

# Alacritous Alumni



In 2015, **Isaac Burris** of Mount Pleasant became one of the first of 10 students in the nation to become a Pearson Scholar. Coming to us rather than SMU, Burris excelled, playing roles in 2 of our films, winning a State of Texas Caldwell, a McGraw Hill Poster Award, and a Coca Cola Gold. Burris went on to pursue actuarial science at College Station. Burris is now a pensions specialist at Aon in the Woodlands.

**William Villalobos** produced our 2014 film on Harriet Potter Ames, and featured it at Corpus Christi, and South Padre Island. He is currently at Texas A&M College Station in the petroleum engineering program. Moreover he has been chosen to participate in a special research team tasked with investigat-



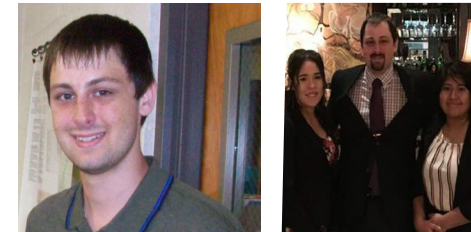
**Cailee (Davidson) Henson** came to us in 2015 from Harmony High School as the daughter of NTCC alumni. She was as successful as she was resolute, placing in two of our poetry contests, and our 2016 McGraw Hill poster contest. She presented her work on Texas Governor Pappy O'Daniel in Seattle at the NCHC. She has recently married, graduated from UT Tyler, and is now teaching 7th Grade for Harmony ISD.

ing unconventional oil and gas procedures. As a Presidential Scholar in 2010, **Naomi Taylor** was the third student in our history to be selected for a solitary presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council. She was also the first to introduce the ideas of popular author, Malcolm Gladwell, into our honors culture. Since 2016, Taylor has been the Director of the NTCC Bookstore where she has maintained that institution's



exemplary culture of affability and trust.

We were remarkably fortunate at this year's NCHC in New Orleans to dine with the representative of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. It so happened that it was "our own" Matthew Jordan who we discussed in last summer's *Alacrity*. Matthew joined



our four students for dinner at the Pelican Club. Three of them have since become Jack Kent Cooke semi-finalists. We thank our patrons, by the way for giving us that "extra" we needed for this exclusive meal in the French Quarter.

**Kassy Martinez** graduated in December with a 4.0 from the U. of Texas at Tyler,



while working two jobs. Offered positions in teaching, she will be a campus missionary instead for a year.

# ALACRITY



## New Orleans: Thirteenth Time our Scholars Present at NCHC

Information in the Age of Information is cheap. Erudition languishes. But Expertise matches capital as an enabler of initiatives. Undergraduate research thus enters the spotlight. Undergraduate research teaches independence and critical thinking. It prepares students for graduate school. As "expertise," it is leveraged for accolades, awards and scholarships.

Universities promise the best in undergraduate research. Yet the web has short-circuited their advantages. Without careful mentoring, and support, such research often unravels.

Thanks to our NTCC System, our scholars have joined 200 of the nation's finest honors students in presenting work each year at the National Collegiate Honors Council. The NCHC has an acceptance rate of under 50%. The NCHC provides a forum to refine institutional pathways for student excellence. Many universities send a tiny minority of their best students instead to NCUR, the National Council for Undergraduate Research. It has an acceptance rate

of 85 percent. Up to 3,000 students present. NCUR tends to ignore the question of student pathways, and deemphasize excellence.

This year the NTCC team experienced a new first. Courtney Baldwin (right), not only presented at the NCHC in New Orleans; she won the poster division in humanities, besting all the junior- and senior-presenters! We also celebrate the accomplishments of Daniel Landaverde, and Verania Leyva (center). Both leveraged their acceptance into the NCHC, as did Courtney, to become Jack Kent Cooke semi-finalists. Though we will pray for a final good outcome there, we note that both Daniel and Verania were Caldwell Award winners on the state level, Daniel for his pioneering work on Mount Pleasant Hispanics, and Verania, for her pioneering film scholarship on Barbara Conrad. Meanwhile, Karla Fuentes (left) presented her "Pink Pathway thesis" on Mary Kay, building on the work which our scholars have performed on this most notable Texan CEO.

## Exceptional Area Banks Provide Support for Student Excellence



Above: VP Brenda Howard, Mercedes Collins, CEO Dwyatt Bell, and Chairman, John Bryan. Our top-tier students are "Presidential Scholars." The most prized scholarship given to that group is the Texas Heritage National Bank Scholarship. For 4 years now, our scholars have benefitted from this award which fully pays for tuition, fees, and books. Above, Mercedes Collins, our Dr. Mary Hood Award winner, receives this generous outlay for 2019-20.

Below: Mistie Nunn, Loan Officer, Sam Griffin, and Josh Cato, VP. For the 12th time, Cypress Bank has financed a high-end laptop for the exclusive use of our scholars. Sam Griffin was the winner this year.



## Alacrity: Newsletter of Honors Northeast

### College Leaders

**President:** Dr. Ron Clinton  
**VP Instruction:** Dr. Kevin Rose  
**Associate VP:** Anna Ingram

**Honors Committee:** Jacob Lambie, Erika Garza, Dr. Drew Murphy, Heidi Wooten, & Dr. Andrew Yox.

**Honors Professors:** Dr. Andrew Daniel, Dr. Melissa Fulgham, Dr. Mary Hearron, Dr. Karyn Skaar, Jim Ward, Dr. Paula Wilhite, Dr. A. Yox.

**Honors Assistant:** Andrea Reyes  
**Honors Secretary:** Delbra Anthony

### Like to Help?

View our Honors Northeast website, and you may find the largest collection of prize-winning essays, films and poems about a single region--in this case, Northeast Texas--in the world. Our benefactors have enabled this "above-and-beyond" culture of scholarship. If you would like to contribute, contact VP Dr. Jonathan McCullough, 903-434-8229, Nita May, 434-8113, nmay@ntcc.edu, or Dr. Yox at ayox@ntcc.edu.



**NORTHEAST TEXAS  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

*Want more information?*

903-434-8229 • ayox@ntcc.edu  
www.ntcc.edu/honors

*NTCC is an AA, ADA, Equal Opportunity institution.*

In this  
edition:

Fall  
Happenings

Regional  
Vanguard

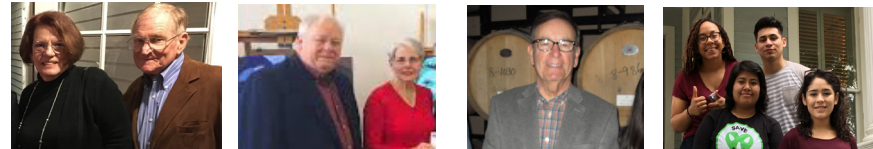
Alacritous  
Alumni





**Santa's Sweeties**, a sewing circle at the First Methodist Church of Mount Vernon, continues to animate our efforts. Making and selling unique regional keepsakes from scratch, they have liberally funded our poetry and film endeavors! Both the craftsmanship and philanthropy are amazing.

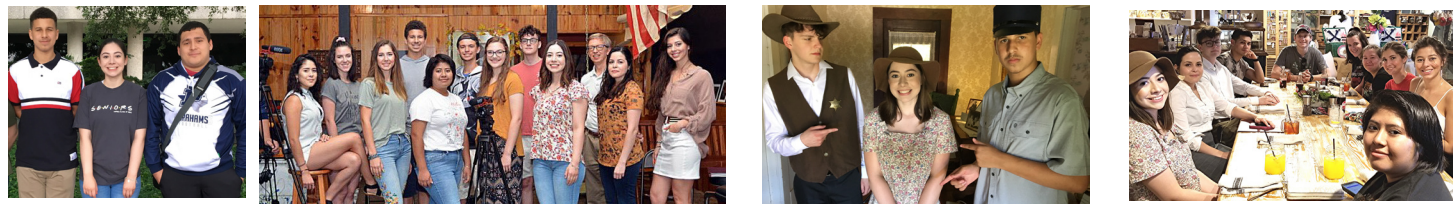
## Our Beneficent Benefactors



Did the U.S. Constitution owe much to J. Madison, and A. Hamilton? Do we owe much to **Drs. Jim and Paula Archer** who have both established and maintained an ongoing social dimension to honors? We are so thankful recently as well for a very special and generous gift to honors from **Ned and Margaret Muse** of Pittsburg. They have helped NTCC in numerous ways, and their recent gift was like an infusion of liquid oxygen to

a crew begging for escape velocity. **Dr. Charles Florio** is like the star Sirius in the galaxy of our efforts. His leadership as NTCC President in 2007 made Honors possible. He still supports us, most recently with another generous gift. We remain very grateful also for the special cash dispensations that our NCHC presenters have been receiving from **two anonymous donors** since 2011! We thank G. Brogoitti, 1st Federal Community Bank and others as well.

## Adina de Zavala and the Making of the Alamo Premieres 21 February



Our 8th feature-length film is yet another measure of the remarkable support we have received. Though the lists of thank-yous are many, we are especially indebted to Jerald, and Mary Lou Mowery of Mount Vernon over the years. At left, we started last May with research at the University of Texas at Austin. For the first time, our key film scholar was also our star, **Maritza Quinones**. As we settled into rehearsals and shootings, at Tennison Methodist, MP, the Whatley, the Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Museum in Pittsburg, and Franklin County historical associations, we were further sustained by attention. We thank Hudson Old for the above photo at his East Texas Journal, and for doing a special photo shoot at the Alamo Mission Museum of Franklin County. We were very privileged to have an area composer, Kenny Goodson, along with Presidential Scholar, Sam Griffin, compose our first-ever original music score for the film, and an alacritous producer, Jalyn English, to fight out every complexity to the bitter end. Director Jacob Lambie and Unit Production Director Peyton McClendon were a remarkable team, planning, sequencing and fitting in an ambitious script to the contours of twenty people, and their individual needs, and talents.



The story that will be featured at the Whatley Center of NTCC at 7PM on the 21st about de Zavala is inspirational, new and true.

## Regional Vanguard



NTCC was a central presence at last fall's meeting of the Walter Webb Society (Left) at San Felipe. Katelyn Cox (right, in black) presented on Walter Webb himself, and the group featured Jalyn English's (in white) De Zavala trailer. Our sophomores won some outstanding accolades. Mercedes Collins (top left) won the Dr. Mary Hood Scholarship for all of Texas. To the right, Daniel Landaverde won the Leaders of Promise. Below left: Jacob Lambie won the second Pearson Award in NTCC history, and Verania Leyva won a Texas STAR award.



## Fall Happenings



Last fall's trip to Fort Worth was the 25th semester trip financed by Drs. Jim and Paula Archer! We went to the zoo, the Woodshed Smokehouse on the Trinity River, and finally beat Tarrant CC H students in Jenga. Our 11th annual Northeast Texas Poetry Contest awarded Mercedes Collins(1st) Karla Fuentes, Cade Armstrong, and Jacob Lambie for heartfelt wordsmithing, and regional uplift. This year Verania Leyva won the second Dr. Jerry Wesson Scholarship as



our most tenacious master of academic achievement (right, top left). We thank

Scott Wesson from Sedalia, Colorado for an additional generous gift to that fund. Jacob Lambie (below top right) was the second winner of the Dr. Charles Florio Leadership Award. Lambie is also District III VP of Phi Theta Kappa and a member of our Honors Committee. Below left, our 2nd Gladys Winkle Scholar, Courtney Baldwin staged an NTCC first by winning in the Humanities Poster Division of the NCHC in New Orleans. Below right, Mercedes Collins, our Texas Heritage Bank Scholar, and Katelyn Cox, daughter of a Tanzania missionary from Mount Vernon, were our 2019 Fall Eckman winners, excelling in our two honors seminars.



## Deo Gratias! "Biological Foundation." By Dr. A. Yox, Honors Director

Thanks to our NTCC administration, our donors, and all of our friends here, I have been able to take Biology 1406, 13 times! We at NTCC are amazingly fortunate to have three honors learning communities in operation, what we call: BioTex, HuMusic, and Stat-Psych. All three combine two courses and two professors with a single cohort of honors students. Seminars have functioned as our engines of scholarly success, leading to 20 student publications, and 40 regional essay awards in 12 years.

Thanks to biology, I have learned new ways to be thankful. How in the world has my listless inattention to my own body coincided with symphonic perfection--for 65 years? My heart has beat in 4/4 time 2.2 billion times, and my body has manufactured 2 million faultless new red blood cells every second? Thanks be to God!

But I also believe that biology, a beginning point for 90 percent of our scholars, has had a special legacy. Firstly it is God's showcase of the most amazing solutions of the universe, how life triumphs over the indifference of brute, inorganic matter. What a neat field to hang out with! At its center is creativity—exactly what we want in our game of high-stakes research. Meiotic mixing leads to "conceptions." And what are 'concepts'?

Concepts are the chromosomes of knowledge in our Information Age. Concepts like 'Krebs Cycle', but also concepts our students have constructed, like "symbiotic supercouple," encapsulate information units. Concepts also are like--dare I say it: catalysts. They help us memorize, read, to digest, teach, and to reorganize knowledge. Featured as "arresting concepts" our students have disseminated their ideas from Seattle to Boston in conferences, on the radio, on the web, in film, and in print.

I have enjoyed each biology class these last thirteen years. I appreciate the added chance to observe and mentor students, to fathom stimulating professors like Mary Herron, and Jim Ward (below), and to expect crossover conceptions. Our 18- and 19-year olds are in the golden age of interdisciplinary awareness, and it has been wonderful to have this special outlet at NTCC.

