

Alacritous Alumni



Daniel Landaverde (2020) an NTCC Jack Kent Cooke winner, has just won his 2nd JKC scholarship for the MBA program at the University of Texas at Dallas. This scholarship is capped at \$75,000 per year. Landaverde, who now works as an associate for Marsh in Dallas, a top-tier global brokerage firm, published the premiere history of Mt. Pleasant Hispanics with us.



Alyssa Breann Ochoa (2023) attained an all-time high score for our poster contests of a 11.7 for her work on why Texas should embrace excellence in the dairy business! Many judges rated her as a complete paragon. She came to NTCC originally on a soccer scholarship from Bastrop, and after one semester in honors was promoted to Presidential Scholar. She transferred to Texas A&M at College Station last fall and was this past year awarded outstanding new member of the Poultry Science Club. She hopes to attend veterinary school.

Rachel (Jordan) Adcock (2018) won a Caldwell Award and then published her pioneering work in Texas art. She presented this work in Atlanta. She became our 3rd student representative of the GPHC, and in our films, she and Adriana Rodriguez became our most memorable cinematography duo for their leadership upgrading scenes. After receiving her BA, Rachel directed a Chick-Fil-A drive thru for a time. She is now married to Kaipo, living in Kansas, with two young children.



In 2019, as we reported, Matthew Jordan (2014) our 3rd winner of the Jack Kent Cooke, won a \$138,000 National Science Foundation grant as a graduate student at Louisiana State. Today with his Ph.D. and many publications behind him, Jordan is a senior process engineer for EnergyX, an American technology company that works with the extraction of lithium from brine as a power source.



Garrett Trickey (2012), son of our esteemed poster judge and Chem professor, came to us for a year after a brief stint at UT Dallas. He starred in our first historical film, and set the record



for someone who could reliably solve a Rubik's Cube. He became an electrician and inventor in Iowa but now has returned to grad school at Iowa State in electrical engineering. He is considering obtaining a Ph.D. in Physics

Maria (Chavez) Medina (2010) placed in our first poetry contest, and starred in our first film. Inspired by Dr. Archer, she presented at the American Chemistry Society, and won a prestigious REU. She graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, married, taught high-school science at Pittsburg for three years, and then



served as a cardiac nurse for five years in Longview. Now she is a very talented mother with three children. She recently visited her 98-year-old grandmother in Mexico.

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ALACRITY



A Higher Apogee: Calderon, Perez, and McCraw

Greed flows from success; we had hoped for more. But the 2023-24 year still concluded with an impressive display of academic fireworks. Michelle Calderon, our 2023 Film, Mary Hood, and Mowery scholar placed first in the nation to win the Gordon Graham Leadership Award. Neida Perez our Whatley Scholar who served as student representative of the Great Plains Honors Council placed on the All-USA Team, a top-20-in-the-nation grouping that we have now attained four times. She also won the New Century Award as the top community-college scholar of Texas. Finally, our 2024 Film, and Florio Scholar, Luke McCraw won the lone \$12,000 Christian Leadership Award at Dallas Baptist University, after having researched and acted in our most expansive film project, and after having given an unprecedented seven presentations on his "traveling preacher" project in one semester.

We are amazed by the teamwork that makes these things happen. We are also thankful for

parents, friends, patrons, and the students themselves. Michelle Calderon presented at the National Collegiate Honors Council because she took over a fallen comrade's research project which she had previously ceded, very graciously. Calderon was our amicability superstar. She wanted to do more for our donors. Perez could have left honors after a semester, for more traction with nursing. She was a tightly controlled Greek Madonna icon of reserve. But she heeded the praise of her professors, changed her goals, and enrolled in challenging Honors seminars. She played a winsome clarinet solo for her HuMusic performance, led students of the entire Great Plains Honors Council in a speech marked with great verve, as well as her endearing, and curious, country-Hispanic accent. Finally, Luke proved there were records still to break. He wrote more, and presented more than any student in our history. He was recently invited to become a Gunn Scholar at DBU, one of a very select group.

No Accident: Our Group Dynamic at Honors NE



As noted on p. 3, the social reality of honors at NTCC has created unique opportunities. Amidst our "Dedicated Team" of benefactors, community judges, administrators, students and professors, we remain awed by our very special donor group who have made retention something we can talk about, and have inspired our students to place at the very apex of the collegiate pyramid. Again this spring, we have been emboldened by the continuance of our film enterprise, as backed by Mary Lou, and Jerald Mowery above. We also have been most singular to have taken thirty-three semester day trips thanks to the help of Drs. Jim and Paula Archer below.



Alacrity: Newsletter of Honors Northeast

College Leaders

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

Honors Committee: Michelle Calderon, Dr. Drew Murphy, Heidi Wooten, and Dr. Andrew Yox.

Honors Professors: Dr. Andrew Daniel, Dr. Melissa Fulgham, Dr. Mary Hearron, Dr. Chris McAllister, Dr. Drew Murphy, Dr. Karyn Skaar, Dr. Andrew Yox.

Assistant Honors Director: Melody Mott
Secretary: Elizabeth Simas

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.



Want more information?

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

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In this
Edition:

Regional
Vanguard

Caring
Donors

Alacritous
Alumni

Beneficent Benefactors



What a wonderful time we had last April at our Rodeo Rose dinner! We so thank our anonymous donors again for a memorable & (see p. 3) fruitful time. We also thank John and Jan Bryan, Karen Harmon, & the 21st Century Club for special contributions this last spring.

A Tribute to our Sophomores



Hood, Star, Leaders of Promise, All-USA Team, McGraw Hill, Red-River Symposium, an international election victory with Phi Theta Kappa, an intervarsity election victory with the GPHC, an excellent display of our scholarship at the NCHC in Chicago, two back-to-back Caldwell Project Awards for the two films they were involved with, four Caldwell Essay Awards on the state level, two upcoming publications. The list goes on. Our 2022-2024 cohort rivaled our great graduating classes of 2020, 2018, 2016, and 2014 in the sheer number of their triumphs. With Michelle Calderon, and Monse Rivero, we had two of the most personable leaders in our history; with Neida Perez, a top national scholar, and with Skylar Hodson, and Luke McCraw, two indefatigable workers who helped spark group successes. Raul Leija was a great enabler of many group enterprises.

Regional Vanguard



Monse Rivero (left), was elected Division II, Vice President of Phi Theta Kappa. She is the 2nd NTCC Scholar to win an international office. Luke McCraw and Skylar Hodson placed at the 2nd Red River Symposium. Mary Faith Wilson, coming into honors, did as well. In the lower left, Luke McCraw accepts our 6th Caldwell-Award-winning film prize on the traveling preachers. Neida Perez gave a featured talk at the TSHA. Above right, we won four Caldwell essay awards at the meeting of the Webb Society at College Station. At right, we are at the Great Plains Honors Council in Stillwater, OK.



An anonymous donor has funded 28 \$100 Eckman Awards for students who gain the highest academic honors in H seminars. This past spring, Vanessa Bayna (right) became our 1st to excel in our new honors chemistry course, and Neida Perez finished her 2 years, with the highest overall seminar performance.

Star alumna, Emmalea (Shaw) Cunningham, and her mother, Lori Shaw, an AP English teacher at Paul Pewitt, both helped us double online cash contributions during East Texas Giving Day. Emmalea was our 6th Guistwhite Scholar nationally, and in 2016 became our 1st Texas Heritage National Bank Scholar,



PS Aubrey Watkins won four awards in one semester. Victoria Matiz was our poet, Sam Pollan our musician, and Maddy Smith our artist; Haley Lewis and Adri Gutierrez kept our stock high at the NCHC.



Spring Happenings



We thank Drs. Jim and Paula Archer for our 33rd day trip--to the Big D. The fun began with free breakfasts at Starbucks in Greenville, and ended with the musical, *I love you, You're Perfect, Now Change*, in Garland. The itinerary also included SMU organist, Benjamin Kolodziej, skating, and a scavenger hunt. Right, we see the winners of our 2024 McGraw Hill Poster Contest. We so thank Beverly Kelley of Mt. Vernon, Bill Welsh of McGraw-Hill, and eleven top community judges.

Winners of the 16th-Annual McGraw Hill Poster Contest



In the photo to the left below we see Sarah Dierflinger (4th for \$100), George Burrows (3rd for \$200), Skylar Hodson (2nd for \$300) and Luke McCraw (1st for \$400). The three biggest winners this year were all connected with larger regional triumphs elsewhere. McCraw and Hodson sponsored projects that won on the state level. It was the 16th time that McGraw-Hill has helped us financially with this premier scholarly contest of our college district. Below we see Presidential Scholar, Alison Majors with Emeritus Professor Dr. Mary Hearron. Majors was our 10th winner of the \$200 Chitsey Award for an honors student whose work most exceeded expectations. She gave three presentations outside of NTCC in the spring, and attracted a very enthusiastic audience at the GPHC at Oklahoma State.



Deo Gratias! “Possibilities with Retention” By Dr. Andrew Yox, Honors Director

How fun to have the Archers, students, and staff at Rodeo Rose discussing retention, & Vince Tinto’s *Leaving College!* How do we do? It is amazing. Some cc honors programs have no graduates in honors! They have smart dual-enrollment HS students taking a few H grades here and there. No seminars. No travel. No national awards. Our Dedicated Team (See p. 1) makes talk about retention possible. So what does happen? Persistence is defined as lasting over a semester, and about 85 percent of NTCC honors students do that as opposed to 70 percent for NTCC as a whole. With NTCC graduation rates, honors gets 45 percent after two years, rather than 20 percent after three years, as with the college. Intriguingly, however, as Vincent Tinto himself would forecast, honors is even with the college in retention, with half remaining after one year. This has basically been true since we started in 2007. The difference would be that half of our NTCC honors students who do not return are transferring to a university, and apparently doing OK. But what about that 25 percent who we called “Flame”- or “Slideouts,” those who departed during or after the first semester in less than admirable circumstances? Many of them transfer presumably in time, but the fact that interests us, is that this 25 percent are not essentially optimizing their stay with honors. One possibility could be the “Gladwell Effect.” Malcolm Gladwell has noted that one should never major in

physics at Harvard, because only half of those entering students will graduate with a physics degree. This isn’t because Harvard students fail. Students drop physics when they become discouraged, when they are obviously not of the first tier. A shattering of pride could initiate a slide out process. Traditionally, our most noticed culprit has been “moonlighting,” having students come in over-employed, and then seeing them become discouraged with the whole collegiate experience when they burn out from overwork. We are thankful for the graduation rates, and mindful that we could still improve with our quaternary group. As Tinto points out, primary connections matter. In honors, we are especially thankful for the ways we can sometimes add members of the community, our wonderful donor group and administrators to the networks of student retention.

