

RFSA MAGAZINE

RETIRED FACULTY-STAFF ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

FALL MEETING

pg. 6

ANNUAL REPORT

pg. 8

**RFSA VISITS
TUSCANY**

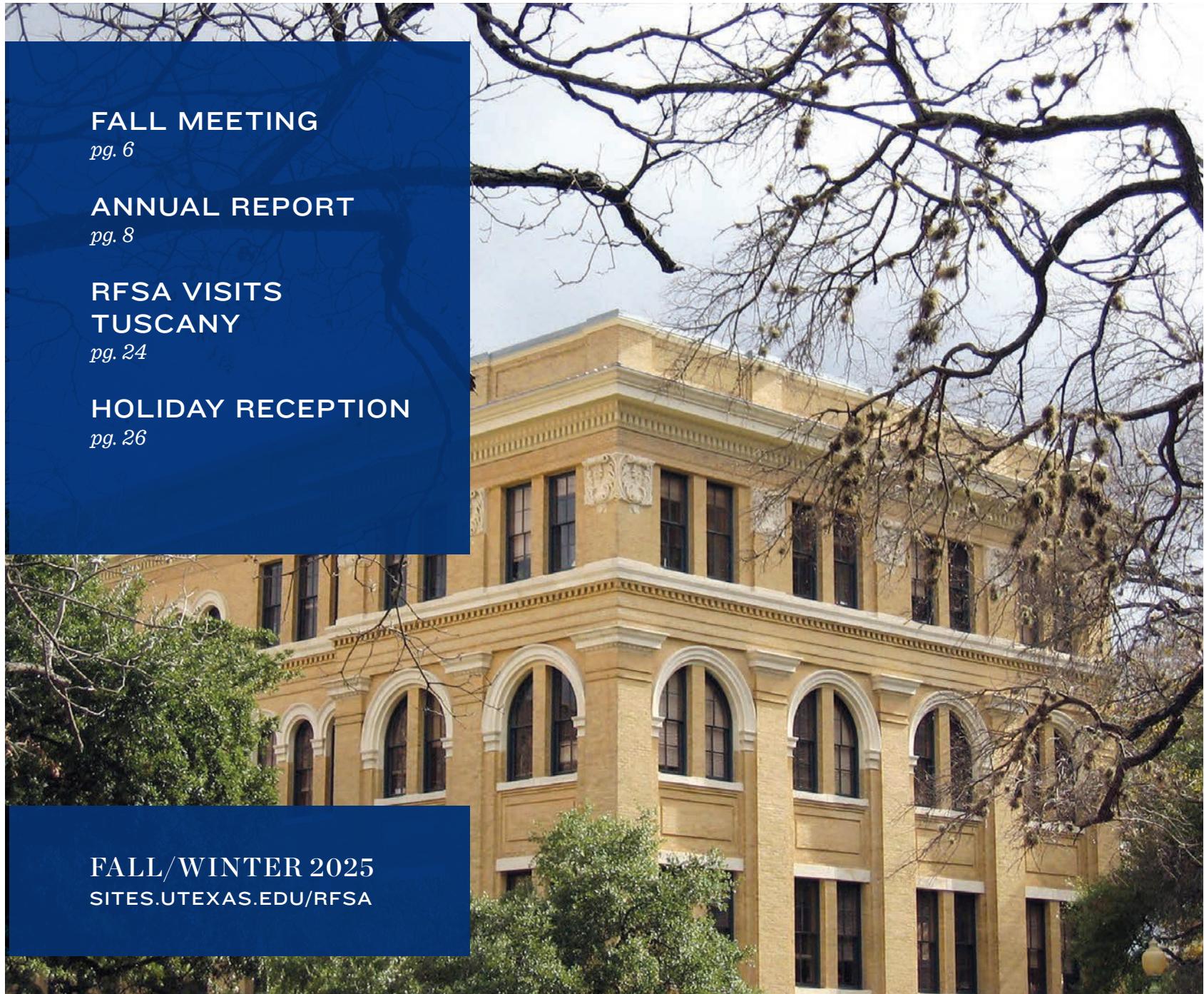
pg. 24

HOLIDAY RECEPTION

pg. 26

FALL/WINTER 2025

SITES.UTEXAS.EDU/RFSA



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FOODIES	Robert Lawrence
SPEAKER SERIES	Phil Kelton & Alice Reinarz
TRAVEL	Kathy & Richard Armenta

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT & COORDINATION	Carol Barrett and the Texas Exes
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Cover Photo: The Dorothy Gebauer Building is the oldest academic building still standing. It was renamed in 1984 to honor Dorothy Louise Gebauer, a former Dean of Women, a driving force on campus for several decades.

Back Cover Photo: Medieval tower, Lucca, Italy, Photo by Brenda Dossey

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



► Greetings to all!

I am sitting here putting the final touches on this message to all RFSA members (and members-to-be!) on Saturday, November 29th. It is the morning after our victory over the Texas Aggies and my television still looks a bit *tired* after the hours of being shouted at, applauded to, laughed upon, and, finally, tears of pride and joy at the end! Upon my arrival at the University of Texas at Austin in 1982, I didn't have the nerve to admit to my students and my colleagues that I was raised an Aggie. My grandfather, R. E. Dickson, was named Superintendent of the Experiment Station in Spur, TX, not long after his graduation date in 1908. I loved my grandfather and did not hesitate to learn to sing the "Aggie War Hymn" before I had mastered "Jesus Loves Me."

After my first fall semester, having had many Longhorn Band members in my piano classes, I began to become a Longhorn. When the second edition of our textbook came out in 1992, my students were thrilled to find "I've Been Working on the Railroad" added to the Harmonization section of PDM II, 2e, Chapter 4. It has remained there through the seventh edition.

I moved my Mother to Austin to live with me in February of 1991. The following fall semester she was a true fan of the Longhorn teams and band, except for the game that happened on Thanksgiving. She promised not to yell for the Aggies as we sat in the stadium, but I would often catch her thumb giving out a silent "Gig Um"!!!

Meanwhile, back to RFSA. We are very excited about the success of the Legacy Membership this first year of its existence. In the last report, twenty-nine members chose the Legacy (lifetime) membership, resulting in a significant increase in our dues income. We are the ones you see at Fall and Spring Luncheons with the burnt orange Legacy ribbon on our nametag. Don't be hesitant to join us.

In his opening message in the Spring 2025 publication, Bob Lawrence spoke of the

changes at our university. As of today, it is President Jim Davis, Provost William Imboden and Associate Vice President of Human Resources Tony Hunt. Past President Bob Lawrence, President-Elect Mary Knight, Carol Barrett and yours truly had a meeting with President Davis earlier this fall. A group of us will have our first meeting with Tony Hunt and Tasha Beretvas (Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs) before the Christmas break and Robert Jones, new Executive Director of Texas Exes, visited our Fall RFSA Board Meeting.

Our guest speaker at the Fall Luncheon was John Dalton, Vice President for Student Affairs as of June 16th. John's portfolio contains many departments including the Counseling and Mental Health Center, Disability and Access, the Longhorn Wellness Center, the Office of the Dean of Students, Recreational Sports, Texas Parents, University Health Services and University Unions. To quote President Davis, "Throughout his career, John has championed student success, fairness, and the University's mission, and we are grateful that he will help provide leadership for the entire University." All to say that the leadership of RFSA and its members are committed to building a strong relationship with the University leadership. It is vital to the organization that we maintain communication with the University Administration.

As I bring this to a close, I have a favor to ask of all members. If you have friends and acquaintances who have recently retired or are thinking of retirement, put forth a word or two about what RFSA has meant to you. And don't forget, that first year after their retirement is a "free" year for them to try out RFSA and all we have to offer!

Be careful, be safe, be mindful and, above all, be honest and kind!

MARTHA HILLEY,
RFSA President, 2025-26

SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS



► Our sponsors have been solicited because of their excellent reputations for selling the best goods and providing the best service to customers.

Many of them are family businesses that have been in our community for a long time. These include the Covert family of auto dealerships, the Ravel family of Karavel Shoes, the Fish family of Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Homes, and Nancy Guilloteau, PhD, Realtor-Professor. Our other sponsors, although not family owned, have a long-time reputation for giving wonderful service to the community. They are St. David's HealthCare, University

Federal Credit Union, the Westminster Retirement Community, Fast Park & Relax, and Capital City Village. Check our sponsors' ads for information about their services, coupons, and special discounts.

Through their sponsorships, these businesses help us keep our membership dues low and provide support to UT students through the RFSA Scholarship Fund. When you need goods or services, please consider using them – it will be a win-win-win situation for you, for them and for RFSA. And when you use them, please let them know that you belong to RFSA and that we appreciate their support.

TEXAS CONNECT

► We are delighted to announce a new Retired Faculty-Staff Association benefit for our dues paying members. **Texas Connect** magazine is available on the RFSA website.

Texas Connect is a magazine for staff and faculty that was created in partnership between University Marketing and Communications and Texas Student Media in the Moody College of Communication. **Texas Connect** was created to shine a light on the people who power this university and to provide information that will help them thrive. We want to offer a chance for all members of the university's staff and faculty to celebrate our stories and meet their colleagues across the hall, down the street and throughout the UT community. The magazine includes storytelling, design and photography contributed by upper-division students as well as staff and faculty members. It is self-funded through advertising revenue.

RFSA advertises in **Texas Connect** with a goal of letting faculty and staff learn about our organization before they retire. You can find the latest issue at this location on our webpage at texasconnect.utexas.edu or in the "Magazines" tab if you are on our site.

FALL LUNCHEON AND BUSINESS MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS

► *RFSA President Martha Hilly presided over Fall Luncheon and Business meeting, held October 15, 2025, in the Texas Exes Building Connally Ballroom.*

GUEST SPEAKERS

Kathy & Richard Armenta, Travel Committee Co-Chairs gave a brief overview of 2026 trips. They reported that there were 46 travelers on 4 tours last year. As a result, \$4,600 was added to the scholarship fund. Read their report in the Interest Group Section.

Mykal Montgomery, 2025-26 scholarship recipient, spoke to the group, expressing her deep appreciation for the scholarship and its significance to her.



RFSA President, Martha Hilly, and our luncheon speaker, John Dalton, at the podium



From left: Stephanie DeMunbrun, Julie Gillespie, Letty Bernal, and Don Verett.

SCHOLARSHIPS

A key activity of RFSA is providing scholarship funding for UT Austin students. This year, scholarships were awarded to 25 students with support from donors and sponsors. **Lael Hasty** serves as the scholarship chair and oversees these efforts. Several of the recipients attended the lunch. Read the article about the 2025-26 Scholarship recipients in this issue.

FEATURED SPEAKER

John Dalton, Vice-President for Student Affairs, has held leadership positions at UT for more than 25 years. As Vice President for Student Affairs, he now oversees a portfolio that serves all UT students. Departments include the Counseling and Mental Health Center, Disability and Access, Longhorn Wellness Center, Office of the Dean of Students, Recreational Sports, Texas Parents, University Health Services, and University Unions. Vice President Dalton shared general enrollment data and examples of student participation in various programs within the Division.



John McKetta \$100 Attendance Award recipients, from left: Tom Barnes, Michael Furtado, Eve Nichols, James Brown, and Norma Fowler

The entire Minutes for this meeting are found on our website <https://sites.utexas.edu/rfsa/> under the About RFSA tab.

FALL LUNCHEON AND BUSINESS MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL TREATS FROM OUR SPONSORS

- Nancy Guilloteau, PhD, Realtor-Professor, surprised several winners with holiday pies from Chez Zee.
- Capital City Village donated two tickets to *Annie* to lucky winners and Aileen Truax hosted a table at the luncheon.



Madeline Sutherland-Mier, Molly Martin, Terry Martin, Holly Thompson, and Carol Obianwu



Gayle Hight; Sponsorship Co-Chair and Aileen Truax of Capital Hill Village

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mary Knight provided a financial report as of July 2025. There was Income of \$36,709 and Expenses of \$43,413, with total ending balances of the Operating and Scholarship Matching Accounts as of July 31, 2025, of \$42,209. The financials through August 31, 2025, were pending finalization at the time of the luncheon.

RECOGNITION OF RESIGNING BOARD MEMBERS

- **Peggy Mueller** resigned in August after serving as President, member-at-large, Membership chair, and Special Programs chair, for 13 years.
- **Cecil Martinez** will resign at the end of December. He has served as President, Finance and Investment Co-chair, Health Co-chair, and Sponsor Chair, for 14 years.

SPECIAL THANKS

Martha expressed appreciation to UT President Jim Davis and his staff for support with hosting our luncheons. Since 1982, the Office of the President has generously provided support for RFSA in many ways. We are grateful for the ongoing recognition and support.

Also, special thanks to the Orange Jackets and Texas Blazers for assisting with the luncheon, as well as the servers, bartenders, setup staff, and kitchen personnel.

Martha expressed her appreciation to the RFSA board members and interest group chairs for their contributions.

BUSINESS SPONSOR APPRECIATION

Martha Hilley thanked our nine business sponsors, some of whom were in attendance. She also acknowledged Sponsorship Co-Chairs Cecil Martinez and Gayle Hight.

- FastPark and Relax
- Nancy Guilloteau, PhD, Realtor-Professor
- Capital City Village
- St. David's HealthCare
- Karavel Shoes
- Covert Chevy Buick & GMC
- Westminster Senior Living Community
- Weed-Corley-Fish
- University Federal Credit Union

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

RETIRED FACULTY-STAFF ASSOCIATION

FISCAL YEAR: SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 TO AUGUST 31, 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

The Retired Faculty-Staff Association of the University of Texas at Austin provides the point of connection, continuity and communication for the mutual benefit of its members and the University.

Retirees of UT Austin and the UT System and their spouses/partners are eligible for membership. Retirees from other UT components and other retirees who are supporters of RFSA are also eligible for membership with approval of the Membership Committee.

EXPENSES

\$43,414

	LUNCHEONS & UNIV. REIMB. EXP.	\$20,515	47%
	MAGAZINE	\$7,059	16%
	TEXAS CONNECT AD	\$1,350	3%
	MCKETTA AWARDS	\$1,000	2%
	SOCIAL & HOLIDAY FUNCTIONS	\$6,070	14%
	OPERATING COSTS	\$1,613	4%
	IT EXPENSE	\$5,687	13%
	AROHE MEMBERSHIP	\$120	1%

INCOME

\$37,985

	DUES	\$16,437	43%
	BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS	\$7,300	19%
	MCKETTA FOUNDATION	\$1,000	3%
	TRAVEL INCOME	\$2,100	6%
	UNIV REIMB-LUNCHEONS	\$11,148	29%

Prepared by Robert Lawrence

Past President, 2025-26

► RFSA MEMBERS, 2024-2025: 594

► Events:

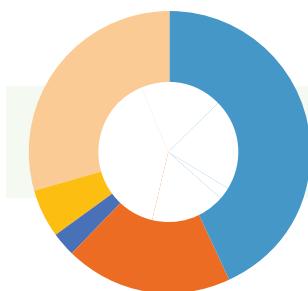
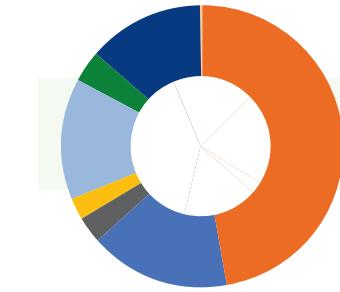
- Fall 2024 Luncheon and Business Meeting Attendance: 155
- Holiday Social and Collections for Orange Santa Attendance: 120
- Spring 2025 Luncheon and Business Meeting Attendance: 172

► Interest Groups:

- Arts & Culture: 9 events; including 3 at the Harry Ransom Center; 2 at the Blanton; 2 plays, one at Bass Concert Hall and one at Zach Scott; and a Wildflower Center Event. Over 50 people attended the events.
- Bridge: 12 monthly meetings with a total attendance of 150
- Exercise: Weekly sessions with a professional trainer, 3 participants
- Foodies: 12 monthly meetings with a total attendance of 310
- Speaker Series: 7 meetings, total attendance of 113. Topics included: Genealogy, AI, Investing, Hospice Care and Astronomy
- Travel: 3 trips, 37 participants. Trips were to Utah National Parks, Peru (including Machu Picchu), and, Historic Trains through Colorado and New Mexico.

► Service Projects:

- Orange Santa – RFSA made online donations, plus \$740 donations in cash and checks at the Holiday Social.
- 40 Hours for the Forty Acres - RFSA members donated \$400, matched by the RFSA Operating Fund for a total of \$800 added to the RFSA scholarship fund.
- UT Outpost - Two large barrels of non-perishable food items were donated by RFSA members at the Spring Luncheon and Business Meeting.
- RFSA Scholarship Fund - RFSA matched \$5,000 for scholarships



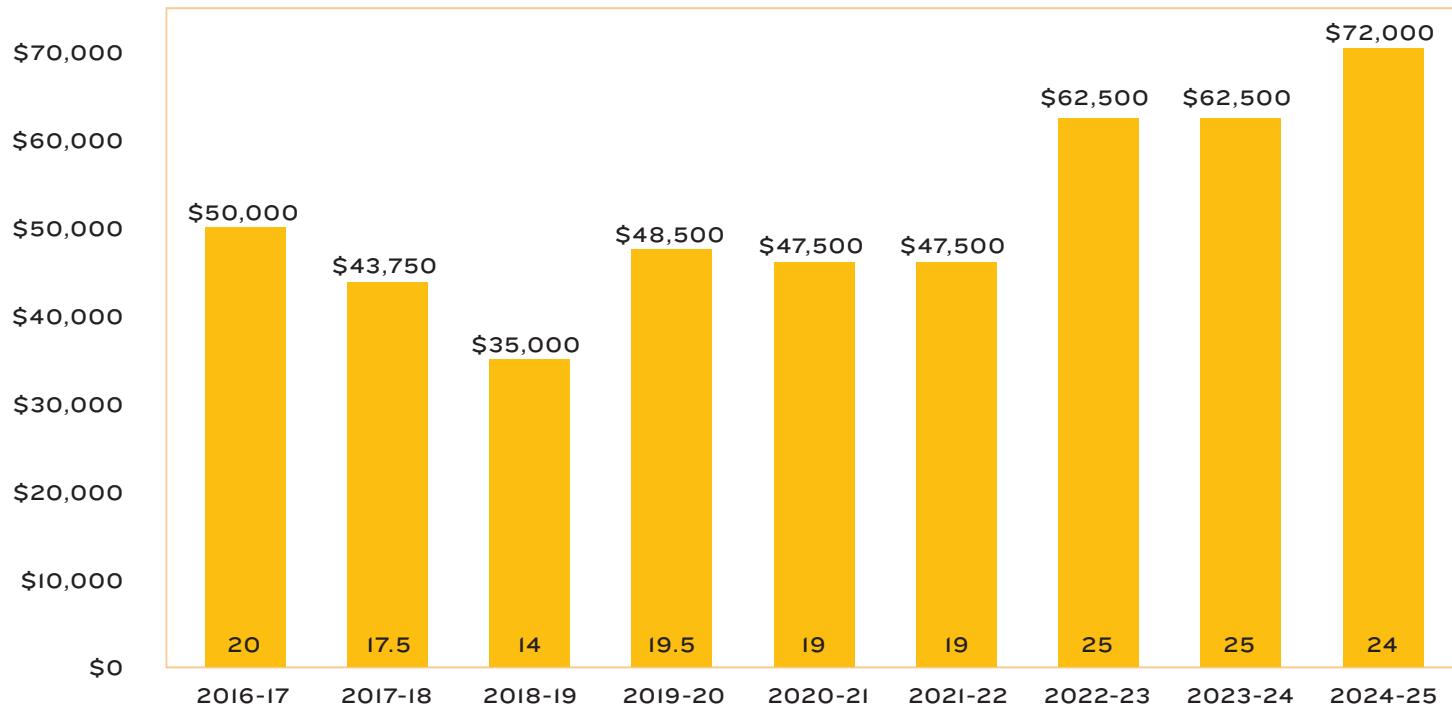
2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

RETIRED FACULTY-STAFF ASSOCIATION

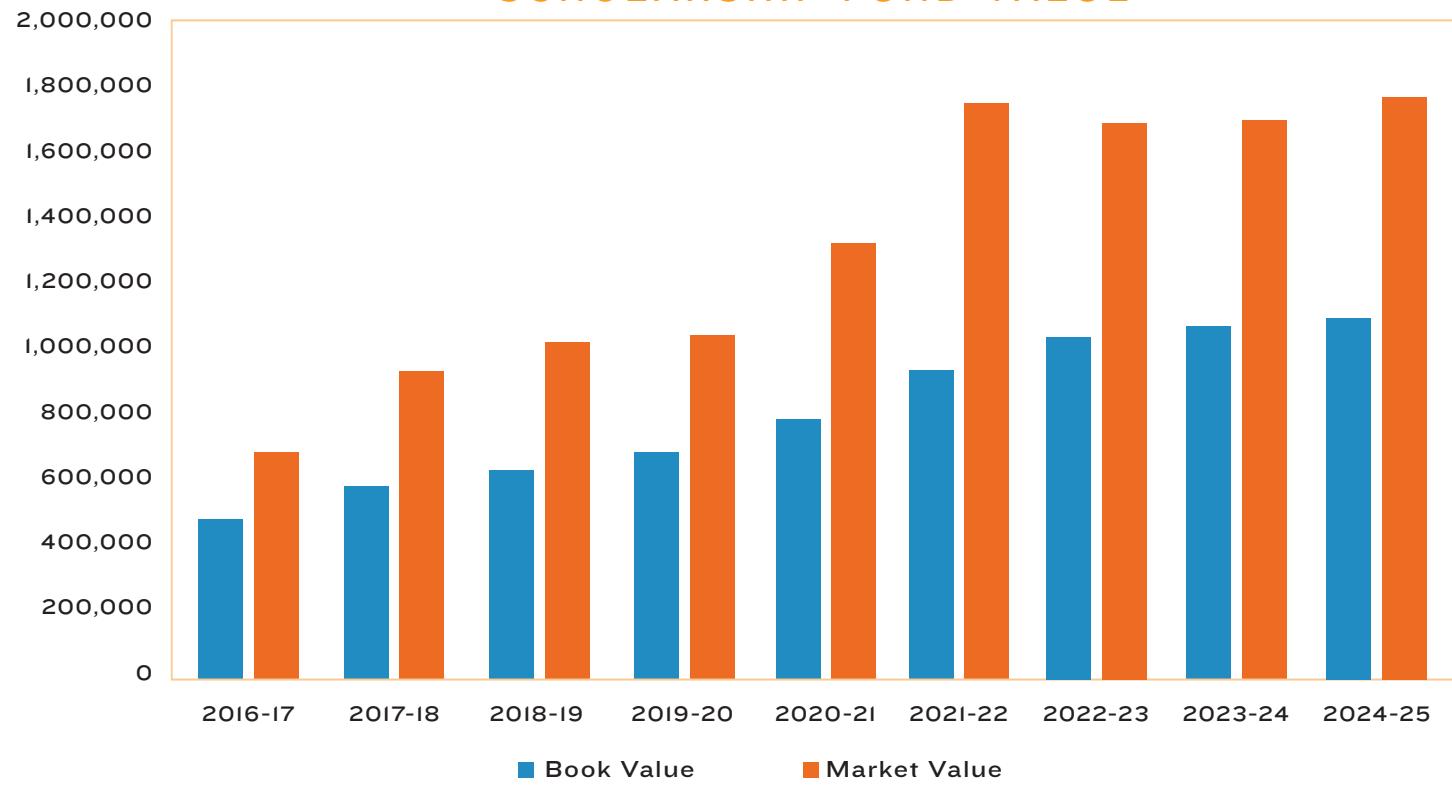
FISCAL YEAR: SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 TO AUGUST 31, 2025

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD TOTAL & NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS

\$2,500 Individual Awards through 2023-24. Effective 2024-25, the Awards are \$3,000 each.



SCHOLARSHIP FUND VALUE



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INTEREST GROUPS

ARTS AND CULTURE

► On October 21, seven A+C members gathered for a docent-led tour of the Blanton museum's stunning exhibit of Spanish Baroque art: *Spirit & Splendor: El Greco, Velázquez, and the Hispanic Baroque*. Led by docent and Arts and Culture member Laraine Lasdon, the tour was eye-opening for her overview of the paintings' importance as a highpoint in Spanish culture. Her explanations revealed much about the role of painting in the exhibit's 150-year history of Spanish painting. This major exhibition ends February 1st.

For more information, contact Co-Chairs Hillary Hart (hart@utexas.edu/512-423-5022 and Madeline Sutherland-Meier (madelinesm@austin.utexas.edu/512-565-0906)



Bob Lawrence, Carole Buckman, Robert Luedtke, and Sylvia Huntsman playing Bridge in September

BRIDGE

► The RFSA bridge group meets monthly throughout the year at the Alumni Center to play "party" (not duplicate) bridge. We meet on the first Monday of each month from 1-4 pm, unless Monday is a holiday. Since we play in tables of four, please get on the mailing list for invitations by contacting the bridge chairperson (Mary Kay Hemenway). You need not bring a partner to play bridge with us.

For information, contact Mary Kay Hemenway at mkhemenway@utexas.edu.

EXERCISE

► The RFSA exercise group meets in Gregory Gym on Monday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 am. To participate you need to join Rec Sports if you are not already a member. You can join at their office just inside the entrance to Gregory Gym. There is an additional fee of \$10 per month for the RFSA class.

Experienced exercise instructor, Sandy Erickson, leads us in a variety of exercises designed for all ages and fitness levels. She can adapt the exercises for anyone with special needs.

This is a small, friendly group that needs more members. If you are a person who has resisted caring for your physical needs, come and check us out. Do not be intimidated. We have a lot of fun as well as increasing our fitness levels. (As an extra incentive, we have been known to get together for coffee and snacks after class from time to time.)

For more information, contact Carolyn Wylie (cateswylie@gmail.com).

FOODIES

► The Foodies group remains popular and we are averaging about 27 people per lunch.

Continuing our ratings for the year, here are the places we have been and the ratings from those attending. The rating is a 5-point scale, 5 being the highest:

May: Dimassi's Mediterranean Buffet

(at Stassney and 35), 18 Attendees, 9 responses
Average Ratings:

Food: 4.6 Service: 5 Atmosphere: 4.4

June: Vida Verde, 26 Attendees, 15 responses

Average Ratings:

Food: 4.5 Service: 4.6 Atmosphere: 4.5

July: Hyde Park Bar & Grill,

34 Attendees, 19 responses

Average Ratings:

Food: 4.9 Service: 4.9 Atmosphere: 4.7

August: Reale's Italian Café,

23 Attendees, 18 responses

Average Ratings:

Food: 4.7 Service: 4.9 Atmosphere: 4.8

INTEREST GROUPS

September: County Line (on the lake),
26 Attendees, 12 responses
Average Ratings:
Food: 4.6 Service: 4.6 Atmosphere: 4.7

October: Casa do Brasil,
27 Attendees, 16 responses
Average Ratings:
Food: 4.9 Service: 4.9 Atmosphere: 4.9

November: Waterloo Ice House (on
Escarment), 26 Attendees, 12 responses
Average Ratings:
Food: 4.7 Service: 4.9 Atmosphere: 4.8

One more month to go for the year. As of this writing, the place is TBD.

Something new for next year is that I will be adding dinners (in addition to the lunches). I plan on doing a dinner outing every other month or so. I will be sending out updates to the Foodie group. Speaking of the group, if you would like to be added to my contact list, send me an email: rjlawrence1031@gmail.com.

RFSA SPEAKER SERIES

► The RFSA Speaker Series had three excellent meetings in fall 2025, all at the Howson Branch Library. Phil Kelton and Alice Reinarz continued as co-chairs of the group. Karen Kelton maintains our google group email list which now has about 120 members. We were pleased that attendance at these meetings averaged almost 40 and for the continuing support from RFSA members.

Dr. J Craig Wheeler was our speaker on September 24. He is the UT Austin Samuel T. and Fern Yanagisawa Regents Professor of Astronomy Emeritus, a Member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, and past president of the American Astronomical Society. He spoke about his recently published book "The Path to Singularity" which is about how current technology changes are shaping the future and the questions that arise from exponential developments in new technology. He also gave away several copies of his 1986 sci-fi techno-thriller "The Krone Experiment".

Our meeting on October 29 featured a panel discussion on the topic "Senior Living



Lunch at Vida Verde

Communities: Why? Where? When." We thank RFSA member Sharon Justice for suggesting this topic which is of special interest to many UT Retirees and RFSA members. Sharon was our panelist from The Village at the Triangle, along with Veryan Thompson from Westminster and Dr. Lynn Rew from Longhorn Village. Many important topics were covered and there was excellent discussion among attendees.

Ms. Liz Nielsen of the Nielsen Law Firm was our speaker on November 12. The Topic was "Estate Planning 101", another topic of particular interest to RFSA. She gave an excellent presentation, and her slides were posted in pdf format on the RFSA website.

We thank all our speakers for their presentations and RFSA members for their interest.



Liz Nielsen of the Nielsen Law Firm speaking about estate planning.

INTEREST GROUPS

TRAVEL

► 2025 RFSA Travel Tours were very successful. Check out articles in this issue about the Historic Train trip through Colorado and New Mexico, as well as the tour of Tuscany. Be sure to check out our photos on the RFSA website.

HURRY! HURRY! 2026 Travel Tours are Filling UP!

Danube Westbound River Cruise, March 27 – April 7, 2026

Sail the Danube River with Avalon Waterways through Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and Germany, exploring vibrant capitals and charming towns from Budapest to Regensburg, ending in enchanting Prague. Pricing starts at \$3,028 based on (double occupancy Category E and D) and includes 1-day pre-cruise night in Budapest, 8-day Danube River Cruise, 2 nights in Prague, most cruise excursions, prepaid gratuities, and a \$100 fundraiser for UT RFSA. Price does not include travel Insurance or airfare. Group airfare may be offered later. River Cruise ships are small and space is selling out quickly. Register and view the Danube River Cruise trip preview meeting recording at www.relaxedescapes.com/groups.

Denali Explorer Cruise Tour August 1-12, 2026

Experience the best of Alaska with a 7-day cruise beginning in Vancouver through the stunning Inside Passage, featuring breathtaking glaciers and wildlife sightings. Then seamlessly transition to a 4-night land tour via rail service, exploring the majestic landscapes of Mt. McKinley, Denali National Park, and Fairbanks. Price starts at \$3,184 based on double occupancy. The price includes \$50 onboard credit per cabin,

crew gratuities, and a \$100 fundraiser for UT RFSA. Price does not include trip, shore excursions, insurance, airfare, or the 4-day land portion meal plan.

Register and view the Alaska Cruise Tour trip preview meeting recording at www.relaxedescapes.com/groups

Autumn Fall Colors in the Adirondacks and Finger Lakes Region

Sept. 20-28, 2026

Visit New York's Adirondacks and Finger Lakes region and tour the picturesque Sonnenberg Gardens and Belhurst Castle. Learn the history of our nation's pastime, baseball in Cooperstown and enjoy a narrated lunch cruise on scenic Lake George. Explore the 1000 Islands of the St. Lawrence River on a cruise to historic Dark Island, home to Singer Castle.

Price: \$3,199 plus gratuities, based on double occupancy. \$900 Roundtrip Economy Air is available if desired. There is a limited-time \$125 per person discount. Guaranteed share program for those who need a roommate. The price includes a \$100 fundraiser for RFSA. Call for trip insurance quote. View the Adirondacks and Finger Lakes Tour trip preview meeting recording at www.relaxedescapes.com/groups

For more information on the trips, contact Kathy or Richard Armenta at karmenta@utexas.edu or richardarmenta@gmail.com or our travel advisor, Lori Threatt at lori@relaxedescapes.com or 737-228-3680.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

WILLIAM F. LASHER



William F. Lasher

► Where did you grow up?

I was born in Auburn, N.Y. in 1944 to Evelyn M. and Charles Alvin Lasher. I am an only child. I was born late in my parents' lives, but they gave me a wonderful childhood. I graduated as the top-boy in my high school class. (OK, there were five women in front of me.) And I was an Eagle Scout. As extracurricular activities, I did mostly music—band, orchestra, and glee club.

I went to the University of Rochester, first as a math major, but switched to psychology (after the math courses ran out of numbers). I loved college. I continued with music—men's glee club and Yellow Jackets. (This was a men's triple quartet. The university's mascot was a Yellow Jacket. So, we wore dorky Yellow Jackets when we sang around town.) Then on a beautiful spring day, I was walking across the quad and I thought, "I want to stay in college for the rest of my life." And basically, I did.

I went to Indiana University to pursue a master's degree in Student Personnel Administration, but I became frustrated because there didn't seem to be enough research to justify the program. So, then I went to the University of Michigan to pursue a Ph.D. at the Center for the Study of Higher Education. (That was a bit of a

challenge because of the Vietnam War, but I was able to convince my draft board that even though I was changing institutions, my professional goals had not changed.) I concentrated in Institutional Research, which became a very important part of my professional identity.

Tell us about your family and career

Also, while at the UofM, I met my first wife, Kathy. We were married in 1969, and we spent four wonderful years while she taught first grade, and I worked on my degree. Our oldest daughter, Kristin, was born in 1973. A few months after that, Kathy was diagnosed with cancer. This happened when I was working for Michigan and when I received a job offer from the University of Texas at Austin. We did a lot of soul-searching and, after determining that Kathy could receive the same or better treatment in Austin than she could in Ann Arbor, we decided to move to Austin. We arrived in August 1974. (God, was it hot!!!) And I started my new job as Director of the Office of Institutional Studies.

When Kathy and Kristin went to the clinic for Kathy's chemotherapy, the nurses were terrific. They gave Kristin her "medicine" too, just like her Mommy. Fortunately, Kathy's condition improved over the next several years to the point where the doctor's told us we could consider enlarging our family. We weren't that interested, but in 1977, Claire was born. Unfortunately, Kathy's cancer returned during her pregnancy. She got sicker and sicker. She passed away in early 1978. Kristin was 4 and Claire was 4 months.

I had been working at UT, and when President Lorene Rogers heard about Kathy, she sent over an amazing assortment of food. I was eternally grateful for that. But for the next several years, I learned how to be a working Mom and Dad. The girls started pre-school and we somehow survived. One day, I received a paper-call-

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

WILLIAM F. LASHER

slip (remember them?) from Lou Keating. I had no idea who that was, but when I returned the call, I was surprised to learn that Lou stood for Lou Ann. She invited me to a birthday party for her boss, Peggy Barr, then Associate Dean of Students. When I went to the party at Scholz,’ Dr. Lou Ann and I met officially—and over-time, we became very good friends.

In 1981, I was asked to become the Associate Vice President for Budget & Institutional Studies. President Cunningham once asked me how much accounting training I had. I told him, “None.” And then, I approached the budget as an institutional research project, and it worked.” By this time, my relationship with Lou Ann had deepened, and we decided to get married. Claire, who was four, told my mother, “We’re marrying Wou Ann.” And we did. Things worked fine until Memorial Day in 1981 when our house (actually, my house), just off Shoal Creek, flooded. Fortunately, Lou Ann still had her house, so we moved in there.

I loved the budget job. But in the late ‘80’s, I learned that there was an opening in the College of Education, as Associate Dean for Administration & Finance. I asked about a tenured faculty appointment, and OMG, I received one. I did that job until 1994, when I joined the faculty, full-time.

I taught courses in Higher Education Economics & Finance Policy, Institutional Research, Higher Education Business Management, and a Higher Ed Policy course when the Legislature was in session. I also directed the Higher Ed program. Then in 1997, I was called to the Provost’s Office. Steve Monti offered me the job of Vice Provost for Academic Planning & Budgeting. Over the next few years, we saw many changes in upper-level administration, including the appointment of Larry Faulkner as President, and Sheldon Ekland-Olsen as Executive Vice President & Provost. We had wonderful times together.

One day, Dr. Ekland-Olsen asked me to get involved with a new project in East Austin. It was a new Pre-K through 5th grade school, called UT Elementary School, and it would occupy a central part of my life during retirement.

In 2003, I returned to the College of Education as a full-time faculty member. I also started to work with the Community College Leadership Program. I did this until I went on Phased-Retirement in 2006. In 2009, I retired.

Since then, I’ve continued to work on the Management Board of UT Elementary School. I currently serve as Chair. Also, I serve on the Board of the Austin Community College Foundation. Since 2012, I have served as Treasurer of the Board and head of their Finance & Investment Committee. In addition, I serve on the Franklin Lindsay Student Aid Fund which provides low interest loans to students.

What's the best thing about being a member of RFSA?

I've also been involved with RFSA. I served as a Member-at-Large on the Board of Directors during 2016-2021. Then I served as Treasurer from 2021 to 2023. I have really enjoyed my time in RFSA, especially the fall and spring luncheons and the holiday parties. Keep up the good work.

Tell us something about yourself that few people know

I guess the best answer to that question is that Lou Ann and I both love choral singing. We have sung with several groups in Austin, and we've traveled around the world to sing with other groups—to Montreal, Canada; Canterbury, England; Salzburg, Austria; and Beijing and Shanghai, China.



Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, photo by Billie Pierce

RFSA VISITS

HISTORIC TRAINS TOUR OF COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO

BY ROBIN JARMAN

► In early June, six RFSA friends and train enthusiasts set off on a scenic bus and rail tour through Colorado and New Mexico. Over the course of eight days, we explored historic towns, national monuments, and breathtaking landscapes—all while riding some of the most iconic heritage railways in the American West. From Denver to Durango, each stop offered a new glimpse into the region's rich history and natural beauty.

Denver Arrival

A great start to our historic trains tour! After exploring Denver's 16th Street Mall, we met our fellow travelers and our guide, Jason "Cap" Capalongo, a Denver resident.

Royal Gorge Route Railroad & Colorado Springs

We boarded the bus for our first rail adventure, a ride on the **Royal Gorge Route Railroad**, a standard gauge railroad built in 1879. This scenic ride along the Arkansas River took us through the dramatic Royal Gorge. At the deepest part of the gorge, where the walls rise to a height of 2,500 feet, the railroad is carried over the Arkansas river by a bridge suspended from steel girders anchored in the rocks above.

Garden of the Gods & Santa Fe

We visited the **Garden of the Gods** in Colorado Springs with its panoramic views and striking red rock formations. Later, on the bus ride to New Mexico, we spotted herds of pronghorn racing across the fields. That evening, we arrived in Santa Fe for dinner

and a stroll through the city's historic plaza.

Loretto Chapel & Chimayó

In Santa Fe we toured the famous **Loretto Chapel** and its "miraculous" spiral staircase, followed by a visit to the **Museum of International Folk Art**, where the exhibit of intricate telephone wire art was a big hit. Later we visited the **Santuario de Chimayó**, a peaceful adobe chapel known for its "holy dirt" which is believed to have healing properties. Back in Santa Fe for the evening, we gathered for drinks and watched the NCAA Women's College World Series game at **Desert Dogs Brewery and Cidery** – go Horns!



Mystery staircase at Loretto Chapel, Santa Fe NM, photo by Billie Pierce

RFSA VISITS

HISTORIC TRAINS TOUR OF COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO

JUNE 2-JUNE 10, 2025

Bandelier National Monument & Taos

The morning took us from Santa Fe to **Bandelier National Monument**, home to 700-year-old cliff dwellings of the Ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi). We explored the ancient homes carved into the rock and hiked among piñon pines and volcanic cliffs. We admired the beautiful **Sangre de Cristo Mountains** and crossed the dramatic **Rio Grande Gorge Bridge**, the fifth highest bridge in the United States. A quick lunch at **The Alley Cantina** in Taos gave us our last taste of New Mexican cuisine—arguably the best of the trip!

Mesa Verde & Durango

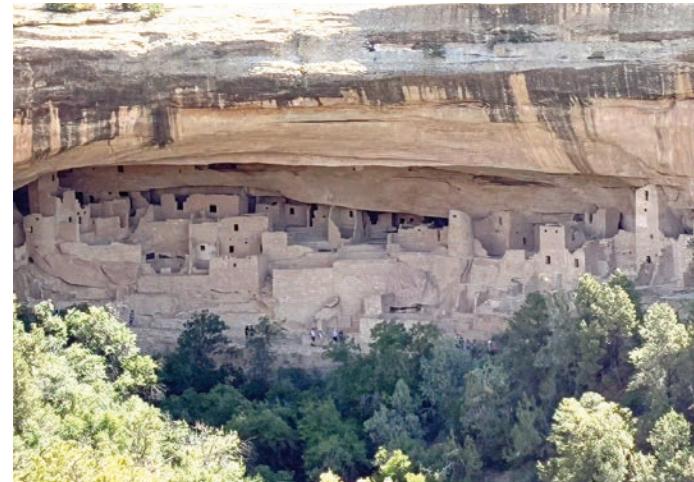
From Durango, we drove through **Mesa Verde National Park** to the **Cliff Palace**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most iconic Ancestral Puebloan dwellings. We toured the museum and maintenance shops at **Durango & Silverton Narrow-Gauge Railroad**, and saw historic steam engines and disassembled boilers up close.

Durango to Silverton by Train

Our longest and most breathtaking train ride of the tour! We traveled 3.5 hours each way aboard the Durango & Silverton Narrow-Gauge Railroad. Completed in 1882, the route follows rugged canyons and scenic valleys along the **San Juan River**. Even today this rail route is the primary and sometimes the only access to the historic mining town of **Silverton** in the winter months. After exploring Silverton, we returned to Durango to begin our ride toward **Glenwood Springs** along the **Million Dollar Highway**—a winding, high-altitude road with dramatic drop-offs and stunning views.

Georgetown Loop Railroad & Return to Denver

Our final train ride was aboard the **Georgetown Loop Railroad**. This narrow-gauge railway, just 45 miles from Denver, was built in 1884 as a scenic tourist destination. The route is only two miles long but delivers historic bridges and jaw-dropping mountain



Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde National Park CO, photo by Billie Pierce



Group at Garden of the Gods, from left: Valena Despenza, Robin Jarman, Mark Harrison, Jean Harrison, Robin Fradenburgh, photo by Jason Capalongo

views. From Georgetown, we began the last leg of our journey with a beautiful ride along award-winning **Highway 70**, passing through the **Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnel** at over 11,000 feet elevation. We arrived back in **Denver** for a farewell dinner with our travel companions, capping off a beautiful journey through **1,495 miles** of railways, canyons, mountain passes, and unforgettable memories.

See our photos on the RFSA website: <https://sites.utexas.edu/rfsa/historic-trains-of-the-old-west/>

TRIP OF A LIFETIME



The Itsukushima Shrine and its iconic gate

BY TANY NORWOOD

► Part 3, China to San Francisco, USA

China

It's early April, and we are finally heading north toward **China** and cooler weather, after spending weeks near the equator. We were in **Hong Kong** on April 3 when a 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit nearby **Taiwan**. On the boat, we didn't feel anything, and a tsunami warning didn't bother us since we were in Hong Kong's very protected harbor, but the damage was significant on Taiwan island.

Hong Kong was a modern and beautiful hi-tech city, or at least the parts where our ship's tours took us. After a few days, we headed to **Shanghai**, another beautiful city. We wrapped up our China adventure with two days in **Tianjin**, the seaport and gateway to **Beijing**, where we saw the **Great Wall of China** and **Tiananmen Square**. The **Great Wall** is almost indescribably massive, dotted with guard towers, and winding through mountains. **Tiananmen Square** was also massive. Our guide said it will accommodate one million people. It

is the site of Mao Tse Tung's mausoleum. Very few younger Chinese know about the massacre of student-led protestors on June 4, 1989. Censorship and absence of historical data available to Chinese residents means that very few know of the government's actions to stop pro-democracy demonstrators.

Japan

Next, we arrived in **Japan**, where our ship made nine stops around the island. Our first one was **Hiroshima**, where we took an excursion to **Miyajima Island** to see the iconic **Itsukushima Shrine** and gate. Both the shrine and gate are painted a reddish orange and were built above the water. Like the other **Shinto** shrines we visited, it was a beautiful and peaceful place. In **Shimizu**, we went to a shrine dedicated to the worship of **Mt. Fuji** and visited several waterfalls and natural areas that were UNESCO heritage sites dedicated to Mt. Fugi. That evening, sailing out of the Shimizu harbor, the top of Mt. Fuji appeared like a ghost through the clouds, a beautiful farewell to our visit.

Another memorable day was spent on **Kyushu Island** to see the active **Sakurajima volcano**. You could see steam rising from the top of the volcano. A large chunk of volcanic rock in the park served as sort of a wishing well. It was covered in coins that visitors had placed in hope their wishes would be granted. Japan's location on the Pacific's "ring of fire" means that volcanic and seismic activity are just part of life. In our travel around the island, we also managed to visit **Busan, South Korea** – it was right between **Nagasaki** and **Kanazawa**. Overall, **Japan** was one of the most beautiful, welcoming and interesting countries I've ever visited, and I would love to spend more time there.

We had six relaxing sea days sailing from Japan to Alaska, including two May 4's since we crossed the International Date Line.

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Alaska

We arrived in Dutch Harbor, on the island of **Unalaska**, and it was snowing! From the ship's decks, we got some beautiful photos of **Unalaska Island**, but my favorite photo was a **bald eagle** that came and perched on our ship railing, welcoming us home. Two of our Alaska highlights included a group of **humpback whales** that visited our ship and put on a show of spouting and diving; and a visit to the **Sitka Alaska Raptor Centre**, where they rehabilitate injured birds of all kinds. I'm always ready to go back to our 49th state.

Canada

We made three stops along **Canada's** west coast, and our last Canadian stop was **Vancouver**, where the ship held a farewell dinner for the passengers who were on the entire World Cruise. The gala was held in an old shipyard that no longer builds or repairs ships, but it is still an active port. In the old pipe-fitting building, we had drinks and appetizers while young ballerinas entertained us. There was also a Champagne Fairy, who flew up and down to refill our glasses. Then we moved to the pier, where they had erected a clear, heavy vinyl building for our dinner. We could watch the ships sailing by and had a view of our Silver Shadow across the harbor. 1000 white paper cranes floated above us, the fragrance of mountains of white flowers on our tables filled the air, a small string orchestra played all night, and we were served course after course of delicious food. All of our senses were very happy. Afterward, we returned to our ship for the final voyage back to where we started, San Francisco.



A bald eagle lands on our ship in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, welcoming us back to North America, Photo by Sue Holt

Final thoughts...

Our ship, the **Silver Shadow**, was quite small, only holding about 350 passengers. Because of its size, we could go deep into the Alaskan fjords to experience glaciers and icebergs and glimpses of wildlife along the way. We also accessed ports all over the Pacific where larger ships could not go. Campbell and I really enjoyed our small ship experience, going to unique ports, and making friends with the passengers and crew. And we are both deeply grateful to our families and friends for taking care of everything that happened at our homes while we were on our trip of a lifetime!



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RFSA VISITS TUSCANY

BY KATHY & RICHARD ARMENTA



Group standing on oldest bridge in Florence, the Ponte Vecchio,
Photo by Kim Riddell

► Eleven RFSA travelers gathered in Florence, Italy, for a ten-day immersion adventure throughout the Tuscany region, exploring many facets of culture, history, cuisine, architecture, and geography. Each day of the tour was filled with stunning scenery of cypress and olive trees, vineyards among rolling hills with winding rivers and valleys. The weather was sunny and autumn perfect in the 60's-70's, providing the golden glow of Tuscany over the landscape.

The tour was launched from the two beautiful cities of Florence and Siena, as the hubs for journeys to San Miniato, Lucca, Pisa, San Gimignano, Pienza and Arezzo. Knowledgeable local guides provided professional, in-depth information and context to each location.

In Florence, travelers toured through the main square to see the many monuments and statues in the Piazza della Signoria. Florence itself is often referred to as an "open air museum," with russet rooftops and lofty domes. The marble façade of the Duomo Santa Maria del Fiore, the Giotto Bell Tower, and the Baptistry with its famous bronze Doors of Paradise, all set the stage for learning about one of Italy's most famous and powerful families, the Medici's, and their contributions to the city. The oldest bridge in Florence, the Ponte Vecchio, was an important photo stop for many folks.

A day trip to Lucca and Pisa provided strolls within medieval walls of towns founded by the Romans. Lucca was a waypoint on the Via Francigena pilgrim route. The 14th century

palace of Lucca's ruling family sprouts a 144 ft. tower with trees growing on the top. Unique piazza's included the Piazzo dell'Anfiteatro, built on the ancient Roman amphitheater.

In Pisa's UNESCO World Heritage Site, travelers were introduced to the Pisan-Romanesque structures of one of Italy's most beautiful squares including the Duomo, Baptistry, and the icon better known as the Leaning Tower, which has been "stabilized" since 2008.

The following day, we were treated to an incredible experience of several hours in San Miniato at the private villa and Fattoria (farm) Collebrunacchi of the Starnotti family. We hiked with Francesca and her specially trained truffle hunting dog, Ares; a representative of the Lagotto Romagnolo, the only purebred dog recognized as a specialized truffle searcher. We were successful in our hunt and returned to the villa for a delicious four-course meal, incorporating truffles, family olive oil and of course wine.

The tour continued the next day as we began our journey to Siena with two unique experiences along the way.



The Duomo in Siena, photo by Brenda Dossey



Medieval street in Siena, photo by Kathy Armenta



Piazza del Campo in Siena
photo by Kathy Armenta

We stopped outside of San Gimignano at the Fattoria San Donato, with the Fenzi family. After touring the wine production, we enjoyed a class in both pasta and ragu (sauce) making. We all made, from scratch, three types of pasta; concluding with a three-course meal of our creations – and of course, more wine from the family vineyards. Afterwards, we journeyed into the village of San Gimignano for a tour and a special dessert from the famous gelateria, Dondoli. We ended the day settling into the city of Siena, in time to experience the beautiful shadows and colors of the sunset on the amber buildings and towers.

The local Siena guide escorted us through unique and less traveled pathways through the city, providing an unhurried and intimate experience with everyday life. Travelers saw beautiful Palazzos and the Torre del Mangia, the magnificent bell tower which is the second highest medieval tower ever constructed in Italy. This amazing tower overlooks the Piazza del Campo, one of Europe's greatest medieval town squares, where the world famous Palio horse race is held twice each year.

The tour continued to the renaissance town of Pienza to visit and experience a local organic farm, Podere II Casale, and meet the owner, Ulisse, for a demonstration of the ancient art of cheese making.

The final day of the tour brought the travelers for a tour of Arezzo, a city of Etruscan origins, in the Chianti region followed by a visit to the renaissance Villa La Ripa, for a wine and olive oil tasting. Rows of ancient Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz vines provided the perfect backdrop for this last experiential activity.

After several days of a multi-sensory experience, RFSA travelers returned home with memories, spectacular photos, and inspiration.

See our photos on the RFSA website:
<https://sites.utexas.edu/rfsa/treasures-of-tuscany-2025/>

And Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/131246400563201>

RFSA HOLIDAY RECEPTION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025

► RFSA members gathered on Wednesday, December 3rd for the annual Holiday Reception at the Thompson Conference Center. Our holiday gathering is a wonderful time to visit with friends, old and new; remember those who are no longer with us; and kick off the holiday season. We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday and hope to see you often in 2026.



Enjoying the food, entertainment, and each other



From left, Joyce Harris and Cheryl Harris



Quartet: From left, Jackson Quevedo, Jace Byrd, Brandon Reyes, and Ross Ganske



From left, Julia Subverbi, Federico Subverbi, and Adolfo Sanchez



Three former RFSA Presidents, from left:
Susan Kessler (2022-23), Eleanor Moore (2019-20),
and Corky Hilliard (2020-21)



From left, Cynthia Sanchez, Marv Hackert,
Bretna Hackert, and Kathy Bartsch

WALKING THE CAMINO TRAIL



Mary with famous rooster statue in Barcelos, Portugal

Mary Knight, RFSA President-Elect

► I did it! I walked part of the famous Camino trail in Spain and Portugal. It was not something I had planned on doing.

Here's how it came about. I have traveled with my sister-in-law, Becky, a few times, including two hiking and camping trips in National Parks. So, when she asked if I wanted to walk the Camino with her from Portugal to Spain, I said "yes" without doing any research or thinking much about it at all. We travel well together. She is adventurous, plans well, and we would have over two weeks of fun and adventure.

Although I have traveled to other countries, I have never been to Europe. Many walk the Camino as a religious pilgrimage. I was more motivated by exercise, exploration, cultural curiosity, and connection. Also, my mother, who had recently passed away, was Catholic. I decided that this would also be an honorary walk for her and packed her rosary to have her with me every step of the way.

Our adventure began when we met in Porto, Portugal on May 1 and had a day to prepare for the next twelve days of hiking. We walked for several hours around Porto, visiting historic cathedrals and tourist sites and enjoying sidewalk meals.

On May 3, we started the 156-mile (251 km) trek from Porto, Portugal to Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Becky had selected the route with the assistance of a guide company. They secured small, well-vetted

hotels, provided maps, and transported our luggage daily. Being a seasoned hiker, Becky had learned the hard way that hostels and full backpacks were to be avoided if possible. Both of us were in our mid-60s and at or under 5 feet tall! We ended up walking 10 to 15 miles per day with a day pack, rain gear, and hiking poles, following the guide's prescribed route.

The overall experience was amazing. We meandered through the countryside and small villages and met fellow hikers from around the world. One day, in a small chapel, we lit a candle and displayed my mother's rosary in her memory.

By the end of each day, we were exhausted, sore, and hungry. Portugal cobblestone roads got the best of me on the fourth day. I wasn't sure I would be able to handle the next day, which was going to be almost 14 miles up and over a mountain. I seriously considered taking a taxi and meeting Becky at the hotel.

Come to find out, there is something to the theory that eventually you get your "hiking legs." By the next morning, I was ready to go and successfully powered through "the most challenging day," as described by the guidebook. It was a powerful reminder that the mind and body can do amazing things.

Staying healthy was a daily task. We learned to take care of our feet and legs with yoga stretches and blister prevention patches. Each day we woke early and were eager to get started.

Getting Camino stamps in the official credential booklet is a popular way to commemorate the experience and a requirement to receive the certificate – many of the stamps are artsy and colorful. Vendors, hotels, musicians, and chapels along the way make them available for Peregrinos (pilgrims/hikers) on the Camino. On May 15, we arrived at the beautiful Santiago Cathedral and received our certificates of completion.

The Camino reminded me that saying yes can lead to unexpected joy and fulfillment. I'm so glad I embraced the opportunity. It was a monumental experience in every sense of the word.



Mary and Becky arrive at The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela



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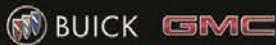
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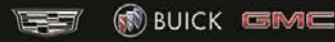


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ABOUT OUR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

RFSA's Scholarship Fund is our main, and most impactful, service project. It was created in 1983, and the first scholarship was awarded in 1988. Several years ago, our fund reached a milestone of surpassing one million dollars in market value.

In addition to undesignated donations, members and friends are encouraged to make contributions in memory or honor of family, friends, and colleagues, in celebration of particular events, and through estate donations. In 2018, our organization committed to match any donations with reallocated operating funds, and some of that match is still available. So, if you donate soon, you can double the amount of your donation.

Please consider a contribution – it will truly make a difference in a student's life.

A donation card is included in this magazine. Make a difference in a student's life this year and send your donation to RFSA for the next group of students receiving an RFSA Scholarship.

RFSA SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

GIFTS RECEIVED FROM MAY 1, 2025 – NOVEMBER 15, 2025

Neil Crump	Cynthia and Thomas Barnes	Sharon Justice
Sybil Momi	In Memory of Harlan Smith	In Memory of Nancy Payne
Peggy Mueller	Michael Corley	Lael Hasty
In Memory of Dorothy De La Garza	John De La Garza	Carole Buckman
In Memory of Mary Palmer Smith	In Memory of Dorothy De La Garza	In Memory of Bruce Buckman
Tany Norwood	Phillip and Karen Kelton	Nancy Armstrong
In Memory of Susana Aleman	David and Phyllis Warner	In Memory of Neal Armstrong
In Memory of Donald Davis	In Memory of Dagmar Hamilton	Dr. Norma Fowler
In Memory of Martha Boyd	Judith K. Davis	James Crook
In Memory of Nancy Payne	In Memory of David R. Davis II	Donna Bellinghausen
In Memory of Dorothy De La Garza		Karen White

STAY CONNECTED ONLINE

► There are two ways for you to stay connected to RFSA online: our RFSA website and our Facebook group. Be sure you have our new website bookmarked sites.utexas.edu/rfsa, where you will find photos, information about our organization, upcoming events, and other RFSA news.

If you are a Facebook user, join us at facebook.com/groups/131246400563201/members, or by searching groups for "University of Texas Retired Faculty-Staff Association." We want this to be a place where members can post activities, updates, and photos, and not just those about RFSA. We want to create a community for our members to share all kinds of information.

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You are also able to donate online through the UT Online Giving website at <https://bit.ly/RFSAScholarship1> The "Gift Designation" line should read "Retired Faculty-Staff Association." Enter the amount you wish to give and complete the rest of the information requested. You will receive an electronic acknowledgement from UT and a written acknowledgement from RFSA in the mail.

SCHOLARSHIPS

2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

For the 2025-26 academic year, twenty-five students were each awarded a \$3,000 scholarship, worth a total of \$75,000. We could not collect all of the students' names or biographies; however, we are sharing what is available. The full text of the responses is found on our website at sites.utexas.edu/rfsa



Tony Chae

HOMETOWN: Bundang, South Korea, and Madison, WI

SCHOOL: College of Engineering

MAJOR: Electrical and Computer Engineering

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Senior

WHAT ARE MY CAREER GOALS?

I dream of a world where humans overcome their sensory limitations and transcend their biological constraints through breakthroughs in positive ways, and to re-understand our conscious research and would like to put my passion into a career where I can pursue my passion in high-risk with high-return (e.g. DARPA program manager, Bio-tech startup, specifically).

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

I came to the United States alone from Korea two years ago. I have faced significant financial difficulties, especially after undergoing personal surgery. Balancing research, schoolwork, clubs and two parttime jobs has been challenging. I truly want to let you know this support means a lot and that I can confidently move forward.



Nathalia Becerril

HOMETOWN: Dallas, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: International Relations and Global Studies

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Senior

WHAT ARE MY CAREER GOALS?

My ultimate goal is to become an international sports lawyer with a focus on protecting athletes from exploitation and promoting transparency in global sports organizations. I'm especially passionate about soccer and I want to work toward a future where both players and teams are treated fairly across borders. I plan to attend Texas Law after I finish my undergraduate studies at UT.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving a scholarship is more than financial support. It's a vote of confidence in my potential and in my future. Knowing that retired UT faculty and staff have chosen to invest in students like me means everything. It helps ease the financial burden on my family and allows me to focus on my studies and long-term goals.



Frederick Richardson

HOMETOWN: Houston, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: Linguistics

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Junior

WHAT ARE MY CAREER GOALS?

I am certain that I will go to graduate school and pursue either a master's degree or doctoral program. I am interested in a Master's in speech language pathology and with that I would go on to be a speech pathologist. Additionally, research is something that interests me. I am a very inquisitive person, and I would love the opportunity to answer questions I have about language.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving this scholarship means that I do not have to stress about financial issues while I am taking classes. I will not have to work as much, and I can pursue opportunities that will enrich my education.



Jerry Herrera

HOMETOWN: Arlington, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: French Studies and Italian Studies double major

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Senior

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

Currently, I would love to work at an institution such as the State Department or CIA, as I love intercultural interaction and traveling, and such a job might offer that with my interpreter aspirations.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving a scholarship means receiving an opportunity to focus on what truly matters, at least to me, which is getting involved more with both the University and local community. It allows me to focus on being an exceptional student while still having fun, instead of "when the bills are due."

SCHOLARSHIPS

2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Samantha Jansen

HOMETOWN: Austin, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: English, Pre-Physician Assistant

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Junior

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

After graduating I hope to attend Physician Assistant school and then go on to be a Physician Assistant.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving this scholarship from the Retired Faculty Staff Association means the world to me because it not only shows the extensive support given at UT but also enables me to continue my education without the stress and burden of finances.



Emily Kim

HOMETOWN: San Antonio, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: Health & Society

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Junior

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

Beyond UT, my dream is to become a competent health professional where I can center my work with empathy and compassion. I want to be part of building a system that can truly support and empower others. I cannot wait to carry what I learned at UT into the world.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

This scholarship means a lot more than just financial relief - it shows me how I am not alone on my academic journey. It makes me realize that I am well capable in reaching my endeavors and further gives me confidence in my potential as a student and individual.



Mykal Montgomery

HOMETOWN: Plano, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: Government

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Junior

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

I would certainly like to go to law school. I'd love to either go into politics or continue down the law path after that schooling.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving the scholarship opened the door to even attempting to study abroad, a door that had been shut before due to financial concerns. It means a renewed dedication to my studies because of the faith that has been put into me by complete strangers.



Anika Ma

HOMETOWN: Amarillo, TX

SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts

MAJOR: Sociology, Pre-Optometry

YEAR IN SCHOOL: Senior

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

After finishing my bachelor's degree in sociology, I hope to attend optometry school at the University of Houston and practice in my hometown following board certification. After a few years, I hope to eventually practice optometry at the Department of Veteran Affairs, giving veterans like my father the vision care they need.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving a scholarship always means a weight lifted off my shoulders. I know that I can pursue my educational goals with less of a financial burden, and it truly is a blessing that donors are selfless in giving to students like me who are just trying to survive and pursue their dreams.

SCHOLARSHIPS

2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Thanh Dat Nguyen

HOMETOWN: Da Nang City, Viet Nam
SCHOOL: Engineering
MAJOR: Aerospace Engineering
YEAR IN SCHOOL: Junior

WHAT ARE MY CAREER GOALS?

My goal is to become an aerospace engineer and take part in building a real rocket.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving a scholarship helps me cover my educational expenses such as textbooks and school supplies. It also relieves my financial burdens on housing and food while sparing me more time to study and participate in clubs and organizations.



Valeria Meza

HOMETOWN: Dallas, TX
SCHOOL: McCombs School of Business
MAJOR: Economics/Minor: Accounting
YEAR IN SCHOOL: Senior

WHAT ARE MY CAREER GOALS?

My career goal is to become a CPA and work in either public accounting or corporate finance.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

Receiving this scholarship has been very meaningful to me as I approach my last year in school! This semester I am studying abroad in London and it has relieved a lot of financial burden. It is allowing me to fully embrace my study abroad experience this semester!!!



Alberto Flores

HOMETOWN: Laredo, TX
SCHOOL: College of Liberal Arts
MAJOR: English and Philosophy
YEAR IN SCHOOL: Senior

WHAT ARE MY CAREER GOALS?

I endeavor to attend graduate school and become a professor in either English or Philosophy. One of my goals is to author prose, but that's a ways away. If I could contribute to cultivating the next generation while becoming a niche author, I'd say I exceeded my career goals.

WHAT DOES THE RFSA SCHOLARSHIP MEAN TO ME?

I transferred to UT Austin because I tried in vain, even wanting to take out a life-ending amount of debt just to be a freshman here. So, now that I am here and living modestly, I am genuinely thankful for everything that made the experience possible. A scholarship is a privilege, and those who fund scholarships change lives.

Angela Baatar

Tarus Bradley

Christina Egan

Carolina Gonzalez

Sofia Russo



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512-452-8811

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FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATION SERVICES

IN MEMORIAM

This column honors the memory of retired University of Texas at Austin faculty and staff and retired University of Texas System staff whose deaths have been made known to us between May 15, 2025 – November 15, 2025. Every attempt has been made to identify the university affiliation of each individual or their contributions to the university community. Also included, when known, are spouses of retired faculty and staff members, as well as notable friends of the University. Any additions or corrections to the list should be addressed to Barbara Frock, Historian, at jbfrack@gmail.com.

Michael Lionel Benedikt, 78

*Meadows Foundation
Centennial Professor,
Architecture*
August 13, 2025

Hollis Boehme, 91

*Research Scientist,
Applied Research Lab*
September 25, 2025

Martha Ann Boyd, 97

*Systems Analyst, UT Office Of
Gov. Sponsored Research;
News & Information Service;
RFSA-Newsletter Editor and
Historian Emerita*
June 25, 2025

Keith Clark Carter, 100

*Coordinator, UT Program
for Petroleum Land
Management*
September 16, 2025

Angela M Crisara, 94

*Widow of Ray Crisara; Professor
Emeritus, Music, Distinguished
Faculty Award*
August 1, 2025

Jere Lynn Davis, 74

Texas Exes Travel Division
September 21, 2025

John M Davis Jr, 84

*Associate Director of Design,
UT System, Office of Facilities
and Construction*
August 23, 2025

Betty J Dunn, 92

Teacher, UT Nursing School
August 21, 2025

Allene Delories Evans, 73

*Assistant Vice-Chancellor,
UT System*
April 12, 2025

Dorothy Lillard De La Garza, 81

Wife of John De La Garza, RFSA Board Member
June 1, 2025

Martha “Beth” Gillham, 85

*Associate Professor, Natural Sciences,
1991 Medallion Award, 1989 Named Texas
Dietician of the Year*
August 4, 2025

Cheryl Ann Mays Halton, 78

*School of Nursing; wife of John Halton,
Associate Dean, College of Engineering*
August 23, 2025

Patricia “Pat” Lou Hempel, 83

Staff, UT System, Board of Regents
June 19, 2025

Jefferson Davis “Beak” Howell Jr, 85

*Adjunct Professor and Senior Research
Fellow, LBJ School of Public Affairs*
July 1, 2025

Ronald William Massey, 81

*Instructor, Graduate School of
Social Work; Social Worker III*
August 6, 2025

Dave McNeely, 85

*Political Reporter; Editor of the Daily Texan;
Co-Taught course in politics and journalism
at UT Austin*
August 30, 2025

Evelyn Yvonne Munn, 78

*Lecturer, French Language
and Literature*
July 5, 2025

IN MEMORIAM

Alison Pace O'Balle, 73

*Professional Librarian,
UT Libraries*
August 21, 2025

Thomas Ramirez, 62

*Assistant Director,
Frank Erwin Center*
June 18, 2025

Pamela Ann O'Connor, 83

Bureau of Business Research
November 11, 2025

Carolyn Spock, 78

*Head of Records, Texas Archeological Research
Lab, recipient of the Mark Denton
Career Achievement Award*

February 1, 2025

Luther Ray Parker, 95

*Clinical Assistant
Professor, Pharmacy*
October 18, 2025

Frances Jean Fowler Terry, 85

Administrative Associate, Folklore
September 29, 2025

Mike Parker, 83

*Assistant Football Coach,
UT Longhorns*
July 11, 2025

Nancy Pfluger Payne, 89

*Special Assistant to Chancellor Harry Ransom,
Director of Special Services under four
Chancellors; Past President, RFSA*
August 22, 2025

RFSA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RETIRED FACULTY-STAFF ASSOCIATION

The Retired Faculty-Staff Association of The University of Texas at Austin provides the point of connection, continuity and communication for the mutual benefit of its members and The University. A complete statement of the purposes of the association can be found in the constitution. Submissions may be emailed to donnabell1015@gmail.com or mailed to Carol Barrett, RFSA Coordinator c/o Texas Exes / P.O. Box 12368 / Austin, TX 78711-2368.

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