Big dreams for future

UTEP begins another academic year with much to celebrate. More than 20,000 students have arrived on our campus, filled with big dreams, and the talent and drive to accomplish them. New faculty and staff members have joined the UTEP family, sharing with experienced colleagues a strong commitment to help our students achieve at the very highest levels and foster standards of excellence in research, scholarship and the arts.

Among the many reasons for our excitement about the coming year is recent approval by The University of Texas System Board of Regents of $50 million in Permanent University Fund bonds to construct a new health sciences complex on or contiguous to the UTEP campus. This state-of-the-art facility will replace the existing College of Health Sciences building—the former Hotel Dieu Nursing School dormitory on Campbell Street—whose age, configuration and distance from the UTEP campus have created major inefficiencies for students and faculty, and restricted the future growth of our health professions education and research programs.

UTEP ranks among the top three universities in the U.S. in the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Hispanics in the health sciences, and we play a key role in helping prepare students to meet the ever-increasing demand, both locally and across the nation, for highly skilled healthcare professionals, especially those who are bilingual/bicultural. The proposed new health sciences complex, which will provide much-needed new space for learning and research, represents a giant step forward in UTEP’s ability to accommodate the increasing demand from students to pursue health care careers, and from health care organizations throughout this region to recruit UTEP health professions graduates. In relocating the College of Health Sciences to the UTEP campus, we will also provide students with greater and more convenient access to campus services and facilities, thus enabling them to participate more fully in university life.

We thank UT System Chancellor Mark Yudof, Chairman James Huffines and all the members of The UT System Board of Regents for this major vote of confidence in UTEP and the region we serve.

This marks the Board of Regents’ second multi-million dollar investment in UTEP facilities in as many years. In 2006, the University received $43.6 million in PUF bonds, which together with $76 million from the Texas Legislature, will enable us to complete a major transformation of the science and engineering facilities at the heart of the UTEP campus. Shelled space in the new Bioscience Research Building and Engineering Annex will be finished; we will break ground in 2008 for a new $65 million facility at the south end of the Engineering Annex to house Chemistry, Computational Science and several other interdisciplinary engineering and science programs; and we will upgrade and refurbish existing facilities, including Physical Science, Engineering and Biology buildings. We even have plans to spruce up the arroyo that runs through the center of the campus.

2006 was the year of “Glory Road” and the inspiring story of UTEP’s 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship, which we continued to celebrate this year with the induction of the 1966 Miners into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, the first college team to be so honored. 2007 has been the year of the equally inspiring story of NASA astronaut and UTEP alumnus John “Danny” Olivas and his flight on space shuttle Atlantis, STS-117. Danny celebrated his pride in being a UTEP Miner by wearing a UTEP shirt and unfurling a UTEP flag as he circled the earth on the International Space Station, and signaling a Miner pick to all of us during his space walk. Thanks to Danny, we are proud to be able to proclaim that UTEP is one of a very few universities on this planet to have established an alumni chapter in space!

We invite all of you to participate in the exciting progress that UTEP has already achieved and learn more about our big dreams for the University’s exciting future. Homecoming 2007 may be the perfect occasion for you to do just that. It’s a great opportunity to greet old friends, meet new faculty and staff members, visit our many new facilities—including the only Bhutanese-style parking garage on the planet—and cheer the UTEP Miner football team on to victory in the Sun Bowl!

We look forward to welcoming you to the campus on October 8-13 for Homecoming 2007. Go Miners!

Diana S. Natalicio
UTEP President
6 Miner Fever
With our increasing accomplishments in academics, research, athletics and more, we’re sizzling hot! What better way to celebrate than with Homecoming 2007: Miner Fever. Check out the events calendar and more!

8 Honored Alumni
Our 2007 recipients of the Distinguished Alumni and Gold Nugget awards are testament to the quality of the university.

FEATURES

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A successful exercise program is helping older alumni stay fit in their golden years – and become health ambassadors along the way.

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Alumnus Robert Malone says UTEP gave him the tools to succeed, and is in turn opening doors for future generations of Miners to achieve their goals.

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Miner on the Move has music in her heart; message from incoming Alumni Association president; and more.
by David Peregrino

It's a creature fit for a horror movie. Giardia, a microscopic parasite, lives in the wild as a "cyst," protected by an egg-like shell. It floats by the millions in contaminated water, waiting for an unsuspecting person to take a gulp.

Hitting warm stomach acid, the cysts transform into trophozoites, bugs as weird looking as their name. Swimming through the gut, the parasites attach to the intestine's cells and feed, triggering giardiasis – an ailment that causes nausea, severe stomach cramps, diarrhea and other digestive miseries.

In UTEP's Department of Biology, a team of researchers led by professor Siddhartha Das is working to unlock the secrets of the parasite, in hopes of finding better treatments for giardiasis. The disease affects more than 20,000 people a year in the United States, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I've seen a lot of people who had been infected. It's a serious problem, particularly for children and elderly, who easily get dehydrated," says Hernandez, who completed her Ph.D. in biological science and pathology at UTEP in May.

Das' team of researchers includes students at the undergraduate and graduate level. The group is part of the Infectious Diseases and Immunology Unit at the university's Border Biomedical Research Center. The majority of the unit's work takes place in specialized laboratories within the university's new Bioscience Research Building.

Currently, giardiasis is treated with anti-bacterial and anti-protozoal drugs that kill off the infection by disrupting the parasite's DNA structure. Unfortunately, the therapies can cause side effects that make a person feel worse, and doctors are also seeing increasing cases of drug-resistant giardiasis.

The UTEP team is working to develop new and improved treatments by taking advantage of one of the parasite's weaknesses—a inability to produce its own lipids—fatty acids—for energy and biosynthesis. Giardia survives in the intestine by feeding off the lipids of its host, stealing nutrients to support its cyst-trophozoite-cyst lifecycle.

By learning how giardia metabolizes lipids, it may be possible to eliminate the parasite by robbing it of its fatty-acid energy supply, the researchers say.

"We are looking for unique metabolic pathways that can become targets for new therapies against giardia," Das says. Harsh side effects from drugs can be
Professor Siddhartha Das and a group of undergraduate and graduate students work in the Infectious Disease and Immunology Unit at the university's Bioscience Research Building.

"We are looking for unique metabolic pathways that can become targets for new therapies against giardia."

- Siddhartha Das

researchers over the Web. The site indicates the researchers are nearing completion of the parasite’s entire genetic sequence.

“We have enough information in place now so that we can share it with the research community, so more can be working on parts of the puzzle,” Aley says.

To Das’ team, the genome database has proved to be a valuable tool, revealing unusual protein structures that could make good targets for drugs or vaccines.

Hernandez says she’s energized by the thought that her research could someday help thousands of people around the world avoid the misery of giardiasis.

“Some of the last treatments for giardiasis came out decades ago … anti-fungal drugs that sometimes make you feel worse,” she says. “What motivates us is the possibility of developing new treatments that specifically target this parasite and are less harmful to the cells around it.”
Participants in the university’s Golden Age exercise program walk to improve their core strength and balance.

by Laura Cruz

The idea of doing cardio exercises or lifting weights was a strange notion for Jean Turley, who says she never “genuinely” exercised a day in her life.

“The equipment alone was overwhelming,” says Turley, 74.

A friend persuaded her to join Physical Fitness in the Golden Age, an exercise program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

“I thought it was a good idea, not only for my body, but also for my mental health,” says Turley, a realtor who signed up for the program in August 2006.

The Golden Age program assists people age 60 and older develop or maintain an exercise program to preserve their motor skills and prevent accidents.

“It’s important to stay active, especially as you grow older because after the age of 30 your physiological functions, including your muscle mass, bone density and cardiovascular functions, start to decline,” says assistant professor of kinesiology Sandor Dorgo, Ph.D., who designed the program with his colleague George King, Ph.D. “By not being an active person, you’re jeopardizing your quality of life.”

Funded by a grant of about $35,000 from the Paso del Norte Ageless Health Initiative, the program began in January 2006 with 30 participants who were recruited through the UTEP Alumni Association and worked out at the university’s Swimming and Fitness Center.

“We’re extending our lives through exercise.”

— program participant Jerry Prewitt

The program now has about 180 participants. Among them is Jerry Prewitt, a 1964 UTEP grad who says he has quickly became a devotee.

Prewitt, 66, says, “I’ve had people come up to me and say, ‘You’ve lost weight.’ I say, ‘I haven’t lost any, it’s just been repositioned.’”

Fellow alumna Katherine Vandenburg, 62, says she’s become stronger and more agile.

“My cardiovascular system is better. What used to be a strain on the treadmill is now simple, so I have to ramp it up,” the 1977 graduate says. “A side benefit is the social aspect. We’ve all bonded and we’re having fun while we’re here.”

The participants have three weekly training sessions where they work on strength, cardio training, speed, agility, power and balance.

“Our specific idea was not to gather a bunch of older adults and train them to be healthy and fit, but instead to create a new model called the Fitness Ambassador Model,” Dorgo says. “The 30 individuals we recruited trained to be role models of successful aging.”
Under the Fitness Ambassador Model, seniors who have participated in the program are asked to invite others to join, and then work as peer coaches.

The seniors are trained with the help of four undergraduate research assistants, three program supervisors and about 30 students from a kinesiology course titled Fitness Programs and Appraisals.

"We’re preparing the students for their professional life, especially those students who plan to work with older adults," Dorgo says.

The program is housed at the Ross Moore building, which was recently renovated to serve as a fitness and strength and conditioning research facility. The renovations were made possible by financial support from the university, Library Equipment, Repair and Rehabilitation Funds, and a fundraising campaign.

Dorgo says he would like to involve recreation centers throughout El Paso in the program with the help of the UTEP Ambassadors.

"I know I plan to continue doing this for the rest of my life," says Turley, who has lost 10 pounds, reduced her osteoporosis risk and is no longer afraid of falling. "This is not just for right now. It’s forever."

"By not being an active person, you’re jeopardizing your quality of life."

— assistant kinesiology professor Sandor Dorgo, Ph.D.
MINER FEVER

HOME COMING 2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information, or additional times and events:
Alumni Relations Office, 915/747-8600
or alumni@utep.edu (unless otherwise noted)

www.homecoming.utep.edu

ACADEMICS. RESEARCH. ATHLETICS.
WHEN IT COMES TO STUDENT SUCCESS,
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO IS SIZZLING HOT.

WE BOAST NEARLY 20,000 STUDENTS, 80,000 ALUMNI,
$46 MILLION IN ANNUAL RESEARCH SPENDING, AND
160-PLUS ACADEMIC DEGREE OFFERINGS.

AS WE COUNTDOWN TO HOME COMING 2007, WE
CELEBRATE THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUR LONG-
STANDING TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF OUR FRIENDS AND OUR FANS,
OUR TEMPERATURE IS SURE TO KEEP RISING.

MAIN EVENTS

ALUMNI. STUDENTS. FACULTY. STAFF. SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS

UTEP Alumni Open House
Monday, Oct. 8 to Friday, Oct. 12
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

UTEP Alumni Association
10th Annual Ron Harvey Golf Tournament
11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10
Fort Bliss Underwood Golf Complex
$4000 per team; $110 per person;
$100 hole sponsorships available
Proceeds benefit the Ron Harvey Endowed Scholarship

Homecoming Parade
Noon, Friday, Oct. 12
Oregnore Drive and University Avenue
Info: Tonya Dawson, 915/747-5670 or tdawson@utep.edu

UTEP Alumni Annual Lunch at the Lodge
1 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center patio

Homecoming Pep Rally
1:15 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Undergraduate Learning Center patio
Info: Yvonne Carranza, 915/747-8621 or ycarranz@utep.edu

Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner
6:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Honoring this year’s Distinguished Alumni and Gold Nugget award recipients

UTEP Alumni Association Pre-Game Parties
3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
Alumni Village on Glory Field
and Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

Business Administration
Gold Nugget Reception
4:30 – 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11
Business Administration Building, Lobby, First Floor
Info: Shari Schwartz, 915/747-7728 or sschwartz@utep.edu

Education
Gold Nugget Breakfast
8-11 a.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Tomáš Rivera Conference Center, Union Building East, Third Floor
Info: Noni Silva, 915/747-5783 or mesilva@utep.edu

Tailgate Party
Noon – 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 13
Heritage House lawn (across from College of Education)
Info: Noni Silva at 915/747-5783 or mesilva@utep.edu

English Department Reception
2-4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11
Hudspeth Hall Foyer
Info: Ceci Lewis, 915/747-6240 or clryhm@utep.edu

Department of Philosophy
Alumni Open House
11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Worrell Hall, Room 203
Info: Lorena Chavez, 915/747-6617 or lchavez10@utep.edu or www.utep.edu/philos

History Department Wine and Cheese Reception
4-6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Liberal Arts Building, History Lounge, Room 321
Info: Paul Edison or Edith Yanez, 915/747-5508 or pedison@utep.edu or eyanez@utep.edu

Communication
Department Brunch
10 a.m. to noon
Saturday, Oct. 13
Cotton Memorial Lawn
Info: Pat Witherspoon or Rosie Antillon, 915/747-6285 or withersp@utep.edu or roantill@utep.edu

Political Science
Department Awards Ceremony and Barbecue
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 13
Benedict Hall Front Lawn (casual dress)
Info: Mona Segura, 915/747-7968 or rsegura@utep.edu or academics.utep.edu/politicalscience

College and Department Events
Alumni Band: Marching Band Rehearsal
3-4 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 13
Bring your instrument and wear your UTEP colors. (If you need an instrument, please contact the Band Office pby Oct. 6.)

Alumni Band: Party and Business Meeting
4-5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
Fox Fine Arts Center, Room 101
All former musicians, flags and Goldiggers are welcome

Alumni Band: March and Halftime Performance
6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
(depart from Fox Fine Arts Center, Room 101)
Info: 915/747-5665 or ctredway@utep.edu

Science
Gold Nugget Breakfast
9-10:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Geology Reading Room
Info: Juan Camacho, 915/747-5536 or jcamacho@utep.edu

Gold Nugget Tailgate
3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
Bell Hall Lawn
Info: Juan Camacho, 915/747-5536 or jcamacho@utep.edu

Mathematical Sciences
Annual Alumni Coffee
10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 13
Bell Hall, Room 125
Info: Lanna Ladewig, 915/747-6551 or ladewig@geo.utep.edu

Geology Brunch
9-11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
Geology Building, Room 310
Info: Sandy Ladewig, 915/747-6551 or ladewig@geo.utep.edu

University College Tailgate
2-6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
Academic Services Building Courtyard
Info: Becky Duran-Levy, 915/747-6106 or rduran@utep.edu

Student Activities
Student Competitions
Monday, Oct. 8-Thursday, Oct. 11
For a complete listing of student competitions, visit www.homecoming.utep.edu
Info: Shannon Osborne, 915/747-5670 or soborne@utep.edu

Lip Sync
Noon, Wednesday, Oct. 10
Union Plaza
Info: Shannon Osborne, 915/747-5670 or soborne@utep.edu

Homecoming Parade
Noon, Friday, Oct. 12
Oregon Drive and University Avenue
Info: Tonya Dawson, 915/747-5670 or tldawson@utep.edu

Homecoming Pep Rally
1:15 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Undergraduate Learning Center patio
Info: Yvonne Carranza, 915/747-8621 or ycerranz@utep.edu

Student Government Association
Info: SGA Office, 915/747-5584 or sga@utep.edu

SGA Pageant
6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 7
Magoffin Auditorium

SGA Party
9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Location: TBA

Athletics
Information: John Matsko, 915/747-6912 or jematsko@utep.edu

Football Game - UTEP
Miners vs. ECU Pirates
7:05 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13
Sun Bowl Stadium
For tickets call: 915/747-5234

Miner Varsity Club
Golf Outing
7:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Santa Teresa Country Club

Miner Varsity Club
Happy Hour
4-7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Hilton Garden Inn El Paso, Pavilion Lounge

Miner Varsity Club Tailgate
5 p.m. Saturday, Oct/ 13
Glory Field

UTEP Bookstore
UTEP Bookstore on campus and the Miner Store at 1452 N. Zaragosa
Info: 915/747-8934 or lfpadula@ utep.edu or www.utepbookstore.com

Homecoming T-shirts available starting Wednesday, Sept. 26

Football Apparel and Gifts Special
Monday, Oct. 8 to Saturday, Oct. 13
10% to 20% discount on all football gear

Heritage House
Exhibits: Class of 1957 Memorabilia; Hal St. Clair Sports Collection
10 a.m. - noon, Wednesday, Oct. 10 to Friday, Oct. 12; and
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13

Miner Morning Mania
Enjoy a special breakfast and show your Miner pride LIVE ON TV! The Marching Miners, Goldiggers, Cheerleaders, Homecoming Court and other Miner fans will be part of the morning mania.

5-8 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10
Larry K. Durham Sports Center parking lot
Info: Nacho Cubillos. 915/747-8244 or icubillo@utep.edu

Golden Grads
For info on all Golden Grads events: Alumni Relations Office, 915/747-8600 or alumni@utep.edu

Golden Grads Reunion Weekend
Thursday, Oct. 11 - Saturday, Oct. 13

Golden Grads Campus Tour
9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 11
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

Class of '57 Welcome Luncheon
Noon, Thursday, Oct. 11
Geology Reading Room, Geological Sciences Building, Room 310

Golden Grads Dinner and Dance
6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11
Ardovino's Desert Crossing

Cedric Hustace Art Exhibit and Reception
10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Centennial Museum

Golden Grads Annual Lunch at the Lodge
1 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center Patent

Golden Grads Luncheon, Honoring the Class of '57
Noon, Saturday, Oct. 13
Tomás Rivera Conference Center, Union East Building, 3rd Floor
A class photo will be taken.

CATCH IT!
An unpredictable life
From teller to CEO, May cherishes career

by Kimberly Miller

Harriet May bubbles with enthusiasm when she talks about the unexpected things that have happened in her life. May grew up in El Paso, graduated from Ysleta High School in 1967 and earned a bachelor's in mathematical sciences from the University of Texas at El Paso in 1971.

While at UTEP, she married Kenneth May, an Army captain stationed at Fort Bliss. May predicted a life traveling the world.

"I was like, 'Yes! Finally I get out of El Paso. Yes!'" she says.

But after three consecutive assignments in El Paso, it became clear that the couple was here to stay.

When her husband left the Army to sell insurance in El Paso, May's 33-year journey to her current position as president and chief executive officer of GECU began in another unexpected way.

"My co-worker convinced me to come apply here, real arm-twisting" May recalls. "So, I came here and the rest is history. I came here as a teller and I worked my way up."

Though it wasn’t the path May had planned for herself, she has enjoyed every step of it.

"I tell my employees all the time: When I started here, I figured I'd be here for five years," she says laughing. "In 1988, though, it became clear. I was basically told what my career path would be. And it was absolutely amazing what it turned out to be."

May is being honored this fall as a 2007 Distinguished Alumni.

The credit union has seen May through the birth of two children, the death of her son and the arrival of two grandchildren.

Thanks to her work, May, 58, has had the honor of attending the inauguration of former Mexican president Vicente Fox and has testified before the House Ways and Means Committee. Earlier this year, she met with President George W. Bush at the White House to discuss financial education.

She is also a member of an international group dedicated to spreading the credit union philosophy around the world.

"You come home from these things and say, 'How have I been so fool lucky? That is so cool," she says. "I've had a blast."

The only time May's exuberance slows is when she talks about the people her bank serves. The passion is the same, but her tone is reserved.

"It's about meeting the needs of the members. It's opening the doors and watching people come in. It's helping people through good times and bad times," says May.

That same passion is evident when May talks about higher education.

A former UTEP Alumni Association board member, current chair of the university's Science Advisory Board and the UTEP Founders, May advises students to put their education first.

"The first thing I always say to my students is find a way to finish school. Finish your degree," says May, who was honored as a Gold Nugget Award recipient in 2000.

She advises that students pursue hobbies that may help them in the future. For May, that hobby is golf.

"I'm the worst golfer in the world," she explains, "but I've learned to play golf because networking takes place on the golf course."

She also tells the students not to spend too much time worrying about where life will take them.

"The skills you learn in school, no matter what you study, as long as you study," she says, "will help you in the rest of your life."
Lucky No. 7: Microsoft Pioneer
One of ‘first 11’ leads remarkable life, career

by David Peregrino

Because of those wisecracking guys in Hudspeth Hall, Texas probably lost one heck of a high school coach. But the world gained a great mathematician, businessman and technology pioneer when Robert “Bob” O’Rear switched his major from physical education to math soon after enrolling at Texas Western College (now UTEP) in the early 1960s.

The young man from the Texas Panhandle made history as one of the first employees of Microsoft and the project leader for the company’s legendary MS-DOS personal computer operating system.

O’Rear will be honored as a 2007 Distinguished Alumnus during Homecoming festivities this fall.

O’Rear is married to Catherine “Cathy” O’Rear and has a son, David O’Rear.

Now 64 and retired from Microsoft, O’Rear laughs when he recalls his days living in the Hudspeth dorm. As a P.E. major with dreams of becoming a high school tennis coach and teacher, he endured relentless teasing from his hall-mates, many of whom were on an engineering track.

They were “taking pretty tough courses … they were already into calculus and they were really having a tough time, complaining a lot and making fun of my major and how easy I was going to have it,” O’Rear says. “I got teased enough to the point where I said, ‘I’ll take calculus and show you guys it’s not that hard.’ So I took it and really enjoyed it, and changed my major.”

Coming from humble roots as the son and grandson of Texas farmers, O’Rear says he didn’t have much guidance when it came to higher education. So he appreciated the support of math professors Vladik Miculka and Charles Gladman, who took an interest in their talented student.

“As I was getting closer to graduation, (Gladman) made sure that I made an application to Graduate School,” O’Rear says. “He even helped me get a couple of part-time jobs while I was finishing up summer school, and then helped me with the application to go to the University of Texas. Off I went.”

After earning a master’s in mathematics from UT Austin, O’Rear embarked on a remarkable professional career. He worked for a space and defense contractor on NASA’s Apollo program, helping make the calculations for the computer program that guided the command module back to Earth. He watched from Mission Control as Neil Armstrong took his first step on the moon.

“It was really exciting,” O’Rear recalls. “It was tailor-made for young persons back in those days. You worked really hard leading up to and through the mission and had a big party afterwards … it was very much like the Microsoft experience I would come across later on.”

In 1977, O’Rear heard from a friend that a couple of young guys from a software start-up in Albuquerque, N.M., were looking to hire a mathematician. These budding entrepreneurs were none other than Bill Gates and Paul Allen, who needed some help developing products for their company, Microsoft.

O’Rear became the seventh employee of the company, which soon relocated to Washington. At Microsoft, O’Rear led the development of MS-DOS, the operating system used on the original IBM PCs and the many PC clones that followed. Microsoft soon enjoyed phenomenal success thanks to the licensing of its MS-DOS product.

O’Rear fondly remembers those days when that small group of programmers cranked out the code that would revolutionize personal computing.

“We got along great. They were easy to get along with. They were just really, really smart, everybody there,” O’Rear says. “It was really fun to be around and developing things right on the edge with what could be done with microcomputers.”

O’Rear continued to be a part of the success of Microsoft, eventually helping to open company offices in Europe and other countries overseas. He bid farewell to the company in 1993.

Though he makes his home in Washington, O’Rear maintains his ties to Texas through an 11,000-acre ranch he co-owns with his brother. He also keeps busy with commercial property development in the Austin area.

O’Rear says he’s looking forward to returning to UTEP, having last been here in 2003 to present a Millennium Lecture.

“I can see (UTEP) is a very successful university — they have so many more areas of study now, so many students,” he says. “Of course, I’m nostalgic about the older days … it was my time there.”

O’Rear during a Millennium Lecture at UTEP in 2003

O’Rear, second row left, in this now famous 1978 photo featuring the first 11 employees of Microsoft, including Bill Gates, bottom row left

2007 Distinguished Alumnus
Novelist finds inspiration in life
Professors enriched writing, university experience

by Laura Cruz

Like the travels in his most famous novel, John Rechy’s journey to success began in El Paso. “But it should begin in El Paso, that journey through the cities of night. ... And it begins in the wind. In a Southwest windstorm with the gray clouds like steel doors locking you in the world from Heaven,” writes Rechy, a graduate of Texas Western College (now UTEP), in City of Night.

An El Paso-born writer and playwright, Rechy is regarded as one of America’s most courageous novelists. A controversial story about a young gay man’s journey through major cities in United States, City of Night was published in 1963 and is said to have opened the doors to gay fiction.

“This is a novel about America. It is a novel about loneliness, about love and the ceaseless, furtive search for love,” Rechy writes about his first novel. Now the author of 15 books and two plays, Rechy credits his success to dedication, perseverance and the “sensational teachers” he had at Texas Western Press (now UTEP).

“I got an education that I would be proud to rank against anyone else’s at the time. I had brilliant teachers at the college, really brilliant,” says Rechy, 76.

“Everything that I learned there helped me continue on in life,” Rechy says. “It enriched my writing. Dr. C.L. Sonnichsen was there when I was there, and so was Dr. Milton Leech. I remember all these extraordinary people.”

The special collections department at the UTEP Library is named after Sonnichsen, an English professor at TWC and renowned author of 34 books. Leech, a professor of drama and speech, is credited for helping preserve a grassy area at the center of campus during his tenure as vice president.

Rechy, who earned a bachelor’s in English from TWC in 1952, is being honored this fall as a 2007 Distinguished Alumnus. “This award is an enormous pleasure. This distinction gains added resonance because it comes from my hometown... from my university,” says Rechy, a graduate of El Paso High School. “It’s absolutely thrilling.”

For his work, Rechy has received PEN USA West and Triangle Publishing Lifetime Achievement awards, and was awarded the first ONE National Gay and Lesbian Culture Hero Award. He is also a 2003 Gold Nugget Award recipient from the College of Liberal Arts.

From an early age, Rechy knew he wanted to go to college to become a writer. But money was tight. It wasn’t until he was awarded a $50 scholarship from the El Paso Times that he was able to enroll at Texas Western.

“You have to remember that this was 1949, so at the time $50 was not as little as it seems to be today,” he says. “The scholarship didn’t get me my books, but my brother Robert gave me the money for my books, which I bought secondhand.”

Rechy joined the Army following his graduation from Texas Western. When he returned to the civilian world two years later, he traveled across the country from Los Angeles to New York.

What began as a letter to a friend about his experiences in New Orleans evolved into City of Night, an international best seller. The novel is now used as a teaching tool in contemporary-literature courses throughout the nation.

Rechy’s upcoming work is titled About My Life and the Kept Woman: Autobiographical Memoir. The book recounts about 40 years of Rechy’s life experiences beginning with a childhood memory about a proud and notorious woman who was kept by a rich Mexican politician.

Now living in Los Angeles with his partner Michael Earl Snyder, Rechy says he’s happier than ever with his life. But he says his journey hasn’t been easy – a message he works to get across to other young authors.

“In my master’s class, I have young writers and I warn them that writing is a very, very difficult profession,” says Rechy, who lectures part time at the University of Southern California. “What I attempt to do is make them committed to their work so they can make it the best possible ... give them the strength to face the monstrous ‘nos’ that are out there greeting virtually every writer. It is very difficult, but it is also very rewarding.”
Honoring achievement, success

Each year, UTEP and the Alumni Association recognize exceptional graduates from each college and school who have given back to their communities and alma mater.

We honor these Gold Nugget Award recipients for their achievements and success.

Maria E. Alvarez
College of Business Administration
BBA, 1986
COO and Senior Vice President
ELM Resources, Inc.
Notables: Former National Secretary and Executive Committee Member, National Society of Hispanic MBAs;
Advisory Committee member, Inter-University Program for Latino Research; 100 Hispanic Influentials for 1995, Hispanic Business magazine

Richard O. Martinez
College of Engineering
BSME, 1979
Deputy Director, Future Forces Division
White Sands Missile Range
Notables: National Past President, Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists;
Member, El Paso Public Service Board; Ex-officio member, El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Randy W. de La Garza
College of Liberal Arts
BA, 1969
President and CFO
De la Garza Public Relations, Inc.
Notables: Board of Directors, Leadership Houston; Board President, Taping for the Blind; 1990 Professional Woman of the Year, Women’s Profession Association of Houston

Eric J.C. Chan
College of Business Administration
BBA, 1978
Founder and CEO
Magnum Co. Ltd.
Notables: Entrepreneur, golf course and real estate development; Member, Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Panel (Hong Kong); Chairman, Incorporated Owners of First Commercial Building Committee (Hong Kong)

Pamela M. Perez
College of Health Sciences
BA, 1984; MS, 1985
Director
Elinor Zind Early Childhood Intervention Program
El Paso MHMR
Notables: Second Vice President, El Paso Speech and Hearing Association; Member, American Speech and Hearing Association; Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Committee (appointed by Gov. Rick Perry)

Corine Prieto
College of Science
BS, 1968
President
Integrated Geophysics Corp.
Notables: Executive Board, Advisory Board of Spaulding for Children; Member, Society of Exploration Geophysicists; Member, American Association of Petroleum Geologists

Clem Mejia
College of Education
BEd, 1973; MEd, 1976
Ret., Regional Superintendent
Kane County (Ill.) Regional Office of Education
Notables: Governor’s Literacy Advisory Board; Past President, Illinois Association of County Officials; Vice Chairman, Kane County (Ill.) Child Advocacy Board

Henry A. de La Garza
College of Liberal Arts
BA, 1971
Chairman and CEO
De la Garza Public Relations, Inc.
Notables: Public Relations Society of America; Past Vice President, Houston Chapter, PRSA;
Recipient, Silver Anvil Award, PRSA;
Recipient, Excalibur Award, Houston Chapter, PRSA

Patricia Duran
School of Nursing
BSN, 1979; MSN, 1997
Assistant Vice President
Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer
Providence Memorial Hospital
Notables: Member, Texas Organization of Nurse Executives; Member, Emergency Nurses Association; Member, American Nurses Association
IN THE SPOTLIGHT
STUDENT AND FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

AARON VELASCO
It wasn’t an interest in earthquakes that inspired Associate Professor Aaron Velasco to pursue seismology.
It was fear.
As a first-year graduate student at the University of California, Santa Cruz, he found himself five miles from the epicenter of the Loma Prieta earthquake that shook the San Francisco area in 1989.
“It was terrifying,” he recalls. “but it was wonderful for a young scientist to be so close.”

EVA MARGARITA MOYA
Eva Margarita Moya has spent nearly 25 years working to improve the health of the border’s most underserved people.
She has fought for improved policies and worked with health educators in the border’s poorest communities. Currently the Tuberculosis Division Director for the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association, Moya has held key positions in the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission and in community health centers in Texas and Arizona. She was named one of the Top 10 Latinos in Health by Latino Leader’s National Magazine in 2004.
“It’s been a service-oriented life,” she reflects. “My passion is this border.”
Now 44 years old, Moya is back in the university’s classrooms and labs pursuing a Ph.D. from the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences program. She received a bachelor’s in social work from UTEP in 1981, and holds a master’s in social work from the University of Texas at Austin.
Through her work, Moya has visited and studied borders around the world. Her decision to come back to UTEP to pursue her doctorate was an easy one.

“What better way to give back than to invest in my community this way? It was a natural decision.”
As a doctoral student, Moya has been honored for her work with tuberculosis patients, being recognized by the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association. It is work that combines her dual passion for health and the border.
“You can’t expect a virus to carry a visa,” she says. “In health matters, borders don’t divide people; they unite them.”

Photos by J.R. Hernandez

His fear turned to inspiration, and over the years, achievement. The only United States-born Latino seismologist in the country, 42-year-old Velasco has conducted research across the globe: from the Rio Grande Rift outside El Paso to the Himalayas in Bhutan to the Denali Fault in Alaska.
Now he has his sights set on expanding his research to the Alps in Austria.
The geological sciences professor has also received grants from Los Alamos National Laboratory and the National Science Foundation and has published numerous papers. He is the president of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science and was recently invited back to his alma mater to serve as speaker at the graduate division commencement and was honored as a Distinguished Alumnus.
Beyond his research laboratories, Velasco has earned the respect of his students.
“Grants and papers are important, but when you impact one student,” he says, “that’s the coolest thing.”
I made up my mind that when the day came, I would give UTEP the same help.

— Robert Malone

FRIENDS AND VISIONARIES
ALUMNI HELP STUDENTS DREAM, ACHIEVE

by Laura Cruz

As a young boy, Robert Malone would often spend his Saturdays with his father, Vince Malone, checking the operations of the iron ore mines of East Texas.

"During those times we would discuss science and engineering, and I became fascinated with metallurgy," says Malone, chairman and president of BP America Inc., one of the world’s largest energy companies. "By the time I reached high school, it was not a matter of whether I became a metallurgical engineer, only where I would go to receive the education."

Malone left the lush green town of Daingerfield, Texas, and fell in love with sun-scorched El Paso and the University of Texas at El Paso, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in metallurgical engineering in 1974. He received a master’s degree in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

But his dream of becoming an engineer might not have come true if he had not received financial aid, scholarships and teaching assistant positions at UTEP. Malone pledged to give back to his alma mater.

"I made up my mind that when the day came, I would give UTEP the same help," Malone says.

In 2002, Malone established the Bob and Diane Malone Annual Scholarship with a personal gift and additional matching funds from BP America, Inc., the nation’s largest producer of oil and natural gas, and second-largest gasoline retailer.

Malone also credits the support of his wife Diane for his success. Together, Malone and Diane support numerous education-related charities to help future generations of students succeed.

"UTEP gave Bob a great foundation and education, so anything we can do to help, we’ll do," Diane says. "Our heart is back home in El Paso."

The Bob and Diane Malone Annual Scholarship supports College of Engineering students like 19-year-old Todd Dorethy.

"I’m really grateful for their contributions to UTEP," Dorethy says. "Once I’m able to, I would also like to give back. It’s only fair to help others when you’ve been helped."

Dorethy recently thanked the Malones for their support in person. The Malones were honored for their support of arts and culture, health care, education and the well-being of children with the KCET Visionary Award in Los Angeles. Dorethy was invited to attend the gala.

"We get wonderful thank you letters from our scholarship recipients, but we had never met any of the students," Malone says. "It was very emotional. He made us so proud."

The Malones are members of two prestigious giving societies at UTEP: the University Founders and President’s Associates – 2014 Society. In 2003, Malone received the university’s Distinguished Alumnus Award, and in 2004 he served as commencement speaker.

"I will always stay involved in UTEP’s future," he says. "You’ll see me and Diane continue to participate in everything."

Engineering student Todd Dorethy with scholarship donors Robert and Diane Malone
REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

With a down-to-Earth attitude, astronaut John “Danny” Olivas excitedly talks about his journey beyond the stars aboard space shuttle Atlantis.

“The sensation is euphoric. It’s the best feeling in the world to float into space.”

The 1989 UTEP mechanical engineering grad was part of a mission STS-117 crew that attached a new set of solar wings to the International Space Station in June. During his second spacewalk, Olivas repaired a thermal blanket on the shuttle.

Olivas returned to El Paso in late August. Olivas’ welcome home included visits to his old stomping grounds in area schools, and a parade and pep rally at UTEP, where he also delivered a lecture detailing his journey.

But more than stories about his space travel, Olivas delivered inspirational messages to all those who now consider him their hero.

“I wasn’t rich, I wasn’t super smart and didn’t come from a privileged background,” he says.

At UTEP, he reminded students that the university gave him the foundation necessary to succeed. Beyond that, he said, it’s up to each student to persevere. After all, he says, he’s no different than any other student in El Paso or at UTEP.

“I’m just a reflection of what you are.”

NEW HEALTH SCIENCES COMPLEX

Construction of a new health sciences complex at UTEP has been approved by the UT System Board of Regents.

The new state-of-the-art facility will replace the existing College of Health Sciences building located outside the main UTEP campus. The new building will be located on or contiguous to campus and near other major health-care facilities.

UTEP President Diana Natalicio said the new building will greatly improve the university’s capacity to address enrollment pressures in health sciences and the growing demand for health professions graduates.

The complex will also increase and upgrade space available for health-related research; improve access to main campus facilities and services; and strengthen collaboration between faculty in the College of Health Sciences and other colleges.

The board in August allocated $50 million in bond proceeds from the Permanent University Fund for the project, one of the largest allocations of such funds for UTEP. An additional $10 million in grants and private funds must be raised to complete construction of the facility — bringing the total cost of construction to $60 million.

The Regents approved the allocation for the new UTEP complex as part of a $177.2 million initiative for 13 capital projects at several UT System institutions, largely funded by bond proceeds from the Permanent University Fund.

HEALTH, NURSING RANK TOP IN NATION

A leading education magazine ranks three health-related programs at UTEP among the top in the nation in graduating Hispanics, demonstrating the key role the University plays in boosting the number of quality, professional minorities entering the high-demand field of health care.

For the second year in a row, the UTEP School of Nursing ranks fourth in the nation in awarding nursing degrees to Hispanics, according to a June 2007 issue of Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education magazine. UTEP ranks sixth in awarding degrees in rehabilitation sciences, which include physical and occupational therapy and speech-language pathology.

Also ranking fourth is the UT Austin Pharmacy School, where about 85 percent of Hispanics earning pharmacy degrees are UTEP students enrolled in the UTEP-UT Austin Cooperative Pharmacy Program.
ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAMS AMONG AMERICA’S BEST

UTEP’s entrepreneur programs are among the best in the nation, according to Fortune Small Business Magazine.

The magazine’s Americas Best Colleges for Entrepreneurs issue selected UTEP for its family business programs and “double majors,” interdisciplinary studies-blending business skills with other subjects such as engineering.

“The Center for Hispanic Entrepreneurship is one of several programs that caters to El Paso’s large population of family-owned Hispanic businesses. There is also a Family Business Forum, which holds quarterly sessions on topics ranging from sibling rivalry to family finances,” FSB states.

The programs are coordinated by the university’s Centers for Entrepreneurial Development, Advancement, and Support.

For more information, visit http://organizations.utep.edu/cedars

INTELLIGENCE CAREER OPTIONS

Students in the four-week camp explored future intelligence career opportunities, and learned about computer security, intercultural communications, political science, international economics and geography. The camp was sponsored by the UTEP’s Institute for Policy and Economic Development.

Under the Intelligence Center, students pursuing any degree at UTEP will be able to earn a certificate in Intelligence and National Security by taking additional courses in foreign languages, regional politics and policy. UTEP’s Graduate School will offer a graduate certificate in Homeland Security this fall, and a graduate certificate and master’s program in Intelligence and National Security are being developed.

The Intelligence Center at UTEP is funded by an initial $500,000 grant awarded in 2006 by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and is renewable for up to $2 million.

GRANT HELPS CONNECT RESEARCHERS, EDUCATORS WORLDWIDE

The National Science Foundation has awarded UTEP a $5 million grant to create a Cyber-SHARE Center of Excellence that will help educators and researchers around the world share information and significantly advance their studies.

Researchers at the center will develop software programs, integration software services and tools to help other researchers and educators better gather, derive and compute millions of pieces of data over the Internet for use in scientific studies.

Sharing resources through cyberinfrastructure to Advance Research and Education, or Cyber-SHARE, is funded by the foundation’s Centers for Research Excellence in Science and Technology.

The Cyber-SHARE Center will involve at least 60 college students in cyberinfrastructure and science research and at least 300 high school and middle school students and teachers in outreach programs.

BORDER SECURITY CONFERENCE

More than 400 security, intelligence and law enforcement professionals from across the nation attended the 4th annual Border Security Conference at UTEP in August.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff was among numerous prominent national and international leaders who discussed security strategies and technologies, drug trafficking, international partnerships and more. Other keynote speakers during the two-day “Securing and Managing our Nation’s Borders” conference were Admiral James G. Stavridis, commander of the U.S. Southern Command, and Mike McConnell, director of national intelligence.

One of the nation’s top spies spoke publicly for the first time after a 30-year cover. Jose Rodriguez, director of the National Clandestine Service for the CIA, discussed the importance of diversity in the intelligence field.

Diversity is one of the reasons why UTEP is uniquely poised to become the leading center of research in border security and defense, immigration and policy studies and international border studies.

UTEP President Diana Natalicio said the university’s emerging role in the security and intelligence fields extends from faculty researchers with unique expertise to talented students who daily have “a front row seat” in understanding border issues.
STEPPING INTO HISTORY

by David Peregrino
photos by J.R. Hernandez

The Texas Western College 1966 NCAA championship team stepped onto the stage — and into history — as part of the Class of 2007 of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in September.

Addressing the Enshrinement Ceremony audience on behalf of the team, senior captain Harry Flournoy explained that at the time, the Miners' only goal during that legendary season was to be the best team in the country.

But after becoming the first team ever to start five black players in an NCAA championship, the significance of their historic 72-65 win over an all-white Kentucky team soon became apparent.

Flournoy said the game put an end to the often unspoken yet often believed conceptions of the time—that black players couldn't play disciplined ball; that blacks couldn't step up to lead a team.

“We had had to break that. We proved that a farce, a fallacy,” Flournoy says. “When we see the diversity in today's game, it does our hearts good.”

The ceremony was one of many highlights of the recent Enshrinement Weekend in Springfield, Mass., which also featured events for the presentation of Hall of Fame jackets and rings, and visits by the inductees to local schools and community centers.

Texas Western is the first college team inducted into basketball's Hall of Fame. “Sometimes a game transcends the court,” says master of ceremonies Mike Breen. “This game changed the face of athletics.”

www.utep.edu/gloryroad
Women's team coming off record-setting year

The women's basketball team is eager to repeat the success of last season, which delivered school records for most wins (22) and fewest losses (8). Head coach Keitha Adams will be back, having received a four-year contract extension that will keep her at UTEP through 2011.

Adams has announced a non-conference schedule that features games against three NCAA Tournament teams and three WNIT participants.

The season will begin with an exhibition against the Houston Jaguars on Nov. 3. Non-conference play will officially start on Nov. 9 at Nebraska. The Cornhuskers made it to the NCAA Tournament last year, finishing the season 22-10.

Other highlights include an exhibition contest against the Chinese Olympic Team at home Nov. 12 and the first-ever UTEP Thanksgiving Tournament on the weekend of Nov. 23. The Thanksgiving field will include Cal-State Fullerton, Nevada and Stephen F. Austin.

"It will be exciting to have our first Thanksgiving Tournament here at UTEP," Adams says. "We are eager to continue the excitement this year that we generated in El Paso last season."

The season’s full schedule was not announced by press time.

Miner ball returns Nov. 1

Head basketball coach Tony Barbee has announced a tough non-conference schedule for 2007-08.

The Miners (14-17 in 2006-07) will play at least six games against teams that reached postseason play last year, with the possibility of more in the State Farm Sun Bowl Tournament. The Miners kick off the season under second-year coach Barbee with an exhibition against Western New Mexico Nov. 1.

Some big games in the non-conference schedule include matchups against 2007 NCAA tournament participant and long-time rival New Mexico State on Nov. 27 and Dec. 8.

UTEP also will play the UNLV Runnin' Rebels in Las Vegas on Dec. 1. The Rebels were 30-7 last year and reached the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

The Miners will finish their non-conference slate on Jan. 5 at Texas Tech. The Red Raiders were a tournament team last year, boasting a record of 21-13.

"I wanted to challenge this team, and people are saying that this is one of the toughest schedules in the history of the program," Barbee says. "I think it's a schedule with good balance that will help our younger players come along at a faster pace and prepare us for conference play."

The Conference USA schedule was not announced by press time.

Soccer kicks off season

The Miner soccer team looks to continue its winning ways for the 2007 season. Coach Kevin Cross' team, which finished 15-6 last year, returns seven starters and 12 letterwinners. Sophomore midfielder Anoop Josan, who led C-USA in assists last year, was selected to the league's all-conference preseason team.

"We are very pleased that Anoop Josan was picked as one of the top-12 players in the conference," Cross says. "It is a huge honor, and we are very proud of her. We look for her to lead us to a successful season this year."

For more news and information about UTEP athletics, visit www.utepathletics.com.
NEW DIRECTION FOR ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE

As I begin my tenure as the Assistant Vice President for Alumni and Constituent Relations, I look forward to beginning a new chapter in the life of the UTEP Alumni Association.

I believe that establishing relationships and partnerships are a critical component for achieving our goals. Therefore, I am calling upon each one of you to expand your commitment to the Alumni Association as we are your lifelong connection to the UTEP.

Every great university has a level of committed volunteers who are the fabric of the institution. To successfully achieve our goal of engaging alumni in the life of the university, here are some initial areas of emphasis:

- To establish strong relationships with students on campus
- To strengthen our Alumni Association dues-paying membership program
- To build a larger, more involved volunteer base with national representation
- To develop comprehensive alumni programs and membership services

I truly believe that if we, as an institution, are going to be effective in establishing a lifelong connection with our alumni, then it must begin as students enter the university—not as they exit the university. In order for campus traditions to thrive and continue, student involvement is critical for the continuation of these treasured experiences. Therefore, engaging with students early on is crucial in developing a bond and affinity to UTEP as they progress through graduation.

This level of engagement and affinity toward the university helps to create a culture in which future graduates want to continue their relationship with UTEP. One way to show your support and commitment to the UTEP Alumni Association is to become a dues-paying member. This level of support demonstrates your pledge in advancing the institution and supporting all of our programs, services and scholarships.

I look forward to meeting you and seeking your support in advancing the UTEP Alumni Association as a premier alumni organization.

MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Dear friends and fellow alumni,

This year I have the distinct pleasure and challenge of serving as the president of your UTEP Alumni Association. We are looking to our future and our heritage, and that's why I am challenging each of you to Look Back, Come Back and Give Back!

Look back upon your days as a student, and remember the joy, wonder and camaraderie you experienced. Each time you come back (as I hope you will join us for Homecoming 2007), remember those who supported you along the way. Then, as these before did, I ask you to give back.

The UTEP Alumni Association is dedicated to supporting the interest and needs of UTEP, its students and our fellow alumni. But we can't do it alone — therefore I urge you to get involved and help us make a difference for all those whom we serve. Won't you give back by becoming a member today?

Fondly,
Clara Duncan-Adams
President, UTEP Alumni Association

New Alumni Association board

The 2007-08 UTEP Alumni Association Board of Directors are:

Clara Duncan Adams
President

Enrique "Henry" Quintana
President Elect

Mary Helen Padilla
Vice President for Membership

Richard Martinez
Vice President for Ways and Means

Keri Moe
Vice President for Public Relations

Gilbert De La Rosa, Jr.
Treasurer

Hector Almeida
Sandra Braham
Elizabeth Dahl
Raul Garibay
Debra Koch
Gerardo Licon
Lars Peters
Jose L. Villanueva
MINERS ON THE MOVE

Barbara Divis

From the moment she sang her first role as La Boheme’s Musetta, Barbara Divis has been hooked on opera. The rising young performer has sung more than 30 roles in operas around the country since earning a bachelor’s degree in music and voice performance from UTEP in 1987.

How did UTEP set you on the path to career in opera?
I auditioned for La Boheme in 1984 on a whim, but I ended up with one of the principal roles. I was so bashful about playing such a flirtatious character that I’m sure everyone was questioning whether I could actually perform the role. During the final rehearsal it somehow all kicked in. There I was, performing with a full orchestra, a full chorus, in full costume, with a full set, and it felt fantastic! I was hooked!

What lessons from UTEP have stayed with you?
I’ve worked with many young artists and realized most undergraduate students weren’t given the kinds of opportunities I had. Even though they graduated from more prestigious schools, I got the better end of the bargain with my experiences at UTEP. In the opera world, you learn the most by doing. You get better with each performance.

You are performing in El Paso this fall. How will it feel to perform in your hometown?
I’m thrilled to be singing in El Paso! I’m so grateful for the opportunity to sing for my community. It will bring back memories of my positive experiences at UTEP.

You live in New York now and travel a lot. What do I miss most about El Paso?
El Paso is definitely the friendliest city I’ve ever been to! I miss that gorgeous Mount Franklin, and of course, the fantastic Mexican food that you just can’t get anywhere else. Between the beautiful purple mountain and the beautiful sunsets, being in El Paso really makes my heart sing!

SEASON OF LIGHTS

Join us at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, at the center of campus for the annual Season of Lights lighting ceremony.

The UTEP Alumni Association presents this annual holiday tradition as a gift to our alma mater. The campus will remain lit through Jan. 6, 2008.

Outstanding alumni nominations

The true measure of a university’s greatness can be found in the achievements of its alumni as reflected by this year’s Distinguished Alumni and Gold Nugget award recipients.

Many more Texas College of Mines, Texas Western College and University of Texas at El Paso graduates have also made exceptional contributions to their professions, communities, and the university, and we need your help to identify these exceptional alumni.

To nominate yourself or someone you know, please visit www.ia.utep.edu/alumni to download a copy of the 2008 Distinguished Alumni and Gold Nugget Awards nomination form.
'50s
Louis W. "Lou" Cope (B.S.M.I. '50), of Denver, received the Arthur C. Daman Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration's Mineral Processing Division.

James K. "Jim" Nickless is a 2007 inductee of the Texas Collegiate Press Association Hall of Fame. Nickless, of North Miami, Fla., is a retired NBC photojournalist who now freelances.

'60s
Rev. Nora E. Ramirez (B.A. '65; M.A. '69), the pastor of the Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in Lakeland, Fla., has retired after 10 years ministry.

Manuel R. "Bob" Ybarra (B.A. '68) is the board chairman of El Paso credit union GECU.

'70s
Derrell E. Hiett (B.A. '71) is director of the International Museum of Art in El Paso.

Dorothy K. Keyser (B.A. '71) is associate professor of music at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks.

Michael A. "Mike" Brochu (B.B.A. '74) is chief executive officer of Global Market Insite Inc., or GMI, a provider of integrated solutions for global market intelligence, based in Mercer Island, Wash. Brochu, who was UTEP's 2004 College of Business Administration Gold Nugget honoree, lives in Bellevue, Wash.

Victor A. Palmer (B.A. '75) is assistant superintendent of human resources at the Banning Unified School District in Banning, Calif. Palmer resides in Redlands, Calif.

Constance "Tippi" Hutchinson Figuers (B.B.A. '77; M.B.A. '82) received her J.D. from the John F. Kennedy University School of Law and was sworn in as an attorney in June. Figuers lives in Livermore, Calif.

Pamela A. "Pam" Padilla (M.Ed. '77), superintendent of the Canutillo Independent School District in Anthony, Texas, represents Region 19 on the Texas Association of Community Schools executive committee.

Valerie A. Gutiérrez Galbraith (B.A. '79) is the principal of Metz Elementary School in Austin, Texas.

'80s
Chris M. Mendoza (B.S.Ed. '86) is a marketing and strategy director for Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. Mendoza, who recently earned his doctorate in business administration from the University of Phoenix, resides in New Albany, Ohio.

José I. Quiñonez Jr. (B.A. '85; M.P.A. '91), foreign-trade zone manager at El Paso International Airport, is a member of the board of El Paso credit union GECU.

Thomas P. "Tom" Mayhew (B.S.E.E. '86) is commanding officer of a Naval Air Systems Command unit at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Mayhew, a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, recently returned from Iraq, where he received the Meritorious Service Medal and the Fleet Marine Force Qualified Officer badge. He resides in Alta Loma, Calif.

Francisco T. Hernandez (B.A. '89), of Sun City, Calif., is senior investigator for the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Cesar Portillo (B.A. '88) is executive director for human resources at Highline Community College in De Moines, Wash.

Cynthia A. "Cindy" Shahan (B.S.Ed. '88) is the instructional math coach at Rosa Guerrero Elementary School in El Paso.

Marie S. Rose (B.A. '89; M.A. '91) is the author of "Princess Silver Tears and One Feather," an illustrated book for children. Rose, who is a producer and story development analyst, lives in West Hollywood, Calif.


Send us your news:
Got news to share? Send us your name, year of graduation, degree and the information you'd like to share with other Miners. (Please include a daytime phone number.) E-mail us at nova@utep.edu or write us at Nova Quarterly, University Communications, The University of Texas at El Paso, 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, TX 79968.
In Memoriam


Mary R. Newell Tippin (B.A. ’45) El Paso; April 5, 2007.


Carol A. McCredie (B.S.N. ’83) Beaumont, Texas; April 13, 2007.


Andy C. Allison, Granbury, Texas; April 24, 2007.


Alan B. Mundell (B.S. ’64) El Paso; May 12, 2007.


Maurice M. Heller (B.A. ’69; M.S. ’76) El Paso; June 2, 2007.


Jeffrey Dember (M.S.Ed. ’76; M.Ed. ’78) Simi Valley, Calif.; June 14, 2007.


Compiled by David Thomas
Miner Fever Homecoming 2007 CATCH IT!

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