

Houston
HISTORY

&

HOUSTON
UH ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION

UH Celebrates 85 Years: The Road to Tier One



{ From the Desk of Mike Pede }

A message from UHAA President & CEO



Greetings fellow Cougars and friends of UHAA!

We are so very excited to team up with our friends from the University of Houston's Center for Public History to bring you this historic look at the University of Houston as it celebrates its 85th anniversary.

I hope as you read through this special collector's edition magazine that celebrates the people who make up the eighty-five year history of this great institution that you will feel your stock in the process. All of us who have walked the halls of this special place feel a kinship with it and, for our own special reasons, a bond that cannot be easily broken. Whether we want to admit it or not, many of us had our lives turned and our horizons broadened by what we learned here, the friendships made here, and the special memories forged here.

I hope as you flip through these pages you feel as prideful as I do, every day, of this great institution and get a stirring of your own memories. They are memories that don't fade and memories that remind you that you need to be even more involved with UH and UHAA than you are now, in whatever way you can. With this edition of the *UH Alumni Association Magazine* and *Houston History*, it means even more now to say, "to thy memories cherished, true we'll ever be."

Mike Pede ('89)
UHAA President & CEO
Life Member

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Houston History

UH CELEBRATES 85 YEARS: THE ROAD TO TIER ONE

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Houston: The City and the University, The Allure and the Promise

By Renu Khator

Chancellor, University of Houston System

President, University of Houston

When I was first contacted about the presidency of the University of Houston, back in 2007, I immediately started searching online to learn about the University, the city that shares its name, and the great state they both call home.

I knew of the Alamo, of course, and the fact that Texas had been an independent republic, and that two recent U.S. presidents had lived in Houston — one of them to this day. I also knew of NASA and the Johnson Space Center — after all, who can forget that “Houston” was the first word uttered by a human from another celestial body? I knew that Houston was famous for its spirit of entrepreneurship. And I remembered the skyscrapers and urban sprawl I saw when I visited the city more than ten years ago for a wedding.

But what I found online intrigued and amazed me. It also started me thinking that, after 22 years at the University of South Florida, and after occasional calls from headhunters on behalf of prestigious universities across the country — overtures that I rejected — Houston was where I wanted to write the next chapter of my career.

I found that Houston is an international city of the first order, with 94 consular offices and 22% of its population foreign-born. I found that Houston is third in the nation in number of “Fortune 500” companies located within its metropolitan area. And I found that, remarkably, if Houston were an independent nation, it would be the world’s 30th largest economy based on its annual gross product of more than \$325 billion.

I found that Houston was home to the Texas Medical Center, the largest in the world, home to the Port of Houston, first in the nation in volume of foreign tonnage, and of course, that Houston was the “energy capital” of the world. And I also found that Houston is one of only four

U.S. cities with resident companies in all four of the major performing arts — symphony, opera, drama, and ballet.

Those many hours of online research also gave me a good insight into the University of Houston and the UH System, of which UH is the largest component.

I found that the University of Houston mirrored the demographics of the city. Not only is UH one of the most ethnically diverse universities in the nation, but probably the most ethnically balanced as well.

I found that the University of Houston excelled in many academic programs and areas of research — from creative writing to nanotechnology, from intellectual property law to chemical engineering, and from superconductivity to the ambitious Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Heritage project.

And I found that University of Houston faculty and staff members included a Nobel Laureate, and winners of Tony, Pulitzer, and Emmy awards.

In the end, what inspired me to come to Houston to be interviewed by the presidential search committee was the question I had in my head — “Why, given all the assets and resources around it, isn’t the University of Houston a nationally competitive university?” To achieve that goal was a once-in-a-lifetime challenge I risked taking, and an opportunity I could not ignore.

The ideas I brought to the interview, the plans and strategies I hoped to implement and the vision I had to elevate UH to its rightful place among the nation’s top universities were exactly what the search committee and the Board of Regents were looking for — eight hours after arriving in Houston, I was offered the job, and I accepted it.

Today, a few months shy of my fifth anniversary as President and Chancellor, I can say that, with the support of an invigorated faculty and



Renu Khator is the eighth Chancellor of the UH System and thirteenth President of the University of Houston – the third individual to hold the dual titles. She is also the first Indian immigrant to head a major U.S. higher education system.

Photo courtesy of the University of Houston.



The University has always benefitted from the wise counsel and guidance of Houston's most prominent civic and business leaders. In 1961, the 57th Texas Legislature voted to transform UH into a state-supported university, effective September 1963, when Governor John Connally appointed a Board of Regents whose members were (from left) Edward D. Manion, James A. Elkins, Jr., Lyndall Wortham, James T. Duke, Col. William B. Bates, Corbin J. Robertson, Sr., Aaron J. Farfel, Jack J. Valenti, and George S. Hawn.

Photo courtesy of Special Collections, University Archives, University of Houston Libraries.

hard-working staff members, many of my goals and plans for the University have been realized.

The University of Houston has been elevated to the highest ranking of research universities — the equivalent of Tier One — by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Faculty, in ever-increasing numbers, are receiving national accolades in the form of prestigious grants and awards, and the number of faculty who are members of the various National Academies continues to grow.

Researchers are pooling their resources and skills to apply for multi-PI federal grants in the health sciences and energy — and receiving them.

New degrees, such as a bachelor's in petroleum engineering, a master's in arts administration, and a master's in subsea engineering, have been launched to great success in response to workplace demands.

New construction is changing the face of the campus, from parking garages and student housing facilities — they used to be called “dorms” in my time — to a new stadium and a multi-modal center to take full advantage of the new METRO rail line that will link UH to downtown Houston.

A UH Energy Research Park has been created to serve as the home of energy-related academic programs and industry-university joint ventures that hold great promise for our nation's energy security and independence. An Energy Advisory Board, comprised of the CEOs of top energy companies, has been formed to guide these efforts. Our next goal in this area? To transform the University of Houston into the nation's and the world's “energy university.”

The University of Houston has been accepted as a member institution of the Texas Medical Center, reflecting our growing importance in health-related education and research.

In academics and student life, we are creating the second-largest on-campus resident student population in Texas. These students are attracted here by the opportunity to live and learn alongside students from 136 nations, an opportunity that provides them with inter-personal relationships

and experiences that will prepare them to be leaders in their careers — anywhere in the world!

Our entering Class of 2016 is our strongest class ever, selected from the largest pool of applicants ever. Over 23,000 students applied for 3,300 freshmen slots. Thirty-three percent of the enrolled class ranked in the Top 10% of their high school and scored an average of 1134 on SAT. The class consists of 34 National Merit Scholars and 58 Tier One Scholars who receive full-ride scholarships supported by an anonymous gift of \$7 million!

I mentioned earlier that support from faculty and staff has been key to moving UH forward. I must note as well



Raymund A. Paredes, Texas Commissioner of Higher Education, was guest of honor at a Wortham House dinner in October 2012. He was welcomed by President Khator and Nelda Luce Blair, chairman of the UH System Board of Regents.

Photo courtesy of the University of Houston.

the invaluable support from our donors — to the tune of \$109 million in gifts this past year — and the support of our corporate and business partners in the community. This support, led by the Greater Houston Partnership, brought our case for Tier One-level funding to the Legislature and voters, resulting in the successful passage of a constitutional amendment to create a permanent fund for Tier One research.

Some may think, “Well, UH is now a Tier One university, so what’s left to do?” And I answer, plenty more!

At the University of Houston, we will continue to work very hard to realize our number one priority of student success, while advancing the institution’s four “big rocks” — UH Health, UH Energy, UH Arts, and UH Stars (programs that are on the cusp of national prominence). We measure student success by the number of students who graduate, and all our efforts are being concentrated on bringing those numbers up to national standards.

At the UH System, of which I am Chancellor, we will continue to elevate UH-Clear Lake, UH-Downtown, and UH-Victoria to prominence in their respective categories, while expanding our academic offerings at our off-campus teaching centers in Sugar Land, Katy, Pearland, Northwest Houston, and the Texas Medical Center.



Looking back at what has been accomplished in recent years, I can say with absolute pride that the dreams of those early Houston advocates for higher education have been realized beyond their wildest expectations.

Founded in 1927 as Houston Junior College — we are celebrating our 85th anniversary this year! — the University of Houston was blessed from its founding by the “can do” spirit of friends and supporters who believed in their hearts that Houston would one day become a world-class city in need of a world class university.

That legacy of support started with the Taub and Settegast families who gave land for the present campus, and continued with the exceptional generosity of Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen and their descendants in the Cullen and Robertson families. More recently, the Bauer, Moores, Hilton, Melcher, O’Quinn, Farish, Rockwell, Blaffer, Hines, and Cemo names grace our buildings and colleges, testimony to that enduring legacy of support.

I can say without reservations that in 85 short years the University of Houston has come a long way, from 232 students in that first class in the summer of 1927, to a national comprehensive university that is a powerhouse of research and education, and the engine that drives Houston’s economy and civic life, enriching the quality of life of our citizens and ensuring the progress of our city and our state.

Our 40,700-plus students today are the beneficiaries of those visionary Houstonians who created the University of Houston, and I am humbled and honored to be playing a small part in that incredible journey that has brought us so far, and that still holds such promise for the future.

I am reminded of a saying I’ve heard many times — “I’m not from Texas, but I got here as fast as I could.” I will never regret that I did.

President Khator is fond of repeating the saying “I’m not from Texas, but I got here as fast as I could.” An avid supporter of Go Texan Day and the annual rodeo, she poses by one of the two large cougar sculptures presented to the University by John Moores, alumnus and former member of the UH System Board of Regents.

Photo courtesy of the University of Houston.



UH AT 85

By Joe Pratt

I first visited the University of Houston in the early 1960s, meaning that I have watched the current campus evolve for almost two-thirds of its existence. I have taught here for twenty-seven years, or almost one-third of UH's history. I have drawn on personal observations as well as published accounts to write this introductory overview of the first eighty-five years of the University's existence.¹ It provides context for the articles in this special issue of *Houston History* that is a collection of written snapshots, rather than a comprehensive history. It is fitting that the issue is a joint effort with the UH Alumni Association; more than at most universities, the history of UH has been shaped by its students.

This began even before the founding of the University. In 1926, a group of high school students nearing graduation met with E. E. Oberholtzer, then head of the Houston Independent School District (HISD), and asked for his help in creating an institution of higher learning where they might continue their educations. Plans for the junior college that was UH's predecessor then moved into high gear. From 282 students in its first undergraduate class of 1927, the University has grown to more than 40,000 students by the fall of 2012. With more dreams than dollars, UH has hustled to fulfill its central mission: providing a path to upward mobility for students from the booming Houston region and beyond. These students have gone on to play important roles in the building of Houston.

As an undergraduate at Rice in the late 1960s, I joined others in referring to UH as "Cougar High." This half joke, half insult reflected the University's earliest years as a junior college housed in HISD. Students attended night classes at San Jacinto High School taught by faculty members at times "borrowed" from other institutions. To offer day classes in the early 1930s, the school borrowed space from local churches. Despite such limitations, by 1934 its student body had more than tripled to about 900 and a four-year curriculum had been approved by state authorities and put into place. Clearly, Cougar High filled a pressing need by establishing a proud tradition of expanding educational opportunities for students who could not afford to go away to college.

Supporters of Houston's university responded by seeking better facilities, and the search began for a new campus location and the funding to construct its buildings. Help came from civic leaders in a city that recognized the benefits of a new university in the heart of Houston. After



The seal of the University of Houston stands near the front of the Ezekiel Cullen Auditorium, welcoming visitors to the UH campus on University Drive.

Photo by Alan Montgomery, Woodallen Photography.

a plan to locate the campus in Memorial Park collapsed, in 1936 Ben Taub and the J. J. Stettegast Estate donated 110 acres of largely undeveloped land southeast of downtown between St. Bernard Street (later renamed Cullen Boulevard) and Calhoun Road. Landscape architects and urban planners created a master plan for the future growth of the University. It embodied a series of quadrangles that could grow into a beautiful traditional university campus.

Supporters of the University of Houston found a benefactor worthy of their ambitions. Hugh Roy Cullen, a fifth grade drop-out who became a self-made millionaire oilman, embraced the idea of a "university for working men and women and their sons and daughters." He funded the first campus building, which was completed in 1939 and named in memory of his son, Roy Gustav Cullen.

This building introduced me to UH when I first came to the campus in 1964 for an Interscholastic League "ready writing" competition as a high school student. I spent three hours of a beautiful spring afternoon in Roy Cullen staring out the window while writing an essay on "Class Divisions in My Home Town." I lost the writing contest, but I won the day by walking around a real live college campus, visiting the Cougar Den, and standing in awe of both the interior and exterior of E. Cullen Auditorium, which my uncle had worked on in a construction gang. The campus Don Whitaker's article describes as "our country club" looked like fantasyland to a teenager from a refinery town. My visit to UH helped put me on the road to college.

After the war, the Cullen family emerged as a driving force in the development of the University of Houston into a



Classes for the Houston Junior College and the University of Houston originally met at San Jacinto High School, circa 1935.

All photos courtesy of Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries unless otherwise noted.

major university, supporting many of the key initiatives that shaped the evolution of the campus and the University as a whole. Then as now, the Cullens and other civic and business leaders understood that to grow into a major metropolis, Houston needed UH.

During the last years of the Great Depression, the University's enrollment already had reached about 2,000, and the campus had more than doubled in size with the additions of 250 more acres of land. Donations and government programs funded two more new buildings, but UH lacked the funding to move quickly forward with the master plan. Such concerns moved to the background with the coming of World War II, which brought new programs and new people to UH. The University created programs in the College of Community Services to train thousands of students to work in vital war industries and established training programs for both civilian and military pilots.

As it contributed to the war effort, the University also looked to its future by organizing its academic activities into six colleges and a graduate school. In the spring of 1945, UH had more than 3,000 students and about 100 faculty members. It had officially moved out of HISD with the creation of its own board of trustees, and E. E. Oberholtzer, its long-term leader, was named the first president of the University of Houston. UH seemed poised for a period of growth and consolidation.

Nothing could have prepared the University for the ambition and energy of the returning G.I.s who flooded the campus under the G.I. Bill of 1944. (See Betsy Morin's article on WWII veterans at UH.) Having lost years of their lives to war, these demanding students brought with them a sense of urgency. UH responded with the expansion of professional programs in engineering, business, law, education, nursing, and communications. (See KUHT-TV article by James Fisher.) The building boom that followed created a small university where a few buildings had stood. The master plan for the campus went into a file cabinet, and campus leaders chose rapid construction of new facilities over gradual and orderly expansion, meeting the needs of a city whose post-war boom was anything but orderly. A second sustained building boom remade the campus after UH became a state school in 1963. During this period, the University also

pledged one percent of future building costs to works of art to beautify the campus and raise its prestige. (See Debbie Harwell's article on the art collections.) Several more building booms have followed, with the current wave expanding facilities to meet the needs of a large research university, including dorms to attract more on-campus students.

The rapid expansion of UH fostered a distinctive entrepreneurial culture for faculty and students. Faculty members knew that if they wanted to develop better programs, they would have to find resources from inside and outside the University and supplement these resources with a healthy dose of their own "sweat capital." Students faced a similar situation. In a university dominated by commuter students and at times lacking adequate support services, ambitious students had to look after themselves. They balanced work, school, and often family demands while learning how to study in college and how to find a parking space. Successful students gained a level of maturity and toughness that proved valuable in the job market. (For profiles of some of these students, see Jeff Sutton's article.)

The enduring symbol for me of the maturity demanded of many UH students walked into my memory after my wife and I had taken our daughter to begin her freshman year at a small, Colorado liberal arts college, which had a week full of functions to welcome its new students. Returning home, I went to my office on Sunday morning to catch up on work. As I crossed the empty campus, I was surprised to see a young woman walking toward the library with a confused look on her face. I asked if I could help, and she explained in halting English that she had just arrived in Houston from Singapore to live with relatives in Sugarland and attend the University of Houston. On this, her first morning at UH, she had somehow managed to find the campus on public transportation—searching for much needed assistance on a day when the campus was closed. I helped her as much as I could. Driving home, I decided that she would either be back in Singapore in a week or become a highly successful graduate of UH. I like to imagine her today as a strong, confident UH alum making a difference somewhere in the world. I am pleased that our historically underfunded student services have improved significantly in the years since then.

Building the athletic programs that put UH on the map also required a form of entrepreneurship by a group of young coaches. Individuals like Bill Yeoman and Guy Lewis built nationally competitive programs from scratch with their intense commitment and a steady stream of good athletes from the Houston region—with an occasional recruit from Lagos, Nigeria. Like many, I first realized that UH was on the rise by following its highly visible sports programs in the 1960s. (Many standouts are mentioned in Debbie Harwell’s Hall of Honor article.) From high up in the Dome, I watched the Elvin Hayes-Don Chaney basketball team make history by defeating mighty UCLA. At the time, this outstanding team played many games in local high school gyms, since it lacked an on-campus facility. Later the football team moved into the Dome rather than the former high school stadium on campus. These Cougar teams broke new ground in racial desegregation in the region while also breaking into the national rankings.

UH students have always been economically diverse, with a healthy number of first-in-family college students and older students returning to college. But, as discussed in the article by Aimee L. Bachari and Ann Lynd, desegregation in the early 1960s accelerated the growth of ethnic and racial diversity. I have tracked the growing diversity of our student body for more than a quarter of a century through my students in the required American history survey classes. Year after year, I have entered Auditorium 1 of Agnes Arnold Hall to meet a new class of 300 to 500 students. Year after year, I have gazed out at my increasingly multicultural



Marguerite Ross Barnett came to UH in 1990 with great promise then died at age forty-nine before completing her second year as president.

students. As I teach classes and find ways to bring together students of all backgrounds, I believe more and more strongly in the benefits of student diversity in the classroom. One of the joys of teaching at UH has been the opportunity to learn from our students from around the region and the world while helping them learn from each other.

Gradually over the last three decades, UH has improved its buildings and its faculty to match the ambitions of its students and meet its own long-held aspirations. For me, the symbols of this pursuit of excellence have been the spectacular advances I have observed first hand in the Bauer College of Business and the Honors College. I attended the dedication of Melcher Hall during my first year on campus. Today I walk past a fine new auditorium and new offices and classrooms at the recently completed Cemo Hall and another building nearing completion. Generous donors helped pay for these new buildings while facilitating the addition of new faculty and the growing quality of our programs and students. I have watched a similar process of change give rise to an outstanding Honors College (as described in Keri Myrick’s article). I know that other programs with which I am less familiar also have greatly improved.

Since 1927, students, alums, faculty, administrators, and supporters have done much to lay the foundation for the recent surge of the University of Houston to Tier One status; much remains to be done. Our look back at the University’s history gives reason for optimism about its future. If I attend the UH centennial in 2027, I suspect that the buildings I first saw in the early 1960s will be hard to find on the sprawling campus. The quality of programs will no doubt be higher than when I joined the faculty in 1986. Faculty and students will be even more diverse, more international. The University of Houston will have moved higher in the ranks of research universities than it stands today. Amid these changes, one thing will be the same as it was in 1927: UH will still be a door through which students walk to find choices in life.

Joe Pratt is the NEH–Cullen Professor of Business and History at the University of Houston and editor-in-chief of *Houston History*.



Hugh Roy Cullen, who along with his wife Lillie Cranz Cullen were the University’s first major benefactors, stands by the bas relief of his grandfather, Ezekiel W. Cullen, in the building’s lobby. Ezekiel Cullen is considered the “father” of education in Texas, having introduced legislation when Texas was a republic that set aside land for the establishment of public colleges and schools.

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THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY: UH ALUMNI MEMORIES THROUGH THE DECADES

By Jeff Sutton

Birch Blaylock, considered the first student to register in 1927 at what became the University of Houston, expressed astonishment when he returned to the campus forty-four years later for the first time in the early 1970s: "Imagine having 366 acres and 46 buildings. We had to scramble for a classroom at old San Jac. They moved us all over the place." No doubt students from the 1970s are astonished when they return to the campus today. Indeed, the University has grown so rapidly over its 85 year history that each generation of students has experienced a somewhat different place.

Some of UH's first graduates left their marks on the city in big ways, while others made more subtle but nonetheless significant contributions. Judge Roy Hofheinz, who got his law degree at UH in 1931 at age nineteen, went on to serve in several state and local elected positions, including Harris County judge from 1936 to 1944. Most importantly, he helped bring Major League Baseball and the Astrodome to Houston. Less well known is Edith Carlton Lord. She broke barriers as one of the earliest women students and one of the few who was married. She competed on the 1934

women's basketball team, which along with the men's ice hockey team comprised the UH athletics program. In addition, she represented UH at intercollegiate debates as one of two women on the six-student team. By 1935, Lord had joined the faculty where she inspired others to reach beyond society's limitations.

The growing number of former students who wanted to maintain contact with and sustain the University led to the formation of the University of Houston Alumni Association (UHAA) in 1940. Today it has over 18,000 members who subscribe to the organization's core values: commitment, leadership, integrity, inclusiveness, fun, and teamwork. Most of the segments that follow, featuring alumni from each decade since UHAA's founding, are written from interviews done by Jeff Sutton, the association's director of communications. Two are drawn from articles written by Michelle Klump for the "You are the Pride" series at UH. While things have changed from the 1940s until today, two things remain constant in these alumni reflections on the University of Houston: UH provided them a gateway to opportunity, and each witnessed the positive impact that the University of Houston has had on the community.

— *Students walk in front of the Ezekiel Cullen Building, circa 1950s.*

Photo courtesy of the Digital Library,
Special Collections, University of
Houston Libraries.

WELCOME WILSON, SR. ('49)

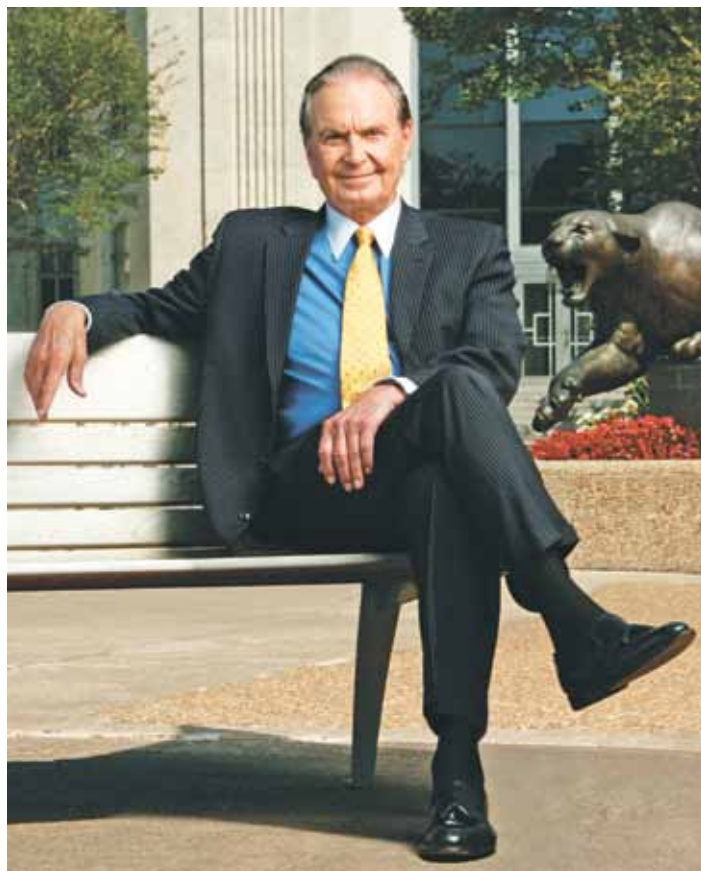
Welcome Wilson Sr. recalled that the University of Houston was exactly the same age he was—seventeen—in 1944, the year he graduated from high school in his hometown of Brownsville, Texas. Following graduation he enrolled in Brownsville Junior College and registered for the draft. He received orders to report on September 17, 1945, but his orders were cancelled after the U.S. bombing of Japan in August.

Most Brownsville students bound for college attended the University of Texas or Texas A&M, not the University of Houston. In fact, Wilson had never heard of the University. His father, however, had “great faith in the city of Houston” and thought UH was the better choice. Wilson explained, he “felt like the city of Houston was going to be the center of the business universe in years to come . . . and going to school in Houston would give us a leg up.”

Perhaps the biggest difference then and now were the expectations parents and their college students held for each other. Wilson remembered, “My father told us when he dropped us off, ‘Boys, I’ve paid your first semester’s tuition. I’ve paid your first month’s rent on this house trailer (\$10). Here’s \$50 each. Anything that you need, call me on the telephone, and I will explain how you can do without it.’ We never heard from him financially again.”

With 10,000 students enrolled at UH by 1946, Wilson thought it was an exciting place with returning G.I.s and a cross-section of students. “My brother and I lived in Trailer number 67 . . . [which was] about the length of a big SUV. There was a bunk at each end and in the middle was a small kitchenette and the bathroom was a block and a half away.”

In the post-war years, “UH was populated with people who had very little money but had a great deal of energy,”



Welcome Wilson Sr. served as chairman of the UH Board of Regents from September 2007 through August 2010.

Photo courtesy of UH Alumni Association.

Wilson explained. He and his brother, Jack Wilson Jr., worked for the campus newspaper at \$1.00 per hour and sold advertising. Wilson started a newspaper for Trailer Village and sold ads for that as well. Because UH was new, it had established few rules for this sort of thing. Wilson, noted, “We didn’t ask permission to do it, we just did it.”

When Frontier Fiesta resumed after the war, the Wilson brothers had a comedy singing routine. The following year they got Humphrey Bogart to come and worked with a Ford dealer to donate a new car for the beard contest. Wilson recalled, “There must have been 1,000 people growing beards, including me.” Wilson married his college sweetheart, Joanne Guest, the day he graduated from UH in 1949. He was twenty-one, and she was eighteen. “We’re now in our 64th year of marriage,” he noted proudly.

As the former chair of the UH Board of Regents, Wilson reflected on the University’s place in the world, “I think more than most universities, UH is going to be inter-woven with the business and civic community in Houston. . . . UH is in Houston, the energy capital of the world. I think that we’re going to produce a model in working with business and industry in producing exactly the kind of graduates that they need. . . . It’s going to be a seamless transition . . . that’s going to be a model for the country and has really strengthened our ties to the community in the last five years.”



Traveling by train, Welcome Wilson and Joanne Guest took advantage of the opportunity to get a little rest. The two married the day after Wilson graduated from UH.

Photo courtesy of UH Alumni Association.

RICHARD COSELLI ('55, J.D. '58)

Richard Coselli was born in Galveston but came to Houston not long after, making him “almost a native,” he said. He graduated from St. Thomas High School in 1950 and recalled that his choice to come to the University of Houston seemed like the natural thing to do. He admitted that Notre Dame was a tempting alternative, but “that was way north and east of Conroe.” In those early days, Coselli recalled UH had just three buildings, and the vast majority of students worked to pay their tuition at the small private university or had come on the G.I. Bill. He worked thirty to forty hours a week at his father’s grocery store as he pursued degrees in business administration and law.

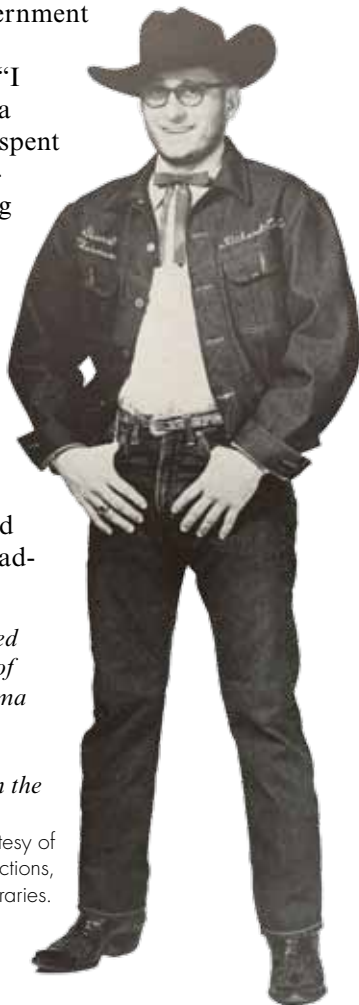
In 1953, Coselli became the chairman of Frontier Fiesta, which the students labeled “The Greatest College Show on Earth.” This was no small feat in the mid-1950s. The event ran for a week and drew 110,000 to 120,000 people. Coselli organized a staff of 300 and 3,000 volunteers. Twenty-four student organizations, primarily fraternities and sororities, produced twelve revue shows, and campus service organizations took care of concessions.

During his law school days, Coselli took an active role in student government, calling it a natural progression from his earlier activities. He explained, “If you’re involved in one thing you’re involved in the other because they are hand in hand.” His final year in law school, he also served as student body president, much to the consternation of the dean who thought being a full time student, working, and heading student government was too much.

Coselli managed just fine. “I was always determined to be a lawyer,” he recalled. Having spent the past sixty years as a property lawyer, it is not surprising that he felt his property law professor, Dwight Olds, had the biggest impact on him as a student. Coselli noted that the field did not always receive its due among other lawyers because property lawyers did not spend time at the courthouse. “They thought of us as sitting around with a green eye shade and reading abstracts,” he quipped.

In 1957, the Houstonian identified Richard Coselli as the chairman of Frontier Fiesta, a member of Sigma Chi, bailiff for Delta Theta Phi, associate justice for the Student Supreme Court, and senator from the College of Law.

Photo from 1957 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



Chair of Frontier Fiesta, Richard Coselli (seated center) discusses the new outfit for Yosemite Sam with committee members Jim Baker, Jon Campbell, Bob Meyer, Bruce Albitz, and Jim Stallworth.

Photo from 1957 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

Richard Coselli has known every UH president except the first, E. E. Oberholtzer. From his days as a student through his involvement as a member and past-president of the Alumni Association he has found them all to be highly accessible. UH, in turn, helped to make him a success by showing him the “joy of working with people,” people who worked together to grow the city. He added, “I always pictured Houston having three crown jewels. One is the University of Houston, the other is the medical center, and the third is the port. They’re what make Houston thrive.”

LIZ GHRIST (M.ED. '67)

Liz Ghrist symbolizes many of the non-traditional students who have attended UH both as undergraduate and graduate students. A native Houstonian, Ghrist lived in Arizona before returning to her hometown with her husband and children in 1958. She had been out of college for fourteen years and was raising four children when she made



The Board of Regents members, left to right, are: C. F. Kendall, Xavier C. Lemond, Elizabeth Ghrist, Chancellor Alexander F. Schilt, Kenneth L. Lay, John Cater, and Dorothy Jena Alcorn.

Photo by Mona Chadwick, from 1990 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



Former Harris County commissioner Liz Ghrist points out that the buildings on the University of Houston campus reflect the names of people who came to know and care about the fact that Houston needs a major university.

Photo by ©Nash Baker.

the decision to go back to school for her M.Ed. Her reason for choosing the University of Houston was simple, “I lived in Houston. It was the university in town.”

Balancing the demands of school and family, Ghrist earned her master’s by attending night school, taking three hours a semester. At the same time, she became heavily involved volunteering for the Harris County Republican Party. “We came back to Houston and decided we were Republican and not Democratic. (At the time, Texas was considered a single-party state.) I started out at as a lowly volunteer but immediately latched onto George Bush’s campaign for county commissioner,” Ghrist added. A tireless volunteer, she took part in multiple campaigns and held important roles in various county groups, including secretary of the Harris County Republican Women and president of a neighborhood Republican Women’s organization.

In 1988, Ghrist was asked to stand in as county commissioner for Precinct Three for one year. During that period, she played an instrumental role in projects to widen Memorial Drive and Voss Road, as well as efforts to convince Compaq Computer Corporation to stay in Houston when the company prepared to relocate. Her work did not stop there, however. “Another project that I got started,

that I was so proud of, is the restoration of our courthouse downtown.” She continued, “Twenty years ago it was a dream, and just this year it was completed!” The \$65 million renovation received the President’s Award from the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance.

Ghrist’s involvement in the city of Houston and Harris County certainly included UH. Shortly after completing her year as county commissioner, James Hofheinz in Governor Bill Clements’s appointment offices asked her what she wanted to do for the state of Texas, and she selected serving on the University of Houston Board of Regents. Ghrist recalled, “The most important thing I probably contributed at that time was to recommend Bill Hobby as chancellor [1995-1997].” Ghrist has remained active with the University, serving on the UH Alumni Association board of directors, including a stint as the board’s chair, and as the association’s president.

Ghrist expressed her pride in UH, the city, and the county, when she concluded, “I love the fact that the University of Houston has become what it is today and what it will be in the future because Houston is the city of the future, and Harris County is the county of the future.”

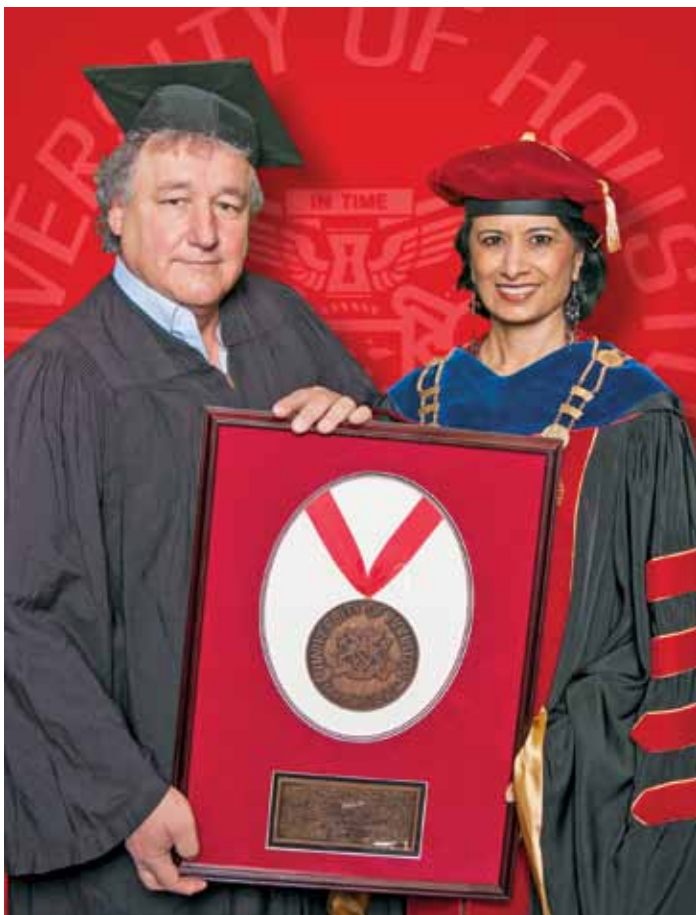
ALONZO CANTU ('78)

Following in the footsteps of his older sister, Elvia ('74), Alonzo Cantu came to the University of Houston to study pharmacy. After working in a pharmacy one summer, however, he quickly realized pharmacy life was not for him and changed his major to finance. The rest is history.

Cantu came from a close-knit Hispanic-American family in McAllen, Texas, and found it hard being away from home, even the short distance to Houston. He credited Southwest Airlines’ economical fares for helping him overcome his homesickness, adding, “In those days, flying back to the Valley was just \$32, round trip.” Finding other students of Hispanic descent from the Rio Grande Valley helped him to feel more comfortable on the UH campus as well. Because they shared similar backgrounds and were also uncomfortable with being away from home for the first time, the “Valleyites” found time to get together and share their feelings. Cantu remembered the group as a cross-section of students, “Some of them were in law school, pharmacy school or business, and a couple of them were athletes – one on the track team and the other on the football team.”

When he was not busy studying or flying home to McAllen, Cantu participated in various student activities, the most memorable being the 1976 football game between UH and the Texas Longhorns in Austin. The Cougars won the game 30-0 on their way to the Southwest Conference Championship. “It was played before one of the biggest crowds ever, and was a very exciting game. Plus, the fact that we beat UT made it even better,” Cantu recalled.

When he returned to McAllen with his degree, Cantu first started building homes with his father before venturing out on his own. His businesses began to succeed despite a devaluation of the peso, interest rates as high as 15-16%, and a hard freeze that crippled the Valley’s agricultural industry.



Alonzo Cantu received the Presidential Medallion from Chancellor and President Renu Khator in May 2012. The medallion represents the highest honor awarded to those who have improved the University community, either through their presence as inspirational guests or as long-term supporters of the University’s mission.

Photo courtesy of the University of Houston.

Cantu explained, “I think my business degree helped me deal with and adapt to those big obstacles.”

Besides giving him a great start in his career, Cantu credits his time at the Bauer School of Business with teaching him that business also carried social responsibilities. “That kind of stuck with me, so I get involved with a lot of organizations, whether non-profit or for-profit, that help the communities here in the Valley,” Cantu added.

Cantu has always had a passion for education. Today he works to make students in the Rio Grande Valley aware of the opportunities available at the University of Houston. “I think that education is the best way to get to the next level, and we have a lot of Hispanics here in the Valley who only need an opportunity. So I’m going to do my best to get them to go to UH and enroll in the professional schools — the law school, the pharmacy school, the optometry school, the architecture school, and the business school.”

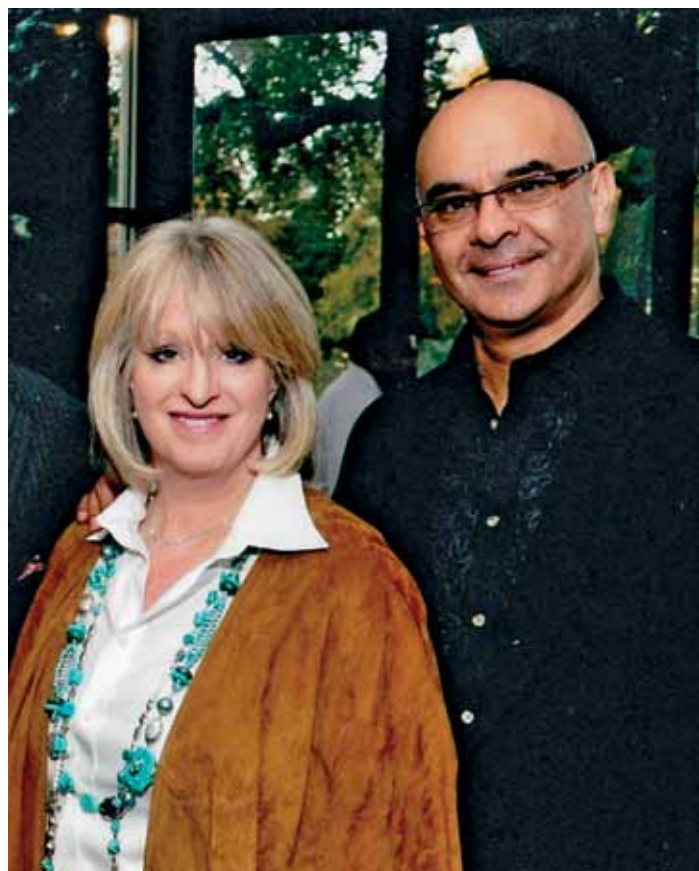
Now when Cantu steps back onto the UH campus and sees the many changes that have taken place since he was a student, he can only look around and say, “Incredible! I think more of the alumni need to go back and look at what’s there now, what’s happening, and what’s going to happen there in the next five years.”

MELISSA ('77, M.ED. '83) AND RICK NORIEGA ('85)

When UH began collecting stories of alumni for its “You are the Pride” series, Michelle Klump interviewed Melissa and Rick Noriega, the only couple on the list. As Klump noted in her article, the pair share a passion for giving back not only to the University but also to the community in a big way.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Melissa Meisgeier came to Houston at age three. She attended Scarborough High School before enrolling at UH where her father, Charles Meisgeier, was the founding chair of the College of Education’s Educational Psychology Department. While working on her B.S. in psychology, Melissa served as president of Phi Mu Fraternity and vice president of the Pan-Hellenic Council, and ran for homecoming queen. She found that “the extra-curricular activities were very valuable” because she learned how to read budgets, to plan events, and to meet and talk to people. Melissa went on to earn her master’s in education counseling at UH in 1983.

Rick’s family came to Houston from Atlanta, and he grew up watching UH athletes excel in football, basketball, golf, and track. The son of a World War II veteran,



Melissa and Rick Noriega have dedicated their lives to public service, and yet they still devote time and energy to support the University of Houston in many ways. Council Member Noriega recently sponsored mayoral proclamations honoring Houston History and the University’s eighty-fifth anniversary.

Photo courtesy of Council Member Melissa Noriega.

he joined the U.S. Army Reserves during the Iran hostage crisis in 1979. When a UH assistant professor of military science came to recruit ROTC candidates, Rick took advantage of the opportunity to earn a scholarship to finish his degree and a commission as a second lieutenant. Majoring in journalism with a minor in military science, Rick wrote for the *Daily Cougar*, and remembers Professor Ted Stanton instilling in him the importance of writing well. “That is something that has stayed with me and is something I use every day,” he told Klump.

Like many other UH students, Rick worked and he appreciated that UH gave him the flexibility to do so. “My experience was a lot of what I think Mr. Hugh Roy Cullen talked about, of having a quality institution for the working men and women of Houston, where they could achieve their dreams and educational desires while at the same time working,” he explained. “So I’m really grateful for the experience and for the university maintaining that value here in the great city of Houston.”

Klump noted that although the couple disagrees on some of the details, eventually it was their loyalty to Cougar alumni activities that caused their paths to cross when Rick organized an off-campus St. Patrick’s Day event and Melissa was the only person who came. They married on Valentine’s Day 1991.

The Noriegas have spent much of their adult lives in various aspects of community service. Rick served eleven years as Texas state representative for Houston’s District 145, thirty years in the military, and is currently president of ADVANCE, a non-profit organization, which offers educational programs for children and parents as well as support to at-risk communities. Melissa worked for the Houston Independent School District for twenty-seven years and filled in for Rick in the Texas House while he was deployed in Afghanistan. She currently serves as Houston City Council Member, At-large Position Three.

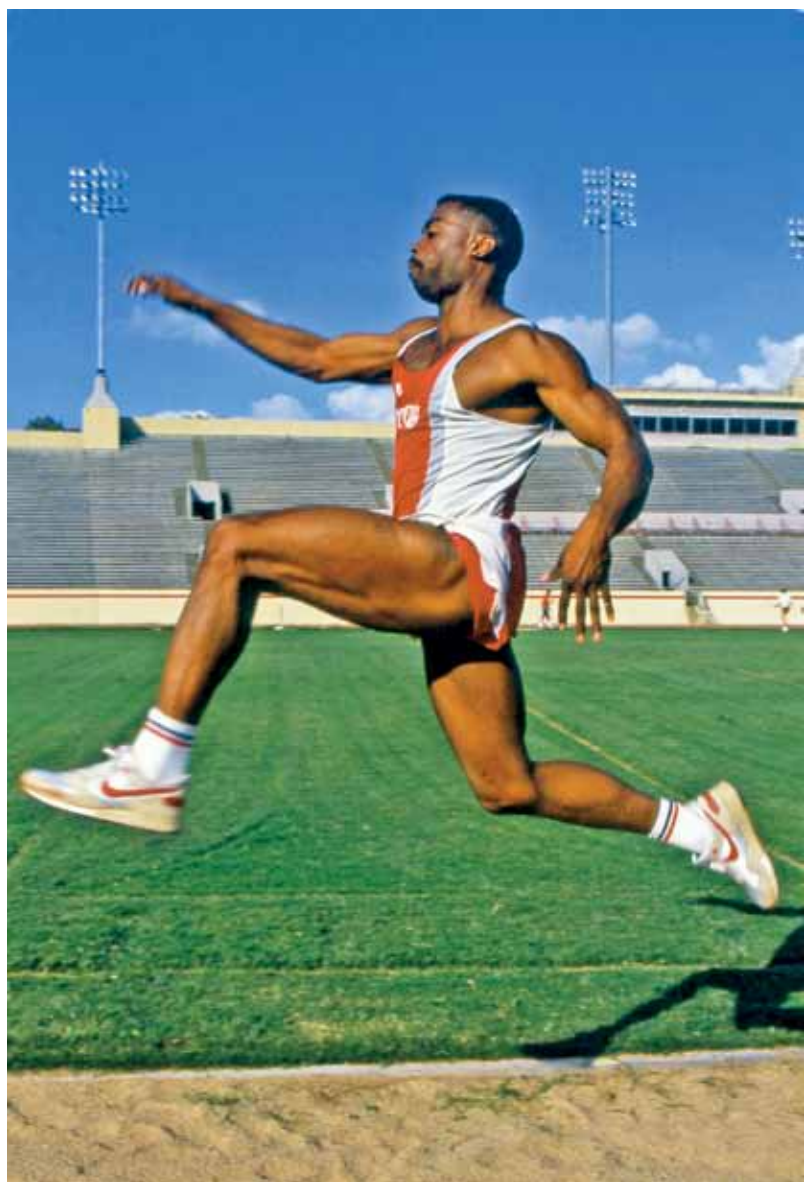
Melissa entered politics after volunteering with Rick when Mayor Bill White appointed him to be the incident commander for Hurricane Katrina evacuees at Houston’s George R. Brown Convention Center. She recalled, “I have never been so proud to be from Houston. I decided to run for City Council because I saw what Houstonians could do when they set their minds to it.” Rick explained, “We feel called to public service. It is more rewarding than any new job title—knowing that you are advancing the ball down the field and trying to make the world a better place. . . . That has kind of been our family mission statement.”

Both Lifetime members of the UH Alumni Association, the Noriegas credit UH with providing the foundation for much of their success. “I think the city of Houston and the University of Houston are marching hand in hand toward whatever the future is going to bring,” Melissa told Klump. “I think the world is changing so rapidly that you are going to have to have the kind of intellectual heft . . . that comes with Tier One status for Houston.” Rick agreed, adding, “It seems to always be getting better. I truly believe that the best days at UH are yet to come.”

LEROY BURRELL ('91)

Leroy Burrell is regarded as one of the best athletes ever to call the University of Houston home. It is fitting, therefore, that the mother of another one of UH’s best track & field athletes played a role in his attending UH. Carl Lewis’s mother, a high school track coach, had noticed Burrell’s name in newsletters with regional results. “Evelyn Lewis was still coaching high school track in the south Jersey area and saw my name at the top of this list in five events and sent it to Coach [Tom] Tellez and told him ‘Hey, I think this is a kid you might want to look at,’” Burrell recalled.

After a phone call from Tellez and a visit to the UH campus, Burrell was ready to join the Cougars. He immedi-



In 1986, Leroy Burrell broke UH’s freshman long jump record held by Carl Lewis, when he leaped 26’ 9” at a dual meet against UCLA. As a senior in 1990, he won the NCAA Indoor Long Jump title for the second straight year with a leap of 27 feet.

Photo courtesy of UH Alumni Association.



Following the 2011 Conference USA Indoor Track & Field Championships, Leroy Burrell was named Men's Indoor Track & Field Coach of the Year. Photo courtesy of UH Alumni Association.

ately made an impact, setting a new freshman record in the long jump with a distance of 26' 9" before an injury at the Southwest Conference championship forced him to miss a year of competition.

During his sophomore year, Burrell earned his first All-America recognition in the long jump. The next year, he won his first NCAA championship, taking first in the long jump at the NCAA Indoor meet with a distance of 26' 5.50." In total, Burrell won three NCAA championships and as a senior received the "Jumbo Elliott Award" given to the nation's top track & field athlete.

As a professional athlete, Burrell twice set the world record in the 100-meter dash. In 1991, he set his first world record with a time of 9.90 seconds, beating Lewis's previous best of 9.92. Three years later, he again bested Lewis with a time of 9.85. He won an Olympic gold medal in 1992 in the 4x100 relay and a pair of gold medals in the event at the 1991 and 1993 World Championships.

When Burrell retired from competition in 1998, the University of Houston selected him to succeed Tellez as the head track & field coach. During his first two seasons at the program's helm, Burrell was named C-USA Coach of the Year for both the Indoor and Outdoor season. In discussing what coaching at UH has meant to him, Burrell commented, "It's truly a blessing to get the opportunity to lead the program that you grew up in. It's been great."

Having spent years here as a student athlete and now in his fifteenth season as head coach, Burrell has seen a great deal of change on campus. "I look back and picture the number of buildings that are here now, that weren't here when I came. The sheer number of buildings that are here now is just astounding." Burrell continued, "The university is still relatively young and for what it's accomplished in that short period of time is pretty amazing."

MICHELLE COLVARD ('00)

Michelle Colvard was born with spina bifida, requiring her to use a wheelchair for most of her life. As a child she found that frustrating and disliked feeling "set apart" from her classmates. She did not want to be identified by her disability. Colvard told Michelle Klump that eventually it occurred to her "that there are a lot of people who didn't have the opportunities that I did. They didn't have the parents that I did. . . . They weren't being able to benefit fully from life because they were either putting themselves in a box, or other people were putting them in a box."

When she arrived at UH, Colvard found the experience liberating. "It was like I just woke up," she explained. "I absolutely loved it. I loved that it was all about you. The professors may give you homework or an assignment, but it is up to you to finish it. . . . I totally thrived in that environment."

Wanting to study how people react to life's problems, Colvard majored in psychology and studied child behavior in families with domestic violence. After graduating in 2000, her position as special coordinator for the research project became a full-time job, and she worked at UH for



Michelle Colvard is an advocate for people with disabilities and a research administration manager at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. She was named Ms. Wheelchair Texas in 2008 and Ms. Wheelchair America in 2009. Photo by F. Carter Smith.

over four years before enrolling in the master's program at the University of Texas School of Public Health. "While I was at UH, I learned a lot of the discipline that you need to go to grad school and to think critically," she said. "I had some excellent professors that really taught me well, and helped me, really encouraged me to think for myself."

While still in graduate school, Colvard was appointed to the Houston Commission on Disabilities and later became executive director of the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities, enabling her to become an advocate for others with disabilities.

With encouragement from her husband and friends, Colvard entered the Ms. Wheelchair Texas pageant in 2008. She won and went on to be named Ms. Wheelchair America in 2009. She saw it as a chance to show people that having a disability does not prevent you from pursuing higher education, holding a full-time job, or being successful.

Colvard is devoted to personal fitness and encourages others to follow suit. She enjoys wheelchair sports, including wheelchair soccer and basketball tournaments held at the UH Campus Recreation and Wellness Center. Additionally, she is a passionate autocross racer.

Today, Colvard works as a research administration manager at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Saying her own challenges pale in comparison to those battling cancer, Colvard told Klump that they inspire her to continue encouraging those with disabilities "to develop the same independence" that she learned first from her parents and then as a student at the University of Houston. Colvard explained, "My message is no matter who you are, where you came from, you can change your path, you can change your destiny." She believes life is an adventure and that people must take advantage of that, adding, "Don't let opportunities pass you by."

PRINCE WILSON ('11)

Born and raised in India, Prince Wilson came to the United States in 2004 as a high school student whose biggest hurdle was overcoming the language barrier. He developed an interest in volunteering and received an award for logging 150 hours of volunteer service.

Once Wilson started his college career at UH, he became involved on campus, starting with the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. After serving as the organization's president, he joined the Student Government Association (SGA), running for vice president. Wilson described his choices, "I'm not going to get involved in a hundred different things, but if I pick and choose, I will do my best."

Wilson was heavily involved in campus affairs for SGA. As vice president during his junior year, he actively campaigned for passage of Proposition 4 to set up a fund for state universities vying to become national research institutions. The bill passed with over 56 percent of voters approving the measure. Wilson explained SGA's efforts to inform the community, "The main goal was, wherever we go, talk about Prop 4. It wasn't just for UH. It was a collaborative effort for other campuses in the state of Texas."

During his senior year, Wilson was serving as SGA presi-



Prince Wilson served as president of the UH Student Government Association in 2011.

Photo from 2011 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

dent when news came that UH received its Tier One designation from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. He remembered, "It was surprising. Looking at the numbers, more than any other student, I knew we were going to reach that level. I never knew it was going to be that fast. I thought in 2014 or maybe 2013."

"As a student, doing this work was a sacrifice. It was a sacrifice of our grades and social time." He added, "The relationships I created at UH; I still keep in close touch with the folks in SGA. It's like any family. Getting involved on campus, especially for me being the student body president, I was involved in the process of shaping this university."

Wilson's tenure as SGA president ended March 31, 2011. The following day, he and his brother, a CPA, started an accounting firm. Wilson handles management, marketing, and operations for the firm, in addition to making contacts in the Houston business community. Wilson is currently in the Executive MBA program at Texas Woman's University, hoping to move into business administration. He married his wife, Sinu, in January of 2012.

Jeff Sutton is a graduate of Southwestern University and director of communications for the UH Alumni Association.

For information on the UH Alumni Association, visit www.houstonalumni.com. To read more "You are the Pride" stories, visit www.uh.edu/pride-stories/index.php.

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WORLD WAR II VETERANS AND THE G.I. BILL REVITALIZE THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, 1944-1946

By Betsy Morin

Returning veterans eagerly selected classes and enrolled at the University of Houston under the G.I. Bill following World War II.

All photos courtesy of the Digital Library and University Archives, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



The first two buildings on the University of Houston campus—the Roy Gustav Cullen Memorial Building and the Science Building—stood in solitary splendor in the early 1940s, at the epicenter of what became, six decades later, a 667-acre campus serving 40,000 students in over ninety buildings and facilities. Local businessmen, and Houstonians like the Cullen, Settegast, and Taub families, to name a few, played an instrumental role in the school's early development. By 1942, two new buildings, funded in part by New Deal programs, joined the original structures, providing space to train local navy reserves and recruits through the U.S. Navy Reserve Vocational School. These young men experienced a taste of university life before joining our forces fighting overseas. UH President Edison E. Oberholtzer, who led the University from 1927 to 1950, drew the connection between the institution, the war, and its veterans:

Since its founding, the University has tried to do everything possible to enable young people and adults alike to get advance training while they live at home and while they work for a livelihood. Now, as we shift with the nation to a war footing, we will seek new assignments as part of the overall defense effort; but we will not forget either our antecedents, or the long future.

All University of Houston curricula are designed to be vital and significant, and to be presented in relation to the world in which the student must live. We began, and we will continue, as a service institution, undergoing continuous growth and expansion to provide whatever courses are needed. The deciding factor for us is not tradition, but what the individual needs.¹

The 1940 Selective Service registration affected 77,177 men in Harris County alone, and since UH enrollment drew largely from commuter students, the University must have felt a tremendous drain. Dr. Walter Kemmerer, administrative assistant to President Oberholtzer, expressed concern about the draft's impact on future enrollment and the University's role as a supporter of national and community interests. With both objectives in mind, Kemmerer pursued the Army and Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) units. Eventually three Navy training units and a small Army Air Corps unit occupied campus facilities, boosting enrollment while allowing UH to play an active role in the nation's war efforts.²

Enrollment at the University of Houston steadily decreased from 2,494 in the fall of 1941 to 1,508 in 1942 and declined again to 1,015 in the spring of 1944.³ Overwhelmingly, the largest decrease occurred when male students enlisted or were drafted. Tuition from the war production courses and navy and civilian pilot training classes kept the University functioning as students (mostly male) left school to enter the armed forces. Extracurricular student activities halted out of respect for those serving in the war. The University appeared in limbo from 1942 to 1944 until the Selective Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, or G.I. Bill of Rights, provided a generous program for returning servicemen and women.

The G.I. Bill had far-reaching social implications by giving veterans access to higher education as they prepared to reenter the workforce. Over ten million WWII veterans took advantage of the vocational and educational benefits, which



The Navy Reserve Vocational Training School prepared sailors for their jobs in the military, and their positive experience at UH encouraged them to return as university students after the war.

paid \$500 per year toward tuition for college or technical training along with a living allowance. This delayed their reentry into the workforce, thus relieving some of the stress on the job market caused by so many individuals looking for work at one time. While certain provisions in the G.I. Bill offered low interest home loans, it also alleviated housing shortages by placing large numbers of veterans at private and public institutions, shifting the housing burden to universities or colleges. Campuses such as UH established "university villages" to accommodate them.

UH's enrollment increased to 2,720 by fall 1944 with a few veterans enrolled under the G.I. Bill. After Japan's surrender, more soldiers returned home, and by 1946, the fall enrollment soared to 10,028, including over 6,000 veterans.

In 2000, I interviewed several World War II veterans who took advantage of the education provisions in the G.I. Bill and were representative of the approximately 1,400 veterans who enrolled at UH after the war and lived on campus. These interviews and university records reveal that World

Families joined married veterans in extended trailers and in military barracks adapted for use on campus.



War II veterans revitalized the University's campus life as they actively participated in academics, sports programs, and other student activities. The solid foundation for future expansion that students, faculty, administrative personnel, and business community leaders built from 1927 to 1944 provided a launching pad for the explosion of activities following World War II. The majority of students who enrolled during these early years came from high schools in and around Houston. The war years kept some Houstonians close to home. Many who could afford college, but perhaps not room and board, elected to attend the small university.

UH held day and night classes, and many students worked while attending the University. Business opportunities along with the war and draft depleted the job market, and alumnus Elizabeth Rockwell remembered thinking, "I don't want to wait until I graduate; I want to get into the business world and get one of these jobs [that belong to] some of these men who are going to war, or into the draft, or whatever."⁴ Rockwell correctly ascertained that World War II was draining local businesses of manpower and elected to stop her formal education in 1942 to pursue her career. She continued her relationship with UH, however, and in later years made many monetary and educational contributions to the University, especially to the University of Houston Libraries.

Universities across the nation reacted differently to the education provisions of the G.I. Bill. Some prestigious institutions such as the University of Chicago openly scoffed at the idea of the "common man" entering hallowed university halls, but the University of Houston planned ahead for just such an occurrence.⁵ The Board of Regents, with its chairman Hugh Roy Cullen leading the way, requested housing from the Federal Housing Authority (FHA).

Beginning in the summer of 1944 and continuing through 1946, housing authorities granted UH buildings from the Federal Works Agency (FWA), which served as temporary classrooms, 320 residential trailers (later known as Trailer Village), and 350 tiny apartments that made up part of Veterans' Village. Kemmerer increased the faculty from forty-four in 1934 to one hundred by 1945.

Other important changes followed. In December 1944, the Veterans Administration selected UH as a site for a Veterans Administration Advisement Center, and student veterans enabled UH to assume a higher status among Texas's colleges, revitalizing UH campus life as early as 1945. That year, the University separated from the Houston Independent School District under Senate Bill 207, which launched UH as a "new" university protected by the Texas constitution.⁶

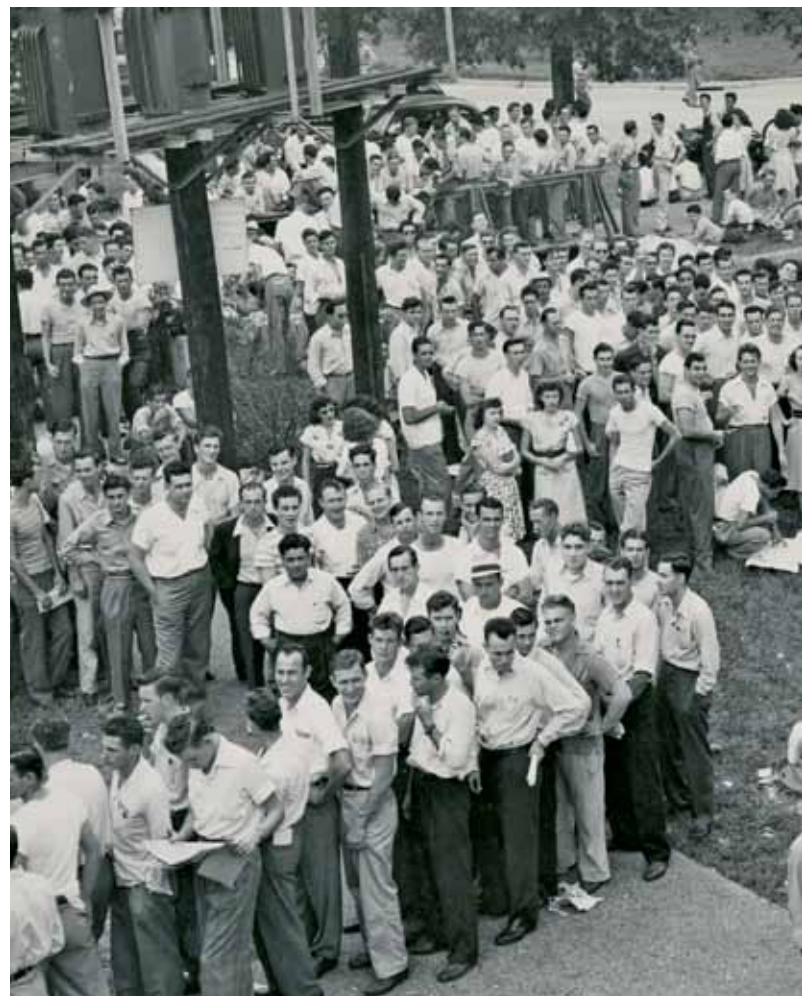
Instead of "Cougar High," UH had a new image. In addition, graduates from UH's naval, army, and air unit classes provided good advertisement. These students remembered their training years and some returned to inquire about registration after the war. Other returning disabled and discharged veterans heard about UH from buddies while serving in the armed forces.⁷ Some gravitated towards the University because the region offered job opportunities, while local veterans may have been influenced by a desire to

remain close to home. The city of Houston itself also drew students and, even today, thousands of UH alumni reside in the Houston area.

UH along with the staff from the Veterans Advisement Center assisted veterans with registration, receiving their subsistence allowance, housing, and career guidance. R. O. Jonas served as the chief counselor, and Roy Crouch headed the psychological services. The counselors provided stability in the veterans' readjustment process. By September 1944, twenty-nine UH students had enrolled under the G.I. Bill. Kemmerer urged the counselors to "do whatever is necessary to develop a successful program of education for veterans."⁸

The University accommodated veterans' educational advancement in various ways. Kemmerer initiated a policy that allowed veterans to enroll any time of the year. For those who needed background education before taking an upper level class, UH offered a group of "130" classes, which explains the wide variety of course numbers that appear in the Veterans Office Records. "130" classes varied each month and included math and English refresher courses along with physics and drawing. The *Houston Press* reported ten veterans had not completed high school but wanted to train in vocational areas such as radio, shop, auto mechanics, refrigeration, and diesel engines. UH administered any needed testing, and veterans received credit for army and basic training. By November 1944, approximately eighty World War II veterans had enrolled under the G.I. Bill.⁹

UH had two divisions of education in the early forties: the junior college division, which offered vocational and technical programs; and a senior college division, which



Registration lines swelled with veterans when enrollment topped 10,000 in 1946.

provided liberal arts classes. By February 1945, the junior college division became better known as the University of Houston Vocational School. It offered courses in machine tool-making, machine shop, drafting, business training, telephone switchboard design and operation, fundamentals of electricity, needle trades, cosmetology, home economics, and automobile, diesel engine, radio, and electrical appliance repair. Review and preparatory classes in English, industrial math, physics, drawing, and machine shops provided basic instruction for those classes. The senior college division offered liberal arts and sciences, six different foreign languages, engineering, pre-law, pre-med, teacher training, and journalism. In December, to accommodate the demands of increased enrollment, UH added six day and evening courses over a special six-week timeframe to allow veterans to earn six additional semester hours credit.¹⁰

In a 1945 letter, the Veterans Advisement and Guidance Services stated that the University's objectives were to "help and establish an independent, self-supporting American citizen, provide gainful occupation, and educate an active member of the community." The Veterans Advisement Guidance Services also wrote to Kemmerer regarding new "vocational courses needed due to increased veteran enrollment." That year vocational studies added courses in refrigeration and air conditioning, drawing, and machine shop; industrial classes expanded physics and mathematics; practical academic curriculum added English and "130" classes. At year's end, an analysis of the "130" classes showed that out of 1,120 veterans who responded, 30% took every "130" class available, 20% took one or more, and 50% took conventional college courses.¹¹

Veterans influenced the University in areas beyond academic schedules and facilities. On November 20, 1945, student pressure convinced the Board of Regents to authorize an intercollegiate athletics program. The University applied to and was accepted by the Lone Star Conference (LSC), which was primarily a basketball conference. At the time, other LSC universities had up to thirty returning letterman, while UH had not participated in intercollegiate competition. Instead, the 1944-1945 UH basketball team played local high schools or junior colleges. University of Houston Alumni Association (UHAA) member and Cuban native, Tony Moré attended UH as a foreign exchange student and remembers playing basketball with naval reserves and returning veterans from 1944 to 1945.¹²

UH recruited players to join team members Dick Pratt, Louis Brown, Charlie Carpenter, Pete Sealy, and Bill Swanson. Willie Wells transferred to UH from Sam Houston State University. World War II veteran Guy Lewis enrolled at UH under the G.I. Bill in November 1945 instead of returning to Rice Institute after the war and soon joined the basketball team. UH won its opening LSC game against number-one-ranked North Texas and went on to win the conference championship two consecutive years.¹³

In September 1946, Jack and Welcome Wilson's father, Jack Wilson, Sr., selected the University of Houston to further his sons' education because he wanted his sons to attend a university in a city where business contacts could advance their careers. He also believed that Houston "was a land of opportunity." At first Jack, Jr., thought his father meant Rice Institute, but his father was considering a "new university—the University of Houston." When the Wilson entourage arrived on UH's campus, they saw thousands forming an orderly registration line stretching from the Recreation Building's gymnasium to Cullen Boulevard. The Wilsons sought an interview with UH President Oberholtzer, but he was unavailable. When his assistant, Dr.



Welcome Wilson enrolled at the University in September 1946 at the insistence of his father, who saw UH as the best choice for a future Houston businessman.

Kemmerer, graciously admitted the group into his office, Jack Wilson, Sr., proclaimed: "My sons want to attend *your* University." Kemmerer looked out his office window and announced, "Well, they will have a lot of company!"¹⁴

The Wilson brothers shared a trailer in the Veteran Village, where a committee of tenants handled everyday affairs and social matters. Life there varied for each occupant. "Bums, scholars, guys that would lock their trailer doors and not ever come out because they wanted to study" occupied the village. The trailer section that Jack and Welcome occupied contained minimal space

for sleeping and eating and offered nothing in the way of bathroom facilities, but the low rent with all utilities paid made it acceptable. The restroom and shower area for an entire section of trailers was located two blocks away. Times were lean; even with Jack's veterans' benefits, the two brothers at times had only the bare necessities. Veterans





The University's Trailer Village accommodated the influx of veterans in need of housing under the G.I. Bill. Though the conditions were less than ideal, the experience left life-long memories.

Club meeting notes from 1945 to 1946 mention drainage and garbage problems, along with poor lighting and streets. An October 1947 *Cougar* article focused on the Veterans Club's concern over the "atmospheric and industrial conditions east of the University of Houston." Jack remembered once when they started dinner, "the stench from the meat packaging company reached us and we took a look at the can of chili..." Needless to say, they lost their appetite!¹⁵

Other returning World War II veterans and UHAA members, Don McKusker and his roommate, Tony Bruno, also shared a singles trailer. Their unit provided even fewer amenities than the Wilson brothers' since it did not contain a stove. Because Don and Tony lacked money to buy a hot plate, Don improvised by building a holder for their iron, which he took apart and placed upside down exposing the coils. Both young men alternated cooking chores, preparing various Scotch-Irish and Italian cuisines on this small "stove."¹⁶ Jeff Anderson and his new bride initially settled in a singles trailer but moved to an expandable trailer when she became pregnant. The extended sections provided room for a double bed along with a bathroom and kitchen. The trailer measured 20' x 20'.¹⁷ Married veterans like Joe Compton occupied one of the apartments in the surplus military barracks, which arrived at UH from Ellington Field and Camp Wallace late in 1946. The Compton's apartment consisted of an un-air conditioned, open space with a stove and refrigerator.¹⁸ Later, the University adapted them to other purposes.

All of these veterans adapted to their situations and soon became involved in campus activities. Others sought opportunities to supplement their income. Don McKusker concentrated on campus activities for the first two years and loved to attend all sporting events. The Wilson brothers along with Jack Valenti solicited advertisements for the University of Houston's campus newsletter, *The Cougar*.

UH's campus activities included the earlier-established Red Mask Players, Varsity Varieties, and Frontier Fiesta.

The veterans injected new life and vitality into these programs, especially Frontier Fiesta. Veterans also participated in the sports programs. Don McKusker remembered that the Veteran Advisement Center issued coupon books with numbered tickets for the various campus activities. Don took this as a subtle hint to attend all activities or have it look bad on his university record. Although Don did not play sports, he never needed an impetus to participate in student activities. After the high activity level he endured during the war, he felt an incessant drive for action.

Whether other veterans attended events due to an implied negative consequence, or whether they, too, continued to thrive on constant mental and physical stimulation, most veterans entered campus life with a vivacity seldom matched since. UH's expanded academic curriculum along with campus social life appealed to them. UH sports now included football, track, golf, tennis, basketball, and, surprisingly, ice hockey. Through this increased student participation, the University found the *esprit de corps* that Kemmerer had been searching for since 1940.

The increased enrollment and revenues generated by the G.I. Bill gave UH a giant push toward becoming a major university. Transforming rapidly from an arm of the local school district to a respected institution of higher education, UH expanded its faculty and facilities to accommodate its growing student body. Further, the changes made by administrators enabled UH to fulfill President Oberholtzer's vision of a university that would grow and expand while preparing students for the world in which they live.

Betsy Morin earned her B.A. and M.A. from the University of Houston and remains actively involved in supporting UH. For the past year, she has helped organize the December and May CLASS commencement breakfasts and serves as treasurer of Cougar Cookers. She is also a member of the Houston General Go Texan Committee.

The Tip of the Spear:

HONORS EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

By Keri Myrick

Whenever the University of Houston has mustered the will and the resources to compete at a higher level, Honors education has helped “move the needle”—President Renu Khator’s metaphor for positive change. “At its best, Honors has served the institution as a whole,” said William Monroe, dean of the Honors College since 2009. “Academically, Honors should be the leading edge for the University,” he said, “the tip of the spear.”

Today the Honors College is a point of pride at a Tier One university and nationally known as a pioneering model of undergraduate excellence. But it took many years and more than a half dozen attempts before Honors found the structure, resources, and consistent leadership that would allow it to play a significant role in moving the University forward. In fact, the development of honors education at UH in many ways paralleled changes in the University as a whole. For Honors, growth and critical development took place during periods of institutional flux: the years of rapid expansion following World War II; the Sputnik-era boom that spurred the development of honors programs nationwide; the University’s turn toward research in the sixties; the

arrival of Ted Estess as director of the program in 1977; the creation of the Honors College in 1993; the expansion of the M. D. Anderson Library, 2002-2004; and the changing of the guard from Estess to Monroe in 2009. At each of these junctures, the University turned to honors education as an instrument of institutional advancement.

POST-WORLD WAR II

The first mention of “honors” in the University’s archives comes in the minutes of the Committee on Honors Courses and Graduation with Honors, chaired by assistant to the president and former comptroller and director of curriculum Walter W. Kemmerer in 1947.¹ The demobilization of soldiers after World War II and the financial support of the G.I. Bill affected UH as it did other institutions of higher education—bloating classrooms, stretching resources, and prompting questions about policies and practice.

With increasing enrollment, Kemmerer’s honors committee sought new models of undergraduate instruction but decided against initiating an honors program until the “special ‘honors’ courses have been developed and in operation for

The Honors College frequently hosts lectures from renowned scholars, poets, and writers, like this talk by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist John Updike, organized by Inprint in 2006.

All photos courtesy of Honors College unless otherwise noted.



some time.” The committee recognized the immediate need to offer content-intensive honors courses that moved at an accelerated pace and demanded more of students, including extensive reading and critical thinking. The purpose of the proposed honors courses was “to make available to the superior students work of the highest caliber,” especially in entry-level courses where advanced students were overlooked in a swell of new enrollees.²

On October 23, 1947, the Honors Committee approved the creation of honors courses in algebra, analytic geometry, English, biology, physics, chemistry, and general business administration but, ultimately, did not offer them. Though history courses were not part of the initial plan, committee member Louis Kestenberg, a Polish immigrant whose field was German history and modern languages, took the initiative to offer “The Fall of the Roman Empire,” History 132H, in the spring semesters of 1948 and 1949.³ With the University struggling to accommodate an onslaught of non-traditional students and returning veterans, it was almost a decade before another honors course was offered.

THE SPUTNIK ERA AND THE SIXTIES

Six years before the University of Houston would become a state school, University president Clanton W. Williams established a second committee. In September 1957—a date later proudly noted as *prior* to the Sputnik launch, which a month later alarmed the nation—the Honors Program Committee began considering plans that included:

- a. Senior honors courses leading to baccalaureate degrees with departmental honors.
- b. Provisions for outstanding students to be accelerated through certain courses.
- c. A detailed four-year “Special Program” of study providing major challenges to outstanding students.
- d. A weekly colloquium for all Honors students, to correlate and integrate information acquired in other classes.

Williams had been convinced to revisit honors education not by Sputnik but by Marjorie McCorquodale, an English professor. McCorquodale argued that the University needed

a program for “superior students” if it wanted to compete with schools like Rice and Texas. Alfred Neumann initially chaired the committee, which was housed in the College of Arts and Sciences and made up of nine professors from departments including Engineering, Business Administration, Philosophy, and Education.⁴ The committee spent months in rigorous negotiations to formulate a plan that defined the superior student and charted an enhanced, interdisciplinary course of study. In collaboration with the Counseling and Testing Office, the selection process for freshman students involved an evaluation of high school transcripts and SAT scores combined with face-to-face interviews. After countless hours of discussion and preparation, the Interdisciplinary [Honors] Program, known as the IDP, began in the fall 1958 with twenty-five freshmen and two senior thesis candidates. The committee appointed Kestenberg as the program coordinator.⁵

By the end of the semester, however, the ambitious honors program that brought hope and excitement to the University had lost one third of its participants. Students’ exit interviews indicated that health and financial difficulties played a role in most cases, as participants not only undertook more rigorous coursework, they also frequently had jobs, families, and time-consuming commutes like their peers across campus.⁶ Having seen the earlier attempt to establish honors education thwarted, Kestenberg knew the likely fate of the IDP if it lost students and credibility. With the help of Edmund Pincoffs in the Philosophy Department and Patrick Nicholson in the Office of Development, Kestenberg initiated a campaign to raise scholarship funds for IDP-selected students.

Meanwhile, the anticipated transition from a private to a state-supported institution promised students greater educational opportunities via reduced tuition, a significant benefit to those struggling to pay for their education.⁷ Greater accessibility also meant greater enrollment, and the rush to attend UH was on—by those already working to save money for college and by students born in the post-war baby boom graduating from high school. A nucleus of faculty and administrators worried that UH needed greater selectivity in admissions and a strong honors program to assure its



Marjorie Nash mentors senior Jodie Fiore in 1987.

Continuity and Change

Jodie Fiore came to the University Honors Program in 1983 from J. Frank Dobie High School in Pasadena. She was hired as a work-study student employee in the Honors office — then located in the basement of the M. D. Anderson Library — quickly became a leader within the program, and was elected president of the Student Governing Board in her senior year. She took several courses with John Danford, a political philosopher brought to the University by Ted Estess, and graduated with a degree in political science in 1987. While a student at the University of Houston Law Center, she worked as a graduate assistant to then associate director Bill Monroe. After completing her law degree and passing the Texas Bar, Jodie was hired as Coordinator of Academic Services. Over the next ten years, she saw the Program



In May 2010, professors Richard Armstrong, John Harvey, and Hayan Charara led a student tour to explore Spain's heritage as a center for Muslim, Jewish, and Christian cultures. "The Convivencia Tour" gave students an alternative to the standard view of Europe as entirely Christian and "Western" in its orientation.

national reputation and continued advancement.

In June 1962, the Honors Program *Committee* became the Honors Program *Council*. Appointed by President Phillip Hoffman, it took on the tasks of revamping the IDP curriculum, developing more sections of honors courses, and increasing University awareness of the program's goals and capabilities.⁸ Across the campus, the little Interdisciplinary Program that still capped freshmen enrollment at twenty-five students had caught the attention of departments and colleges that wanted their programs added to the IDP course book. The program thrived despite financial crises, loss of faculty, and an ever-shifting core curriculum.

Other major universities, still reacting to the Sputnik wake-up call, sought to imitate what UH offered its top students: an honors curriculum of breadth, scope, and quality. "As you know," Neumann wrote to Kestenberg

on April 2, 1963, "universities and colleges are still asking for information regarding our Honors Programs (the most recent one, the University of New Hampshire)."⁹ In 1964, Honors attracted 300 applicants scoring 1200 or higher on their college entrance exam. These achievements did not go unnoticed, and the University turned to Honors to "bring the [entire] campus up to a higher level."¹⁰

In May 1964, McCorquodale nominated Mary Ellen Goodman, a renowned researcher and a Fulbright Scholar, to replace Kestenberg as Honors Program Council chairman. Based on the recommendation of Dean Neumann, President Hoffman appointed Goodman the program's first director, effective June 1.¹¹ Goodman had joined the faculty in 1961 as a visiting associate professor when her husband, internationally known physicist Clark Goodman, was recruited to UH. A social scientist whose research fo-

become the Honors College, married Lorin Koszegi, an Honors classmate, and had two children, Jet and Zachary. Following a short stint as registrar of St. Johns School in Houston, she returned to the Honors College as assistant dean. In her current role she directs Honors recruitment, admissions, advising, scholarships, and housing while interfacing with almost every office on campus that deals with undergraduate academics or student affairs. "There have been many, many changes since I arrived as a very green eighteen-year old," Jodie says, "but the commitment to students and their development hasn't changed. The Honors family has gotten bigger—and older!—but we are still very much a family."

Today the tables are turned as Jodie Koszegi, now assistant dean, mentors student Katie Jewett. Photo by Keri Myrick.





The first director of the Honors Program, Mary Ellen Goodman (center), talks with Velma Edworthy and Nurse Roberts before speaking to an assembly of the Medical Careers Club.

cused on the psychological development of adolescent girls, Goodman immediately steered Honors in a more science- and research-friendly direction, a shift that Kestenberg had resisted. One of the first changes she implemented was emphasizing science in the mandatory junior-senior seminar “to supplement, to some degree,” as she put it, the emphasis placed on humanities during the freshman and sophomore years. Professor Phillip J. Snider, an accomplished geneticist fresh off a European tour promoting a paper on “genetic regulation of nuclear migration in fungi,” led the program’s first required science seminar, a “roundtable discussion” entitled “Science, the Scientist, and Society.”¹²

Goodman also lifted the cap on the number of entering freshman; redesigned the sophomore colloquium to enhance the interdisciplinary platform; added six hours of independent study for juniors to increase the number of senior thesis candidates; and swayed the registrar’s office to add an “H” to students’ transcripts, indicating an Honors course designed to challenge the individual with an accelerated curriculum or interdisciplinary content.¹³ For the academic year 1964-1965, Honors enjoyed considerable growth and recognition, but burdening financial issues persisted, threatening student scholarships and forcing faculty to retreat to their “home” departments.

Meanwhile, the University was spending millions of dollars on research facilities and classroom buildings to accommodate its growing enrollment. In a 1961 issue of *Extra*, the UH Alumni Association’s newsletter, President Hoffman boldly proclaimed, “[UH] may become the largest University in the South.”¹⁴ Some Honors students, however, found the emphasis on new buildings and research facilities problematic. An April 1965 editorial in the student-run IDP Newsletter expressed pointed dissatisfaction with

the general treatment of students and commended those professors who, in addition to their regular load, donated their time to teaching Honors courses with absolutely no monetary compensation: “We have people here dedicated to an ideal—that freedom of thought is more important than buildings ... Dreams are made of people—and the kind of people that build these dreams are fighting for an ideal on this campus.” One month later, Goodman resigned as director of the Honors Program, lost to a full professorship at Rice University.

On June 1, 1965, Phil Snider became the program’s second director, and within two years the IDP’s profile shifted from approximately 80% humanities majors to 50% science majors.¹⁵ Snider served as director until 1970, and each year brought “record enrollment.” But behind the scenes, budgetary insufficiencies and faculty shortages handicapped the program. Soon, political and social events—the Vietnam War, racial tension, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., the fear of global communism, and widespread student protests—eclipsed honors education at Houston and similar initiatives nationwide. Harried administrators of the University neglected undergraduate excellence to concentrate on sensitivity training, emergency planning, and group dynamics. By the end of the 1969-1970 academic year, Honors lost yet another director, a pattern repeated almost annually until the mid-seventies, when a chance encounter of two people, Donald Lutz and Ted Estess, began a process that stabilized the program, brought consistent leadership, and put a stamp on Honors education that remains today.

THE EARLY ESTESS YEARS

The early 1970s represented a fallow period for Honors at the University. When political philosopher Donald Lutz became director in 1976, UH still failed to offer compensation or release time from teaching for the position. Lutz accepted on the condition that UH bring in a consultant to assess the program and clarify its potential importance to the University. He recommended Ted Estess, then at the University of Montana, whom he had met through a series



of unlikely coincidences at a National Collegiate Honors Council convention. Estess, a scholar of religion and literature, served as consultant for academic vice president Barry Munitz and drafted a seventeen-page report

Ted Estess headed the University Honors Program and the Honors College from 1977-2008.

Photo courtesy of University Archives, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

recommending a larger, university-wide program and charting a course forward.

Estess's site visit and subsequent report convinced Lutz and Munitz that Estess was the academic leader that the program and the University needed. Munitz offered Estess the position, and, after some hesitation and negotiation, Estess came to Houston in January 1977 to launch a re-named University Honors Program with expanded ambitions and responsibilities. For the first time, the program had a budget for a director and associate director—conditions for Estess taking the job—as well as modest funding for scholarships and a lecture series. Stephen Langfur, a philosopher, was recruited from Syracuse to be the first associate director.¹⁶

Estess and Langfur, joined by classicist Anthony Sirignano in April, determined that the most important first step involved creating an enhanced common curriculum, and, further, that a team-taught, “great books” course would provide the range and intensity needed to give Honors students of all majors a distinctive and lasting experience. A defining characteristic of UH Honors, “The Human Situation” class, named by Langfur, was born, and “excellent faculty were put into undergraduate classrooms with the best students.”¹⁷ This two-semester course, affectionately dubbed “Human Sit” by students and faculty, further developed the IDP’s goal of integrating disciplines, specifically through team teaching and the critical reading of texts: “the Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic cultures of antiquity” in the fall, and selected texts of “modernity”—roughly Dante through the present—in the spring. After thirty-five years, the objectives of the course remain to develop skills such as close reading,

careful writing, and critical thinking, and at the same time to invite students of all backgrounds and majors to participate in what has been called “the great conversation.”¹⁸

Allen Mandelbaum, a scholar, poet, and translator visiting the University from the Graduate Center at CUNY, stated well the rationale for the program and the need for academic scholarships: “The budget of the University does not now include truly competitive student support for the very finest students in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences on a four-year scholarship basis,” he wrote in a January 5, 1980, letter to Estess. In Mandelbaum’s view, such students “could only be drawn to the University of Houston by a strong Honors Program. Conversely, without such an Honors Program, one cannot in bona fide summon students of that kind and attend to their intellectual needs.” With the help of an aggressive scholarship program supported by President Richard Van Horn and Dean of Admissions Wayne Sigler—including, beginning in 1983, “full ride” support for National Merit Finalists—the number of Honors students grew and the program flourished.

THE HONORS COLLEGE

The rapid growth of the program raised again the question of the place of Honors education at UH. In 1988, Senior Vice President Robert Lineberry created a task force, chaired by Harrell Rodgers, dean of the College of Social Sciences, “to look into the possibility of creating an Honors college.”¹⁹ Although the Undergraduate Council reviewed the proposal favorably in fall 1989, council members expressed concern over funding. “I strongly endorse this [proposal] if we have the money,” council member

Students representing interdisciplinary Honors minors—Medicine & Society, Politics and Ethics (Phronesis), and Creative Work—participate with Professor Robert Cremins in a college-bowl style game called “That’s Not My Field!” Visible on the left is the Estess Alumni Library, a premier seminar space that houses bound copies of all the senior honors theses completed at UH.





The fall 2004 UHALUMLINE featured the official spirit group of the Honors College—the Bleacher Creatures. Shown center, left to right are alumni Bill Kelly, Beth Kungel Borck, and Dave Armendariz. Cover courtesy of UH Alumni Association.

Ernst Leiss, a professor of computer science said. “But if we go ahead without the money, we could get into a fiasco.”²⁰ With the support of President Marguerite Ross Barnett and, following her untimely death, President James Pickering, the Board of Regents unanimously approved a proposal to create an honors college in July 1992. The Texas Coordinating Board of Higher Education voted in favor of the University’s proposal at its January 1993 meeting.

For a week during the summer, seventh- and eighth-graders can preview college courses at the Cougar Junior Scholars Camp in the Honors College. Classes taught by UH professors include English literature, creative writing, engineering, and chemistry.

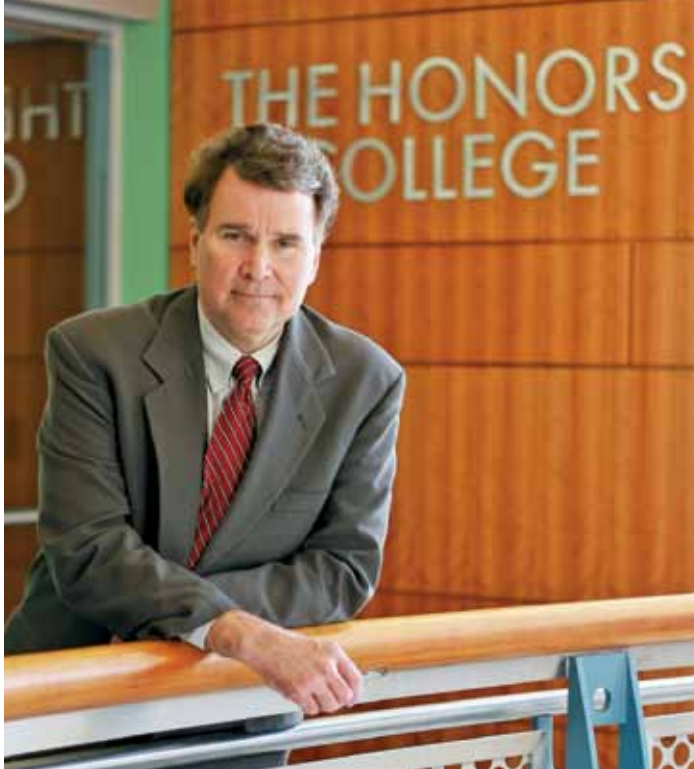


In many ways the replacement of the University Honors Program by the Honors College was symbolic, a certification of the program’s growth in size and comprehensiveness. Professor John Bernard seemed skeptical: “I’m not sure how simply changing the name will make a difference,” he commented. “It’s a good sign, but it may be only a sign.”²¹

Bernard’s concern proved well-founded. In one very important respect—physical space—the Honors College remained a program. As early as 1988, the Rodgers Task Force had strongly urged that the new college move from its overcrowded space in the basement of the library. “Toward the 21st Century: A Plan for the University of Houston, 1990-1996,” a strategic planning document, called for a residential honors college to be located in a renovated Quadrangle.²² Yet not until 1999 did President Art Smith announce plans to include the Honors College in a new wing of the M. D. Anderson Library. Five years later, the construction was complete.

Other than the administrator’s offices, Honors had been located (sequentially) in a library storage room that only required “a combination lock to look . . . like a banker’s safety deposit vault”; the Ezekiel Cullen Building in a room only available to students weekdays from 1:00-5:00 p.m.; three offices in one of the WWII Quonset huts; and, for twenty-five years, in the library basement with a “lounge” that opera director Peter Sellars described as “the ugliest room in America.”

During the 2002 Thanksgiving holidays, the College transferred its classrooms, faculty offices, student service facilities, and lounge to three trailers near the Law School. During spring break 2004, the College moved into an attractive, functional, and “rather cushy” space, in the words of one Honors student, on the second floor of the new library addition.²³ The new space includes a beautiful Honors Commons used by students as a place to study and often adapted for formal lectures, dinners, recitals, dance performances, plays, and parties. It has four seminar rooms, including the cherry-paneled Estess Alumni Library, a student computing lab, a student services center, and offices for at least twenty faculty and staff. In a real sense, the Honors College had arrived.



Having served the Honors College since 1985, Bill Monroe became dean in 2009. The location of the Honors College in the M. D. Anderson Library reflects its centrality to the mission of the University. Photo by HYPERKULTURMEDIA | Mauricio Lazo.

THE MONROE YEARS

William Monroe, who since 1985 had served as associate director, associate dean, and executive associate dean under Estess, was appointed dean of the Honors College in January 2009 by interim provost Jerald Strickland. With President Renu Khator seeking Tier One status for the University, she and Provost John Antel turned to Monroe and the Honors College to help attract a larger cohort of academically talented and motivated undergraduates. A driven, entrepreneurial staff that included six Honors alumni responded to the challenge. For twenty years, Honors College enrollment had hovered between 1,000 and 1,250 students, but in 2009 the needle began to move dramatically. By fall 2012, the number of Honors students exceeded 1,500, an increase of 40% in roughly three years. The combined math+verbal SAT average for incoming freshmen increased to 1316, the highest ever, and the class included fifty-eight “Tier One” Scholars and thirty new National Merit scholarship recipients.²⁴

In addition to expanding the number of students, faculty, and staff, the Honors College has added courses in the sciences, engineering, and business and is proposing a new honors program within the College for students intending careers in the health professions. With three interdisciplinary minors—Medicine & Society, Politics and Ethics (*Phronesis*), and Creative Work—the College has developed extensive offerings at the upper-division level and is again the envy of institutions around the country. The Human Situation course is stronger than ever, with two teaching teams, thirty small sections, and seventeen faculty, representing disciplines such as philosophy, political theory, English, rhetoric, creative writing, and history.

While the concept of Honors education has been im-

portant to the University since the years following World War II, the actual role, structure, and physical location of Honors has been in flux. Many times over the years, an organized program supporting undergraduate excellence across colleges and disciplines appeared at risk and, as a hallmark of the institution, was passed over as more urgent concerns—graduate studies and research, physical plant repairs and construction, cutbacks in state support, departmental, and disciplinary priorities—took precedence. But the Honors College continues to flourish, in many ways more than ever, with an entering class of over 600, a dedicated faculty, and a friendly, hard-working, and professional staff.

With the recent dramatic enrollment increases, space has again become a limiting factor. The College has outgrown its premier space in the library and will be locating some of its faculty and functions in rehearsal rooms on the auditorium side of the Ezekiel Cullen building and elsewhere on campus. “We hope to find appropriate quarters for our students and programs soon,” Monroe said. “This kind of growth—in both size and quality—is a good problem to have. But it’s still a problem,” he added. “In many ways, the questions raised by Ted in his 1976 consulting report are still valid. We should always be asking, ‘What is the place of Honors education within the University and how does Honors relate to the other concerns of the University?’ The ways we respond to these questions,” Monroe said, “will shape the character, reputation, and core values of our institution and, ultimately, the city of Houston itself.”²⁵

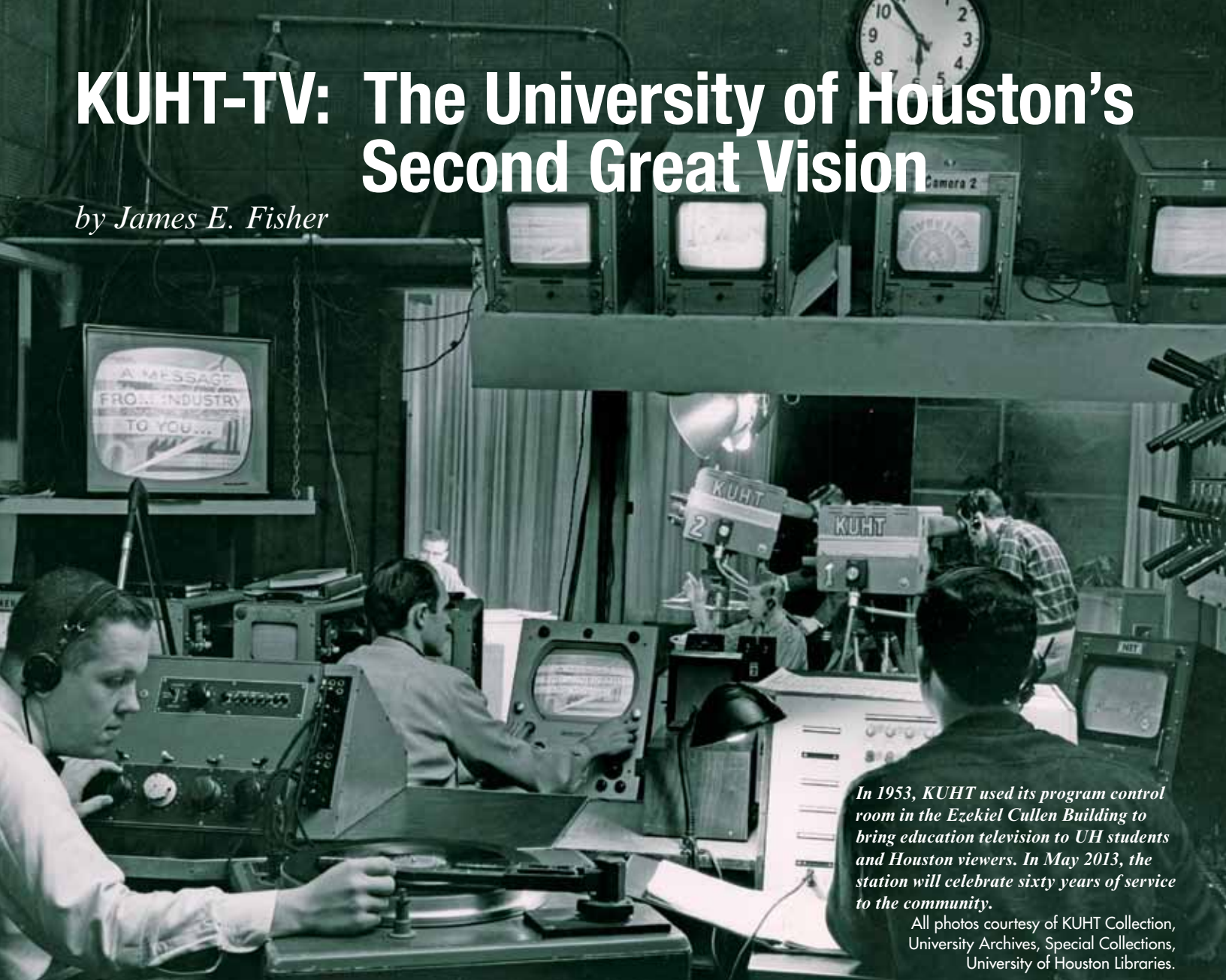
Keri Myrick was recruited to the Honors College in 2011 as a high-achieving mid-career student. A Fine Arts (Painting) major minoring in Creative Work, Myrick has travelled with two study abroad groups, studied the Human Situation, participated in Undergraduate Research, and launched the Honors History Project, an ongoing public history of honors education at UH based on archival documents, photographs, social media posts, and interviews with students, faculty, and staff, past and present. To contribute, contact Keri Myrick at hhistory@central.uh.edu.



When Dean Bill Monroe hosted an all-night reading of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, participants got into the spirit with their costumes.

KUHT-TV: The University of Houston's Second Great Vision

by James E. Fisher



In 1953, KUHT used its program control room in the Ezekiel Cullen Building to bring education television to UH students and Houston viewers. In May 2013, the station will celebrate sixty years of service to the community.

All photos courtesy of KUHT Collection, University Archives, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

KUHT – The Big Picture

Houston Independent School District superintendent Dr. E. E. Oberholtzer's concept for Houston Junior College was arguably the University of Houston's first great visionary aspiration.¹ In 1951, UH president Dr. Walter Kemmerer brought another visionary concept to the University, a proposal for an educational television station. The University had already launched the nation's first university-licensed radio station, KUHF-FM, in November 1950 to provide courses in radio communication, but expanding that concept to an entirely new technology was a bold move for the youthful institution. The University's intention became firm on April 17, 1951, when it approved and sent an application to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a television permit. On April 15, 1952, the University's Board of Regents approved a resolution for a joint application with Houston Independent School District (HISD) to secure an FCC "construction permit" for Channel 8. The commission granted that license, and KUHT-TV went on the air May 25, 1953.²

To fully appreciate this accomplishment a general famil-

ilarity of television history is helpful. The United States had not taken its first tentative steps into commercial broadcasting until the mid- to late-1920s. These basic steps generally in the New York area, however, represented merely a starting point. The adoption of technical standards, the Great Depression, and a lack of willing participants in this business limited the television industry's expansion. It suffered another set-back with the United States' entry into World War II. This time period saw the NBC, CBS, and Du Mont networks limiting their schedules to four hours per week, while utilizing their manpower, equipment, and expertise for government service.³

World War II ended in 1945, and in the years that followed, the nation was ripe for growth. By 1948, the broadcast industry began to lay the foundation for the complex media we know today. The FCC became the battleground for this expansion. Houston's first commercial television station, KLEE, owned by W. Albert Lee, went on the air on January 1, 1949.⁴ At the time Albert Lee applied for KLEE's license for channel 2 in Houston, no other FCC applications had been filed for that channel. Typically during this period,

the FCC promptly granted all uncontested license requests. However, the launch of KLEE incited the competition for licenses locally. This movement mirrored the national trend; and as a result, on September 30, 1948, the FCC implemented a “freeze” on the granting of new licenses. The freeze lasted for over three and a half years. It was only after the Commission’s 6th Report and Order was issued on April 14, 1952, that the commerce of television moved forward. Among other things, this report allocated 242 channels for educational, non-commercial television use across the county.

With the lifting of the freeze, the race was on for new stations to begin broadcasting. KUHT’s first broadcast came just over a year later, on May 25, 1953. With this broadcast, KUHT became the second television station in Houston, and the third television station in the area. It followed KLEE (now KPRC) in Houston and KGUL-TV in Galveston, which signed on the air two months prior to the launch of KUHT. In 1959, KGUL-TV moved to Houston and became KHOU-TV.⁵

KUHT-TV was only the eleventh television station in Texas, with three stations in Dallas-Ft. Worth, two each in San Antonio and El Paso, and one each in Austin, Houston, and Galveston preceding KUHT’s launch. Today, the Houston market boasts seventeen full power television stations.⁶

With its first transmissions, KUHT established non-commercial educational television in the United States, a new broadcasting branch for the fledgling industry. With its primary focus on education, it helped to establish the foundation for “distance education,” a staple of contemporary higher education today. Before then “extended education” consisted primarily of correspondence courses or satellite colleges.⁷ Given the challenges faced by the individuals whose determination brought KUHT to life, this educational environment benchmarks a vision for the future that is still one of the University of Houston’s most significant early accomplishments.



UH student Nancy Watchous displays a 1954 KUHT insignia designed by Walt Disney Productions.

KUHT – The Early Years

During her speech at KUHT’s Dedication on June 8, 1953, FCC commissioner Frieda Henneck said:

For here in Houston begins the practical realization of the tremendous benefits that television holds out to education. With television, the walls of the classroom disappear; every set within viewing range of the signal is a potential classroom. . . . [T]he accumulated riches of man’s educational, cultural, and spiritual development can be spread right before the viewer’s eyes.⁸

The start-up of KUHT drew national attention. NBC’s *Today Show*, a program that had premiered a year earlier in New York, filmed a special four-and-half-minute “Welcome to the Pool” talk by host Dave Garroway to air as part of Channel 8’s dedication. In his casual conversation to the viewers, Garroway stated, “you are pioneering a brand new and complex side of the television picture . . . no one knows what educational television can do . . . you are free to investigate the uses and defects of the most powerful communications medium . . . the one with the most overwhelming social impact and overwhelming social implications that anyone can imagine.”⁹

KUHT-TV officially signed on the air on May 25, 1953, using the Very High Frequency (VHF) Channel 8. This live broadcast originated from the remodeled radio studios on the fifth floor of the University of Houston’s Ezekiel W. Cullen Building. The TV station’s schedule that day consisted of two and a half hours of programming between 5:00 and 7:33 p.m. *It’s Five* host George Arms was the first to greet Houston viewers. The evening continued with Dr. Evelyn Thompson’s *Bookland*; a fifteen minute newscast; *Open House* hosted by UH assistant professor Curtis Rogers; a film on The Toronto Symphony Orchestra; and UH assistant dean of the College of Education Charles White hosting *Experiment in Teaching*.¹⁰ Chief engineer W. T. (Bill) Davis was responsible for the technical side of the station’s operations. KHUT-TV sent those first transmis-



KUHT Dedication, June 8, 1953, (left to right) UH president Dr. Walter Kemmerer, FCC commissioner Frieda Henneck, and UH regent Hugh Roy Cullen.

sions from the top of an on-campus oil derrick originally supplied by Hugh Roy Cullen for transmitting KUHF-FM's signal.¹¹

The first full week of broadcast, May 25 to May 29, consisted of a variety of programs, including assorted episodes of *It's Five*, *Bookland*, *Open House*, and *Experiment in Teaching*. The schedule also included *Viz Quiz*, *Tour of the Studio*, *Jack Armistead's Music Show*, *Spring Quarterback*, a number of commercially available films, and "hostess" segments.¹² Female college students served as hostesses who provided short on-camera interludes that allowed time for set changes between programs. When not on camera, the hostesses joined other students who formed the station operations team led by radio-television faculty.

A March 1954 *New York Times* article painted a gloomy future for KUHT. John Schwarzwald, director of UH's Radio-Television-Film Center, rebutted in an editorial in UH's *The Cougar*, citing numbers from a recent poll taken by another UH department on the area's 200,000 television sets: "It is estimated that of the 200,000 sets, between 145,000 and 150,000 are tuned in to KUHT at least once during a two week period." Based on national averages, Schwarzwald called it a "staggering number of people."¹³

Of the original 242 channels the FCC allocated for use by non-commercial educational television, KUHT-TV was the first station to begin full time broadcasts. KUHT-TV is also singular for its longevity. The nation's second educational station, KTHE-TV in Los Angeles, went on the air in November 1953, then failed nine months later when its benefactor withdrew support.¹⁴

A significant part of the original KUHT-TV staff came to Houston from Hollywood show business. Dr. Wilton W. Cook had worked for David O. Selznick, producer of *Gone with the Wind*. He recruited John C. Schwarzwald, a film music director, to head the station's television film center. Paul Owen, also from Hollywood, was hired as producer/director.¹⁵ Others came to establish the radio and television



GRETA productions allowed KUHT to provide educational content for local children prior to the creation of the Public Broadcasting Service/PBS.

academic department.

From the very beginning, KUHT-TV offered two kinds of programming that commercial broadcasters did not want to air: instructional and enrichment. Instructional television denoted the reason for the station's existence, while enrichment programming catered to special audiences and has now become the foundation for cable television. In the summer of 1953, Dr. Richard I. Evans taught KUHT-TV's first credit course on Channel 8—Psychology 231. Numerous courses in English, foreign languages, sciences, and the arts followed. Experimentation became the norm in those first years. In the fall of 1954, KUHT's schedule included *Metropolitan Farmer*, *Civil Defense*, *Pigskin Pow-Wow*, *Language Hour*, *Classic Piano*, and *The Chemist at Work*.¹⁶

Dr. Harlan Burr Roney taught perhaps the best-known course at the time.¹⁷ His beginning biology course, using models constructed especially for television, was subsequently filmed and distributed nationally via National Educational Television (NET) to other educational stations.

In April 1954, the station presented "3-D Sound," using a creative simulcast technique. Viewers watched the program on KUHT-TV and heard it on KUHF-FM. They were asked to place an FM radio twelve feet to the right of their television set and, for better results, an extension of their television speaker the same distance to the left. UH journalism professor Jim Palmer called the technique the first of its type in the world.¹⁸

In this early period, KUHT-TV also presented live broadcasts of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) board meetings. These meetings proved quite lively because a public chorus applauded, hissed, and booed in response to the board members' actions. As the year progressed, KUHT-TV's ratings soared and the programs received extensive local – and eventually national – press attention. Viewers described the HISD board sessions as the best program on television. In 1956, Dr. Richard I. Evans reported that twenty-six percent of the area's television homes watched at least some part of these telecasts.¹⁹



UH students shown as a camera operator, floor director, and on-air personalities for live KUHT broadcasts.

From June 1955 through May 1956, KUHT provided a total of 1,453 hours of broadcast in its Monday-through-Friday schedule—about twenty-eight hours a week, on average. The total direct expenses for the television and film operations for 1955-1956 were \$211,117. Today, KUHT broadcasts 8,736 hours each year, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, with an annual budget of \$9.5 million.²⁰

In 1957, KUHT developed a sociology project titled *People Are Taught To Be Different* conceptualized by Texas Southern University (TSU) professor Henry Allen Bullock. This co-production featured student performers from TSU working with KUHT's production staff and KUHT director Paul Schlessinger. These innovative films visualized intellectual concepts such as birth, death, aggression, and personalities through interpretive dance. Nationally known artist Dr. John T. Biggers (1924-2001), the founder of the TSU Art Department, was part of this creative team.²¹ The two schools completed twelve nationally distributed films during an era of strict racial segregation.

In 1958, just one year after the launch of *Sputnik I* by the Soviet Union, KUHT-TV produced a multipart series titled *Doctors in Space*. Utilizing rudimentary props made of paper and wire, host and UH associate professor John Rider and his guests envisioned a future in space that included space stations and a space shuttle.²²

In 1959, at the suggestion of the UH Board of Governors, HISD agreed to allow the University to be KUHT's sole licensee.²³

UH applied for and was granted status as a state-supported institution in 1963. Then-president Philip G. Hoffman – who had vigorously supported Channel 8 – found himself forced to terminate the instructional programming because legislators would not allocate funds for broadcast stations. KUHT then had to take on the task of raising all the money for its operations as well as the acquisition of programming through National Educational Television (NET) and other emerging national program syndicators.²⁴

In 1964, KUHT moved from the Ezekiel W. Cullen Building to 4343 Cullen Boulevard. KNUZ - Channel 39, KTRK - Channel 13, and NASA had previously occupied

the site that also included the station's well known Quonset hut, which was constructed for and housed KUHT's film production unit.

KUHT received an extraordinary gift from KHOU-TV, Channel 11 on August 16, 1964. KHOU was relocating its transmitter site and, with the approval of KHOU's owner, Corinthian Broadcasting, gave its old eighteen-acre site and tower in Alvin to KUHT-TV. After installing a new antenna, KUHT's broadcast range extended to an eighty mile radius from Alvin, creating a regional signal covering twenty-three counties.²⁵

Regional broadcast capability gave HISD the opportunity to develop and broadcast courses for grades four through six. With the help of funding from the Texas legislature and the University of Houston, the Gulf Region Educational Television Associates (GRETA) was formed. By 1968, GRETA was providing thirty-five hours of supplementary programming to 460,000 children in KUHT's twenty-three county range.²⁶

In the spring semester of 1965, at the higher education level, Channel 8 presented seven televised classroom lectures including: accounting, biology, English, mathematics and political science.²⁷

KUHT – The PBS Era

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).²⁸ When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act, non-commercial educational television stations from coast-to-coast joined together as independently operated Public Broadcasting System (PBS) stations.

In 1969, UH President Hoffman and Dr. Patrick Nicholson, who had been the principle officers over the University's broadcast properties for some years, initiated the Association for Community Television (ACT), coinciding with the national movement to build support for public television. ACT, now the Association for Community Broadcasting (ACB), remains the station's primary fund-raising arm.²⁹

KUHT took its next step to extend its broadcast range in 1983 when it began transmitting from a 2,000-foot tower in Missouri City. KUHT chief engineer Al Leverick estimated

that this expanded KUHT's service to just under 100,000 additional viewers, and added 2,868 square miles of viewing area.³⁰ The station's viewing radius increased from eighty-miles surrounding Alvin, southeast of downtown Houston, to a radius of 100 miles from Missouri City, located southwest of downtown.

Technical advances and other industry-leading accomplish-



President George H. W. Bush was interviewed for KUHT's Berlin Wall Collection in 2011.

ments have marked the station's history. In 1981, KUHT-TV became the first local station to offer closed captioning. In 1985, it introduced Houston television audiences to high fidelity stereo, further enhancing the viewing experience for fans of *Masterpiece Theatre*, *NOVA*, *the MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour*, *Evening at Pops*, *Austin City Limits*, *Sesame Street*, and many other programs that became household names during those years. That same year, KUHT's special *Child At Risk*, a program that explored the topic of pedophilia, won the station a national Emmy® Award. The station brought descriptive video and other services for the visually impaired to the city in 1991. And on April 14, 1994, KUHT became the first television station in the United States to embrace the Internet when it launched its website on the World Wide Web.³¹

In 2001, Channel 8 produced one of the first PBS high definition children's productions, *Mary Lou's Flip Flop Shop*, starring Olympic gymnast Mary Lou Retton. The first station to offer live Scripps-Howard spelling bee competitions to Houston viewers in 1954, KUHT returned to its roots in 2009 when it became the first PBS station in the nation to act as a local sponsor of the *Scripps National Spelling Bee*.³²

As the new millennium began, the television station moved to its third home, the LeRoy and Lucile Melcher Center for Public Broadcasting, at Elgin and Spur 5, off Interstate Highway 45 South. From the Melcher Center, KUHT continues to provide daily offerings of educational, informative, and enlightening programs, including such lo-

cally produced and nationally distributed offerings as *Space Station*, *A Maestro's Farewell*, *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided*, *After the Wall: A World United*, *InnerViews*, *Living Smart*, and *The Cruiser Houston: Of Pride and Purpose*.

The dream of visionaries in the 1940s and 1950s created KUHT-TV. Six decades later, instructional television, as it is now called, provides a multitude of opportunities for students and employees throughout the greater Houston area and southeast Texas. Whether earning a complete degree via television, retraining for a new job, or receiving instruction to improve a career, thousands of Texans are improving their lives and advancing in their jobs thanks to KUHT-TV. Year after year, the community shows its belief and trust in this organization by providing the much needed funding that allows it to provide its services.³³

James E. Fisher is a third generation Houstonian and graduate of Texas A&M University. A member of the Harris County Historical Commission and the Houston History Association Board, he retired from KUHT-TV in 2012, after a thirty-year career in public broadcasting. His affinity for local history began as a production intern on the films *River of Innocence* and *Elissa: A Crown for a Queen*. In the early 1990s, he became senior producer for special projects at KUHT where he wrote and produced numerous regional history programs including the *Houston Remember When* series, and the Lone Star Emmy nominated programs *The Cruiser Houston: Of Pride and Purpose* and *Our Nation's Highest Honor*.



This Quonset hut was home to the KUHT-TV Film Studio.

Photo courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

The Campus Was Our Country Club

By Don T. Whitaker

I did not realize it at the time, but my childhood was made special by the place my family lived: University Oaks, a small neighborhood separated from the University of Houston campus by Wheeler Street. The houses were well-seasoned, some a bit run down, a few luxurious, the majority comfortably middle class. Families, like mine, chose to live there because the University was a stroll away.

My father was a tenured engineering professor and my mother was a Class of 1944 alumna and a former editor of the *Daily Cougar*. Her mother lived in the second house from Wheeler on Rockwood Drive, where she made her living renting rooms to students. Our house was several doors farther down, a big frame house with iffy architecture, too few window unit air conditioners, and spotty heating. Its location made up for whatever disadvantages it had. Dad could walk to the office, there were cultural and artistic opportunities nearby, a world-class library, and, most important to me, the neighborhood kids had a world of entertainment and wide open spaces on our doorstep.

MacGregor Park and Brays Bayou were nearby, but the local sub-adult population spent its free hours on campus. We rode bikes on tree-shaded sidewalks and spent every summer day at the UH pool, growing overly tanned and testing the patience of the lifeguards, who we knew by name. Over the years, we grew into teenagers there, evolving deep friendships, swimming and enjoying excellent burgers and cherry cokes at the Water Hole. (We scrupulously did not swim for an hour afterward.) We hit the Cougar Den after the pool, at first in the old gym next to the pool, then in the sleek, ultra-modern University Center (UC). It was air conditioned, and it had snacks. Life was good.

As the campus acquired new buildings in the 1960s and 1970s, unsecured construction sites offered places to play. I remember sneaking into the unfinished UC and watching the artist weld the sculpture in the atrium. Magic. (He yelled at us, but we stayed and watched.) Climbing around in the Fine Arts Building, my sister and I encountered possums that turned out to be enormous rats. Somewhat less magical, but, what the hell? As long as we were not caught (or bitten), and our parents did not find out, all was well.

The campus was our country club, and the kids of University Oaks were our social circle. We led average lives with two exceptional differences: the University, and our highly educated parents. Most families in the neighborhood had at least one Ph.D. in the house, and everyone was expected to succeed at school, and, mostly, we did. Weighty



Photo courtesy of Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

talk sessions involved national and international issues (the 1960s were full of them), as well as art and science, and often the adults around us got involved to challenge our preconceptions and opinions. We were encouraged to be little adults, intellectually, and we were. Again, magic.

University Oaks was separated from the world on all four sides, somewhat isolated from the dynamic social changes that went on around us. City green space or University property north, south, east, and west, and the socially progressive attitudes of the professors and their spouses in

the homes, kept the white flight that caused massive demographic change in neighborhoods all around us at bay long enough for cooler heads to prevail. When families of other races began to move in, there was no massive reaction. Most families remained in place, in our place, in our idyllic island of sweet southern scholastic bliss.

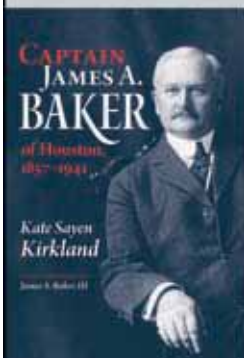
HISD zoning brought change in fall 1970. A few families exited the scene for the suburbs and some, like my parents, opted to stay and put their children in private schools. As I look back on that period now, two things strike me: the surprisingly large number of my neighbors who chose to make a stand for urban multicultural integration by sending their kids to school with people they may have been wary of, and the shockingly narrow world view of the suburbanites I was suddenly in school with.

My parents would not pick up and leave University Oaks for the few high school years my sister and I had left. It was too good an environment for them. They flourished in the social scene and Dad enjoyed walking to campus. In his later years, he did his part for democracy by serving in the civic club. As for me, I tried to make myself move out of the house after high school, but couldn't. I finally left when I was a junior.

The neighborhood looks remarkably the same, today. A few houses have different paint, and the new light rail line took out the entire row of houses that faced Wheeler Street. There are more buildings on campus now and fewer trees, and the pool where I whiled away entire summers is gone. But when I drive through University Oaks to my parents' house, it feels exactly as it did when I was riding a bike, and I hope the kids growing up there know how good they have it. There is a country club next door.

Don T. Whitaker is a sixth generation Houstonian and a second generation UH Cougar. He is married to Jean Miracle Whitaker and is father to Victoria Whitaker.

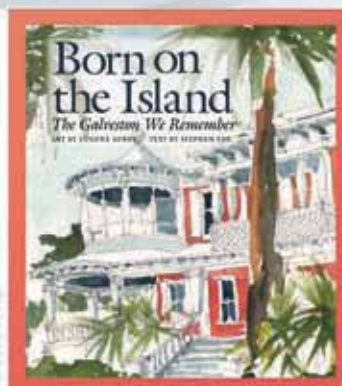
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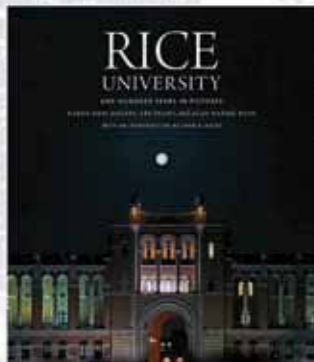
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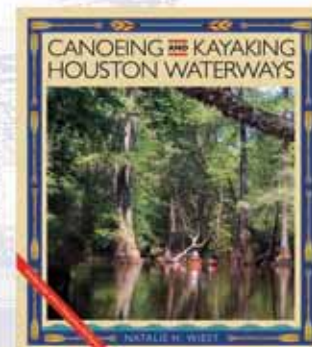
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Moving Forward: Diversity in Area Studies Programs

By Aimee L. Bachari

“The changes have to be made in the mindset of the minority students here. They have a right to this education and they should demand that right be executed by the administration.”
—Gene Locke

I secretly dreaded moving to Houston, even though I knew it was the best option for me. It promised more jobs, more opportunity, and funding for graduate school at the University of Houston. I pictured myself living in a southern city, complete with thick accents and racial slurs. I based this idea of the South on my earlier experience living in North Carolina. I hated it with a passion. Everything moved at a slower pace, and I heard the “N-word” more often than I had in Massachusetts. I was a Yankee in a place where the

Civil War was referred to as the War of Northern Aggression. Luckily, I was wrong about Houston. I enrolled at UH and found myself in a sea of diversity. It took a while to settle into this big city, but now I call Houston and the University of Houston home.

Both places provide opportunities other cities do not. Much more diverse than Boston and surpassing Los Angeles and New York City, the Houston metropolitan area currently ranks number one as the most ethnically diverse region in the



Students in the African American Studies Department can participate in a study abroad program in Ghana, West Africa. While in Ghana, former student and now professor Lamar Johnson (center) and current student Desire Davis (right corner), participate in creating fabric that is on display outside of African American Studies in Agnes Arnold Hall.

Photo by Varsha Williams, courtesy of African American Studies.

nation, according to a report from Rice University's Kinder Institute on Urban Research and the Hobby Center for the Study of Texas that traced the change to desegregation and shifting immigration laws. Laws passed in 1924 and revised in 1952 established immigration quotas based on a percentage of each national group's population in the U.S. according to the 1920 census, insuring two-thirds of new immigrants would come from northern Europe. The quota system controlled race or ethnicity of new immigrants until Congress passed the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965.¹

Mirroring the city's increasing diversity, the University ranks second on the list of the most diverse campuses. Diversity means the inclusion of different types of people; UH is diverse racially and ethnically, but also in sexuality, gender identity, age, ability, and socioeconomic class. With over 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students from around the world and across the United States, UH's current white enrollment is approximately 33% of the student population. But numbers can be deceiving. Some Arab and Central Asian students check "White" on their application forms since "Middle Eastern" is not a category. Therefore, UH is likely more diverse than the ethnicity reports show. Further, Susan Moreno at the Department of Institutional Research explained that students self-report their race on the application, and it was not until the fall 2010 that students could report two or more races.²

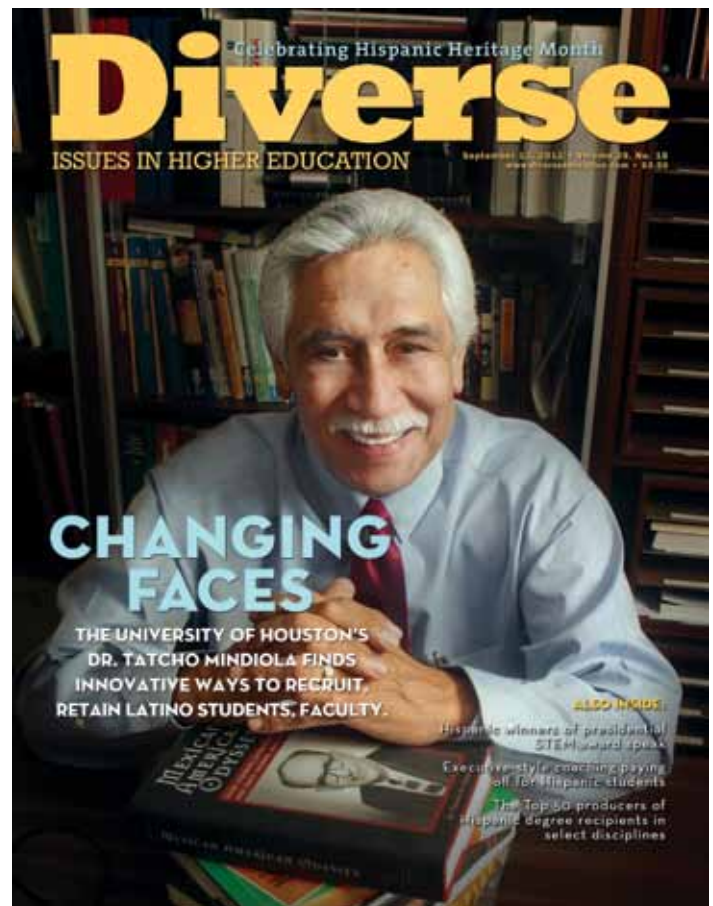
Defining features of the University, its accessibility and affordability, have made the campus attractive to the many migrants who came to Houston to take advantage of its blossoming economy. Since the 1960s, whether from student activism, community pressure, or faculty interest, the University has established at least fifteen area studies departments or centers, allowing for a richer educational experience and reflecting the diverse student body and the Houston population in general.

The University of Houston has come a long way from its founding as an all-white school. Before desegregation, its closeness to Texas Southern University enabled UH officials to exclude African Americans, claiming they had a "separate and equal" college right down the street. UH accepted women, Mexican Americans, and international students, with the exception of those with African ancestry. The exclusion of blacks at UH officially ended in June 1962 when Charles P. Rhinehart became the first African American student. The integration of athletics occurred in 1964, increasing the pool of talented athletes that took UH to the next level. Although black athletes faced discrimination and were not always accepted, the integration of the Cougar's football and basketball teams challenged prevailing racial attitudes and forced other universities to confront their segregation policies.³

Civil rights activities at the University reflected the struggles for equal treatment at the national level. Blacks at UH remained a small minority throughout the 1960s and faced challenges like segregated student organizations and restaurants even though classes were integrated. Thanks to the efforts of the student organization Afro-Americans for Black Liberation (AABL), UH has one of the oldest African American Studies (AAS) programs in the nation. Founded in 1969, AAS led to profound changes for all students of color at UH.⁴

With African Americans fighting for civil rights across the nation, other minority ethnic groups were spurred to follow their example. The Chicano movement fought for equality for Mexican Americans in Houston and beyond. Student groups such as the Mexican American Youth Organization and the League of Mexican American Students at UH supported AABL's desire for an AAS program and subsequently asked for a Mexican American Studies program that same year. The administration delayed their request until AAS was established. The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) became a reality in 1972. Once CMAS secured special funding from the legislature in 1986, it began the visiting scholars program to generate more research on Mexican Americans in Houston and to encourage scholars to remain at UH in tenured or tenured-track positions.⁵

In addition to student activism, community members have also lobbied for area studies departments, as is the case with Italian Studies. Beginning as a few language courses in the 1970s, the program grew to include a minor and major in 1987 when Houston's newly established Consulate General of Italy sponsored a full-time lecturer at UH. Houstonian Baron Ugo di Portanova and his family fund a lecture series, a \$30,000 yearly endowment, and a scholarship for students that allow them to travel to Siena, Italy, for one month in the summer. "Currently, the Italian B.A. at UH enjoys more financial sup-



Featured on the cover of *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* magazine, CMAS director Tatcho Mindiola promotes the Center's attempts to gain and retain more Mexican Americans in all aspects of university life.

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Why support Women's Studies? Just ask UH physics professor Donna Stokes.

Photo by Elizabeth Gregory, courtesy of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.



Sandra Frieden enthralled a standing-room only crowd with her reading of Nellie Sachs's poetry in German and English during the Holocaust Torah case dedication event, M. D. Anderson Library, University of Houston.

Photo courtesy of Jewish Studies.

port from the community than any other language program," explained Alessandro Carrera, professor and graduate director for the new M.A. in World Cultures and Literature.

One year after the landmark decision to hire its first African American woman president, UH formally announced a new interdisciplinary program called Women's Studies, although courses related to women's studies were taught earlier than that. Unlike CMAS and AAS, the program is funded through the dean's office in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS). "We have a budget of \$8,000," said director Elizabeth Gregory. As a result, Women's Studies developed the Friends of Women's Studies in 1993 to help raise funds, which has proved successful. The Women's Archive and Research Center at the M. D. Anderson Library opened in 1996, and a GLBT minor was added in 2009. In 2010, the program changed its

name to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies to better reflect its expanded focus.⁶

The Asian American Studies Center (AASC), established in 1995 in the College of Education, grew out of a vision of students, faculty, administrators, and the Houston community. As an interdisciplinary academic center, AASC's "mission is to generate knowledge, increase awareness and foster rich opportunities for learning about the Asian/Asian American experience." AASC offers a minor, a China study abroad program, research programs, professional training programs, and a visiting scholars program.⁷

New area studies departments are springing up with help from the Houston community and the support of CLASS. Jewish Studies, India Studies, and Arab Studies represent three new programs at UH. With many courses already being taught about Jewish history and religion,

The desire to promote good relations and understanding between Arabs and Americans has had a long history at the University of Houston. Well before the creation of Arab Studies, the Organization of Arab Students took on the initiative throughout the 1960s. Front row—Suhail Misleh, Munther Antar, Sami Rabie, Musa Misleh, Amin Saab, Riad Attar, Walid Kana, Moayad Shanshal, and Wagih Abu-Rish; back row—John Stephan, Ahmed Abushaaban, Ahmad Saidi, Ghaith, and Samir Salameh.

Photo from the 1965 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



Modern and Classical Languages (MCL) has created an interdisciplinary minor available to undergraduate students in Jewish Studies. Under the guidance of its new director, Marie-Theresa Hernández, two entirely new courses in Jewish Studies were created for fall 2012. Beyond the campus, outreach will bring together students, faculty, and the larger Houston community of learners. The long-term goal, to create a Jewish Studies program, will “promote teaching and scholarship focused on history, culture, tradition, languages, and religion, keeping in perspective the global Jewish Diaspora and its intersections with a multitude of world cultures.”⁸

The local Indian community encouraged UH to offer language and religion courses about six years ago. Then dean John Antel, established these classes within the pertinent departments. Last year, CLASS dean John

Roberts created a new department — Comparative Cultural Studies, which combined Liberal Studies, Anthropology, and Religious Studies. “India Studies was the newest, fourth program,” said Assistant Director Anjali Kanojia. India Studies now offers a fifteen hour minor with courses in history, English, economics, religious studies, anthropology, and business, which began in fall 2012.⁹

With increased student demand for more courses on the Arab world and the greater Middle East and with more Arab students coming to Houston to study, MCL hired Emran El-Badawi to direct the new Arabic language program in fall 2011. “Houston is home to a highly educated and vibrant Arab-American community. In recent years the Houston Arab-American community—including the AAEF [Arab-American Educational Foundation] — has expressed their desire to promote Arab Studies at UH,” explained

Making Strides: Diversity on Campus

By Ann Lynd

Before the University of Houston desegregated, international students led the way in diversifying the UH student population. Since 1957, international student enrollment has grown steadily. The first available record indicates 829 international students enrolled in 1968, compared to 3,343 in 2011. Director Anita Gaines suggests that many internationals choose Houston for “favorable educational opportunities, affordable cost of education, location, climate, and economy.” The majority of UH’s international students have come from China, India, Vietnam, South Korea, Pakistan, Nigeria, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Turkey, and Taiwan.¹

At the University of Houston, U.S. student diversity is also at a high compared to past years. In fall 2011, whites represented 33% of students, a drop from 40.5% in 2002. Enrollment among Hispanic students saw the largest increase, rising six points to 23% in the same period. In 2008, the U.S. Department of Education reported that nationwide 63% of undergraduate public university students were white and the percentages of some ethnic minorities were much lower than at UH. In May 2012, the federal government designated UH as a Hispanic Serving Institution, which requires at least 25% of students be Hispanic and 50% or more eligible for need-based aid.²

The University does not solicit detailed information on student race and ethnicity. Many students are of multiple



During International Week in February 1981, Suraj Kalbig from India and Deborah Evans from Jamaica were named Mr. and Miss International.

Photo courtesy of the International Student and Scholar Services Office, University of Houston.

ethnicities, and many students are from backgrounds that are not listed at all. Although students had the option to check multiple races before fall 2010, those who selected more than one race were only counted as one of those chosen. This applied to students who choose multiple ethnicities when enrolling, as well. Today, students can check two or more ethnicities or choose multi-racial, and in either case they will be reported as multi-racial.³

Many view UH as ethnically diverse, but other areas of diversity seem to go unnoticed, such as age, ability, and sexuality. Since approximately 80% of full-time undergraduate students do not graduate in four years, the average age of undergraduate seniors rises. UH also attracts many “non-traditional” students who return to complete their degrees after years of being out of school. The Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center promotes gender and sexual diversity on campus.

Several student organizations joined with the Student Government Association to pass the Gender Expression Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment bill, protecting students from discrimination on the basis of gender expression and identity. The bill calls on the University to apply these principles in all areas, including scholarships and financial aid assistance, employment, and admissions.⁴

Of the seventeen UH presidents, only two have been women. In 1990, UH hired its first woman and first African American president, Marguerite Ross Barnett. She was up

El-Badawi. And with Houston ranked as the fourth largest U.S. metropolitan area and its strong commercial ties to the Arab world, “both UH and Houston naturally lend themselves to Arab Studies.”¹⁰ Having created a minor in Arab Studies, El-Badawi hopes to collaborate with other departments to create a major in Middle East Studies. Meanwhile, he notes, “the minor enables UH graduates to bring some much needed dialogue and understanding between the U.S. and Arab World.”¹¹ As of October 2012, AAEF is \$25,000 shy of its \$1 million campaign to establish an endowed chair in Modern Arab History. It hopes to formally announce that the goal has been reached when UH, AAEF, and the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, open “Patriots and Peacemakers: Arab Americans in Service to Our Country.” The exhibit will be on display at the Alumni Center from March 11 to April 5, 2013. The ultimate goal is to

raise enough funds to support an interdisciplinary Center for Arab Studies at UH.¹²

Since its founding in 1836, Houston has attracted numerous waves of migrants from across the country and around the world. People, like me, come to Houston for a fresh start, to change their lives for the better, for the jobs and opportunities Houston holds in its ever-growing economy. Moreover, people who come to Houston now have the option to attend an affordable state school that is a Carnegie-ranked Tier One research university with numerous area studies departments. In this truly international city, the University of Houston represents one more opportunity Houston affords to all who come here seeking a better life and a brighter future.

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against “older candidates who would have normally been president of U of H—fifty-five year old white guys,” said Joe Pratt who served on the search committee. Dr. Pratt recalled that some believed that Houston was not ready for a black woman to run UH. The committee felt the University was ready and that Barnett represented the best candidate. Unfortunately, due to her untimely death from cancer, she only served two years. The University of Houston’s current chancellor and president, Renu Khator, came to UH in 2008 and is the first Indian immigrant to head a research university in the United States. “My mother never expected anything less of me because I was a woman,” recalled President Khator. “I may have had to cross extra hurdles or jump extra hoops, but in my mother’s eyes, I was not being defined by my challenges but by the way I faced them.”⁵

With increasing diversity in the president’s office and student diversity at an all-time high, the University has recognized the need to reflect this progress at the front of the classrooms. In 2007, 75% of all tenured four-year public university faculty nationwide were white, and UH fared only slightly worse at 79%. Of the 406 professors on campus, 16% were women, which fell far short of the one to one gender ratio of the student body.⁶

In January 2011, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) dean, John Roberts, established the ongoing Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity to develop recommendations for retaining and recruiting a more diverse population of students, faculty, and staff. The committee



UH is the second most diverse campus in the nation. Here, a group of students show off their Cougar pride.
Photo courtesy of the University of Houston.

is comprised of faculty and staff from a wide range of programs, and chaired by Elizabeth Gregory, director of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Their first task involved collecting data on the diversity levels within CLASS and comparing that to university-wide and national statistics. In 2011, although 62% of CLASS students were women, only 39% of tenured faculty were women. Race and ethnicity closely resembled university-wide numbers. White students

made up 42% of the CLASS population, but 77% of tenured faculty were white. Black students made up slightly over 16%, but black faculty was less than 4%. Once the committee has compiled all the data, it will investigate what can be done to increase the number of minority graduate students in fields where they are underrepresented. This in turn will lead to an expanded pool of diverse faculty candidates nationwide.⁷

The ethnic diversity among students and faculty is reflected in the University’s many student organizations, academic programs, and daily life around campus. As the second most diverse campus, UH compares favorably to other colleges and universities across the nation. As UH strives to include more diverse people at all levels of the University, let us celebrate how far we have come.

Ann Lynd is an undergraduate student in public relations at the University of Houston and the social networking coordinator for *Houston History*.

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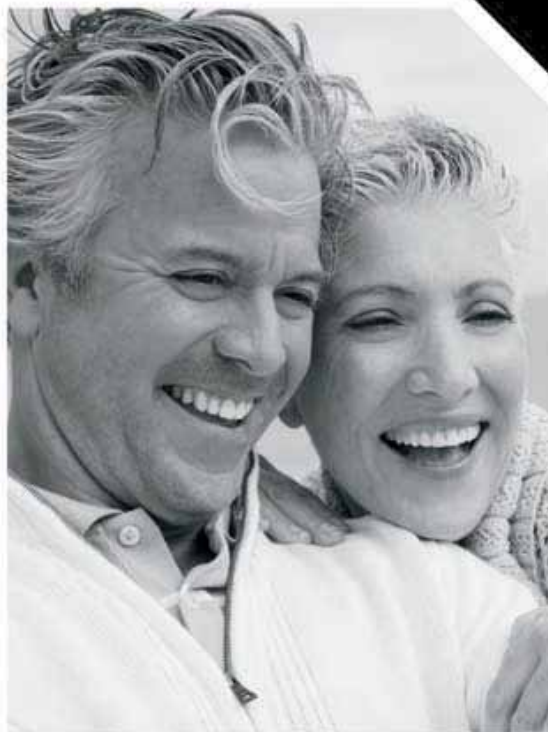
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THE HALL OF HONOR AND THE MOVE TO TIER ONE ATHLETICS

By Debbie Z. Harwell

From its earliest days, the University of Houston rose to the top in athletics—not in football or basketball as you might expect, but in *ice hockey*. The team competed for the first time in 1934 against Rice Institute in the Polar Wave Ice Rink on McGowan Street. It went undefeated for the season, scoring three goals to every one for its opponents. The next year, only one player returned, but the yearbook reported that they “represented a fighting bunch of puck-pushers.” They must have been because the team had no reserves and played entire games without a break.¹

The sports picture changed dramatically in 1946 when the University joined the Lone Star Conference (LSC) and named Harry H. Fouke as athletic director. He added coaches in men’s tennis, golf, track, football, and basketball, and a new director of women’s athletics focused on physical education. Although the golf team took second in conference play and the tennis team ranked fourth, basketball was the sport that electrified the Cougar fans. The team once practiced with a “total inventory of two basketballs left behind by World War II campus Navy recruits, one of them with a slow leak.” But behind the play of center Guy Lewis, who scored a record 54 points in one game, they won the conference.²

In the early 1950s, Regent Corbin Robertson Sr. pointed to “the accelerated development of a successful program of intercollegiate athletics as a *sine qua non* for any young university aspiring to greatness.” His father-in-law, Hugh Roy Cullen, seemed to agree when he announced his gift of \$2.25 million after the Cougars defeated Baylor 37-7 in 1953, stating, “The great spirit and determination shown by the Cougars last Saturday in defeating Baylor fills me with



The 1934 Houston Junior College ice hockey team, left to right: Nelson Hinton, Bob Swor, Lawrence Sauer, Donald Aitken (goalie), Ed Chernosky, Paul Franks, Bill Irwin, Gus Heiss, and Harry Gray. Not pictured John Burns, Erwin Barrow, John Staples, and Bill Goggan.

Photo from 1934 *Houstonian*, courtesy of Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

enthusiasm and prompts me to do something for our great university.” Wendy Adair and Oscar Gutiérrez note in *Our Time: Celebrating 75 Years of Learning and Leading* that even though Cullen’s gift was already in the works, the victory forever became linked to the donation—a forerunner of things to come in collegiate sports.³

Since those earliest days, the University of Houston has built a proud tradition of athletic excellence that unites the Cougar faithful. Nowhere is that more evident than in the UH Hall of Honor located in the Alumni Center. Over

ninety individuals and two teams appear on the list of inductees. Even though the 1934 ice hockey team did not make the list, the roll of honorees takes us on a walk down memory lane.

FOOTBALL

A crowd of 11,000 arrived at Public School Stadium (now Robertson Stadium) on September 21, 1946, for UH's first football game against Southwestern Louisiana Institute. The Cougars lost 13-7, but the fans remained hopeful.⁴ In 1952, the team played in its first bowl game—the Salad Bowl—in Phoenix, Arizona, and defeated the Dayton Flyers 26-21. That year, UH received its first Top Twenty ranking and won the Missouri Valley Conference (MVC).⁵

Coach Bill Yeoman (1962-1986) arrived in December 1961 and set the team on a long-term winning trajectory. He introduced the Veer offense that “change[d] the future of college football forever.” Standout players included Warren McVea (1965-1967) and Wade Phillips (1966-1968). McVea, the school's first African American football player, ran for more than 100 yards six times and ranks tenth at UH in all-time, all-purpose yards with 3,009 yards rushing and a reception in the longest pass in Cougar history, a 99-yard pass from Bo Burris against Washington State. Now defensive coordinator for the Houston Texans, Phillips played linebacker, and his 228 assisted tackles made him the UH all-time career leader. The Cougars reached a milestone in 1968 when they defeated the University of Tulsa 100-6.⁶

In 1971, UH entered the Southwest Conference (SWC) with full competition beginning in 1976, when the football team ranked first in the conference and fourth nationally. In 1976, Wilson Whitley (1973-1976) won the Lombardi Award as the nation's outstanding lineman. He and the defense held the UT Longhorns to twenty-four yards rushing in a 30-0 Houston victory, and the Cougars defeated



Coach Bill Yeoman discussed plays with Garret Jurgajtis during the Cougar's 20-18 victory over the Baylor Bears.

Photo from the 1979 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

unbeaten Maryland 30-21 in the Cotton Bowl.⁷

Yeoman retired in 1986 with a record of 160-108. His teams had seventeen winning seasons. They were ranked nationally eleven times, and won four SWC championships.⁸

Quarterback André Ware (1987-1989) came to UH under Coach Jack Pardee in 1987. Ware set twenty-six NCAA and fifteen SWC records for passing and total offense in 1989 and became the first African American, and the only UH football player, awarded the Heisman Trophy—all without playing a single game on live national television. After playing in the NFL and Canadian Football League, Ware returned to UH in 1996 and completed his degree in marketing. The consummate student-athlete, he said, “This ranks right up there with receiving the Heisman Trophy.” Today, he is a respected football broadcaster, a profession that has given him a front-row seat as recent UH players Kevin Kolb and Case Keenum have continued the tradition of excellence at quarterback.⁹

BASKETBALL

The Cougars won their first ever varsity basketball game against North Texas State Teachers College 62-35, going on to a 10-5 record. Guy Lewis (1946-1947) led the team to the LSC championship in the first two years of competition and played in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) tournament. Lewis (1956-1986) returned as the team's coach and is one of only two Hall of Honor inductees named for their contributions on the field and from the sidelines.¹⁰

Lewis integrated UH athletics in 1964 when he recruited Don Chaney (1965-1968) and Elvin Hayes (1965-1968). Both players are perhaps best remembered for playing in the “Game of the Century.” A crowd of 52,639 made their way into the Astrodome on January 20, 1968, to see the Cougars battle the top-ranked UCLA Bruins. Although Chaney played the full forty minutes, the match-up between Hayes



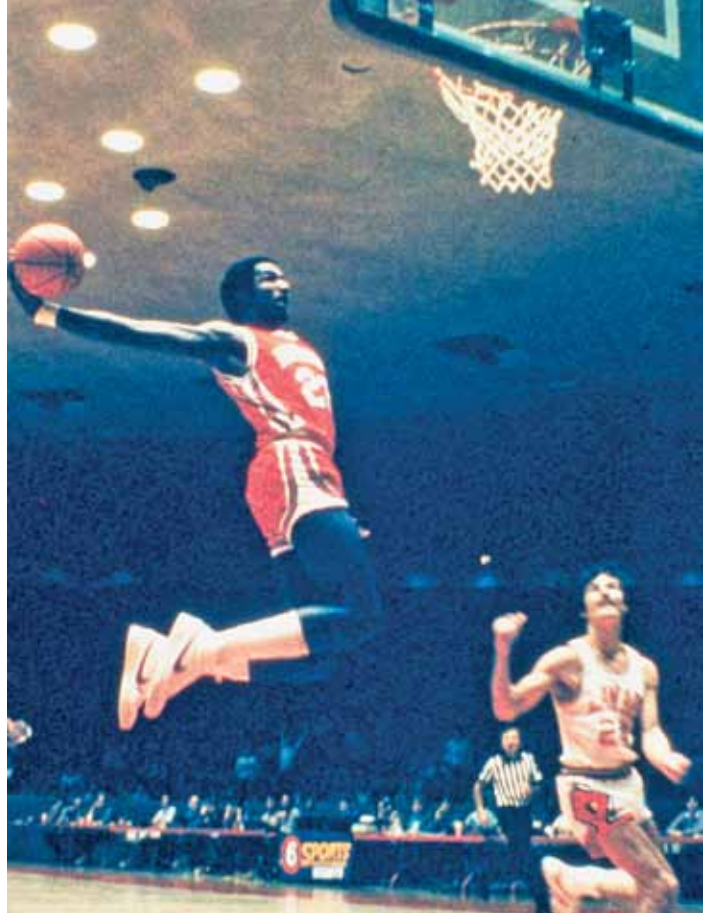
Even though Heisman trophy winner André Ware rarely played more than the game's first half because of the Cougars' high scores, he passed and ran for seventy-five touchdowns accounting for 8,202 yards in total offense.

Photo from 1990 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



“Big E,” Elvin Hayes competes with UCLA Bruins’ Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) for the jump ball at center court in the “Game of the Century.”

Photo from the 1968 *Houstonian*, courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collection, University of Houston Libraries.



Clyde “The Glide” Drexler, called UH’s “most versatile” player, is the only Cougar to accumulate more than 1,000 points, 900 rebounds, 300 assists, and 250 steals.

Photo courtesy of UH Athletics Department.

and UCLA’s Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul-Jabar) drew the most attention. Hayes scored thirty-nine points and made fifteen rebounds, leading the team to a 71-69 victory.¹¹

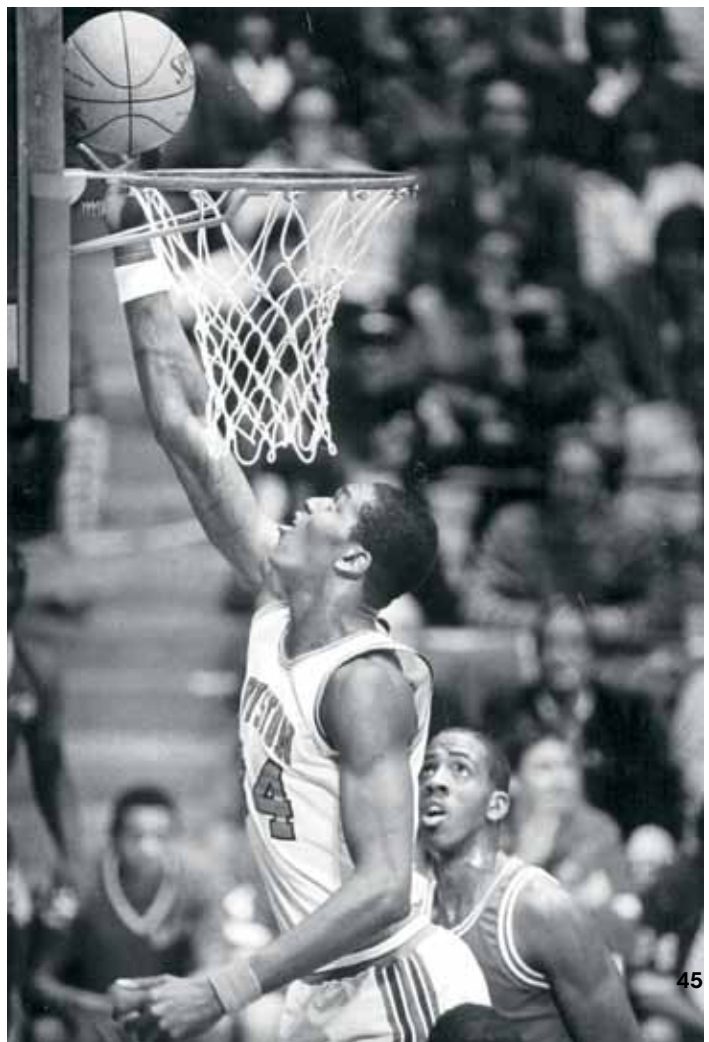
Lewis’s teams in the 1970s included greats like Louis Dunbar (1972-1975) and Otis Birdsong (1973-1977), and in the 1980s, UH basketball again rose to national prominence. *Houston Post* reporter Thomas Bonk coined the term “Phi Slama Jama” to describe “Texas’ tallest fraternity” and its style of play. The team went to the NCAA Final Four in 1982, 1983, and 1984, advancing to the national championship game in 1982 and 1984.¹²

Michael Young (1980-1984), Clyde Drexler (1980-1983), and Akeem Olajuwon (1980-1984) led the team. Young, the current UH assistant coach, is one of three Cougars to score more than 2,000 points during his college career, and the only one to start for four NCAA tournament teams. He led the team in scoring for the 1982-1983 and 1983-1984 seasons, averaging 17.3 and 19.8 points per game respectively. In 1982, Drexler averaged 15.2 points and 10.5 rebounds per game and, the following year, he earned first-team All-America honors after UH ended the year 31-3 and undefeated in the SWC.¹³

Olajuwon came to Houston in January 1981 from Lagos, Nigeria, planning to interview with multiple schools. When

In 1984, the Houston Rockets took Akeem Olajuwon (later changed to Hakeem) as the first pick in the NBA Draft. He led the team to NBA titles in 1994 and, again, in 1995 with Clyde Drexler.

Photo courtesy of UH Athletics Department.



bad weather delayed those meetings, he flew on to Houston. Lewis offered him a scholarship, and the rest is history. Olajuwon was a consensus All-America in 1984 after leading the NCAA with a .675 field goal percentage, 13.5 rebounds, and 5.6 blocked shots per game.¹⁴

Known for clutching his red and white towel on the sidelines, Guy Lewis retired in 1986 as UH's all-time winningest basketball coach. He led the Cougars to five NCAA Final Fours, 592 wins, and twenty-one NCAA Tournaments in thirty years as head coach. Three of his players, Hayes, Drexler, and Olajuwon rank among the NBA's top fifty players of all time.¹⁵

For the Lady Cougars, Chandi Jones (2000-2004) took the C-USA Freshman of the Year honors despite an injury that sidelined her for eleven games. After averaging 27.5 points per game as a sophomore, the Women's Basketball News Service named her its Comeback Player of the Year. She was named C-USA Female Athlete of the Decade, Women's Basketball Player of the Decade, a member of the C-USA Women's Basketball All-Decade Team, and a first round pick in the WNBA draft. Now the Lady Cougar video coordinator, Jones became the first UH woman to have her jersey retired.¹⁶

TRACK AND FIELD

Some UH victories have come from unexpected heroes, such as Al Lawrence (1960-1963). After winning bronze at the 1956 Olympics, the Australian native came to UH where, at age twenty-eight, he won the national collegiate cross-country championship and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) title back to back, a first in the sport. He led the UH track team, consisting of two fellow Australians, a Pole, and a Scot, to two team titles, the first all-foreign team to do so, and the oldest at an average age of twenty-six. Coach Johnny Morris (1955-1975), who is credited with bringing indoor track to Houston, guided them to victory and three MVC titles.¹⁷

When Tom Tellez (1976-1998) joined UH as the head coach for track and field, he brought his knowledge of biomechanics, which applied scientific principles to human anatomy. Tellez explained, "There are not ten different ways to run fast, there is only one way, and the coach has to teach the athlete what that way is."¹⁸ His methods succeeded across the board for both men and women.

Carl Lewis (1980-1981) stands out as Tellez's most accomplished athlete. After having his Olympic hopes dashed in 1980 by the U.S. boycott of the Moscow Games, he began training with Tellez for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. There, Lewis won four gold medals, tying Jesse Owens's 1936 record. Lewis went on to win four more gold medals and one silver at Olympics in Seoul, Barcelona, and Atlanta, where his gold came in the long-jump at age thirty-five.¹⁹

As a freshman, Leroy Burrell (1986-1990) broke Lewis's UH record in the long jump. He twice set the world record in the 100-meter dash and, in 1990 and 1991, ranked as the world's best sprinter. In addition to numerous NCAA long-jump and 100-meter championships, Burrell joined with Lewis, Mike Marsh, and Dennis Mitchell to win gold in the 4x100-meter relay at the Barcelona Olympics.²⁰

Tellez added women's track and field to UH's athletic



Joe DeLoach, Coach Tellez, and Carl Lewis at the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988. DeLoach won the gold medal in the 200 meters, and Lewis won silver in the 200 meters and gold in the 100 meters and long jump. Photo courtesy of UH Athletic Department.

program upon his arrival. Among the standouts are Carol Lewis (1982-1985), Carl's sister, and Third Ward native Jolanda Jones (1985-1988). Carol Lewis won a gold medal at the 1981 World University Games in the 4x100 relay, eleven national titles in the long jump at both indoor and outdoor meets, and a bronze at the 1983 World Athletic Championships. Jones won three SWC high jump championships and still holds the UH record. In 1989, she won her third heptathlon title, the prestigious NCAA Top Six Award, and GTE Academic All-American female athlete.²¹

Tellez coached Olympic medalists Kirk Baptiste (1983-1985), Joe DeLoach (1987-1988), and Frank Rutherford. He led the Cougars to SWC and C-USA championships and received multiple recognitions as both men's and women's indoor and outdoor coach of the year before retiring. Burrell took over the program in 1998 and has already been named C-USA Coach of the Year a combined sixteen times.²²

SWIMMING AND DIVING

In 1957, swimming and diving coach Phil Hansel (1975-1996) put an ad in the *Daily Cougar* to find swimmers for his fledgling team. After gathering some talented athletes, he learned the program had been dropped because UH lacked an indoor pool. Instead of quitting, he coached the students at the YMCA. In 1959, he entered swimmers in the AAU championship, where they competed as the University of Houston Swim Club and finished second.²³

From this club came UH's first student-athlete to appear on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, Olympic medalist Carin Cone (1958-1960). The "queen of backstrokers," Cone set four world records and twenty-four American records and won sixteen U.S. Senior National championships while helping lead the Cougars to their second place finish at the 1959 AAU championships.²⁴

UH opened a swim natatorium in 1969 and reinstated the swimming program in 1971, naming Hansel as the men's coach. In 1975, Hansel added a women's team and took them to ten consecutive Top Ten finishes with a combined 120 All-Americans.

Diane Johannigman (1978-1981) became the first UH athlete to win an Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AAIW) national championship and the first to



Yulia Pakhalina and Anastasia Pozdniakova won a silver medal in the 3-meter springboard synchronized diving competition at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Photo courtesy of UH Athletics Department.

do it three consecutive years. She ranked in the world's Top Twenty in the 100-meter butterfly, 200-meter butterfly, and 100-meter backstroke and continues to hold fifteen times in eight events, ranking in UH's ten fastest times.²⁵

Hansel built the foundation for today's swimming and diving program, guiding UH to more than seventy dual meet victories and ten Top Twenty finishes. He trained UH champion diver Jane Figueiredo (1983-1986) who took over as the women's diving coach in 1990. Still at the helm, she has been named C-USA Diving Coach of the Year every year since its inception, C-USA Swimming and Diving Coach of the Decade-2000s, and NCAA and NIC Diving Coach of the Year multiple times.²⁶

Figueiredo's champions include Yulia Pakhalina (2001-2003) of Penza, Russia, and Anastasia Pozdniakova (2006-2010) of Elektrostal, Russia, the only UH athletes to be named NCAA Diver of the Year. In 2001-2002, Pakhalina had a thirty-six-event winning streak, taking 64 of 66 collegiate diving events. She won six Olympic medals in synchro-



Swimmer Carin Cone became the first student-athlete from the University of Houston to appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated, April 18, 1960. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1984.

Photo from 1960 *Houstonian*, courtesy of Digital Library, Special Collection University of Houston Libraries.

nized diving and the 3-meter individual springboard in 2000 and 2004. At the 2008 Beijing Games, Pakhalina took the silver in synchronized diving paired with Pozdniakova, who holds more C-USA Athlete of the Week honors than any other individual in conference history.²⁷ With the Cougar women divers leading the NCAA with eight national championships in the last eleven years, they appear poised to continue the winning traditions.

GOLF

During his tenure at UH, Dave Williams (1952-1987) built a world-renowned golf dynasty for the Cougars while, coming to be known as the "Father of Collegiate Golf." Originally an engineering professor, Williams earned this distinction by inventing the scoring system used by the NCAA and conferences nationwide and for introducing team uniforms.²⁸

The victory of Rex Baxter Jr. (1955-1957) at the 1957 NCAA Golf Championship brought UH its first national championship in any sport. Over the years, many of Williams's protégés took their skills to the PGA, including Homero Blancas (1960-1962), Kermit Zarley (1961-1963), Marty Fleckman (1964-1966), John Mahaffey (1968-1969), Bruce Lietzke and Bill Rogers (1970-1973), Keith Fergus (1973-1976), Fred Couples (1977-1980), and Billy Ray Brown and Steve Elkington (1982-1985). In 1992 when Couples won the Master's, his UH teammate and sports broadcaster Jim Nantz anchored the tournament's coverage.²⁹



Under coach Dave Williams, UH won sixteen national championships, fourteen conference titles, seven individual championships, and over 340 tournaments.

Photo courtesy of the Digital Library, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

BASEBALL

The University's fourth baseball coach, Lovette Hill (1949-1974), built a strong baseball tradition at UH. His teams won 343 games, taking the MVC championship five times. The Cougars went to the NCAA College World Series in 1953 and returned in 1967 after a come-from-behind play-off victory over the University of Texas. The team, which included future major leaguer Tom Paciorek (1966-1968), advanced to the finals, but lost to Arizona State.³⁰

Before following Hill as the Cougars coach, Rolan Walton (1975-1986) distinguished himself as a student-athlete. He hit .300 or better in his first three seasons and was the team's first Most Valuable Player in 1951. He remains UH's second winningest coach with 378 wins and a .616 winning percentage. One of Walton's star pupils, Doug Drabek (1981-1983), led the Cougars to their first NCAA regional appearance in 1982. He pitched six shut outs and one no hitter at UH before the Chicago White Sox drafted him. He saw his best success with the Pittsburgh Pirates (1987-1992), winning three division titles and the 1990 Cy Young Award after going 22-6 with a 2.76 ERA.³¹

OTHER HONOREES

Hall of Honor inductees have made contributions to UH athletics beyond the high profile sports as well. The University named John E. Hoff (1946-1966) its first tennis coach. Under his tutelage, Jason Morton (1948-1951) won championships in singles and doubles in three conferences: Lone Star, Gulf Coast, and Missouri Valley. In the early 1970s, he opened the University Club, Houston's first indoor tennis facility and chaired the "Battle of the Sexes" match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs in the Astrodome.³²

Sue Garrison (1945-1979) pioneered UH women's athletics as they competed in softball, basketball, badminton, volleyball, track and field, and swimming and diving. Long before Title IX, her efforts resulted in the University being one of the first schools to dedicate funds to strictly women's sports. Garrison became the first woman administrator elected to the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Hall of Fame.³³

The accomplishments of many women athletes can be attributed to Garrison's advocacy, including volleyball stars Flo Hyman (1974-1976), the first female inducted into the Hall of Honor, Rita Crockett (1977), and Rose Magers-Powell (1978-1980). In the 1984 Olympics, the three UH women led the USA volleyball team to a silver medal, its first medal in the sport.³⁴

Working behind the scenes, athletic trainer Tom Wilson (1953-1993) tended to UH athletes for forty years—includ-

ing hundreds of All Americans, five Final Four teams, and twelve bowl game teams—and crafted the football conditioning program nicknamed "Camp Fun." Wilson was named to the Athletic Trainers Hall of Fame, and in 1991, UH established an endowed scholarship for distinguished service in his honor.³⁵

The University of Houston has a proud athletic heritage dating back to that first hockey team, but college sports today is dramatically different than it was then. Athletic victories garner national media exposure that leads to higher enrollment and increased giving. Echoing the words of Corbin Robinson Sr. a half century earlier, UH President Renu Khator argued in 2010 that "building the strongest athletics program possible is a key element of a Tier One university." Calling for the University's acceptance to a BCS conference, she noted that UH's case was strong in academics and athletics as Texas's third largest public university with a supportive alumni base located in the tenth largest television market. In 2011, the goal was realized when UH officially joined the Big East Conference. With plans for a new football stadium and renovated basketball arena, UH athletes will play in one of the largest, most diverse Division I conferences in the country, bringing new stories of accomplishment to the Hall of Honor.³⁶

Debbie Z. Harwell received her Ph.D. in history from the University of Houston and is managing editor of *Houston History*.

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Blaffer Art Museum entrance,
Gala, September 21, 2012.

Photo by Fulton Davenport, courtesy of
Blaffer Art Museum.

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: THE UH PUBLIC ART COLLECTION AND BLAFFER MUSEUM

By *Debbie Z. Harwell*

As the University of Houston has made its push for Tier One status, what many people do not realize is that since the 1960s UH has been building a Tier One art collection that is one of the city's best kept secrets. With the campus in the midst of a building boom in 1966, the Board of Regents and President Phillip Hoffman pledged to dedicate one percent of future construction costs to acquiring works of art. The first state institution to make such a promise, UH recognized that works of art both beautified the campus and enhanced the University's prestige.

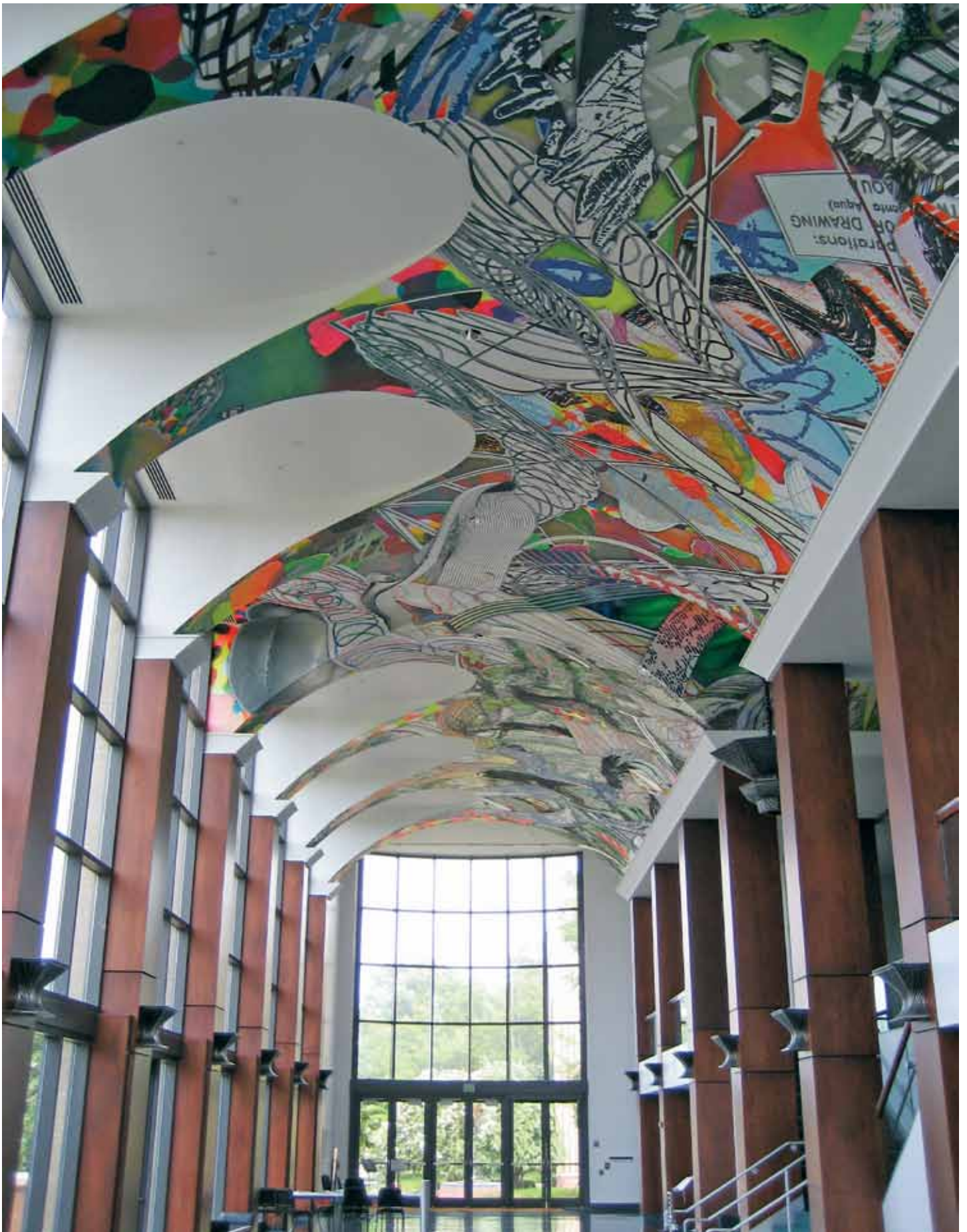
Found boldly marking the outdoor landscape as well as tucked away inside campus buildings, the public art collection traces artistic trends over the last half century and features the work of artists in a variety of mediums. The acquisitions began with the *Orbit I* and *Orbit II* by Masaru Takiguchi and include Frank Stella's mural *Euphonia* commissioned for the Moores Opera House, and the recently installed *Statue of Four Lies* by UH alums, The Art Guys. Almost 300 pieces of public art can be found on the main campus with another 150 at locations throughout the UH System.

In 1973, the University dedicated a new Fine Arts Center and, with gifts from Sarah Campbell Blaffer, expanded the University's support for art appreciation and art education. The next year, Blaffer Museum director, Richard Stout, reinstated the Houston Area Exhibition, a juried

competition previously held by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. This event continues to be held every four years, representing the pulse of Houston's art community. In 1976, the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation initiated a traveling exhibition program that has featured exhibits of internationally renowned artists such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, and Willem de Kooning. In addition, the museum showcases the works of local artists, faculty, and students.

In October 2012, the University completed a \$2 million renovation of the Fine Arts building and Blaffer Art Museum, creating a premier exhibition space. The opening exhibition features the first comprehensive presentation of sixty works by unorthodox American sculptor Tony Feher spanning twenty years of his career. A fully-illustrated monograph on Feher's work with essays by Russell Ferguson, chair of the Art Department at UCLA, and Blaffer's director and chief curator, Claudia Schmuckli, will accompany the exhibition.

The best kept secret in Houston's art world awaits you. The new Blaffer Art Museum space will soon include a courtyard lounge, a stage, a screen for outdoor film screenings, and a café offering locally-produced food and indoor-outdoor seating. All exhibitions are free and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information on the public art collection and a map of selected works, visit www.uh.edu/uh-collection/.



Frank Stella, *Euphonia*, 1997, collage on ceiling
Location: Moores Opera House Lobby

All photos by Michael Guidry, courtesy of University Public
Art Collection unless otherwise noted.

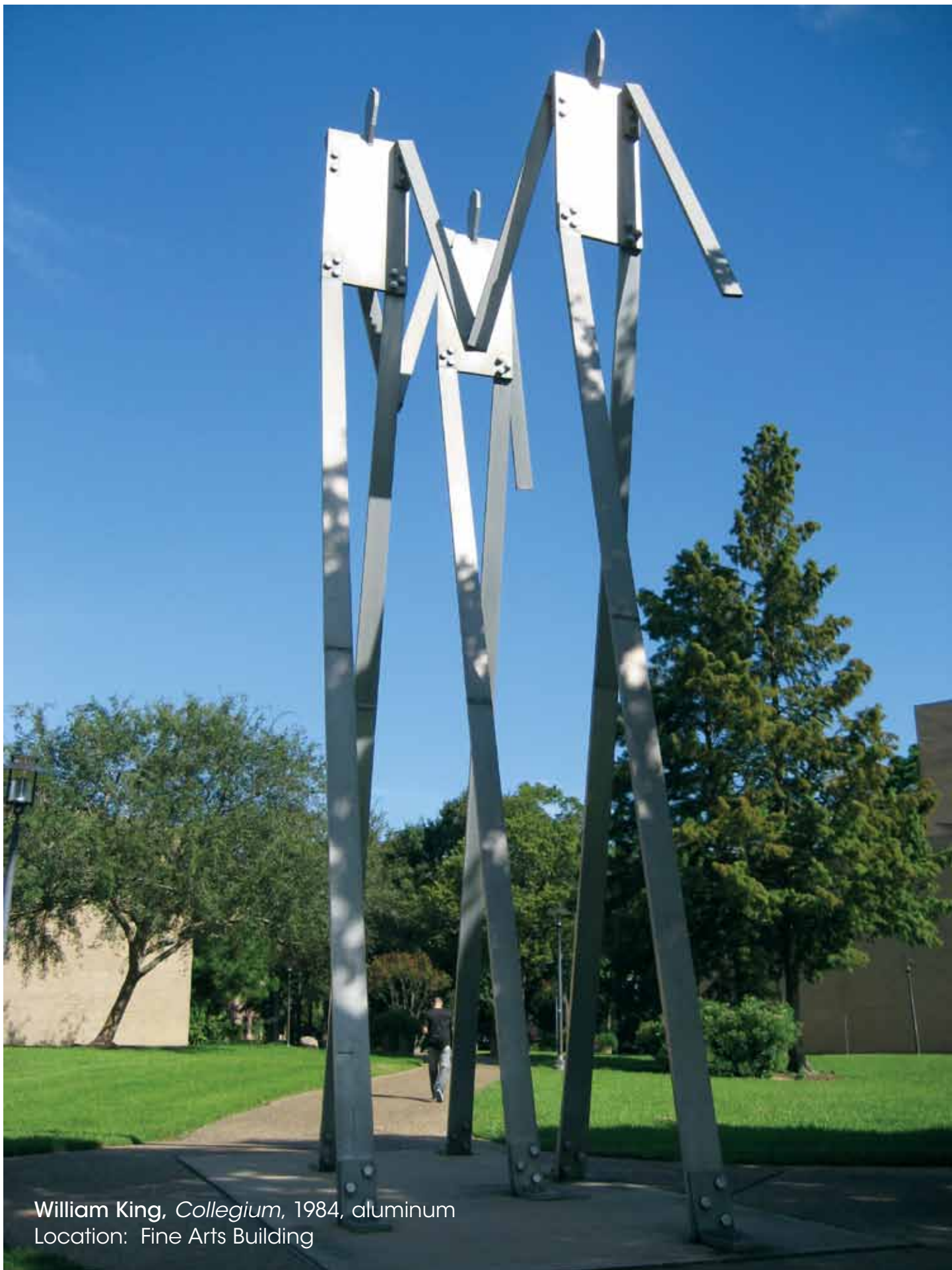


Les Cubistes, The Russian Invasion, 2010, Archival pigment print
Location: Roy Cullen second floor hallway, group of ten photographs

Photo by MANUAL, courtesy of University Public Art Collection.



Lawrence Argent, Your Move, 2010, bronze and granite
Location: Calhoun Lofts courtyard



William King, *Collegium*, 1984, aluminum
Location: Fine Arts Building



The Art Guys, *The Statue of Four Lies*, 2010, bronze, stone, concrete, accompanying Codex house in Special Collections
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Alyson Shotz, *A Moment in Time*, 2005, glass beads and monofilament
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Randy Twaddle, *Shine and Rise*, 2007 (detail), charcoal on canvas
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Masaru Takiguchi, *Orbit 1*, 1968, camphor wood
Location: Science and Research Building



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at the San Jacinto
Museum of History

Visit the Monument
and walk in the
footsteps of history

Open Daily
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

For information &
reservations, call
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www.sanjacinto-museum.org

San Jacinto Battleground
State Historic Site



MAP
TEXAS
With Parts of the Adjoining States
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