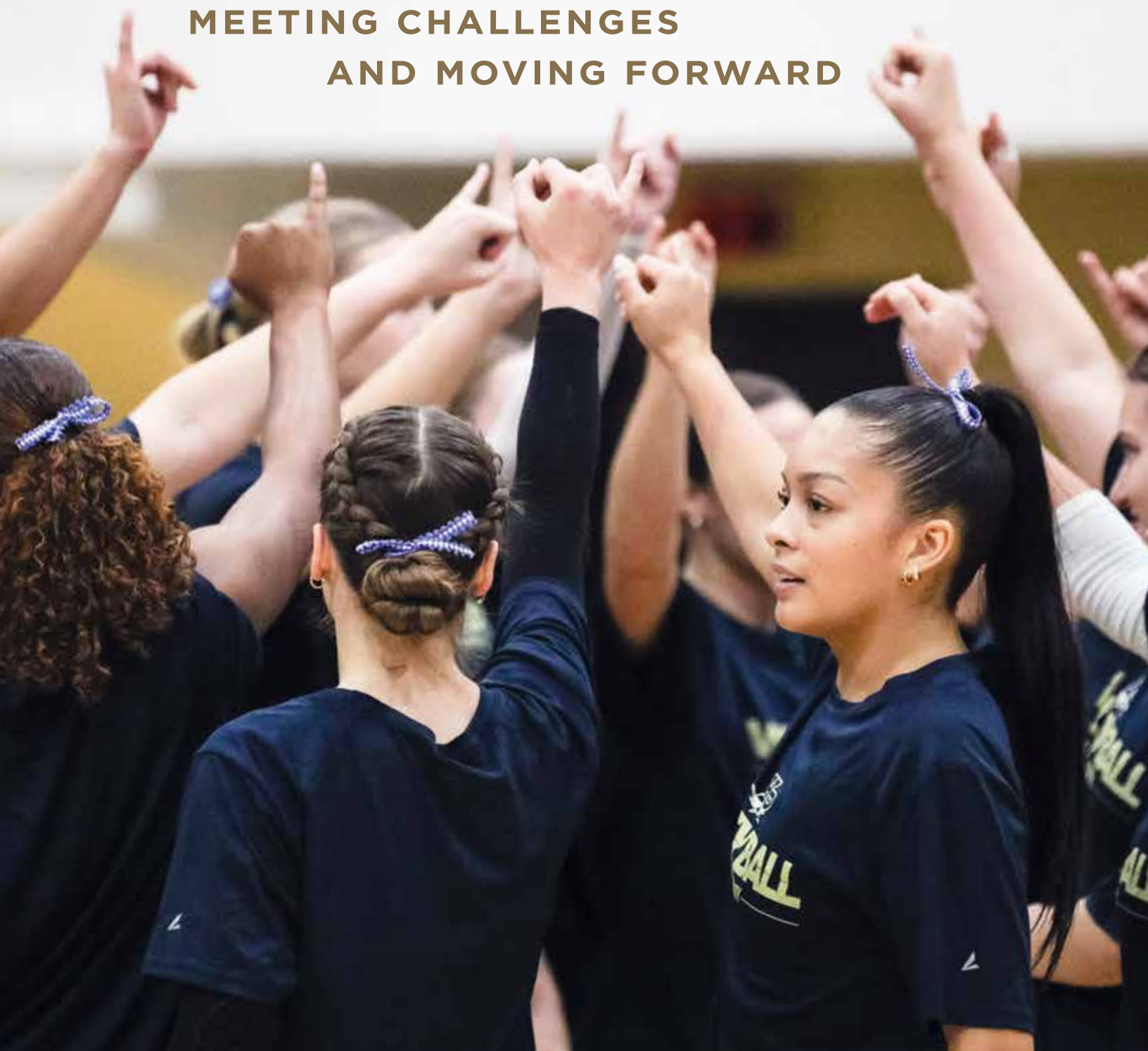


Link

THE MAGAZINE OF
HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2026

HPU WOMEN'S SPORTS AT 50

MEETING CHALLENGES
AND MOVING FORWARD



GREETINGS FROM DR. CORY HINES '97, HPU PRESIDENT



As I read through this issue of the *Link* magazine, I was struck by the importance of legacy – leaving something behind for those who follow. We often think of legacy in a giving or fundraising context, which is perfectly fine, but legacy also extends to less tangible things, such as our time, energy and talents.

When we give of these things, not for our glory, but for the Lord's, He can make them into something lasting. This is a theme I saw again and again in these pages.

The cover story is a celebration of 50 years of women's sports at HPU. The women who were members of those first teams on our campus had no idea of the path they were laying for future female athletes at HPU. Now, as we look to the future of HPU women's sports, we have those women to thank for so much of what lies in store.

I was also humbled by the numerous supporters of HPU, many of whom are featured in the news section, who continue to faithfully support our students. Throughout HPU's history, this kind of generosity has helped "keep her colors ever floating."

Also featured in this issue are the members of the Information Technology Services team, whose dedicated work behind the scenes is essential to university operations. Drs. Evelyn and Nancy '04 Romig have taught a combined total of more than 50 years at HPU, sharing their expertise and love of reading with generations of Yellow Jackets. The experiences of Caleb Kostreva '19 and current students Eric O'Quin and Lydia Sweet are examples of the impact of legacies of faculty, staff, alumni and friends.

I hope you will be encouraged and inspired by these stories, just as I have been, and know that all of this is for His glory.

Blessings,

Cory Hines, Ph.D.
President

DR. HINES PHOTO BY HEATHER NIX; MIMS AUDITORIUM PHOTO BY LAUREL STANARD

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HPU breaks ground on new tennis center

HPU broke ground on its new HPU Tennis Center on May 8.

The ceremony provided an opportunity for the HPU community to gather together to champion HPU Athletics and celebrate the contributions of alumni Ronnie '83 and Teri '83 Andrews, who provided the lead gift for the project.

“None of this happens without the passion and vision of Ronnie and Teri Andrews,” said Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president. “For decades, the Andrews family has invested time and resources in service to Howard Payne University. Their faithful leadership has provided – and will continue to provide – countless opportunities for students and student-athletes, and this new HPU Tennis Center will be a state-of-the-art hub for competition that will draw thousands of people to campus and to Brownwood over the years.”

The tennis center, which will be constructed over the next year, will be home to HPU men's and women's tennis and will provide opportunities to host tournaments, NCAA events, UIL tournaments and regionals, as well as regional events.

The center will include a 3,300-square-foot clubhouse with locker rooms, team room, coach's office, study room and outdoor-accessible restrooms; two additional tennis courts, for a total of eight; covered observation area; additional visitor stands; and expanded parking.

The construction will replace the clubhouse located at 301 2nd Street across from the McCullough Athletic Center. Teinert Construction serves as general contractor for the project.

“We're all called by God,” Teri Andrews said. “He's called us to gratitude, and in gratitude, Ronnie and I came back to the campus about 10 years ago to try to add what equity God had given us back to the school.”

She explained sports have always been a part of her life. She said sports like tennis at HPU can provide an opportunity for students to learn about God, life, teamwork and overcoming challenges.

“Sport is powerful,” Teri said. “It's powerful to inspire great things – both on the court, the pitch, the field, and off. It is so powerful to unite a disparate group of people and rally them around a common flag. Howard Payne is our common flag.”

Ronnie Andrews said he and his wife felt the Lord leading them to give to HPU because of the university's impact on their lives. It was where they met. It was also where their faith grew and where they made lifelong friends. He said he and his wife followed God's call to invest in the tennis center.

“Leadership begins when a burden becomes action,” Ronnie Andrews said. “Much like Nehemiah, Teri became



Participating in the groundbreaking ceremony for the HPU Tennis Center are, from left, Dr. Brent Gentzel, chairperson elect, HPU Board of Trustees; Ronnie Andrews '83, trustee, HPU Board of Trustees; Teri Andrews '83, alumna; Melinda Hines, first lady of HPU; Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president; and Randy Lewallyn '97, chairperson, HPU Board of Trustees.



HPU's new tennis center will have eight courts and a clubhouse.

deeply burdened for the many needs of the Howard Payne campus. God put it on her heart to focus on the tennis center and to do so in such a way that it would become a catalyst for the quality of all future athletic facilities at Howard Payne.”

This construction is the next in a series of projects for HPU Athletics that include renovations to the Brownwood Coliseum; new lights at Don Shepard Park and Citizens National Bank Soccer Field; and construction of the Bob Carter Athletic Park for intramurals and the Woody and Miki Martin Sand Volleyball Courts.

“This is a transformational moment for Howard Payne Athletics,” said Adam Bright, director of athletics. “Our goal is to provide a championship-level experience for our student-athletes, and this facility is a major step forward in doing exactly that. It will elevate our tennis programs, strengthen our ability to recruit high-character young people and serve as a point of pride for our campus and the Brownwood community.”

Major grant to benefit area schoolchildren through HPU's Academy of Freedom

Howard Payne University's Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom museum will soon expand its educational offerings to area schoolchildren due to an \$881,000 grant recently awarded by the United States Department of Education. The grant will fund the facility's rollout of a wide range of interactive learning opportunities for students in Brown County and surrounding counties.

HPU's Guy D. Newman Honors Academy: The Program for Civic Leadership and Public Policy and the related Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom museum have long promoted American democracy and free enterprise among students and the community. As the United States approaches its semiquincentennial in 2026, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, university leaders seek to leverage this resource to benefit the area to a greater degree. Through the grant, the program will focus on reaching underserved K-12 students and educators across Brown County and its seven neighboring rural counties, a total of more than 18,000 students and 700 educators.

“We're incredibly excited about this wonderful opportunity and proud of our team's efforts,” said Dr. Matthew McNiece '03, Academy director, chair and professor of history and government. “This was a very competitive grant program, and our proposal was one of 85 grants awarded, and one of only six in Texas.”

Grant funds will be used to host educator workshops and seminars, as well as for the development of grade-specific, TEKS-aligned curriculum. Funds also allow for the modernization of the Academy's learning environments through new furnishings, interactive technology and student-centered events. Additionally, the Academy will offer cost-free museum visits, transportation support and meals to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Academy was founded in 1962 under the leadership of Dr. Guy D. Newman, who served as president of the university



HPU's Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom museum will soon expand its educational offerings through a grant awarded by the United States Department of Education.

from 1955 to 1973. More than 60 years later, the Academy continues to emphasize Judeo-Christian values, Western Civilization, free enterprise and civic engagement.

The museum's theme is humanity's search for freedom, and the story culminates with a visit to its nearly inch-perfect replica of the Assembly Room of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where both the Declaration in 1776 and the Constitution of 1787 were debated, drafted and signed.

“Our goal is to do for area students and teachers what we've done for our HPU honors students for more than 60 years – use a high-impact pedagogy, including the use of our unique museum spaces, to emphasize the rights and responsibilities we each have within our American system of self-government,” said Dr. McNiece. “There's no better time to think deliberately about these things than on a date like the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and – we think – there are few better locations in which to do this in than a place like the Academy of Freedom museum.”

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CEREMONY PHOTO BY LAUREL STANARD
PHOTOS BY REBEKAH STERLING '18

HPU raises \$1.26 million on GivingTuesday



Student Alexia Uribe expresses gratitude on behalf of HPU

In fall 2025, Howard Payne University surpassed its GivingTuesday goals of raising \$750,000 from 400 supporters. The total given on Tuesday, Dec. 2, was \$1,265,075 from 425 supporters across 21 states. Donations during the one-day giving event – held annually on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving Day – were provided by alumni, friends, personnel and community partners.

Gifts support a wide range of student-experience initiatives, including student scholarships, academic programming,

campus improvements, athletics, the Howard Payne Fund and more. By reaching the goal of supporters, the university met several matching grants, including \$100,000 for campus improvements, \$50,000 for athletics and matches for the university’s extension centers and student organizations.

Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president, said GivingTuesday gifts will provide for long-lasting impact.

“GivingTuesday has become a day of incredible generosity and true thanksgiving for our HPU community,” said Dr. Hines. “I am extremely grateful for all the supporters who partnered with us to make an impact on our campus and in the lives of our students. The world needs the type of Christ-centered leaders we are seeking to produce, and days like this help continue that mission.”

Supporters who were not able to give to HPU on GivingTuesday can still make gifts to support the university by visiting www.hputx.edu/give.

HPU’s Robnett Founders Dinner honors Texas Baptists, raises \$447,000

HPU hosted more than 400 attendees at its fourth annual Robnett Founders Dinner on April 14 at the Brownwood Event Center.

The dinner, which featured a special performance by Grammy Award-winning Christian artist Chris Tomlin, raised \$447,000, with \$247,000 designated for student scholarships. Bruner Auto Family was the Presenting Sponsor for the event.

The Robnett Founders Dinner, named in memory of Dr. John David Robnett, a founder of HPU, was established to celebrate the mission and values of HPU and to honor an individual or organization that has made a major impact on the university and its work in the lives of students. Members of the Robnett family were in attendance.

The dinner provided an opportunity for the university to thank and honor Texas Baptists (Baptist General Convention of Texas) with the 2026 Dr. John D. Robnett Founders Award.

“This year, we were able to thank Texas Baptists for their decades of support for Howard Payne,” said Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president. “The thousands of member churches that make up Texas Baptists have provided the funds and resources to launch the ministries of countless HPU graduates. To have the opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to them, to raise money for student scholarships and the university, and to worship with Chris Tomlin, truly made this an unforgettable evening.”

BGCT churches, collectively, are the largest donor to HPU. From 1960-2025, Texas Baptists’ financial support of HPU totaled nearly \$54 million.

Dr. Hines presented the award to Dr. Julio Guarneri,



The 2026 Dr. John D. Robnett Founders Award was presented to Texas Baptists.



Grammy Award-winning Christian artist Chris Tomlin (right) gave a special performance at the dinner.

executive director of Texas Baptists, who accepted on behalf of the organization.

Following the award presentation, Tomlin, who *TIME* magazine heralded as the “most often sung artist in the world,” took to the stage to share songs and stories with the audience.

PHOTOS BY THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

HPU expresses gratitude, best wishes to retiring personnel

Five members of Howard Payne University’s personnel will retire this year after lengthy tenures of service. These individuals were among those honored at the annual Personnel Recognition Luncheon, held on April 24.

Charles “Chuck” Boland, CPA, has devoted more than four decades to HPU. A professor and longtime chair of the accounting department, he joined HPU first from 1981 to 1985 and then returned in 1986 for a 40-year run. He earned BBA and MBA degrees from the University of Mississippi and became a licensed CPA in Mississippi and Texas. Boland taught accounting, economics, business law and finance, and served as faculty athletic representative.



Marcie Drew '03, MBA '15, has served at HPU for nearly 29 years in roles including student account coordinator, director of financial services and, ultimately, controller. She participated in 28 annual financial statement audits to show HPU’s compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles with an external accounting firm. She was recognized by her peers with Excellence in Service (2003, 2008 and 2012) and Outstanding Staff Member of the Year (2014) awards.



Dr. James Finch has served HPU since 2015 as a professor of business administration, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. He is known for integrating a biblical perspective into his teaching. Finch earned a doctorate in business administration and an MBA from The Ohio State University and a bachelor’s degree in economics from Canisius College. He directed HPU’s management major and contributed to academic and professional service through consulting and editorial work.



Yvonne Lundy began her service to HPU in 2007. She has assisted countless students and other university constituents through the years in her roles as assistant to the vice president for enrollment and student services, executive assistant to the senior vice president for institutional advancement, executive assistant to the associate vice president for enrollment management, and data management and ana-



Administration updates

Eric Eckert was named HPU’s associate vice president for marketing and communications. He earned his master’s degree in English from Missouri State University and his bachelor’s degree in communication from Truman State University. He brings more than 25 years of professional communications experience, including 20+ years in higher education marketing, public and media relations, recruitment and community engagement. He previously held positions at Missouri State University, Baylor University and Temple College, where he served as executive director of strategic communications and outreach. He has taught as an adjunct professor for nearly 15 years, serving students in the journalism and media departments at Missouri State and Baylor. He and his wife, Corinn, are the parents of Michael '25; Evan, a current HPU student; and Caleb.



Dr. M. Chad Gann '97 was appointed associate vice president for academic affairs. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from HPU and holds multiple advanced degrees, including a Ph.D. in health science. Dr. Gann brings more than 15 years of experience in law enforcement, having served with the Arlington Police Department, and he also has extensive experience in emergency medical services and healthcare. An educator since 2007, Dr. Gann has taught undergraduate and graduate courses across multiple disciplines at several Texas universities. In his current role, he focuses on student retention, online program and course development, and initiatives aligned with HPU’s mission and core values. His diverse academic and professional background reflects a deep commitment to education, public service and student success.



lytics coordinator. She has submitted numerous data reports and worked with four customer relationship management software systems.

Dr. E. Dennis “Denny” Megarity has served HPU since 2012 as an assistant professor of chemistry, bringing extensive industry, research and teaching experience to his students. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in chemistry from Texas Christian University and a doctorate from Florida State University. His career includes roles as a research chemist and product line manager. He founded Aztron Chemical Services Inc.



David '71 and Kathy '70 Strawn build a lifelong legacy of support for HPU

By Dr. Dale Meinecke '98

David '71 and Kathy (McCaleb) '70 Strawn have been driven by conviction before, during and since their days as students at Howard Payne University.

David surrendered to serve in ministry at an early age, largely through conversations with a friend, the late Tom Ruane '68. HPU was the right place for David to pursue his calling with professors such as Dr. José Rivas and Dr. James Shields.

Three couples with HPU ties – Roy '59 and Janette (Sewell) '59 Kornegay, Randall '57 and Glenda Purvis and Dr. Ed '56 and Sylvia (Rundell) '56 Rogers – shared with Kathy about HPU as a terrific place to study. However, it wasn't until she was on her way to visit a different school that she experienced it herself. Her church youth choir took a road trip to another university and stopped at HPU along the way. Kathy recently found her journal entry about her first time as a young teen on Howard Payne's campus: "We were on the road to Brownwood and Howard Payne by 7:30. We toured the whole college. It sure was neat. At first, it looked kind of old fashioned, but the people are real friendly. The girls' dorm is superb! It had speakers so you could get called down stairs and neat furniture. The college had a swimming pool, library, and a beautiful chapel, trimmed in red velvet. We came back and sang at Hardin-Simmons which is enormous. But I like H.P. better."

Kathy enrolled at HPU, and it didn't take long for her to meet David and for the two to fall in love. They have served in ministry together since their marriage on Dec. 31, 1969. Soon

"We want, as part of our legacy, to invest in putting Christian leaders back into society."

after, David served as music minister at Jones Chapel in Early, with Kathy accompanying on the piano. The Strawns served in churches at Pilot Point, Edna, Lubbock, Irving, Little Rock and finally for 25 years at First Baptist Church, College Station. Through the years, Kathy taught in the public school system and viewed it as a ministry. Later, God led Kathy to a full-time ministry of writing children's curriculum for Lifeway Resources. According to Lifeway, over the past 45+ years, based on circulation numbers, more than a million children and their leaders have been impacted by studying the Bible using Kathy's materials.

David and Kathy started giving to HPU in the early days of their marriage because of what HPU had done for them and because they believe in its mission. They couldn't give



The Strawns' support for their alma mater is rooted in their love for the university's mission.

much, but what they did give helped them keep their minds on HPU and pray for the school.

Ten years after their marriage, they decided to create a will. In that process, they felt convicted to give a portion of their estate back to the Lord. They were convinced then, and still are today, that the best place to make that gift to the Lord is at Howard Payne University.

"God has blessed us tremendously, and we see God at work at Howard Payne," David said. "We want, as part of our legacy, to invest in putting Christian leaders back into society."

David and Kathy, now retired, continue to minister through their non-profit The Ministry of Education, leading travel tours all over the world. One of their greatest joys is leading people to experience firsthand what they have read about in the Bible and learned in church history.

The couple remains connected to HPU, with a third-generation Yellow Jacket, Kourtney Melton, a junior at HPU. Their hope for HPU is that it continues to thrive as a place with wonderful people who genuinely love the Lord and help shape students for lives of ministry, whether within or outside of the church. The Strawns also hope that their story will encourage others to give back to HPU through an estate gift. ■

To learn more about supporting HPU through an estate gift, visit www.hputx.edu/give.

DR. GIL PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ADRIAN GIL; DR. FERGUSON PHOTO BY BEN SARTAIN '23
PHOTO BY LAUREL STANARD

HPU El Paso Center Highlights



By Dr. Adrian Gil
Assistant Vice President for the El Paso Center

Your HPU El Paso Center is happy to report that we have increased our overall student enrollment for a fourth consecutive long semester. From the fall to this spring semester, enrollment jumped over 27%! We thank our staff, donors and partners in education for helping us plant so many seeds, sharing the great news that is HPU, throughout our community.

We would like to proudly recognize the 2025-26 recipients of scholarships and assistance solely available to students attending the HPU El Paso Center. Maria Esther Sanchez Mancillas received the Bertha R. Valle Annual Scholarship. Victor Alvarez, Marie Ann Arellano, Samuel Lee, Fernando Portillo and Carlyn Cloud received the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation Scholarship. Micah Cottingim and Arturo Soto-Rios received the Dr. Joe T. Poe Christian Studies Annual Scholarship. Patrick Propeck-Rivera, Carlyn Cloud, Arturo Soto-Rios and Jacob Ruiz received assistance

from the Jeremiah 29:11 Fund. Trinitee Rojas received the Alicia Franco Annual Scholarship. Lastly, Sophia Cataudella, Samantha Molina, Roxanne Lara and Arturo Soto-Rios received the GECU Foundation Scholarship. Thank you so very much to our generous supporters – and way to go, HPU El Paso Center students!

The HPU El Paso Center is proud to introduce the new 2025-26 HPU Alumni Association El Paso Chapter Officers: President Beatriz Munoz '23, Vice President Jesus Zaragoza '23, Treasurer Susan Zaragoza '05 and '24, and Secretary Ileri Gutierrez '14, along with Chapter Advisor Eva Gutierrez '11. This team was busy planning and leading our participation in the William B. Dean, M.D. Community Impact Day in March. Sting 'em!

Lastly, we participated, along with our campuses in Brownwood and New Braunfels, in GivingTuesday this past winter to raise funds for HPU. We surpassed our previous record-breaking year, raising over \$5,000 for the center's scholarships, activities and alumni chapter. In that same season, we received \$10,000 in scholarship funding from a local community foundation. We are blessed beyond measure!

HPU New Braunfels Center Highlights



By Dr. Cynthia Ferguson
Assistant Vice President for the New Braunfels Center

The HPU New Braunfels Center celebrated four graduates in December 2025: Kendyll Buckner (Associate of General Studies), Helena MacCrossan (Master of Business Administration), Addison Svartz (BAAS in Business Administration) and Kaylyn Williford (BAAS in Business Administration). The center will be honoring five graduates at the May graduation celebration: May graduates Blanca Castaneda (BAAS Business Administration), Dylan Rhoads (BBA Marketing) and Aaron Heatherly (MATM); and August graduates Adrian Cano and Amy Schiwart, both earning an Associate in General Studies degree. Each of these individuals has a remarkable story. We are incredibly proud of their dedication to education over the years and pray for them as they begin their professional careers!

This year, students were featured on our HPU New Braunfels Center GivingTuesday fundraising video.

On April 23, HPU sponsored our first Texas Homeschool

Coalition (THSC) Graduation in New Braunfels at Oakwood Baptist Church. The ceremony featured Dr. Cory Hines '97 as the graduation speaker, encouraging graduates as they celebrated this important milestone! Over 120 family and friends attended to watch their graduates cross the stage. Thank you, Megan Proctor and Dr. Ben Martin '04 for tabling at the event! Special thank you to Roxi Vanstory and her team at Oakwood Church.

HPU New Braunfels students, faculty, alumni and friends of HPU celebrated the end of the year on Sunday, April 26, at Landa Park. We enjoyed hamburgers, BBQ, lumpia (thank you Juliet Mohler), brownies, cupcakes and lots of fellowship. We had so much fun that we are planning a repeat event in the fall to kick off the year. Watch for the announcement and join us!

Summer is almost here. When you are visiting with family and friends in this area, please, drop by the HPU New Braunfels Center to say hello and see our facilities. We are located at 2164 Oak Run Parkway (78130). Alumnus Matthew Aguirre '15, MBA '17, dropped in to say hello and tour the facilities!



The Early Town Center Park features a monumental sundial.

From humble beginnings to bright futures: HPU and City of Early share common values to guide success

By Tony Aaron '11
City Administrator, City of Early, Texas

The City of Early shares some of the core values that define Howard Payne University. Both institutions are focused on community, called to service and committed to excellence. These shared values have shaped their histories and continue to guide their growth, success and the strong partnership that exists between the university and the city today.

In 1951, Howard Payne College, already with more than six decades of history, was just two years away from consolidating with Daniel Baker College. That same year, a small community formed around the consolidation of several school districts into the Early Independent School District, which took steps toward incorporation as the City of Early. When Early officially became a city in December 1951, its population was estimated at just 600 residents.

From these humble beginnings, both HPU and the City of Early have grown into institutions envisioned by their founders. This year, HPU celebrates its 137th anniversary, while the City of Early approaches its 75th year. These milestones remind us that progress is built over time through faith, perseverance and the dedication of generations who invested their lives in something greater than themselves – and who understood the value of working together for the common good.

Our future success is shaped by the work we do each day. For many years, the City of Early has remained committed to intentional growth that strengthens the community it serves, including its partnership with Howard Payne University. Recent efforts have focused on economic development by increasing sales tax, hotel occupancy tax and property tax revenue while also creating new jobs and expanding housing opportunities that benefit residents, students and visitors alike.

A cornerstone of this vision is the Early Town Center development. This project is the result of extensive planning and collaboration, guided by the mayor, City Council, Municipal Development Board and city staff. From its inception, the Town Center has been designed not only as a city asset but as a shared space that complements the presence and mission of Howard Payne University. With the completion of the boardwalk, Mangrum Street and essential utility infrastructure this year, private developers are beginning to invest in the vision that has been carefully laid.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, development is expected to begin on a hotel, approximately 30,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space, and townhomes. Over the next three to 10 years, completion of the full 25-plus-acre, mixed-use development is projected to generate more than \$106 million in private investment, produce approximately \$2 million in new annual revenue, create up to 600 jobs and provide more

than 100 new housing units. These outcomes reflect the city's commitment to long-term, sustainable economic growth that supports both the university and the broader community.

Equally important to economic development is the City of Early's commitment to quality of life. The Town Center Park, lake and boardwalk are more than amenities. They are gathering places that foster connection, wellness and community pride. At first glance, the Town Center offers beauty and recreation – but at a deeper level, it represents an investment in people and relationships.

For HPU, the Town Center development offers significant benefits for current students and serves as a strong recruitment tool for prospective students. The park, lake and boardwalk provide a safe, welcoming environment for study, recreation, fellowship and rest – an extension of campus life that supports personal well-being and community engagement.

As additional restaurants, retail, housing and hospitality options are developed, the Town Center will further enhance the student experience. Prospective students and their families increasingly evaluate not only academic programs, but also the surrounding community when choosing a university. The Town Center allows HPU to highlight a vibrant, growing city that complements its Christ-centered academic mission.

This shared vision is further demonstrated through the City of Early's ongoing partnership with HPU. The city has supported numerous HPU initiatives, including ASC basketball, baseball and golf conference championships; academic conferences; student events; and community programs.



The Early Town Center Boardwalk is a picturesque location for outings.

More importantly, this partnership extends beyond financial support. City staff routinely contribute time, coordination and event assistance, demonstrating a shared commitment to service and excellence.

From humble beginnings to bright futures, HPU and the City of Early continue to move forward together united by shared values, strengthened through partnership and committed to serving both present and future generations.



The Early Visitors & Events Center's welcome sign celebrates various aspects of area life and history.

Alumni Association Spotlight

Chapter updates

By **Lindsay Badgeley '09**
Director of Alumni Relations

African American Alumni Chapter

The African American Alumni Chapter hosted a Black History Luncheon in the spring semester that included three panelists from the chapter, Victoria Malone '17, Barbara Walls and HPU student Kayla Kirk. Over 75 students, faculty, staff and alumni attended the luncheon that was hosted in the Newbury Family Welcome Center. The panel focused on celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Black History Month and encouraging students to keep connections with their HPU peers long after graduation.

El Paso Alumni Chapter

The El Paso Alumni Chapter provided snacks for students during the fall finals week. This has been a tradition of the El Paso Chapter that the group would like to continue. The chapter also hosted its end-of-semester Christmas celebration in conjunction with the El Paso Center 35-year anniversary celebration. The chapter participated in the fifth annual William B. Dean, M.D. Community Impact Day by serving in local churches and non-profits in their area.

Victoria Malone '17 (left) and Barbara Walls (right), members of the African American Alumni Chapter, are joined by current HPU junior Kayla Kirk (center) as panelists for the Black History Luncheon.



Hispanic Alumni Chapter

The Hispanic Alumni Chapter hosted an alumni gathering at the Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas 2025 annual meeting during the summer and also hosted its annual Hispanic Family Breakfast during the 2025 Homecoming. Over 60 alumni and friends were in attendance between the two events, and it was a wonderful time of connection and sharing memories from their days at HPU. In October, the chapter hosted a luncheon to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. During the event, 130 guests heard from alumni panelists Natalia Lopez '06, Bobby Flores '08 and Nereida Cenicerros '05 about how their culture and their time at HPU shaped them into who they are today. The chapter also participated in the 2026 Spring Family Reunion and partnered with the student organization Amigos Unidos.

Jacket Alums in Ministry

Jacket Alums in Ministry (JAM) is a chapter of the HPU Alumni Association designed to foster fellowship and networking opportunities among the university's alumni who serve or have served in Christian ministry. JAM has continued its Bible project, designed to be able to provide a Bible to every incoming student at HPU. The group is currently raising funds to purchase approximately 400 Bibles. JAM has also started a Prayer Ministry that allows alums to share their prayer requests with the JAM prayer team.



Members of the Hispanic Alumni Chapter join the panel at the Hispanic Heritage Luncheon held in October 2025.

Music Alumni Chapter

The Music Alumni Chapter started the school year by hosting a Popsicle social for all of the music students. Over 30 students, faculty and staff attended the event that took place at the new Ben and Bertha Mieth Outdoor Pavilion. During HPU's football season, the Music Alumni Chapter hosted Band Alumni Band Day. Band alumni and future Yellow Jacket band members were able to play with the HPU band in the stands throughout the game.

Young Alumni Chapter

The Young Alumni Chapter hosted a reunion during the 2025 Homecoming in Fambrough's, located in the Mabee University Center. Over 20 alumni and friends attended the reunion and enjoyed time reconnecting, sharing stories and playing games. The Young Alumni Chapter also created a GroupMe to help streamline communication, encourage attendance at events and discuss chapter initiatives.



For more information
on joining an alumni chapter,
contact alumni@hputx.edu.

Educator Alumni Chapter

The Educator Alumni Chapter was created in December 2025. With almost 200 charter members, this alumni group was formed to help reconnect the educator alumni community and find ways for the alumni to get involved on campus through events and with the student body. The Educator Alumni Chapter's goal is to foster connections between alumni in the education field and provide opportunities for mentorship between alumni and young graduates who are in their first years of teaching. ■



The Music Alumni Chapter hosted its first event for current music students in the Ben and Bertha Mieth Outdoor Pavilion.

PHOTOS BY THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY ARTIFACTS

DATE: 1970s-2020s

TYPE: Team rosters and photos



Something brand new was added to Howard Payne sports this season with the formation of the Spiking Jackets. The team offered extra opportunity for the women to show school spirit and pride. Participating on the 1975-76 team (1) were: (bottom row, left to right) Anna Hone, Lamar Rodriguez, Gayle Echols, Mary Lofly, Rosalinda Prias. Second row: Coach Maxine Hine, Lori Havel, Melinda Venable, Faye Echols, Barbara Jones, Faye Babacks, Carmen Amos, Jenny Allen. Third row: Coach Arvid Koopman. (2) Carl and Ann Amos saves the ball on the line. (3) Ann Amos saves the ball on the line. (4) Faye Echols (#11) discusses the game.

by Dr. Robert Mangrum, professor of history and government and university historian

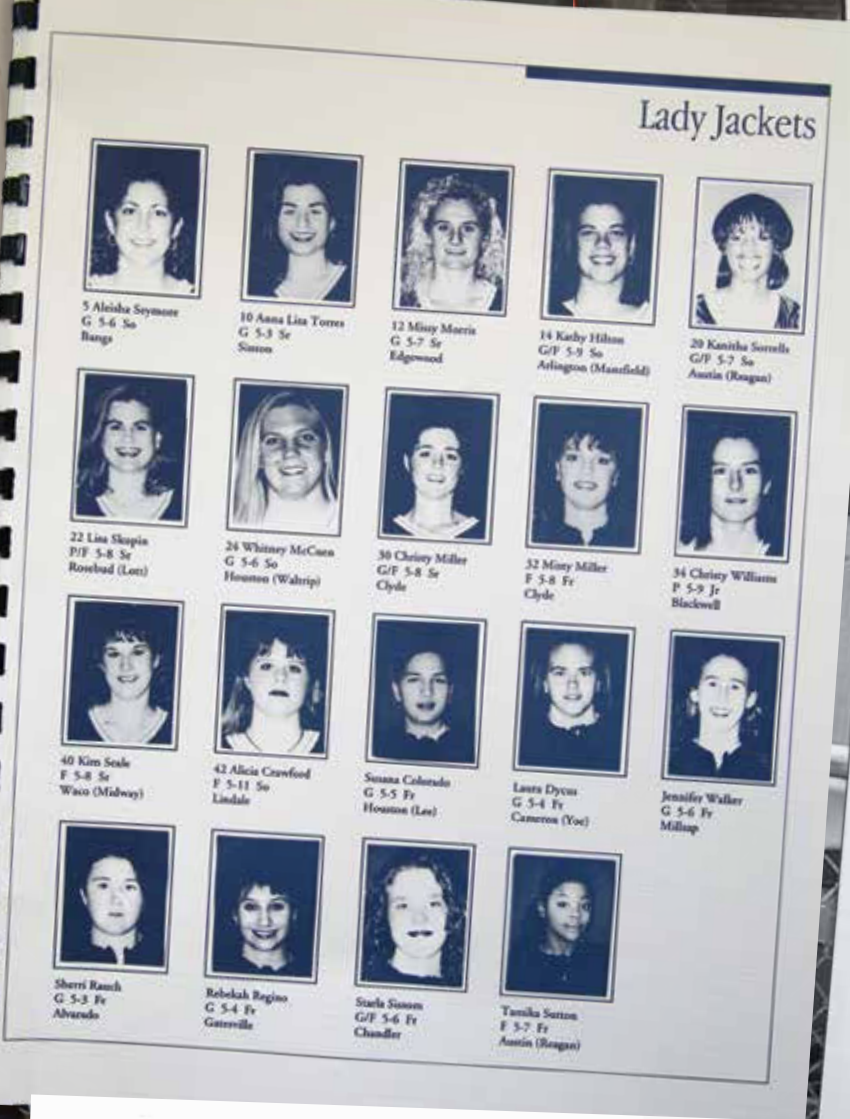


Howard Payne University has always been involved in intercollegiate athletics from the earliest times to the present. Even during the years that HP was a junior college, athletic teams were fielded in several sports. The photos opposite were selected to illustrate and commemorate the rich history and heritage of women's sports at HPU.

Artifacts pictured clockwise from top left:

- The volleyball team of 1975, shown in the 1976 yearbook, reflects the heritage of the first such team fielded in 1955.
- The Lady Jackets basketball team pictured in the 1995-1996 basketball media guide carries on the heritage of the first girls' basketball team fielded in 1912.
- The 1992 women's tennis team, from the 1993 yearbook, carries on from the first intramural team of 1912.
- The 2004 softball team, shown in the 2005 yearbook, reflects the first team fielded in 1997.
- Of course, one would be remiss if the national basketball champs of Division III for 2008 were not represented in this commemorative photo.
- The 2020-2021 women's golf team is an example of how rosters are featured on the HPU sports website. The women's golf team was first fielded in 2015.
- Women's soccer began varsity competition in 2007, and this team photo was included in the 2008 yearbook.

Dr. Robert Mangrum published an account of HPU's history titled *For Howard Payne My All: 125 Years of Christian Higher Education and Service, 1889-2015*. The book, which took 17 years to write, celebrates the university's history since its founding in 1889 and is available for \$30 on DVD or USB flash drive. Contact Dr. Mangrum (rmangrum@hputx.edu) for details. All proceeds from the book's sales support an academic scholarship at HPU.



LL TOGETHER NOW... The men's tennis team consists of: Geoff Iodley, Rodney Chant, Jeff Hartman, Gabriel Lorenzo, David Fay, Morgan Walker, Tim Trasher, Shane Williford, and Kevin Hill. (Photo by Tricia Bedford)

SHOW SOME TEETH... The women's tennis team includes: Coach Mary Nickell, Kim Lindsey, Missie Markham, Leanne Holm, Amy Engeske, Suzanne Stewart, and Amy Gilmore. (Photo by Tammy Conard)



Cory Lee	C/O	FR	S/R
Chiesia Rhinehart	2B	SO	R/R
Dayberly Hopper	OF	SR	R/R
Brooke Schneider	P/U/L	FR	R/R
Tiffany Quick	OF/U/L	SO	R/R
Jill McLaughlin	P/B	SO	L/L
Candra McKee	C/O	JR	R/R
Chelsey Densman	OF	SR	R/R
Tiffany Wolfe	P/B	JR	R/R
Tammie Hart	3B/SS	SO	R/R
Amanda Bludworth	SS/U/L	SR	R/R
Amanda Wanoreck	P	SO	R/R
Kasie McCain	P/SB	FR	R/R
Paige Phillips	U/L	JR	R/R
Meredith Yates	3B/R	JR	R/R





The Elliston-Cassle Wellness Center was built in 1939 and had its grand opening during HPU's 1940 Homecoming celebration. The facility includes office spaces and classrooms for the kinesiology department as well as exercise equipment and a basketball/volleyball court for HPU students and employees to use.



Elliston-Cassle Wellness Center



PHOTOS BY REBEKAH STERLING '18



When it was first completed, the Wellness Center served as HPU's physical education building as well as the location of home basketball and volleyball games and intramural sports. The first basketball game held in the facility resulted in a 69-36 Yellow Jacket victory.

In 2000, the building underwent renovations which included classroom and office updates, the replacement of the gym floor and the addition of a track and exercise equipment for the use of students, faculty and staff.

In recent years, facility upgrades have included renovated lobbies, updated paint and flooring, ID card access at both entrances and new weightlifting equipment.

While basketball and volleyball games are now hosted in the Brownwood Coliseum, intramurals, kinesiology classes and some team practices still take place within the facility.

To contribute toward ongoing improvements of HPU facilities, visit hputx.edu/give.

FROM COLORADO TO CAPITOL HILL ~ AND BEYOND ~

{ AN HPU EDUCATION LAUNCHES
CALEB KOSTREVA '19
TO WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES }

BY COBY SAUCE, MBA '14

Caleb Kostreva '19 has a simple bit of advice for young people considering Howard Payne University to further their education.

“Go to Howard Payne,” he said, with a laugh. “Just go.”

It was, after all, the same advice he took, and it has paid dividends in his life and career.

Originally from Clifton, Colorado, Kostreva visited HPU on the advice of a high school teacher. Coming from out of state, he wasn't quite sure what to expect. He was pleased to discover HPU's exceptional public policy program, the Guy D. Newman Honors Academy; a robust Study Abroad program; and an award-winning Model United Nations program.

“And I did all of those things,” he said.

In addition, he worked on campus, was a resident assistant and was active in the Baptist Student Ministry, Student Government Association and Alpha Psi Omega.

Perhaps most formative to his future profession were a Study Abroad trip to China his sophomore year and an internship during his senior year with the Christian human rights organization 21Wilberforce in the Washington, D.C., area. 21Wilberforce is dedicated to defending people of faith internationally through collaborative partnerships, grassroots efforts and the enacting of public policy. This internship, in particular, set the stage for Kostreva's career devoted to supporting the creation of policies and programs to benefit Americans and those around the world.

After graduating from HPU with honors, he interned with the Heritage Foundation, a think tank promoting conservative public policies, before working on Capitol Hill, most recently

serving as a congressional legislative director.

Since 2024, he has worked at Systems Planning and Analysis, Inc., providing support for AUKUS, a trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. According to the website for the U.S. Department of War, the AUKUS partnership “reflects the continued commitment by Australia, the United Kingdom, and United States to support a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, secure and stable.”

“I do policy work for the program, leveraging similar skills that I developed on the Hill,” Kostreva said, noting that HPU prepared him for the work he's doing today. “I've had good experiences in my career thanks to my time at Howard Payne.”

He encourages prospective students to visit HPU and see the value in its small size.

“There are no detriments to going to a smaller school, and, I would argue many benefits,” he said. “I got to sit down with my advisors and professors for hours and talk about my life and career goals. The small class sizes and the personal connections are so important. The professors truly care about every single one of their students.”

Among others, he credits HPU faculty members Drs. Matthew '03 and Jennifer '02 McNiece, Dr. David Claborn and Dr. Millard Kimery for their leadership and support.

“If Howard Payne has the academic programs that you're looking for, you should go,” he said. “I had an awesome experience there. I wouldn't trade my time at Howard Payne for anything.” ■

“I WOULDN'T TRADE
MY TIME AT
HOWARD PAYNE
FOR ANYTHING.”

PHOTO BY LIGHTBULB MEDIA



HPU WOMEN'S SPORTS AT 50

MEETING CHALLENGES AND MOVING FORWARD

— BY MEDE NIX '80 —

Fifty years after a handful of intramural athletes simply asked for a chance to play, women's athletics at Howard Payne University stands as one of the institution's great success stories.

It's a legacy marked by challenges, championships, celebrations, growing programs and significant investment in the future.

Today, HPU fields seven women's sports with approximately 125 student-athletes. Starting in 1975 with basketball and volleyball, the university has added softball, soccer, golf, tennis and beach volleyball. An eighth program, flag football, is in the works to debut this fall.

In addition, alumni are giving back, new facilities like the beach volleyball courts and the construction of the tennis center are going up, and Lady Jackets continue to earn honors on the field and succeed as leaders in their professions.

"From facility upgrades like the new tennis center to the addition of women's flag football, our department is intentionally creating opportunities for women athletes to compete at the highest level and thrive off the field as well," said Adam Bright, director of athletics. "These investments reflect our belief that women's sports are central to the HPU athletics experience."

But in the beginning, it was tight budgets and bologna sandwiches.



Miki Mieth at the net

"WE JUST WANT TO PLAY"

In 1975, universities across the country began launching women's sports programs in response to new federal regulations requiring equal opportunities for women in athletics.

That's when a group of HPU's women intramural athletes stepped out in faith and asked then-president Dr. Roger Brooks to approve the creation of women's intercollegiate sports at HPU.

"We went to the president and we asked for intercollegiate athletics," said Melinda (Venable) Kirst '78, who met with Dr. Brooks and played on HPU's first volleyball team. "We said, 'We just want to play.'"

That request launched the era of women's sports at HPU.

THE EARLY YEARS

There would be no scholarships the first year, but that was OK with the players.

Maxine Hine, a physical education



Melinda Venable in action



Members of HPU's first women's basketball team

professor who had never coached volleyball, was named the first coach, so the coach and players were growing together.

And the first basketball coach was also a student, said Sherri Johnston '78, who played on the first team.

Miki (Mieth) Martin '80 came to Howard Payne a year later. She said even though there were challenges, some of them are remembered fondly.

"The years that I was there, we got a brown paper sack from the cafeteria – we had a bologna sandwich," said Martin, while laughing about the go-to road meal. "We ate it and we survived."

Kirst said many of their meals in the first season were paid for by Hine and her husband, George, who served as sports information director.

And fans, at first, were few.

"Some people supported us, but it was kind of a misnomer," Martin said. "People didn't really know we were there. As the four years progressed, there were more fans."

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

In its second year, the volleyball team made it to the AIAW (the governing body for women's sports at the time) state tournament, Kirst said.

However, the season ended with some disappointment because travel money was unavailable.

"The second year, we had a very good team, and we qualified for small college nationals, but they wouldn't let us go," Kirst said. "We were very, very disappointed."

Even with some of the challenges, the women athletes still said they wouldn't trade their experience on the first teams for anything.

"Although the program had limited funding and basic equipment, we were just glad to play," Johnston said.

"I can't even remember what our first-year record was."

"We went to school there and we loved it," Martin said. "Most of us had nothing ... but we had a great time."

CHRISTIAN MISSION AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The women stayed true to HPU's Christian mission.

Kirst said the players formed "Lady Jackets for Jesus," a homegrown, sport-specific version of Fellowship of Christian Athletes. They spoke at local schools, shared their faith

and used their platform as athletes to connect with younger students.

"At Howard Payne, it's so easy to talk to people about your relationship with God, because that's the most important thing," she said.

Playing on those first teams also led to immediate opportunities after college, said Kirst, who went on to start three high school volleyball programs around the state, winning 508 career matches. She's one of only nine women ever in Texas to be athletic director in a school district for both boys' and girls' programs and is a member of HPU's Athletics Hall of Fame.

"Title IX had finally hit and everybody was looking for young women who had actually played," she said. "Suddenly those scrappy years at Howard Payne were exactly what schools wanted in a coach. By the age of 24, I was a head coach."

MAKING A NAME FOR HOWARD PAYNE

Women's basketball graduated to a bigger stage in the early to mid-1980s with a move to the NAIA. The change meant both men's and women's teams competed under the small-college athletic governing body and in the Lone Star Conference.

Under the leadership of Coach Sharon Campbell, the Lady Jackets won the Lone Star Conference championship in 1982 and went to the NAIA Playoffs that year and again in 1983,

Championship coach Sharon Campbell



Howard Payne's intercollegiate women's volleyball and basketball teams weren't the first to take the court against intercollegiate opponents.

In 1912, just 21 years after James Naismith invented basketball, Howard Payne College fielded its first teams – for both men and women. And according to the 1912 *Lasso*, the women's team won its first championship.

The yearbook staff wrote the women's team earned "the credit and the honor for breaking a series of defeats and beginning a series of victories in athletic contests against our local competitor. This season's games began with a victory of 11 to 7 over Daniel Baker and ended with the local championship for our girls."

Most of the senior women that year played on the basketball team, including Lucille Skinner of Zephyr, who had "ambition to become a Basket Ball player," the *Lasso* noted.

The next season, the women's team only played two games – against Simmons (now Hardin-Simmons) – losing both. Unlike modern-era HPU women's athletics, there was no governing

body or conference for women's sports. Few colleges offered women's athletics, so there were only a handful of games. Being on the basketball team was more like belonging to a campus club.

Early photos of the first teams showed the players wearing shirts with a tie or bow, bloomer-type skirts that came below the knee, and long socks.

According to research by Dr. Robert Mangrum in his encyclopedia *For Howard Payne My All, 125 Years of Christian Higher Education and Service, 1889-2015*, a women's basketball team appeared in yearbooks from 1912-20.

Tennis also was listed as an intramural sport for women beginning in 1912, with the women playing in ankle-length skirts, white shirts and a contrasting tie or scarf. Photos of women's tennis teams appeared through 1927.

More than 110 years later, the competitive spirit of those first players lives on in Howard Payne women's athletics.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HPU ARCHIVES



Peggy Taylor, HPU legend

when they won the NAIA District 4 championship.

For that 1982-83 season, Campbell recruited possibly the best women's basketball player in school history – Peggy (Taylor) Davis '85. In just two seasons after transferring from Cisco Junior College, she still holds HPU records for most points in a season (738), most rebounds in a season (381) and most field goals in a season (300) – marks all set in 1982-83. She also became the first HPU player to earn All-American honors.

The Lone Star Conference moved from the NAIA to NCAA Division II in 1983. In 1983-84, she led the Lady Jackets to overcome a lackluster regular season and win the Lone Star Conference Tournament, earning the team a spot in the NCAA Division II tournament with a first-round game against Southeast Missouri State.

The Lady Jackets' success earned the notice of fans not only at Howard Payne, but in Brownwood. That led to games being moved from the gym on campus to Brownwood Coliseum with the women playing doubleheaders with the men's team.

Longtime HPU broadcaster Dallas Huston said women's basketball had a "rocky start" in the '70s, but one player changed that in the 1980s.

"Peggy obviously was the one," he said.

MOVING TO DIII

The women's sports landscape at Howard Payne changed again in the late 1980s. The school's athletics teams joined the non-scholarship NCAA Division III Texas Intercollegiate Athletic Association (TIAA). The move put HPU on more equal footing with private schools and smaller state schools.

And it led to the volleyball team becoming a powerhouse, with TIAA championships in 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995 and 1996, with a co-championship in 1988.

Peggy (Taylor) Davis returned to her alma mater in 1988 to coach the basketball team,

becoming the first of several former players who returned to HPU as coaches. Her teams were TIAA co-champions in 1989 and champions in 1990.

The move to Division III also allowed the addition of women's track in 1988, women's tennis a couple of years later and softball in 1998. All three sports saw early success, with the track team winning five championships in the 1990s, tennis titles in 1991 and 1996 and softball a divisional title in 2001.

"I recognized them [women's sports] as being critically important," said Dr. Don Newbury '61, who was HPU president at the time during the move to Division III and the addition of the new women's sports.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Dr. Julie (Anderson) Welker '94 arrived at Howard Payne from tiny Rocksprings, motivated by a coach who constantly asked, "How good do you want to be?"

Recruited at the state track meet to run the 800 and the mile relay, she chose Howard Payne over larger programs after a campus visit and a personal welcome from Dr. Newbury.

Dr. Welker, now professor of communication and department chair at Howard Payne, was part of a team that won two TIAA championships and ventured into indoor track and cross country.

"Relays were always my favorite," she said. "There's such a sense of satisfaction when your team comes together to win something, because everybody benefits from that."

And track helped Dr. Welker long after her running days were over.

"Working hard and putting more into it than I think I can has pushed me in my career to not just settle," she said.

Julie Anderson passing the baton to Christina Johanan



Celebrating the 2008 NCAA Division III championship (Photo courtesy of Derrick Stuckly)

THE 21ST CENTURY

The new century brought soccer in 2006 as a new sport – and Howard Payne's first women's national championship in any sport.

Just like volleyball in 1975, Howard Payne's soccer program was born from a grassroots student effort.

When current women's soccer coach Brandon Badgeley '09 arrived on campus as a student in 2004, there was only a loosely organized club team. Badgeley and other players approached the athletic director, Mike Jones, gathered 300-400 student signatures and a list of players with high school or club experience and then put together a business proposal

for the Board of Trustees. The board approved their plan for intercollegiate soccer for women and men to start in 2006.

"We went back to Mike Jones and said, 'Is this enough to see that there's interest and there can be a benefit?'" Badgeley said. "They voted and passed it. That's how it started – students pushing for it."

"THE PERFECT SWARM"

The undisputed biggest moment of 50 years of women's sports at Howard Payne is the 2008 undefeated 33-0 NCAA Division III basketball championship.

Nicknamed "The Perfect Swarm," the HPU women were the only undefeated basketball team in the NCAA – men or women in any classification – that season.

"I had the privilege of calling all of their games and it was one of the highlights of my life," Huston said. "They were by far the best Lady Jacket team ever and one of the best ever in the nation at that level."

Hope (Hohertz) Deramus '10 was a part of it and sees the championship run as a turning point for women's sports at Howard Payne. It raised the visibility and respect for women's athletics on campus, helping put HPU "back on the map" through women's basketball. It also helped establish an expectation of more equal support for men's and women's programs, she said.

The team had lost in the Sweet 16 round the year before and she said the players came home "sick" over the loss and immediately started working for the next season. Players stayed in Brownwood over the summer, practicing together to get better.

"We were so adamant that we wanted each of us to become better. We all knew our role and we just needed to fulfill those roles," said Deramus, who's now a sergeant for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Only four of 33 games were decided by 10 or fewer points. The team had NCAA Division III National Player of the Year Meia (Daniels) Netter '08; National Coach of the Year Chris Kielsmeier; and two All-Americans, Daniels and Stacey Blalock '08.

"It made a huge impact and will continue to be a milestone for my entire family," Deramus said. "You never, never will get over that feeling of the stands being full and over you at the coliseum. You felt like you were on top of the world when you were on the court."

Huston said after the women advanced to the Final Four at the Sweet 16 regional at Brownwood Coliseum, there was no doubt about what would come next.

"We went up there fully expecting a national championship," he said. "Those girls were special – and they still are."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HPU ARCHIVES EXCEPT WHERE NOTED



Former HPU basketball players (from left) Renee (Scott) Tyner '83, Sherri Cantrell '76, Pamela (Foster) Starr '79, Rebecca (Warrington) Coolbaugh '88, Belinda (Sheffield) Hailey '77 and Elaina (Buchanan) Gray '25 at a recent ceremony commemorating 50 years of HPU women's sports

THE LANDSCAPE TODAY

After adding golf in 2015, the last three years have brought rapid expansion and momentum to women's sports at HPU.

Another new addition is the Woody and Miki Martin Sand Volleyball Courts on campus, with the lead gift coming from Martin and her husband, Woody Martin '80, a former HPU football player. The couple see the gift as "Kingdom work" to draw students to campus, strengthen women's athletics and ensure more students hear the Gospel while they're there.

"I didn't realize beach volleyball was becoming the thing until Dr. (Cory) Hines ('97) said many colleges were adding the sport," she said. "I'm glad it's something new for the girls – and I like that it's right there on campus. People just seem to love being out there and being able to watch."

Micah (Cisneroz) Taylor '16, MBA '18, who was an All-Conference volleyball and basketball player for the Lady Jackets from 2015-2017, is the new beach volleyball coach.

"Schools know they have to invest more if they want to attract the kind of recruits they're looking for, and our current administration and coaches are really pushing for better and bigger things," she said. "You can see it in the way Howard Payne keeps adding opportunities for women – starting beach volleyball is a great example of that commitment."

LARGER IMPACT

Badgeley, the soccer coach, sees the ripple effects from his program showing up on sidelines across Texas. Several of his former players have gone into high school coaching and are providing a pipeline for new players to HPU.

He's also seeing better support through some of the improvements that have been made, like adding lights on the soccer field to allow night games that don't conflict with daytime classes.

"Before the lights, we were averaging about 105-110 people at a game, and now we're averaging around 300 at a game," Badgeley said. "After 10 years here, it feels like women's sports at Howard Payne are on the verge of something new. With fresh coaches, growing crowds and new programs, there's a real sense that this is just the beginning."

His players feel at home too.

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Landry Combs, a goalkeeper from Midlothian, transferred from University of Texas-Tyler.

"When I came to HPU, I immediately felt welcomed by Coach 'Badge' and my teammates, both on and off the field. The environment here made me feel valued not just as an

athlete, but as a person, and I knew very quickly that HPU was where I wanted to be."

Combs, who wants to one day coach college women's soccer, mentioned something that several other women athletes said: Throughout most of the 50 years of women's sports, there has been great care for athletes from the faculty and administration.

"One of the things I appreciate most about HPU itself is how intentional the professors are about student success," she said. "I believe HPU provides strong opportunities for female athletes to succeed. We are given a lot of resources and, as a female athlete, I feel very valued and given plenty of opportunities to develop academically and athletically."

Kate Nordhaus, a junior defender from McKinney Christian Academy, also said she has thrived at HPU.

"Having the opportunity to play soccer at the next level is a really cool experience," she said. "I feel like playing soccer in college gave me an instant family, which was especially nice when I was a freshman. But it has also taught me a lot about having self-discipline, grit and leadership."

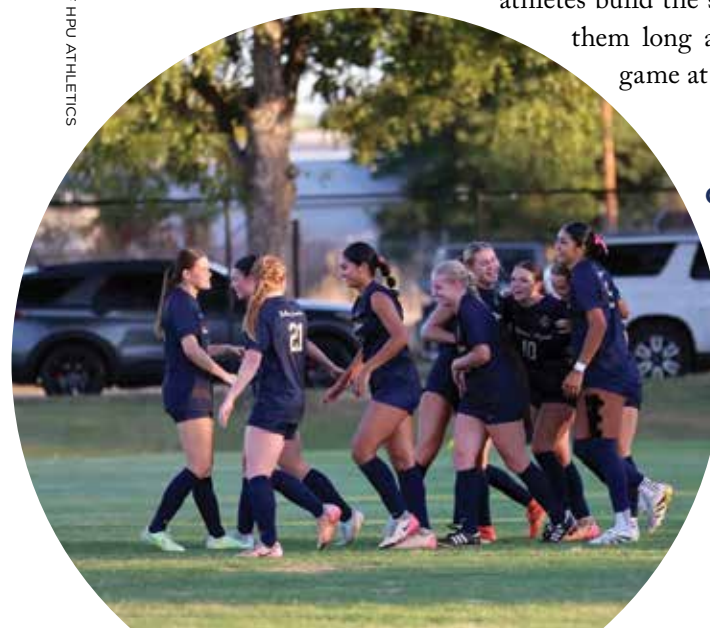
"STRONG CULTURE OF CARE"

Bright said success for women's athletes isn't just measured on the field.

"Our student-athletes are supported through health and wellness services, mental health resources and mentoring programs that help them navigate the rigors of competition, academics and life," he said. "There's a strong culture of care here from coaches, teammates and staff who all play a role in helping young women grow in confidence and resilience."

This fall, HPU will have a staff sports psychologist to help student-athletes "be the best version of themselves."

"We aim to develop women of character who are ready for life after college," Bright said. "Through leadership opportunities within their teams and across campus, community service initiatives and career preparation resources, women athletes build the skills that serve them long after their final game at HPU." ■



Celebrating with the women's soccer team

CEREMONY PHOTO BY LAUREL STANARD; SOCCER TEAM PHOTO COURTESY OF HPU ATHLETICS

50 YEARS OF HPU WOMEN'S SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Basketball

- 1981-82: Lone Star Conference (LSC) championship, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) District 4 championship, NAIA Area 2 runner-up
- 1982-83: NAIA District 4 qualifier
- 1983-84: LSC Tournament championship, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II first round
- 1990: Texas Intercollegiate Athletic Association (TIAA) champion
- 1994: TIAA co-champion
- 1995: TIAA tri-champion
- 2005, 2007, 2009: American Southwest Conference (ASC) champion
- 2008: ASC, NCAA Division III national champion

Softball

- 2001: ASC West Division winner

Tennis

- 1991: TIAA co-champion
- 1996: TIAA champion

Track

- 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996: TIAA champion

Volleyball

- 1976: Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) state tournament, small college nationals qualifier
- 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996: TIAA champion
- 1988: TIAA co-champion

FOUNDING YEARS OF HPU WOMEN'S SPORTS

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1975: Volleyball, basketball | 2006: Soccer |
| 1988: Track (through 2008) | 2015: Golf |
| 1990: Tennis | 2025: Beach volleyball |
| 1997: Softball | 2026: Flag football |

WOMEN IN THE HPU ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

- 1991: Vera (Davis) Turnipseede, volleyball
- 1995: Tami Pattillo, basketball
- 1996: Peggy (Taylor) Davis, basketball
- 1998: Melanie Mayer, basketball
- 2003: Christy (Williams) McKee, track and field, basketball
- 2004: Myka (Allen) Johnson, volleyball
- 2009: 2007-08 NCAA Division III basketball champion team
- 2011: Melinda (Venable) Kirst, volleyball
- 2014: Meia (Daniels) Netter, basketball
- 2014: Kristy Lyons, basketball
- 2017: Stacey Blalock, basketball
- 2019: Leslie Jones, soccer
- 2019: Kate McLaughlin, softball

EVERY TICKET AN OPPORTUNITY

HPU's Information Technology Services office strives to show Christ's love with every interaction

BY COBY SAUCE, MBA '14

When asked to describe their day-to-day responsibilities, Howard Payne University's Information Technology Services team responded with a beat of silence followed by laughter. It turns out that their day-to-day responsibilities vary, well, from day to day.

"Each staff member has a special area of responsibility," said Dr. Jodi Goode, assistant vice president for IT services and chief information officer. "But, as a small department, we often step in to help wherever needed."

On any given day, the department's six-person staff may be found answering service calls received via phone or through the IT online ticket system, doing administrative duties, consulting with other departments or, as was the case on a recent work day, completely overhauling the system the university uses to handle finance, human resources, payroll, registration and more.

Though they stay incredibly busy, Dr. Goode strives to lead the team in such a way as to facilitate the big systems while also remembering the human touch.

"We really try to be service oriented, dropping everything if someone needs our help," she said. "If we receive a call from a professor who is unable to start class because the classroom technology isn't working, or from a student who is unable to submit an assignment, the team's instinct is to respond immediately. We will often show up in person to assist, even when remote help is possible, to provide added reassurance and support. The team does this not because it is our job, but because we genuinely care about the people we serve. I

love that the IT team's response to our daily tasks not only reflects professionalism but also our willingness to serve in a Christ-like way."

Dr. Nathan Lane, HPU's vice president for academic affairs, said Dr. Goode leads her team with integrity and professionalism.

"They go above and beyond to serve others both on and off campus and, in so doing, serve God very well," he said. "I'm proud of the team and the work they do for the university."

The IT team meets challenges with grace and humor, serving God by serving others on campus.

"I like to think of our department as the nervous system of the university," said Christopher Ewen '24, database administrator. "We help every function on campus."

The group enjoys working behind the scenes to ensure the campus' technology infrastructure is sound and secure.

"If we're doing our job well, no one should know we're here," said Dr. Goode, although she quickly pointed out that people at HPU are always grateful, even for the little things.

The department has received encouraging notes, thoughtful words and even snacks from appreciative campus clients.

"The sense of community is the best thing about Howard Payne," said Dr. Cherri Conley, instructional technology specialist.

Dr. Goode said technology issues often occur at the worst possible time for the end user.

"We often support faculty, staff and students when tensions



IT TEAM MEMBERS (FROM LEFT):

Dr. Cherri Conley
Instructional Technology Specialist

Isaac Salazar
Systems Administrator

Dr. Jodi Goode
Assistant Vice President for Information Technology Services; Chief Information Officer

Chris Thompson
Director of Technical Support Services

Bobby Womack '09, MBA '22
Director of Network and Infrastructure Services

Jordan Gomez
Enterprise Systems Administrator

Christopher Ewen '24
Database Administrator

are high or time is of the essence," she said. "We fix printers, rescue lost documents and troubleshoot crises at all hours. Our faith calls us to respond with grace, patience and understanding. Although our work is often behind the scenes, it is our ministry, and every ticket, phone call or crisis moment is an opportunity to show Christ's love through excellent service."

Dr. Goode reflected on how the Bible consistently calls followers of Christ to servant leadership, humility and compassion.

"Those values are key in how I interact with my team and how I hope they interact with one another and the campus community," she said. "I do my best to model leadership focused on integrity, transparency and service. I strongly believe we lead best when we serve first, and I strive to foster this culture within the IT department."

Continual advances in technology bring both challenges and opportunities.

"One of our biggest challenges is protecting the university against constantly evolving cybersecurity threats," said Dr. Goode. "While computer viruses in the residence halls or password sharing might have been common security issues in the past, today we are defending against sophisticated attacks, phishing attempts and global cybersecurity threats."

Keeping HPU data, systems and end users safe requires constant monitoring, advanced tools and university-wide training initiatives.

"When many of our alumni were students, most classes were entirely face-to-face, and technology played a supporting role," said Dr. Goode. "Today, technology is woven through nearly

every academic experience. This includes classroom technology, online learning systems and tools, remote collaboration and more. With the rising expectation for these tools and their integration into daily learning activities, reliability and rapid support are crucial."

Dr. Goode said the average student living in HPU's residence halls has three to five connected devices such as laptops, tablets, phones, gaming consoles and smart TVs.

"The increased number and variety of devices, along with the expectation of instant access and seamless connectivity, place significant demands on our wireless network and campus infrastructure," she said. "To support the growing reliance on technology, providing high-speed connectivity across classrooms, residence halls and outdoor spaces is a priority."

All universities must update systems, hardware and software frequently to keep pace with evolving technology.

"Finding the right balance between innovation and financial stewardship is often difficult as we seek to ensure that every dollar invested in technology clearly supports HPU's mission and strategic goals," said Dr. Goode. "As technology demands grow, we constantly evaluate priorities, streamline processes and seek creative solutions to ensure we meet the needs of the campus and successfully support the university mission."

Dr. Goode said working for HPU is a great way for the IT team to take their gifts, technical in nature, and utilize them for Kingdom work.

"We truly feel like we're serving the greater good," she said. ■



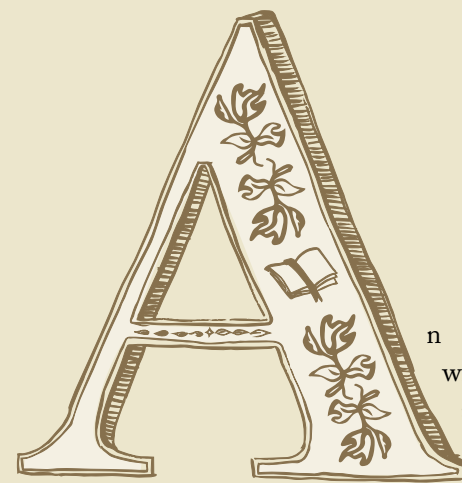
PHOTOS BY LAUREL STANARD

A LEGACY OF LITERATURE



DRS. EVELYN AND NANCY '04 ROMIG
ON THE LIFELONG VALUE OF READING

BY REBEKAH STERLING '18



An unusual thing happens when a person opens a book and reads it: Two perspectives are represented simultaneously – the reader's and the character's. The reader is then invited to sit with the feelings, quirks and decisions of another and ask, "Why is this person doing this? How does this make me feel? What would I do in this situation?"

This process of introspection can shape the reader into a more understanding, well-rounded and empathetic person. Dr. Evelyn Romig and her daughter Dr. Nancy Romig '04 have spent their careers equipping Howard Payne University students for just that.

On a summer day in 1978, Evelyn Romig and her husband, Peter, were visiting his hometown of Brownwood. She had nearly completed her doctorate from Rice University and was in search of a teaching opportunity, when she decided to see if HPU had an opening. As Evelyn climbed the oiled-wood steps of Old Main, she didn't know much about Howard Payne, but she did know three things: She wanted to teach English Literature, positions teaching English were scarce and HPU's English department was on the third floor.

"Before I walked down the stairs, I had a job offer," she recalls.

In 2014, Dr. Nancy Romig stood in front of a class full of HPU students. She had recently completed her doctoral studies and was substitute-teaching courses for the woman who had instilled in her both a love for literature and a love for HPU – her mother. Of course, the position was a temporary one. Nancy planned to search for a full-time position when her mother returned from teaching abroad. To her pleasant surprise, at the end of that summer, she had a full-time job offer from HPU. She and her mother were colleagues for four years until Evelyn's retirement in 2017.

Today, the Drs. Romig have a combined total of more than 50 years teaching English at HPU. Now several years retired, Evelyn often misses those years spent in the classroom but is gratified knowing the department is in good hands.

PHOTO BY REBEKAH STERLING '18

"It's just about as cool as anything can be to have your daughter go into the field that you love and do such a bang-up job of it," she shares of Nancy. "I was good, but this one is really exceptional."

For Nancy and her siblings, Robert and Liz, the HPU campus was the backdrop for much of childhood.

"These guys," Evelyn says, referring to twins Nancy and Robert, "were toddling around Old Main for the last Chime Out ceremony that took place there (1984). Then it burned during finals week."

Nancy recalls attending numerous HPU events as a child, including Christmas parties and gatherings for Gamma Beta Phi, an HPU honors organization co-sponsored by her mother and a fellow professor, Dr. Jack Stanford. In her entire life, she's only missed a handful of Homecoming celebrations.

In addition to Dr. Stanford, many of Evelyn's colleagues became key figures in the lives of her family members, including Dr. Glenn Hopp, Dr. Ed Roth, Dr. Donal Bird, Dr. Gary Gramling '81 and Dr. Donnie Auvenshine '75.

Although it was a special place for her, Nancy didn't initially plan on attending HPU. She gained early admission to Southwestern University in Georgetown and attended her freshman year there with her brother. It didn't take long, however, for Nancy to realize it just wasn't a good fit. During a visit home, she met a group of HPU students at a campus event.





DR. EVELYN ROMIG SERVED AS AN ENGLISH PROFESSOR AT HPU FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS.

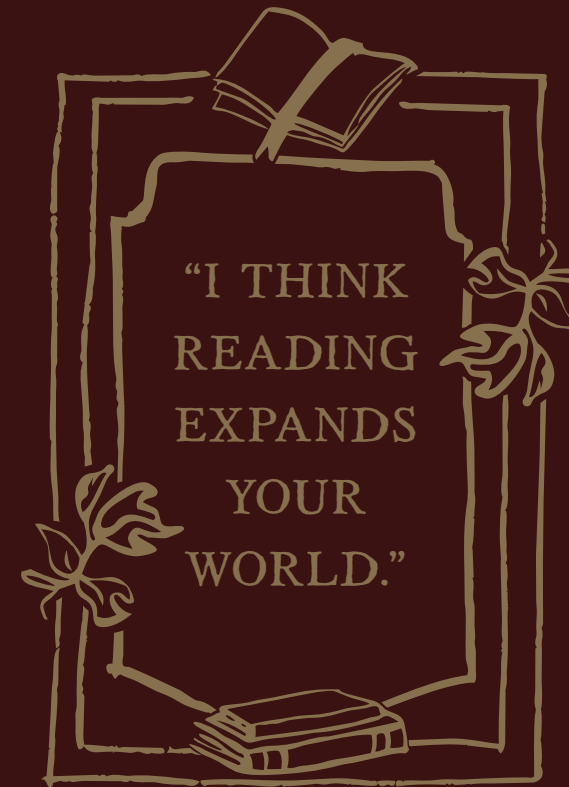
"I was introduced to a few people who were a year older than me, and they were all so nice," Nancy remembers. "I thought, I'll just go to Howard Payne in the fall and probably transfer out some other time. Then I got here, and everybody was so friendly. I liked my classes and loved living in Veda, so I stayed put. It was very unintentional, but it worked out."

Of course, in addition to HPU, reading has always been deeply rooted within the Romig family.

"My children don't know that you can't love to read," shares Evelyn.

For Evelyn and Nancy, studying literature extends beyond career preparation or checking a box on a skill set – it's instrumental in developing a deeper understanding of the human experience.

"Storytelling has always been a way for us to relate to each other and to relate to situations that are unknown at the moment but may be encountered later on," Nancy



explains. "Relatability, human emotion, interactions and sympathy are such key things that reading brings us that other things can't in quite the same way."

She adds that the classroom setting brings another important layer to reading.

"Reading is such a solitary thing," Nancy says, "but then you go to class and it's meant to be very communal. You're meant to share your viewpoint with people who are going to see it the same way or process it very differently. This adds to your understanding of the text, which is a lot of fun."

Evelyn says that, in addition to introspection and connection, reading can lead to a broader worldview.

"If you looked at the facts of my life, they would look incredibly narrow," she says. "I married young, I have lived in one house for over 50 of my 74 years ... but I would never say I have had a narrow life. I have been exposed to broadness of thought and experience and conversation with other people. I think reading expands your world."

For that same reason, one of Nancy's favorite classes to teach is World Literature.

"We read literature from all over the world – from India, South America, France, Germany, America – I mean all over," she says. "The class is themed around this idea of universality – that, hey, humans are humans. What does a French writer from the realist era have to say about us? A whole lot, oddly enough, because as humans we're still concerned with the same things."

Evelyn could hardly have predicted the outcome of that first day's visit to campus – a nearly 40-year-long career teaching English at HPU, and her daughter Nancy's eventual appointment within the very same department.

"I have felt very much that things look accidental and then I see the hand of God after the fact," Evelyn says. After reflecting on her early days at HPU, she adds, "I would tell myself that I was becoming part of a great, lasting community: The students I taught would go on to teach my children and my grandchildren, faculty members would become cherished lifetime friends, and the job that I thought was only a short-term thing would become the fabric of my life."

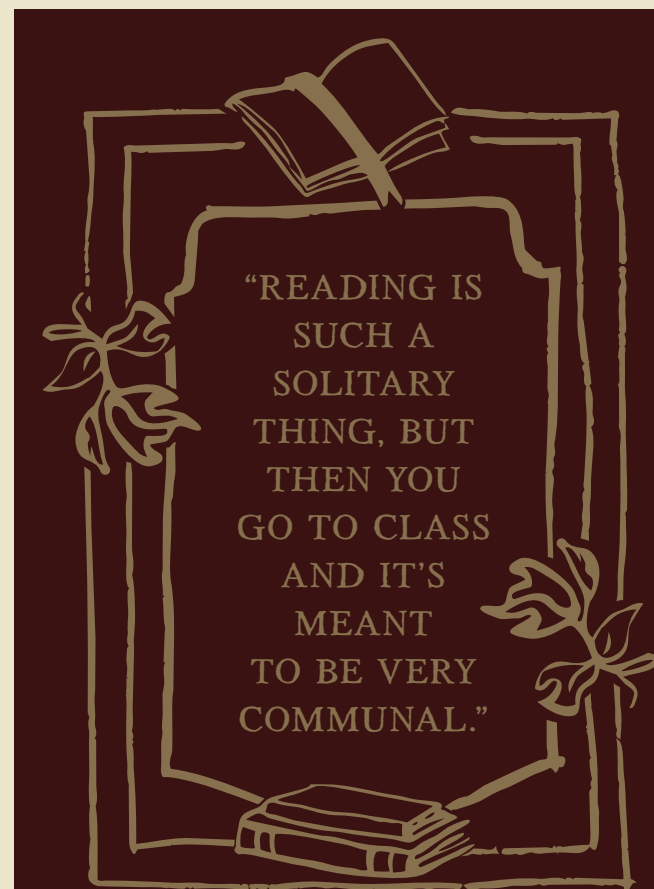
Although Evelyn's time as an HPU professor has ended, her influence remains, especially within Nancy's own classroom.

"I don't think there is anyone who loves her profession or HPU more than Evelyn Romig," she says. "If I can get halfway there by the time I retire, I think I'll have done pretty well."

Nancy continues to enjoy the daily interactions with students in the classroom as they learn together.

"Every day, I get to come to work and talk about authors I love and teach stories that I think have a lot of relevance and meaning for us – stories that I think will help us figure out how to be human a little better than we might be managing at the moment," she explains. "For someone who loves literature, there's nothing more gratifying than that." ■

DR. NANCY ROMIG '04 HAS TAUGHT ENGLISH AT HPU FOR 12 YEARS.



PHOTOS BY REBEKAH STERLING '18



A different path

By Julia
Catlett '21

How Eric O'Quin's life experience brought him to HPU

For nontraditional student Eric O'Quin, the road to Howard Payne University wasn't straightforward. By the time he began classes at HPU, O'Quin already had an education, a career and a family. Though his path may look different from many of his classmates, it led him to the same place.

Originally from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, O'Quin moved to Cisco when he was 10. In 2021, he and his wife, Ashley, moved to Brownwood with their sons Matthew, Jordan, Jacob and Jesse. Ashley works in HPU's Walker Memorial Library as the government document specialist and technical services assistant, and was the first to encourage him to begin his journey at HPU.

"My wife has always been the biggest supporter of my dreams," said O'Quin. "When I decided to go down a different path, she told me to go for it!"

Before his time at HPU, O'Quin earned a degree in culinary arts and spent the first part of his career working in the food industry, including working as an executive chef for several years. He currently serves in the local food industry. Wanting to expand his education, O'Quin began looking at online programs and decided to pursue the field of psychology. He spent a few semesters studying online before transferring to HPU.

O'Quin is a junior majoring in counseling and clinical psychology. His favorite part about HPU has been attending his classes and interacting with his classmates. One

class that he particularly enjoys is Marriage and the Family, taught by Dr. Jim Wunderle, assistant professor of psychology and department chair.

"I enjoy the balance Dr. Wunderle brings to the classroom setting," O'Quin said. "He is very interactive with his students, and I like the way he does his lectures. I learn best by being involved in the process, instead of just listening to someone speak."

Dr. Wunderle is grateful for O'Quin and the wisdom he brings to their class discussions.

"Eric is a joy to have in class," said Dr. Wunderle. "He has such insight and maturity and life experience. He has something that I don't see in very many students, and it's that he has a thirst for learning. He sits on the front row, and you can tell he's engaged every minute. He's truly engaged and hungry to grow."

After becoming a licensed clinical professional counselor, he plans to earn a master's degree in psychology and the credentials to become a licensed marriage and family therapist.

"I have always been fascinated with people and how they see themselves and others," he said. "My time as a foster parent has shown me the need for counseling, especially in the family unit."

Dr. Wunderle has enjoyed watching O'Quin's life experience combine with his educational experiences at HPU.

"That's sort of the golden combination – experience and education," said Dr. Wunderle. "He has the experience, and now he's getting the education." ■

PHOTO BY JULIA CATLETT '21



There are so many things I love about HPU. I could talk about the benefits of a small campus, or how it is centered on Christ, or how many opportunities there are for leadership on campus. All of this is true, but the thing that stands out most to me is how vast the opportunities are to find mentors and wisdom here.

The presence of mentors can be the difference between flourishing and failing. There have been so many times at college where I have been struggling academically, emotionally or physically, and I needed someone to speak encouragement and wisdom into my life. Every time, the HPU community fulfilled this need. Instead of getting stuck in the struggles of college life, I was helped to see ways to improve and grow so that I could succeed. There are so many examples of my mentors from my two and a half years at HPU that it's hard to pick only one or two to share.

One of the very first people to become a mentor to me at Howard Payne was Kristen Faulkner, resident director of Veda Hodge Hall. I met her as soon as I moved to Brownwood and she supported me even from the beginning. Although I was excited to be here, I was also very scared. I went from being

homeschooled in the Houston area to college in Brownwood. I didn't have any friends or know anyone here, so I didn't have a support system yet. I was struggling to cope with all of the changes – new home, trying to find friends, adjusting to college academics, trying to juggle responsibilities – and on top of all this I broke a student's laptop on the second day of school. When I was in a hurry to get to my next class, my backpack knocked someone's laptop off a desk and shattered the screen. I ended up crying in Kristen's office. I needed encouragement and a hug, and she was there for me. This kindness gave me the courage to keep trying at college and not give up. That was the beginning of my relationship with Kristen, and even though I no longer live in Veda, she is a friend and mentor to me to this day.

The encouragement I received did not stop after the first couple of weeks or even after the first semester. A year ago, I was not very involved on campus because I hadn't found the place where I clicked. We had spaces for those who are into athletics, ministry, video games, politics, social events and science, but there was no group for creatives. I had been thinking about this when Kailee Torgerson, director of student

LYDIA SWEET IS PICTURED AT TOP RIGHT WITH FELLOW HOBBY HIVE MEMBERS KOURTNEY MELTON, KATELYN WHITE AND ELLIE FAULEY; AND BELOW RIGHT WITH KRISTEN FAULKNER '01, HOUSING DIRECTOR AND RESIDENCE HALL DIRECTOR OF VEDA HODGE HALL, AND KAILEE TORGERSON, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT.

PHOTO WITH KRISTEN FAULKNER AND KAILEE TORGERSON BY LAUREL STANARD
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LYDIA SWEET EXCEPT FOR

leadership and engagement, asked to meet with me about leadership opportunities on campus. She encouraged me to start a group to fulfill this need. At first, I didn't think it was something I could do, but she kept encouraging and supporting me. It was my first time to step fully into a leadership role. In the fall 2025 semester, our new group, the Hobby Hive, held four campus-wide events and took part in two existing HPU events. We foster a community for anyone interested in art and crafts. It has been amazing to see how God has blessed this group and used it to bless our campus. It turns out that there were others like me who hadn't found their spot on campus either. Now the Hobby Hive is that place. I would never have started this group if I did not have continual encouragement and support from Kailee, Dr. Nathan Penland, vice president for student experience, and so many others.

If I had not attended Howard Payne University, I do not think that I would have found this type of encouragement and community. HPU as a whole offers this to every student who comes here. I am so grateful to everyone here who has taken a minute or two out of their day to encourage and disciple me as I seek to further my education and glorify God in all I do. ■

"I AM SO GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE HERE WHO HAS TAKEN A MINUTE OR TWO OUT OF THEIR DAY TO ENCOURAGE AND DISCIPLE ME AS I SEEK TO FURTHER MY EDUCATION AND GLORIFY GOD IN ALL I DO."

LYDIA SWEET IS A JUNIOR FROM ROSENBERG MAJORING IN ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCE.

In Memoriam

Howard Payne University sadly lost the following alumni and other members of the HPU family between the dates of August 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026 (except where noted). To notify HPU of the passing of individuals with connections to the university, please email development@hputx.edu.

HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI/FORMER STUDENTS

Clifford Wayne Allred '76, Dec. 9, 2025
Ruth E. Applin '63, Feb. 11, 2026
Luana Michaelyn (Thompson) Atkinson '69, Dec. 2, 2025
Gloria F. (Myers) Barr '63, Feb. 16, 2026
Russell Earl "Rusty" Bertrand '73, Sept. 18, 2025
Charles Audice Brewster '61, March 12, 2026
Susan C. (Campbell) Brown, Jan. 11, 2026
Dr. Paul Walker Butler '62, Sept. 22, 2025 (Retired faculty/staff; Distinguished Alumni; Medal of Service; Grand Marshal)
Michele Cagle '76, Aug. 31, 2025
Gerald Layne "Jerry" Callaway, Aug. 7, 2025
Dr. Jack L. Carter '55, Nov. 6, 2025
Rachel (Ayala) Castro '56, Dec. 15, 2025
Moyra G. (Lasso) Chisholm '83, Oct. 23, 2025
Carveth Clinton Clements, Feb. 14, 2026
Dr. Robert B. "R.B." Cooper Jr. '54, Dec. 7, 2025 (Former member, Alumni Association Board of Directors)
Janelle (Hinkle) Coyle '67, Jan. 26, 2026

Richard Colby Cundieff '77, Nov. 19, 2025
Emmett Booth Duty III, March 8, 2026
Martha Joyce (Redfearn) Edwards '54, Dec. 31, 2025 (Former member, Alumni Association Board of Directors)
Ruth (Johnson) Edwards '68, Nov. 10, 2025
Alice Louise (Wesson) Franklin '54, March 18, 2026 (Former faculty/staff)
Dr. Santiago "Jimmy" Garcia III '71, Feb. 18, 2026 (Dr. José Rivas Distinguished Service Award)
Richard Blanchard Grant '62, Feb. 21, 2026
Dr. Wilson Wayne Grant '62, Jan. 9, 2026 (Former member, Board of Trustees; Distinguished Alumni)
Kimberly Alicia Hall '87, Feb. 5, 2026
Rev. Kenneth David Harpster '71, Nov. 11, 2025
Judith Faye Hayes '65, Jan. 27, 2026
Alicia Jo (McCarter) Henry '91, Dec. 16, 2025
Juel Ann (Bradford) Holtzclaw '67, March 3, 2026
Gary Richard Howard, March 13, 2026
Jacquelyn Nicole Hrachovina '13, Dec. 13, 2025

Marilynn (Bock) Jackson '73, Sept. 6, 2025 (Retired faculty/staff; Coming Home Queen)
Larry Lee Kauffman '67, Dec. 1, 2025
Jerry T. Keel '62, Aug. 8, 2025
John Henry Kidd '73, Aug. 2, 2025
Nancy Kay (Bishop) King '73, Feb. 25, 2026
Robert Lee Kolls '64, Aug. 8, 2025 (Former member, Alumni Association Board of Directors)
Coy Dale London, Jan. 4, 2026
Ken E. Mayberry '69, Oct. 31, 2025
Patricia (Mays) McCoy '58, Jan. 18, 2026
Rosemary (Quinn) Miller '57, June 25, 2025
Janet Lee (Hunt) Newberry '72, March 2, 2026
Robert Pereida Ortiz, Dec. 1, 2025
Rev. Harrell William Parr '54, Feb. 10, 2026
Ewart E. Phillips '79, Nov. 20, 2025 (Former faculty/staff)
Francis Marion "Frank" Pope Jr., March 7, 2026
Betty Gail (Bramblett) Quinones '64, Jan. 23, 2026
Betty Sue (Phillips) Reeves '58, Feb. 14, 2026
Rev. Jack Tom Riley '59, Aug. 25, 2025 (Former member, Board of Trustees; former member, Alumni Association Board of Directors)

Leland Austin Ross '62, Jan. 19, 2026
Marcella Kim "Marcy" (Tulcus) Ross, Dec. 8, 2025 (Faculty/staff)
Donald Franklin Rutledge, Aug. 18, 2025
Suzanne (Welch) Schnitz '65, Jan. 12, 2026
Gloria K. (Kimbrow) Self '56, Feb. 9, 2026
Jack Henry Shaw '63, March 14, 2026
Dr. Mildred Mozelle Sherman, Aug. 22, 2025 (Former faculty/staff)
Carole Jene Shipley '74, Jan. 20, 2026
Rosanne S. "Rosy" (Stohler) Smith '70, Jan. 8, 2026
Charles Ray "Chuck" Snow Sr. '80, Aug. 3, 2025
Sharon Sue Piper Southall '67, Feb. 23, 2026
Evelyn J. Sowell '55, Dec. 1, 2025
Ollie E. "Teddy" (Billings) Spraberry '91, Jan. 19, 2026
Charlie Thomas Sprinkle '68, Jan. 29, 2026
Vicki Carolyn Bachtel Stephenson '01, Oct. 30, 2025
David Stilwell '85, Jan. 12, 2026 (Former member, Alumni Association Board of Directors)
David Alan Strasner '72, Oct. 31, 2025
William Fletcher "Bill" Thornton '49, Dec. 27, 2025

Judith Carol Vogel '65, Sept. 22, 2025
Edmund Walter Wade '63, Dec. 4, 2025
Dr. Elizabeth Ann "Liz" (Ellis) Wallace '71, Sept. 1, 2025 (Retired faculty/staff; former member, Alumni Association Board of Directors)
Bill D. Walls '53, Feb. 10, 2026
Charlotte Jean (Miller) Walsh, Oct. 17, 2025
Shirley Ann (Toungset) Webb '66, March 22, 2025
Cynthia Anne (McClure) White '72, April 7, 2025

Jacqueline (Watkins) Whitfield '59, March 1, 2026
Larry Ray White '65, Feb. 22, 2026
Jimmie Del (Watson) Wicker '63, March 15, 2026
Mary Alice (Ivy) Wilkins, Aug. 28, 2025
Betty Zada (Montgomery) Williams '50, Jan. 13, 2026
Peggy Lou (Startz) Wright '77, Jan. 31, 2026
Edward H. Yantis, March 20, 2026

HPU STUDENT

Bo Rozell, Jan. 11, 2026

DANIEL BAKER COLLEGE ALUMNI

Alice Jeanette (Cadenhead) Caffey, June 12, 2025
Jewel Elizabeth (Williams) Holmes, March 21, 2026

ADDITIONAL HPU FACULTY, STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Eddie Alexander, Sept. 24, 2025 (Former faculty/staff)
Carolyn P. Crutsinger, Sept. 10, 2025 (Friend)

Clarence Fothergill, Feb. 8, 2026 (Retired faculty/staff)
Thomas John Graybill, Dec. 2, 2025 (Former faculty/staff)
John Daniel Harkey Sr., Oct. 25, 2025 (Friend; former member, Guy D. Newman Honors Academy Board of Directors)
Jimmy Jones, Sept. 8, 2025 (Friend)
Sharla (Freeman) McGee, Dec. 16, 2025 (Friend)
Ben William Mieth, Dec. 8, 2025 (Friend)
Ginger Patterson, Feb. 4, 2026 (Friend)

Alma Mater

*High above old Bayou's waters,
out on Center's heights
Stands our noble Alma Mater,
towering in her might
Keep her colors ever floating,
sing her praises due
Hail to thee our Alma Mater,
hail the Gold and Blue*

PHOTO BY LAUREL STANARD

HOWARD PAYNE
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 2369
Brownwood, Texas 76804



**STUDENT
PERSPECTIVE**

This photo was taken by
Kassidy Johnson, a junior
strategic communications
major from Magnolia