

The Scenic Route

Navigating the Twists and Turns of a Dedicated Public Servant

BY KARA BISHOP

“You may start out on a path, but if you’re willing to take detours you can have some amazing experiences in life,” said Nancy Neal, RN, (Nursing ‘85). As this year’s Presidential Distinguished Alumni Awardee, Neal takes us down some monumental detours in her life as a public servant.

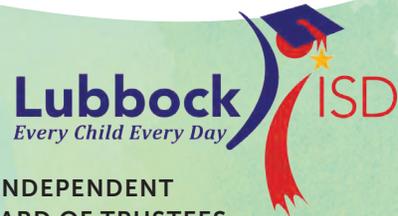


Nancy Neal, RN



INTENDED PATH: ATTORNEY AT LAW

She wanted to go to law school, after nursing school, with a passion for education and health care driving her to be the voice for those who couldn’t speak for themselves. However, a decision by the Lubbock Independent School District board of trustees sent her off course.



DETOUR 1: LUBBOCK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES (1986-1992)

“I was very active in the PTA for my children’s schools and was annoyed at a decision made by the school board, so I decided to run,” Neal said. “If you don’t like something, you should try to solve the problem—not just complain about it.”

She served on the board for six years and was the first female president. During her tenure, a monumental piece of history still brings tears to her eyes.

“I was elected in April 1986, and in May, the Lubbock public schools were notified about the first child with HIV/AIDS who wanted to attend school (in the district),” she recalled, choking back emotion. “I was the first and only nurse to be elected and a fellow board member was a pharmacist, so we led the charge in seeing what we could do for this child. The child was either in second or third grade and HIV positive. We couldn’t hide it from the community—all we could do was protect the child’s name. Fortunately, we were able to find a way for the child to attend school for two full semesters before he died. I’m glad I had the nursing background ... it was just so important that there were people on the board who wanted this to happen ... It was a great moment in health care for Lubbock public schools.”

Then Margaret La Montagne Spellings (named U.S. Secretary of Education under President George W. Bush), who Neal worked closely with while on the LISD board, asked Neal if she’d ever considered serving as a university regent. “The governor wanted people to serve who didn’t have a tie to the university system, so Margaret gave him my name,” Neal added, thus beginning her detour into higher education.

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

The rising STAR of Texas

DETOUR 2: TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS (1997-2004)

“This is where I fell in love with higher education, to be honest,” said Neal, with a smile in her voice. “I was not a big donor to Gov. George W. Bush. That’s not how governors work. They wanted someone to serve as a regent who had something to offer. I was the first nurse to serve as regent—there had been physicians but no nurses.”

She served on the TSU System board eight years, and, yes, was president for some of them. She was then appointed to The Higher Education Coordinating Board by Gov. Rick Perry for three years where she helped approve the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree for Texas nursing schools.

Then, the governor called her again.



DETOUR 3: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS (2009-2015)

“This was one of the most tremendous volunteer jobs for me, to say the least,” Neal recalled. “I was the first nurse to be selected for this board as well. During my six years, I’m pretty sure I hold the record for ‘person on the most search committees for the system!’”

She never did get that law degree; however, that didn’t stop her from serving the Texas Tech University System and her community. Neal may not have achieved that initial dream, “but I wouldn’t have missed the alternate paths I took for the world.”

“Service is a component we all need to have in our lives,” she adds. “I could stay at home, but my blessings have driven me to do something with my life ... not a J-O-B but an impactful purpose that serves others.”

Congratulations Nancy on being selected for the 2017 Presidential Distinguished Alumni Award. You deserve it. 

[DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI 2017]



Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

T. CELESTE NAPIER, PHD, ('82)



School of Health Professions

MATT BARKER, AUD, ('04, '00)



RYAN BREWSTER, MS, ('17)



TOMMY HIGGINS, CRC, ('06)



MINDY HOFFMAN, ATC, ('06)



ELY PEREA, MBA, MSMP, ('08, '07)



School of Medicine

TIMOTHY BENTON, MD, ('94)



JOHN GRISWOLD, MD, (RESIDENT '86)



AMY THOMPSON, MD, ('04)



School of Nursing

GAIL ACUNA, DNP, ('16)



JAMES DICKENS, DNP, ('12)



MICHAEL MOON, PHD, MSN, ('87)



Full biographies for the 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award winners can be found online: ttuhsc.edu/alumni/distinguished-awards





1 TTUHSC El Paso hosted a blood drive in January in partnership with United Blood Services. According to United Blood Services, a single blood donation can save up to three lives. **2** In January, hundreds of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders from throughout El Paso County got a taste of careers in STEM fields at the seventh annual Adventure for Your Future health sciences fair. **3** Seventy-five TTUHSC El Paso students spent Martin Luther King Jr. Day volunteering at five community service events in and around El Paso County. **4** The latest graduating class of BSN students was honored during a commencement and pinning ceremony at the Plaza Theatre in Downtown El Paso May 19. Fifty students completed the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing track, alongside seven registered nurses who completed the RN to BSN track. **5** The TTUHSC Alumni Association invited area alumni to the Texas Tech University versus West Virginia baseball game in March. **6** The TTUHSC Alumni Association held alumni receptions in Abilene, Dallas, El Paso (pictured), Fort Worth, Houston (pictured), Lubbock, Midland and San Antonio (pictured). Follow the association on Facebook for news and upcoming events. **7** TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, served as the 2018 Lubbock March for Babies chair. The event, hosted by the March of Dimes, took place in April. More than 1,000 participants registered, raising an estimated \$200,000. **8** Medication Cleanout completed a successful spring cycle with an event hosted by TTUHSC at Amarillo. Events were also held on TTUHSC campuses in Abilene and Lubbock. In total, more than 3,600 pounds of unused and expired medications were dropped off for appropriate disposal.

Reading Nook

Looking for a book to read?
Support TTUHSC alumni!



“A Hero in Time” by Peter Rappa, MD
(Medicine '89)

Story abstract: “A Hero in Time” offers readers a love story and an adventure with an unexpected ending wrapped in an inspiring message. A medical theme and a complex plot take the reader back in time to the inception of young love while moving forward in time to touch the concepts of selfless love, integrity, dedication and soul work.

Purchase on Amazon

“The Blow-up Man” by Nina Blakeman, PhD
(Biomedical Sciences '14)

Story abstract: West Texas is not a place for the weak ... or a naive, young woman with a head full of fantasy. Inside the hallowed halls of Cullen State University is where Faye Brady falls in love with Todd Davis, a well-respected researcher in the area of pharmaceutical sciences. Faye's mother, Madeline Brady, is concerned about her daughter's new relationship. Does Faye have what it takes to overcome the toxic mistakes of Todd's past and the nightmare that is about to come true?

Purchase on Amazon



Expert Corner

ASHLEY STURGEON, MD

Ashley Sturgeon, MD, (Medicine '10) assistant professor in the School of Medicine Department of Dermatology, stresses the importance of taking care of your skin.

Put sunscreen on exposed skin first thing in the morning EVERY DAY. Even when walking to and from your car, the sun's exposure takes a toll on your skin. Use an SPF of 30 or greater with broad spectrum coverage. Reapply every hour if you are outside—even more often if you are sweating or in water.



Wear sunglasses to protect the skin around your eyes.

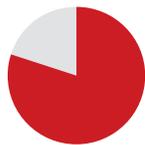


Wear clothing with a UV protective factor of 50, which protects your skin from 99 percent of UV rays. (A regular T-shirt only protects you from 5 percent of UV rays.) Stay in the shade as much as possible.

Don't forget your head! It can be challenging to discover skin cancers in the scalp because hair can hide them. Unfortunately, hair doesn't always protect your scalp or ears from the sun. Wear a broad-brimmed hat that covers your scalp, ears, face and neck.

READERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

We asked and you answered. Here's what you told us.



80 percent of you like to read about new programs/curriculum and scientific discoveries/scholarly activities.



Most of you spend 11 to 30 minutes total time with an issue.



Over half of you read most of the articles.



Most of you hold Pulse in high esteem with an average score of 4.9 (highest = 5) for excellent overall impression.

When asked what you like most about Pulse, you said:

- Information
- Attractive piece with a good range of content covered
- Seeing our school in action

And our favorite:

"It makes me proud to be an alumnus. It is also a very professional looking publication."

What do you like least?

"You should occasionally spotlight an alumnus who is not the glitzy rock star, but the silent giant." (*Send us your "silent giant" nominations!*)

Improvements?

"More summary-like articles with bullet points for easier reading." (*We are putting this into action!*)

You are extremely interested in reading about alumni success stories (*and we LOVE to write about them!*)

Most of you said that Pulse strengthens your connection to TTUHSC by: **"Making me proud to be a graduate of TTUHSC."**

Actions taken as a result of reading Pulse?

(top three responses)

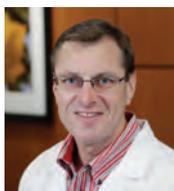
- Shared an article with a friend, colleague, family member or other;
- Downloaded the TTUHSC Alumni Association App; and
- Attended an event, made a donation to TTUHSC or recommended TTUHSC to a potential student or family member

Congratulations!

Courtney Sherman, MSHA, DNP, ('17, '15) is the winner of the iPad Mini offered as an incentive for participating in the survey.

We appreciate your feedback – keep it coming!

Awards & Accolades



JOHN K. BINI, MD, FACS, (Medicine '99) trauma surgeon at Wright State Physicians—Surgery and affiliated with Acute Surgical Associates in Dayton, Ohio, was named a 2018 Top Doctor.



BRANDON "KIT" BREDIMUS, MSN, RN, (Nursing '15) won the 2018 American Organization of Nurse Executives Pamela Austin Thompson Early Careerist Award. Bredimus is the director of emergency services for Midland Memorial Hospital in Midland, Texas.



ADAM BOROWSKI, MD, (Medicine '91) was awarded fellowship in the American College of Radiology. This prestigious honor is awarded to less than 8 percent of all practicing radiologists. Borowski is a neuroradiologist for Waco Radiology in Waco, Texas.



CYNTHIA JUMPER, MD, MPH, (Resident '91; Medicine '88) was re-elected to serve as a Texas alternate delegate in the American Medical Association House of Delegates.

A Tribute to Ted Hartman, MD

The last time I saw Ted Hartman, MD, was in October 2017 at a Texas Tech University sponsored ceremony to honor World War II liberators and Holocaust witnesses. Hartman died Feb. 2, 2018.

A tank commander from 1943 to 1946, Hartman chronicled his experience as a 19-year-old with the 11th Armored Division in the book, “Tank Driver” (Indiana Press). For Hartman, the danger and challenge of being a tank driver, the spectacle of the German defeat, and his role as a concentration camp liberator made him the outstanding person and physician that he became. He graduated from Iowa State in 1949 and from Northwestern Medical School in 1952. He wasted no time becoming a doctor and then an orthopedic surgeon. He left his practice at the Cleveland Clinic in 1971 to become the founding chair of orthopaedic surgery for the School of Medicine. He served in that role until 1982 when he became dean.

That night at the liberators’ ceremony, I joked with Hartman that he must have been very comfortable in the School of Medicine dean position because it was like being a tank driver: Both jobs were less fun than they first appeared; both were jobs that you didn’t expect to stay in for very long; and in both jobs, everything can explode around you. Well, he thought that was all very funny.

From 1982 to 1988, Hartman moved the School of Medicine forward at a critical time in its development. What better judgment for a dean’s work than that of the austere accrediting body for medical schools called the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

In 1988, the last year of Hartman’s tenure, the LCME evaluated the medical school and stated that Ted Hartman “was a dedicated leader who had the great respect of all of his faculty.” There had been major progress in communication including from one campus to another. (There were four campuses by then—Amarillo, El Paso, Lubbock and the Odessa Regional Academic Health Center, now TTUHSC at the Permian Basin, which Hartman established.)

The accreditation committee reported that the enthusiasm of the students had grown under Hartman’s administration. The physical facilities had improved and were contemporary. Research funding had increased including a \$1.6 million Kellogg grant and a \$1.2 million area health education grant, and all chair positions were filled. Hartman had taken the dean’s baton and run hard and fast to improve the School of Medicine.

The only criticism of the LCME was suspect. “Excessive uncompensated care as a mandated mission can become a drain on resources, which could threaten the educational mission and discourage scholarly activity.”



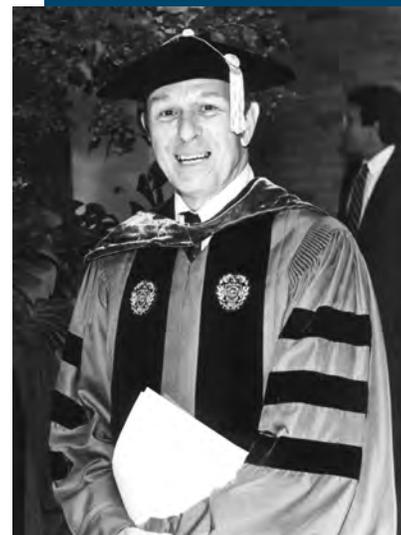
Hartman maintained that the mission to provide care for the indigent would not change at this School of Medicine regardless of who made the recommendation to change it.

Long after his retirement, Hartman continued to make important contributions to the medical school and was a frequent visitor to orthopaedic resident rounds and other medical school events. UMC Health System honored him with an endowed chair in medical education, now held by his longtime friend Surendra K. Varma, MD, (University Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics and executive associate dean for Graduate Medical Education and Resident Affairs in the School of Medicine).

We held a memorial service for Hartman here at TTUHSC in March, where he was eulogized by Tom McGovern, MD, (retired professor in the Department of Psychiatry) and many others who had decades of ties to the medical school. The audience was filled with so many old timers, but it also included young orthopedic residents who had never met Hartman. They were there to honor the founder of their department.

And of course, representing all recent deans, I had the privilege of expressing our thanks by reciting Isaac Newton’s quote, “If we have seen further than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

James Theodore “Ted” Hartman, MD, is survived by his wife, Jean, of 63 years, three children and four grandchildren.



By Steven L. Berk, MD, TTUHSC Executive Vice President and Provost and dean of the School of Medicine



250

In February, more than **250** El Pasoans attended the eighth annual Students United Para Nuestra Salud Health Fair. The fair, hosted by TTUHSC El Paso's medical and nursing students, provides free health services such as HIV and STI tests, blood pressure, diabetes, dental, eye, glaucoma and back screenings, and EKG readings.

JUST *the facts*



\$35 million

TTUHSC El Paso provided **\$35 million** in uncompensated care to the El Paso community in 2017.

1,000

TTUHSC El Paso will educate nearly **1,000** health care professionals this year, including 265 residents and fellows.

National Advisory Board Meets in El Paso

The TTUHSC Alumni Association National Advisory Board convened in El Paso May 11 for their spring meeting. From scholarships to memberships, much was accomplished.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

Alumni Association

2,371 TOTAL TTUHSC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

14 purchased with the "Five for the Price of Four" package

10 purchased lifetime memberships

The board passed a motion to establish a \$1,000 scholarship for each school from membership dues.

The board voted to support the Our Legacy Now Student Foundation with a \$1,000 gift.



GOALS

- ▶ Increase alumni association memberships by **5%** each year.
- ▶ Continue to provide **\$1,000** to each school annually—eventually increasing to **two \$1,000** scholarships per school.



GSBS GRADUATES INAUGURAL CLASS

In May, TTUHSC El Paso graduated the first class from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences—23 students in the master's program and five students in the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program.

Two years ago, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) became the third school to comprise TTUHSC El Paso. In May, the 23-student inaugural class proudly donned their caps and gowns for graduation, alongside five students in the school's Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program.

With approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences was added to TTUHSC El Paso's degree offerings in January 2016. Before that, TTUHSC El Paso's graduate students completed their coursework in El Paso but officially earned their degrees from TTUHSC.

Because TTUHSC El Paso is a health sciences center, students in the graduate degree program benefit from an interprofessional education model. "The GSBS is the only school of higher education in El Paso to offer an interactive and collaborative environment for students to learn alongside future physicians and nurses," said Rajkumar Lakshmanaswamy, PhD, dean of the GSBS. "These collaborations provide a framework that can continue after graduation and will make our students exceptional health care professionals, educators and researchers."

Students in the master's program are prepared for a spectrum of health professions, including biomedical research, but also medical and veterinary school and doctoral programs. Throughout the curriculum, students participate in hands-on research related to prevalent border health issues, such as diabetes, cancer and infectious diseases and neurological disorders, which have some of the highest incidence and mortality rates nationwide.

"As the only health sciences center on the U.S.-Mexico border, we have a unique opportunity to lead the nation in research that will inform tomorrow's treatment strategies," said Richard Lange, MD, MBA, president of TTUHSC El Paso and dean of the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM). "Through our hands-on educational model, our students are prepared to make the next big discoveries in health research that go far beyond the border."

In addition to its master's program, the GSBS offers a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in biomedical sciences, a potential pipeline for students looking to increase their competitiveness for medical school.

Most of this year's graduates will be going to medical school—three of whom have been accepted to the PLFSOM. Others are pursuing careers in the biotech industry, science writing, medical and scientific research, MBA and PhD programs, and teaching.

Meet one of the new
GSBS alums on page 52.