first such community college scholarship endowment in the state of Texas. The program, which rewards students who take rigorous high school courses, became a model for other campuses.

“Every year when I go to Harvard to speak to a summer institute aimed at helping prepare new university presidents, I’m asked to tell the powerful story of the woman who donated a crinkled \$5 bill to me as her donation because ‘It is the only hope I have for my babies,’” García recounts. “The commitment of this community continues to inspire audiences across the nation.”



## WELCOME NEW DEANS

DR. PETER B. GAWENDA, LEFT, IS DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGY AND GENERAL STUDIES. DR. MIKHAIL BOUNIAEV, RIGHT, IS DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY.

Two colleges had new leadership when the academic year began this fall.

Dr. Peter B. Gawenda became dean of the College of Applied Technology and General Studies after serving in the role as interim dean.

He began as a professor in The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College’s School of Education in 1984. He led development of the bachelor’s degree program for applied technology and applied arts and sciences.

**GAWENDA HAS DEGREES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, TROY UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON AND THE FUEHRUNGS-AKADEMIE IN HAMBURG, GERMANY.**

He also served as interim dean of the College of Science, Mathematics and Technology before Dr. Mikhail Bouniaev took over as dean this fall.

Bouniaev wants to promote an environment among faculty of rewarding research, teaching and commitment to learning, and a desire to learn and achieve among students. He also wants to work with faculty to develop goals for the college aligned with the university’s strategic plan.

He has a desire for the college to help attract more companies to the area for job creation — especially those dealing with technology.

**BOUNIAEV WAS BORN IN RUSSIA AND HAS DEGREES FROM MOSCOW PEDAGOGICAL STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE MOSCOW INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING.**

He was previously the founding dean of the College of Computing, Integrated Engineering and Technology at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah. He has also worked as a professor, faculty chair and dean at SUU and at Moscow Pedagogical State University.

The position Downing holds was formerly known as the vice president for External Affairs. The new position was designed to correspond to the strategic needs of the university to advance academic and economic development.

Downing brings more than 30 years of experience in city planning, economic development and banking.

**“HAVING WORKED IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY, MR. DOWNING KNOWS THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES IN THIS REGION,” PRESIDENT JULIET V. GARCÍA SAID. “HE ALSO HAS A STRONG BACKGROUND IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER COMBINATION OF SKILLS WE WOULD LOOK FOR TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP.”**

Downing sees great potential for the university to partner with industry through applied research that will help the community create more jobs in the private sector.

**“WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON KEEPING PACE WITH THE CHANGING ECONOMY TO ENSURE OUR REGION CAN MEET ONGOING COMPETITIVE CHALLENGES FOR JOB CREATION,” DOWNING SAID.**



## A VISION OF DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

Irv Downing sees a bright future in economic development for Brownsville, and he envisions much of it being spawned at the International Technology, Education, and Commerce Center.

Downing joined The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College as vice president for Economic Development and Community Services in June.

“I want to see the areas of workforce training and small business incubation expand and grow,” he said. “The more that we can grow this sector, the more of a player we will be in economic development for this region, and that is what this is about: economic development and community service.”



DR. ALAN F.J. ARTIBISE BRINGS KNOWLEDGE OF URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AND EXPERIENCE IN BINATIONAL RELATIONS TO HIS NEW POSITION AS PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE AND TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE.

## A NEW ERA

Dr. Alan F.J. Artibise joined the campus community in October after serving as executive dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and executive director of the Institute for Social Science Research at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona.

“I am very excited about joining one of America’s most distinctive and challenging institutions and contributing to important higher education issues such as student access, teaching and research excellence, and community impact,” Artibise said. “I am especially looking forward to joining and working with a diverse and capable team of administrators, faculty and staff at UTB/TSC, all dedicated to student success.”

The provost is the second highest administrative position at UTB/TSC, answering to the president. The position’s duties include making recommendations for appointments, promotions, tenures and salaries; preparing and submitting the budget; and writing academic and fiscal progress reports.

“I am blown away by what an incredible campus it is, (with) both some of the existing buildings and the new buildings coming on line in the next six months,” Artibise said. “The planning that went into them with the uses seems quite exciting.”

## FIVE MILLION NASA GRANT BOOSTS RESEARCH

With a \$5 million grant from NASA, the Center for Gravitational Wave Astronomy at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College is making changes in the study of the universe and in the community.

UTB/TSC’s center will use the money to train area teachers, to support a new doctoral program with The University of Texas at San Antonio, and to provide \$1 million for new equipment and \$1.3 million for undergraduate and graduate student support, including scholarships.

“It was very stiff competition because, with research centers, everyone wants to have one,” said Adrienne Rodriguez Zermeno, senior program director in the College of Science, Mathematics and Technology. “It’s hard to get the funding in this day and age. We are very proud to be honored with this grant.”

In September, NASA’s Group 5 University Research Center awards program announced UTB/TSC as a grant recipient, one of two Texas minority-serving institutions to receive the grant.

“What is so great about the grant is it will not only expand

Artibise said a university should be the most important part of a community.

“I think the critical challenge for UTB/TSC is: Where do we want to put our energies and our resources and where do we want to seek additional resources to deal with issues that are particularly important to the Rio Grande Valley and the people of the community in which we operate?” he said.

Artibise has dual citizenship in the United States and Canada, his home country. He has degrees from the University of Manitoba and The University of British Columbia.

Artibise has served in academic and administrative roles at Canadian universities in Kamloops, Vancouver, Victoria, Manitoba and Winnipeg. He has also worked at the University of Missouri – St. Louis and the University of New Orleans.

“The University community is very enthusiastic about the broad depth of experience in innovation that Dr. Artibise will bring to our work, especially in the areas of using higher education as a critical element in community development and establishing trans-disciplinary schools

the department and allow students and faculty to test their theories, it will also help students become very competitive in the field, even more so than we are now,” said Sergio Cantu, a sophomore physics and mathematics major. “It is great to be able to buy new equipment for the lab, taking the program to a higher level, but this now gives students hands-on learning in a lab.”

“When we go to look for internships with large companies or research facilities, they look for that experience, and we will have that now,” he said.

**THE GRANT WILL BE USED TO SUPPORT RESEARCH IN LASERS AND OPTICS AS PART OF NASA’S LASER INTERFEROMETER SPACE ANTENNA PROJECT, ALSO KNOWN AS LISA. THE PROJECT LOOKS AT THE ASTROPHYSICAL AND COSMIC SOURCES OF LOW FREQUENCY GRAVITATIONAL WAVES USING THREE SATELLITES THAT FORM AN EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE ORBITING THE SUN.**

“The next revolution in electronics is going to come from lasers,” said Dr. Mario C. Diaz, director of the CGWA and professor of physics. “Lasers have the speed of light.”

to create a dynamic university environment,” said UTB/TSC President Juliet V. García.

He succeeds Dr. Jose G. Martín, provost emeritus, who was named provost in fall 2000 and retired in February.

## MILLION DOLLAR GRANT LAUNCHES BIOFUEL STUDY

Funded by a million dollar grant from the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, the scientific research community at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College has joined forces with Photon8, a producer of algae-based biodiesel.

**“THIS PARTNERSHIP MAY LEAD TO IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE RENEWABLE ENERGY FIELD,” SAID DR. LUIS COLOM, INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH. “IT CONSTITUTES THE FIRST STEP TOWARD THE CREATION OF A RENEWABLE ENERGY INDUSTRY IN OUR AREA.”**

Research activity on alternative genetic structures will take place in the UTB/TSC microbiology lab, while chemistry students will work on lipid profiling in the chemistry lab.

“We feel that we will be the first to be a profitable enterprise to produce algae oil,” said Brad Bartilson, president and founder of Photon 8.

**“WE SEE THE TREMENDOUS VALUE IN HAVING THE UNIVERSITY AS A PARTNER IN OUR RESEARCH, AND WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH WILL BE OUR FUTURE EMPLOYEES.”**

With six start-up personnel, Photon8 has moved into space at the International Innovation Center at the International Technology, Education and Commerce Center.

“We are all excited about the project, of course, but also about relocating our families to this beautiful, sunny area,” Bartilson said. “The sunshine, by the way, will be critical to our production efforts.”



## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE: BUILDINGS TAKE FORM AND FUNCTION

This month marks the five-year anniversary of the 2004 bond issue for The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, which allowed the construction of facilities needed to keep pace with the growing number of students and academic programs.

Out of that bond funding, UTB/TSC has three new buildings up and running for the fall semester: the University Boulevard Library, its companion University Boulevard Classroom Building, and the Recreation, Education and Kinesiology Center. A year ago, the university opened new renovations at the International Technology, Education and Commerce Center.

The Center for Early Childhood Studies is nearing completion.

Located on University Boulevard on the Fort Brown Peninsula, this five-building mini-campus consists of a multipurpose building with a lunchroom, an art room, a nursing station and administrative offices.

There are also four casitas, each with two classrooms separated by an observation room for UTB/TSC early childhood studies students. Two play areas complete the child-friendly campus with a colorful front-yard playground and a back yard with a patio and shade trees for outdoor group activities.

**"WE EAGERLY AWAIT JANUARY 4, 2010, THE OPENING DAY OF THE CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES," SAID DR. STEPHEN ROSALES, ASSISTANT DEAN FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS. "THE CENTER WILL SERVE AS A TEACHING LABORATORY SCHOOL FOR UTB/TSC EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STUDENTS AND WILL BE A MODEL SCHOOL FOR SOUTH TEXAS EDUCATORS."**

"This facility will continue to be a provider of exceptional preschool learning and care, as well as a learning venue for UTB/TSC students of childcare occupations," Rosales said.

With the opening of the new facility, the current Raul J. Guerra Early Childhood Center on the opposite side of campus will be able to accommodate a greater number of infants to 2-year-olds.

The last bond-funded new construction project is The Arts Center, a \$25 million spiral-shaped facility with a captivating presence from all angles.

"UTB/TSC's ability to provide quality music education will be transformed by this beautiful, yet practical facility," said Dr. Sue Zanne Urbis, Fine Arts Department chair. "It is the perfect venue for teaching and supporting our students as they stretch their talents and develop into performers and music educators."

The 49,887 square-foot structure also will serve the region and its surrounding communities with an 808-seat performance hall. The fully equipped stage is designed to accommodate orchestras, operas, and dance and theater productions with up to 150 people on stage simultaneously.

"We expect upwards of 8,000 public school students a year in competitions, festivals and concerts," Urbis said.

The lobby gallery, with magnificent views of the Fort Brown Resaca, will be a venue for art exhibits. On the first floor, aside from the stage and audience chamber with its six boxes, are a large rehearsal hall (2,912 square feet) and a medium rehearsal hall (1,834 square feet).

Dressing rooms, a green room, a grand piano room and four teaching studios complete the first level. The second level includes balcony seating and 11 boxes, a patrons' room connected to a terrace that also serves as a recital and rehearsal hall, and a fifth teaching studio is overlooking the resaca.



THE ARTS CENTER



CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES

"UTB/TSC's ability to provide quality music education will be transformed by this beautiful, yet practical facility," Urbis said. "It is the perfect venue for teaching and supporting our students as they stretch their talents and develop into performers and music educators."

The fixed seating for the performance hall has been installed, and, in the coming weeks, desks, music stands, percussion equipment and choral risers will be moved in.

To date, \$1.7 million of the total project cost has been covered by private gifts and fundraising by the UTB/TSC Development Office.

Another large construction effort under way is the \$33.8 million Science and Technology Learning Center along the Lozano Banco Resaca near the biology wing of the Life and Health Sciences Building.

Funded by the Texas Legislature, this two-building facility will house the Center for Biomedical Studies, where cutting-edge efforts in biology, biotechnology and medicine will build momentum for the flow of additional research dollars to the university.

Opening this fall was the 43,300-square-foot University Boulevard Library. With its three floors, flooded with sunlight through an abundance of windows, it is already a student favorite for study and research. The Arnulfo L. Oliveira Memorial Library, now the home of Library Archives Services, will remain open during its upcoming \$3.1 million renovation.



UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD LIBRARY AND CLASSROOM BUILDING

## ENDOWMENT HONORS BARRY T. HORN



Barry T. Horn was known as the "go-to guy."

When the impossible needed to be done, people said, "Call Barry."

Horn, who died in October, was a longtime friend and colleague of the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

A lifetime steward of education, Horn will be most remembered for his commitment to the thousands of students that benefited from the endowments and scholarships he helped to create. He worked closely with families and organizations to establish many of the current scholarship endowments.

His life touched many people who were unaware of his work. He was a philanthropist, and he helped others to be as well," said Dr. William Strong, former vice president for Institutional Advancement."

The Barry T. Horn Scholarship Endowment for the Arts has been established by Sonia Cunningham, UTB/TSC nursing professor, and her son, Laird Ferguson.

Horn worked with Cunningham, first in helping to raise money for The President's Circle Fund and later with

her own fund, the Sgt. Keith A. Ferguson Scholarship Endowment.

"Barry saved my life once," she said. "He helped me to start the endowment in my son's name when I had no energy to do anything but come back to work. He even coordinated with my friend Betsy Freeth and helped pay for my son's obituary to be in the local papers."

Horn first joined the university in 2000 and served as manager of the Jacob Brown Civic Center. He oversaw renovations of the Jacob Brown Auditorium and successfully launched the Arts and Entertainment performing season.

His kind-hearted nature and natural ability for relating with all walks of life made Horn a perfect fit for leading the philanthropic arm of the university. In the Division of Institutional Advancement, he served as director of Development, and, in 2004, he was promoted to associate vice president for Development.

To make contributions to the Barry T. Horn Scholarship Endowment for the Arts, contact the Division of Institutional Advancement at (956) 882-4322 or ken.turpen@utb.edu.



THE KEYNOTES ORGANIZATION DONATED \$250 TO THE ARTS CENTER PAVER PROJECT IN JULY.

## GIFTS ARE BUILDING A DREAM

Gifts for The Arts Center have increased to \$1.7 million as far-sighted members of the community recognize the impact this project will have on students and the arts in South Texas.

"The Arts Center will be the finest performance venue south of Austin, and, when combined with the excellence that the UTB/TSC Music Program represents, I believe that the impressive 41 percent increase in freshman music majors is just the beginning of a new era in music education," said Dr. Sue Zanne Urbis, chair of the Fine Arts Department.

With its distinctive spiral shape, the 49,887-square-foot center is designed to accommodate large orchestra, opera and theater productions. It also includes teaching studios, rehearsal halls and a 5,298-square-foot lobby for receptions and art exhibits.

When it debuts in 2010, the performance hall will include a "Graciela Gutierrez Box" and "The Villarreal-Montemayor Box." Another box will honor Brownsville founders Charles and Elizabeth Stillman.

Gutierrez has been an arts and education supporter in Brownsville and northern Mexico for many years and is well known for her community work on both sides of the border.

"I have always believed in helping my community, whether it was in Matamoros, where I was born and raised, or in Brownsville, my home now," Gutierrez said.

The Villarreal, both alumni of Texas Southmost College and art collectors, also are excited to help build a new home for performing arts and arts education in Brownsville. The music program's prestigious accreditation, outstanding performance opportunities and top-notch academics draw students from far and near.

Previous significant gifts are from James D. and Gloria Zellerbach, Roberto B. and Perla Robles, Jim H. and Amy Tipton, Neal and Lourdes Simmons, Ruben H. and Bernice Edelstein, Kalim J. and Gigi Habet, and Sergio and Magda Argüelles, IBC Bank, Keppel AmFELS, and H-E-B President Charles C. Butt in honor of his mother, Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth Butt.

Campus friends also are working to name a box in honor of Terry Jay Phillips, a beloved professor, musician and former dean of what now is the College of Applied Technology and General Studies.

Construction of The Arts Center is funded by \$18 million of a \$68 million bond package approved by voters in 2004 and \$6.7 million being raised from private gifts.

# Build A Dream

**HELP US CREATE A WORLD-CLASS ARTS FACILITY FOR OUR UNIVERSITY AND OUR COMMUNITY. NO GIFT IS TOO SMALL.**

### SEATS OF HONOR

Name a seat in The Art Center's new 808-seat performance hall to honor a family member, a colleague or your department. Seats can be named for honorees at a variety of giving levels, from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and the honoree's name will be inscribed on a plaque on the seat.

### COMMEMORATIVE PAVERS

Reserve a commemorative paver to be installed on the beautifully landscaped grounds of The Arts Center. The four-inch by eight-inch pavers will be inscribed with two lines of custom engraving to recognize your \$250 gift and your commitment to the arts at UTB/TSC.

### DONORS

Sergio and Magda Argüelles Douglas Arney Javier Balboa Walter Barthel Gerhard Berg Ann K. Black Martha J. Blanton Antonio Brisenio Dianne E. Brumley Donald H. Cadriel Catherine Cantu Allen C. Clark Azenett A. Cornejo Charles F. Dameron Marta DiGregorio Ruben H. and Bernice Edelstein Musa Essayyad Robert R. Farris Gerry Fleuriet Rosie N. Fruia Emigdio M. Garcia Juliet V. Garcia Graciela Gutierrez	Kalim J. and Gigi Habet David G. Handley Jennifer L. Hernandez Laurie M. Howell Deborah Huerta Daniel Hunter-Holly Farhat M. Iftekharruddin Mary W. Johnson GERALYN S. Kirkpatrick Chet Lewis Eric & Meloney Linder Jose G. Martin Allen C. Clark Rosemary R. Martinez Patrick K. McGehee Carol S. McNabb Lawrence P. Neuburg Judith Neumann Thomas Nevill David Pearson Sylvia C. Peña Maria I. Perez Fred and Ruth Ann Ragland Roberto B. and Perla Robles Yolanda Rosenbaum Hilda Silva	Luz M. Silva Alexander Stillman William F. Strong Jim H. and Amy Tipton Kenneth M. Turpen Evelyn Urbis Richard J. Urbis Sue Z. Urbis Alejandro and Irma Villarreal Remedios S. Villarreal Stephen D. Wilder Jane Williamson Lucy G. Willis Marilyn J. Woods James D. and Gloria Zellerbach Keynotes International Bank of Commerce Keppel AmFELS Inc. Neal & Lourdes Simmons Foundation Charles C. Butt and HEB Foundation
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**CONTACT UTB/TSC OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT AT (956)882-4322 FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



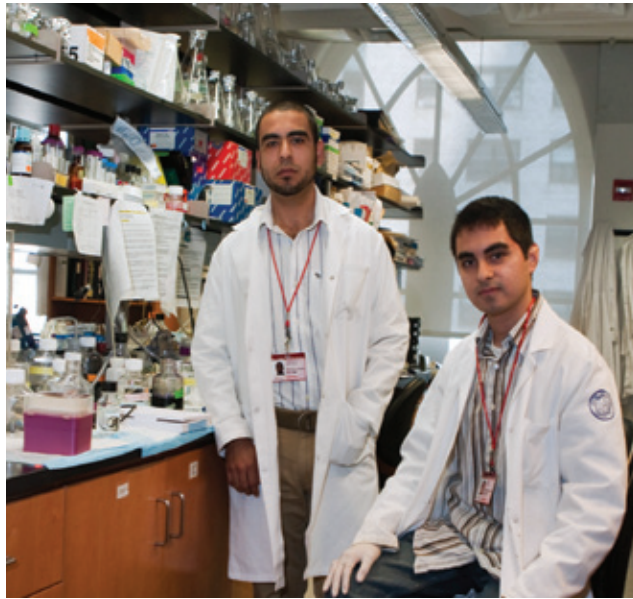
## SCORPIONS TAKE ON THE BIG APPLE

**STUDENT PROFILE:**  
HERMINIO GUAJARDO AND IVAN VALDEZ,  
BROWNSVILLE

From a pool of more than 200 nationwide applicants, two students from The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College were selected to participate in a prestigious research internship.

HERMINIO GUAJARDO AND IVAN VALDEZ, BIOLOGY MAJORS, WERE TWO OF SIX CHOSEN TO INTERN AT THE WEILL CORNELL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDICAL SCIENCES IN NEW YORK CITY.

"WHEN WE FOUND OUT WE HAD BEEN ACCEPTED, WE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT," VALDEZ SAID. "IT WAS JUST FANTASTIC."



HERMINIO GUAJARDO AND IVAN VALDEZ

Over the summer, they conducted research in neuroscience and experienced New York City for the first time.

"This is a great opportunity, and to be able to spend it with my friend Ivan has been good," Guajardo said. "It helps to know someone. We are able to study and go out together."

The internship was made possible through their participation in the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement Program, part of the Minority Biomedical Research Support Program, also known as MBRS-RISE.

"They have done very well; they are serious students," said Francoise Freyre, assistant dean of Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences and the director of the Summer Research Program. "They are the first students that we have had from UT Brownsville, and we hope we have more of the same quality."

Both students credit their success to their mentors at UTB/TSC. Guajardo and Valdez both work in a research lab on campus with Dr. Luis Colom, interim vice president for Research.

"They (my professors) inspire me. My mentor is Dr. Colom, and he taught me that you go into research because you love it," Valdez said.

### >> Alumni..... We want to hear from you!

Share with us your favorite memory :

UTB/TSC Alumni Association  
80 Fort Brown  
Brownsville, Texas 78520  
Or e-mail alumni@utb.edu

info



**Ken Turpen** is the associate vice president for Development, and **Marisa Campirano** is the director for Alumni Relations in the Division of Institutional Advancement at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

#### Q: How vital are alumni to a university?

**A: Campirano:** They will help change our future as a university. Alumni play such a special role in our community, and we have to build relationships with them. We also have to let them know that there are opportunities for them to give back.

**A: Turpen:** We're trying to create a philanthropic environment, and our alumni are a huge part of that effort. Specifically, we are hoping the alumni will see an opportunity to invest back into the lives of the young people that are attending school so they can have an excellent education right now. We feel that UTB/TSC has made such a huge impact in Brownsville, South Texas, and our region; plus, it has changed the lives of many individuals. It's only natural that we give alumni an opportunity to be involved in what we're doing here.

#### Q: What are some ways alumni can become involved in their university again?

**A: Turpen:** There are a lot of ways that people can become involved. Our alumni are spread throughout the United States and the world, and what we are trying to do is share information with them, our other supporters and the business community about how lives are being changed and the opportunities where they can make a difference. That's one reason why we have a homecoming weekend, and that's why we are ratcheting up our annual giving program: to give alumni more of an opportunity to know about what we are doing here and to invite them to be a part of changing other people's lives by making a gift back to this organization.

**A: Campirano:** And it's about creating awareness. I think because we are such a unique institution and we have our partnership, we have a lot of people who attended in the '30s, '40s and '50s that have lost the relationship, for whatever reason. So, it's about us reaching out to them and saying, "We're still here. You're still important to us. What you can give is still important to the students that we have here."

**A: Turpen:** There are about 80 percent of our students who receive some type of financial aid. What happens when we give people the opportunity to give back to the university is that it helps to complete the cycle. They receive and then they can give back.

#### Q: What are some of the ways the UTB/TSC Alumni Association helps its members?

**A: Campirano:** Alumni Relations will let you, as an alum, make those connections with your old classmates or the professor that really touched your life. We would love to build up a network of alumni so that when you're looking for something, whether it's a service or a lead, you'll have someone here that you can call and say, "I saw on the list that you're doing this." We also want students to see us as a resource when they're finished with their degree.

#### Q: What do you see for the future of Alumni Relations?

**A: Turpen:** We see the alumni support growing in the future, and adding Marisa to our team and building the alumni association is a key part of doing that. Unfortunately, few of our alumni have ever heard from us. What we would like to do is re-establish that relationship and let them know we are still here and that the university can still make a difference in people's lives, which is a good reason for them to come back and get involved.

**A: Campirano:** There are going to be a lot of exciting things coming out of the Alumni Relations office. As we grow, we want to let people know that we are really here for you, even after you have left the area. It will be fun finding out where exactly students end up — all over the world.

**A: Turpen:** I think one of the most exciting things for everyone is that the Alumni Association is growing. We have started a homecoming event that should happen every year in perpetuity, so alumni will routinely be coming back to make connections with their old friends, to be a part of this community again. We can re-establish relationships with them. I'm really excited about continuing the tradition of homecoming next year.

For more information or to join the UTB/TSC Alumni Association, call 882-7990, e-mail alumni@utb.edu or go to [www.utb.edu/alumni](http://www.utb.edu/alumni).



## MIND AND BODY: REK CENTER DEDICATED

With a cry of "Let's be strong; let's be fit," The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College heralded the new Recreation, Education and Kinesiology Center at its October dedication.

Alumni joined students, faculty, staff and community members to celebrate the official opening of the REK with cheers, a ribbon cutting, tours and the new Scorpion dance. With the tune of "I Gotta Feeling" by The Black Eyed Peas, the new dance's song featured lyrics of spirit,

including, "Let's be strong; Let's be fit; Sting 'em hard; Sting 'em hard; Let's sting 'em hard!"

"Having the new REK Center is the fulfillment of a dream of the Department of Health and Human Performance," said Dr. Zelma Mata, chair of the Department of Health and Human Performance. "We were able to partner with the students to make this a reality. This is a dream that has been shared by the faculty for the past 30 years."

#### MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL "REK-ING" CREW, WHO LOBBIED TIRELESSLY FOR A STUDENT RECREATION AND FITNESS CENTER, MARVELED AT THE TRANSFORMATION OF WHAT WAS JUST AN IDEA INTO A PREMIER FACILITY FOR STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES AND ALUMNI.

"A few of us got together and started talking about this idea of building a fitness facility here at UTB/TSC that was comparable to those at other institutions," said Edward Camarillo, a member of the original REK-ing Crew. "We presented it to the student body and held meetings across campus, and it really took off from there."

Special symbolic features of the new building include the four iron art panels that grace the social space inside the front doors.

"These are symbolic of the philosophy of our campus, each depicting a value that we weave throughout our designs," said UTB/TSC President Juliet V. Garcia. "They are respect for the environment, the importance of the study of science, exercise and body-mind development, and the joy that comes from dance and play."

Laurie Braden, director of Campus Recreation, said the REK is a place where the campus will foster not only recreation but also fitness and a culture of wellness.

"This is a great place to make fitness and recreation a part of their daily life, no matter their age or ability," Braden said. "The REK Center is the evolution of Campus Recreation as a vibrant and formalized unit within the Division of Student Affairs, and because of that we create success."



### GET MOVING, ALUMNI!

WITH AN ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP AT THE REK CENTER.

UTB/TSC's Recreation, Education and Kinesiology Center has already proven a great asset to the campus and the community. The 150,000-square-foot REK Center includes three basketball and volleyball courts, a weight room, an indoor track and a multipurpose exercise room. The sports fields surrounding the facility help complete the campus recreational zone. And UTB/TSC alumni are eligible to join!

IT'S A GREAT DAY AT THE REK!  
To join, call 882-5967.

[www.utb.edu/campusrec](http://www.utb.edu/campusrec)



### DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBER: DR. NOLAN PEREZ, HARLINGEN

Dr. Nolan E. Perez came back to the Rio Grande Valley after his medical training because it's his home and because he hopes to be an example to local students who also dream of a professional career.

A busy board-certified gastroenterologist in Harlingen, Perez is one of the The University of Texas at Brownsville Development Board's newest members.

A Port Isabel native, Perez took classes at Texas Southmost College, graduated from The University of Texas at Austin, and went on to medical school at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. As a Development Board member, he wants to help UTB/TSC prepare for an increasingly important role in educating local students for high-demand careers.

"Not enough Valley kids go to college," said Perez. "We need to start filling up all those beautiful buildings and giving the kids more degree options."

Perez believes UTB/TSC is key to addressing shortages of educated workers in fields like nursing. "I joined the board to be a proponent of higher education and to help the college raise money for more quality programs. We've got to be ready."

Perez was an intern at the Navy Medical Center in San Diego and completed his residency at the Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen. After a gastroenterology fellowship at Detroit Medical Center, he established his practice in 2007.

"I'M ALL ABOUT EDUCATION," SAYS THE PHYSICIAN, WHO ALSO WORKS TO INCREASE VALLEY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR UT AUSTIN. "ANYTIME ANYBODY ASKS ME TO BE PART OF EDUCATION, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO SAY 'NO.'"



### >> UTB/TSC Distinguished Alumnus Award Nomination

We invite you to bring to our attention deserving candidates for the Distinguished Alumnus Award. To request a nomination form, contact the Division of Institutional Advancement at (956) 882-4322 or go to [www.utb.edu/daa](http://www.utb.edu/daa).

info





## ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

### ALUMNI PROFILE: J.J. GUAJARDO, MISSION

J.J. Guajardo was just 7 years old when he picked up his first chess piece.

Little did anyone know that his introduction to a game of strategy and tactics would start a movement that changed an elementary school, a university and an entire community.

Known to the Brownsville community as the “Godfather of Chess,” Guajardo graduated from Brownsville High School in 1974 with plans to enlist in the U.S. Navy. Then he received a letter recruiting local students for the Higher Education Excellence Program at Texas Southmost College.

**“WHAT A TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE,” HE SAID. “THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE A LABORER THE REST OF MY LIFE, BUT I HAD SUCCESS AT TSC, AND IT WAS THAT SUCCESS THAT ALLOWED ME TO MOVE ON.”**

In his last year, his speech professor encouraged him to go into education. He graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor’s degree in education and recently completed his master’s in history from The University of Texas - Pan American.

After working in Austin, he returned to Brownsville to teach. In 1989, Guajardo first taught chess at Russell Elementary as a motivational tool for a group of mischievous students.

**AFTER HIS PRINCIPAL SAW THE IMPACT THE GAME MADE ON STUDENTS, GUAJARDO BECAME SPONSOR OF THE SCHOOL’S CHESS CLUB.**

In 1993, the team won its first state championship, as well as in the next six consecutive years, spurring a chess movement that has given birth to one of the nation’s top collegiate chess teams at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

“The story is phenomenal and what grew from it is phenomenal,” he said. “In fact UTB/TSC has one of the best programs in the country as a result of it. I feel incredible that my service and the experience that I had with those children served as a foundation. I look at everything that has happened, the scholarships awarded and lives changed because of that, and it is more than me. But I am very proud of it. But you have to know that none of it would have happened had I not registered at TSC.”

“It all started there, at TSC,” he said.

Guajardo is currently the social studies coordinator for the Mission Consolidated Independent School District and teaches history at the South Texas College campus in McAllen. He resides in Mission with his wife, Carmen, and has two sons, Miguel Guajardo and J.J. Guajardo Jr.



## UTB/TSC HOSTS "WORLD SERIES OF CHESS"

From its humble beginnings as a way for students to challenge their minds between classes to being nationally recognized, The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College chess team has come a long way.

To further solidify its stance in the game, UTB/TSC will host the Pan-American Intercollegiate Team Chess Tournament, December 27-30 at the Sheraton on South Padre Island and the 2010 Final Four of College Chess Tournament, also known as the “World Series of Chess,” April 9-11 on campus.

“This is very prestigious, and it helps to further legitimize us as a top chess team,” said Russell Harwood, UTB/TSC Chess Program director. “I think we proved it last year on the boards but this momentum of other things we can do in collegiate chess says a lot.”

In 2009, UTB/TSC qualified for the Final Four coming into the Pan-American competition ranked 10th. The

team finished third at the Final Four with a 1-1-1 record and 6.5 points, only one point behind The University of Texas at Dallas and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, two well-established power houses of collegiate chess.

“I was proud of our team,” Harwood said. “Coach Gilberto Hernandez did a great job of preparing them. It was just an incredible result.”

UTB/TSC has quickly become a major player in the new era of competitive college chess, with more recruitment efforts and generous scholarships to lure some of the world’s top up-and-coming players.

This year, returning players Axel Bachmann and Timur Gareyev, both grandmasters, will bring the team total to three grandmasters, including newly titled Mauricio Flores.

“We have brought in great players, as well as three players holding the title of grandmaster,” Harwood said. “Very few colleges have that.”

## SCORPIONS FOREVER: HOMECOMING 2009



**UTB/TSC CELEBRATED ITS FIRST HOMECOMING IN OCTOBER. THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY JOINED WITH ALUMNI AND THE PUBLIC AT REUNION MIXERS, SOCCER GAMES, PARADES, TAILGATING PARTIES AND CAMPUS TOURS.**

**“UTB/TSC HAS EVOLVED INTO A FIRST RATE CAMPUS. I WAS AMAZED AT THE GROWTH AND PRIDE EVERYONE HAS, ESPECIALLY THE JOY AND COMMITMENT OF THE FACULTY AND STAFF.” —RHONDA SPURLOCK DAHLKE, CLASS OF 1981.**

## DONORS HAVE IMPACT ACROSS THE GLOBE ALUMNI PROFILE: JESSICA CHAVEZ, MARYLAND



JESSICA CHAVEZ TRAVELED TO TANZANIA IN 2008 TO WORK IN CLINICS PROVIDING BASIC HEALTH CARE TO THE MASAI VILLAGERS.

In 2008, recent biology graduate Jessica Chavez traveled to rural Tanzania on a medical mission.

**THERE SHE GAINED REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE PROVIDING BASIC MEDICAL SERVICES TO MASAI VILLAGERS IN SOME OF THE MOST REMOTE AREAS OF AFRICA.**

Chavez recruited sponsors and sold chicken plates to raise money for this life-changing service trip but said the trip would not have been possible without The President’s Circle Fund donors.

“I was really happy that they were able to help me in that way because I really had very little time to raise the money,” Jessica said. “I wouldn’t have been able to go if they hadn’t covered my ticket — it was really expensive.”

Because of students like Chavez, The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College continues to establish itself as a national research and learning institution, and Scorpions continue to further that reputation globally — thanks to generous supporters.

Through The President’s Circle Fund, students and faculty are able to embark upon educational projects, travel to conferences, and present at workshops and seminars. Gifts to this fund also provide necessary

scholarships and a way for university supporters to make a personal impact on higher education in the Rio Grande Valley.

The university annually seeks gifts from alumni, former students, parents, foundations, corporations and friends of UTB/TSC to support the fund.

“The litmus test for strength of public support of most nonprofit and educational organizations is measured by the number and size of philanthropic gifts it receives,” said Ken Turpen, associate vice president for Development. “It is imperative that our alumni and worldwide community of friends extend financial support to meet the needs that tuition and other fees simply can’t meet. It’s really all about people: both those who give and the talented students and professors they support.”

**CHAVEZ, WHO IS NOW INTERNING AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH AND PREPARING TO APPLY TO MEDICAL SCHOOLS, SAID RAISING THE MONEY WAS BOTH A HUMBLING AND HEARTWARMING EXPERIENCE. SHE IS GRATEFUL TO THE PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE FUND AND OTHER SPONSORS FOR BELIEVING IN HER.**

“I think they just saw a drive in me and thought, ‘Maybe she is going to do something good,’” she said. “I wasn’t just asking for money for me; I was asking for money to help somebody else: the people in Africa. I really loved what we did there.”

All across campus, fund donors open up this same world of discovery for other talented students and faculty:

- Student Maria Rivera was able to present an award-winning paper to the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.
- Doctoral nursing student and UTB/TSC nursing instructor Dania Ochoa traveled to Vienna, Austria, to present her award-winning abstract at the International Nursing Research Congress.
- The fund also paid travel costs for a geology class studying water systems of the Laguna Madre, South Padre Island and the Rio Grande.

“Your gifts to The President’s Circle Fund will meet the educational needs of our students and faculty wherever the need is greatest,” Turpen said. “Our hope is that everyone who cares about young people at UTB/TSC, the greater Brownsville area and South Texas will give what they can and realize that we can all make a difference.”

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