

McDermott Alumni

The Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

FALL 2017

SAVE THE DATES!

Fall Feast

Mark your calendar now for a fall feast at the home of Dan Patterson, taking place on Saturday, October 21st from 5-7 pm in Dallas. Join your fellow alumni for food, drinks, and merriment. Keep an eye out for your invitation!

Visionaries Luncheon

Look forward to the biennial Visionaries Luncheon, taking place Friday, Nov. 3. Join your fellow alumni, the Eugene McDermott Scholars Program, and esteemed guests as we honor pioneers in education and innovation. Formal invitation, including registration details, to follow.

Coming Soon - Regional Alumni Clubs

There's no need to visit Dallas to catch up with other alums - there may be plenty of past McDermott Scholars in your own backyard! This year, we're working with local alumni to organize happy hours and social events in markets like Houston, D.C., New York, Austin, and the Bay Area. Do you want to help head up one of these groups? Drop Pam Hughes a note at pamelahughes08@gmail.com.

More Committee Updates on pg. 11!

RE-EXPERIENCING SANTA FE



Top, Left to Right: Walter Voit ('01), Eric Kildebeck ('01), Michael Seeligson ('02), Jonathan Coker ('06), Steve Horne ('05); Bottom, Left to Right: Benjamin Cruz ('12), Hannah Frank ('04), Megan Coker ('06), Juliann Horne ('05), Sid Nivas ('09)

The last time I hiked up Mt. Atalaya I was an eager high school graduate, full of hope and aspirations and, not to mention, in much better physical shape. It was exactly five years ago to the day that I marched up the mountain with a group of classmates who felt brave enough to challenge the steep terrain at a blistering pace.

This time, however, I thought it best to take it at a much more moderate pace. I would soon learn there'd be nothing mod-

erate about the hike. If I'm being totally honest, it was one of the most grueling hikes I've ever done. I would take breaks constantly just to catch my breath.

Nevertheless, with some encouragement from my fellow alumni, staff, and new scholars alike (plus a few huffs from an oxygen tank) I did it. The moment I reached the top felt that much sweeter for it. The view was more spectacular than I remembered. *(Continued on pg. 6)*

Check out the blog!

Read updates from the current scholars: <https://mcdermottscholars.wordpress.com/>

Brady in Unalaska!

'07 Brady Spenrath writes about his adventures on the job in Unalaska (pg. 7)

Alumni Center Open!

Get the scoop on the newly opened Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center (pg. 10)

PRESIDENT'S DESK

An update from our current President

Greetings, Alumni!

As I write my first letter as the President of our Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association, I am struck by how much the Association has accomplished in its short existence—and by how many tasks await us. As you will see from the committee updates, we have been busy since our new board took office.

We made our last payment to fulfill the commitment to donate \$100,000 to UT Dallas. Fifty thousand of the total went to fund the campus beautification project, and the remaining fifty thousand went to the Worsfold Grants Program, named in honor of the man who so lovingly annotated the world of opera for many of us. The grants awarded so far under that program are a fitting tribute to his legacy, especially the most recent round involving many arts-related projects on campus.

There's no doubt about it: we are maturing into a more significant role within the University and Dallas communities. During this period of growth, we are working hard to take the Association to the next level on several key fronts:

1. *Financially, through smart investment and management of our \$1 million quasi-endowment fund;*
2. *Interpersonally, through more frequent events that build stronger connections between alumni, students, staff, and faculty; and*
3. *Digitally, by updating and consolidating our web presence to help our alumni and McDermott Scholars become and remain connected.*

How are we progressing on each of these fronts? First, the board created and elected a Finance and Investment Committee to manage the Association's budget and investments. Starting this year, each committee of the Association will submit a budget proposal to the Finance and Investment Committee, and the board will approve an annual budget after receiving that Committee's recommendation.

Last month, the board approved the Finance and Investment Committee's unanimous recommendation to engage Westwood Trust as our investment advisors for the quasi-endowment fund. Westwood Trust has strong connections to the Dallas community, an good understanding of



Megan Coker ('06), an Associate in complex commercial litigation at Vinson & Elkins in Dallas, and current Alumni Association President.

UT Dallas that was appealing to the board, and significant experience managing investments for nonprofits. We look forward to working with them.

On the second front, the Association has grown to the point where we can now host regional events and have more frequent events in Dallas. Several of our committees are laboring to ensure the Association enables networking and fosters more frequent connections through local and national events sponsored by the Association. If you live in Houston, New York, the Bay Area, DC, or Austin, please enjoy our hospitality at a local event soon.

You will also receive is an invitation to attend our Visionaries Luncheon at the Dallas Museum of Art on November 3. Whether you are local or not, please consider joining us for lunch and for broomball with the scholars that evening.

Alongside local and regional events, we are also starting new traditions. This year, all alumni received an open invitation to travel to Santa Fe and spend time with the scholars and each other. We had a blast rafting together, though we also came face to face with our advanced age while hiking with the young and energetic scholars. Then again, we older kids had a happy hour, sponsored by the Association and one particularly generous donor (thanks Cheng Lee!). In years to come, we hope to see you on the mountain or in the river (yes, we fall in more frequently now).

(continued on page 3)

Finally, led by those of us who are more technologically gifted, we have worked to consolidate and update our web presence to better communicate with all of you. Special thanks to alums Aidan Skoyles and Josh Cai for their generous gifts and years of hard work on our websites and online platforms. We look forward to introducing you to our new and improved website very soon.

Watch for the re-launch of mcdermott.org and prepare to update your information (stimulating, I know). In all seriousness, the scholars are anxious to get to know you better, as are various members of the University and Dallas communities. With up-to-date information, we plan to highlight our best resource—you—to ensure we continue to connect with

administrators and students as the University grows and new leaders take the helm.

Thanks for reading my lengthy missive and for staying engaged with your Association. Now more than ever, we need your involvement and support. Our contributions and engagement in the next few years will be essential to remaining relevant so we can effectively support the Program and University that we all hold dear. *Whoosh!*

Megan Coker ('06)

President

Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association

Recent Grad Gab

Celebrating the success and looking to the future with our newest alumni



Name: Nancy Fairbank ('13)

Degree: B.A. Political Science

Where are you headed next?: I am headed across the pond to England as a Marshall Scholar. My first year there I will study International Development with a Focus on Poverty and Inequality at the University of Birmingham. My second year proposed course of study is a Policy Evaluation and Social Intervention at Oxford. After completing my Marshall Scholarship, I will attend Harvard Law School.

We also heard that you won the Urann scholarship! What's that?: The Marcus L. Urann Fellowship is a national award given by Phi Kappa Phi to six graduates each year. Each recipient receives \$15,000 to help them fund postgraduate degrees. I will be using the scholarship to help pay for Harvard Law in two years.

It was Dr. Dow at UT Dallas who encouraged me to apply, and I understand that we have a history of UT Dallas students-- and McDermott scholars-- winning these Phi Kappa Phi scholarships.

How did you spend your summer?: I spent the summer interning for Judge Louis Guirola, Jr., who is the chief judge of the 5th Circuit Federal District Court. Working with Judge Guirola and his staff allowed me the opportunity to see how a federal court functions. I was able to sit in on a wide variety of court proceedings, including two trials-- one criminal and one civil. The internship also gave me some basic training in conducting legal research. I really enjoyed playing around on Westlaw and writing memos on various case issues.

I was also on a boat for three weeks at the beginning of the summer, sailing from Rhode Island to Michigan through the Erie Canal and Great Lakes. It was wonderful to see parts of the country I'd never been to, especially since it will be two years before I return to the U.S.!

Can you share one of your best McDermott memories?: Going on a class retreat as seniors. We played board games, made driftwood rafts, and just had a lovely time being together before graduation.

How has UTD prepared you for your future?: The research I was able to do because of the program, a lot of which took place internationally, allowed me to deepen my understanding of poverty and inequality. Also, a few excellent professors really took the time to mentor me as a student. Their guidance helped me determine what I wanted to focus on going forward.

A DECADE IN REFLECTION



Dear McDermott Community,

For the last ten years, I have had the distinct pleasure and honor to direct The Eugene McDermott Scholars Program. This has been a unique and inspiring experience made possible by the entire community – Mrs. McDermott, Mary McDermott Cook, Executive Vice President Hobson Wildenthal, Scholars, Alumni, faculty, staff, parents and friends. Together we have accomplished much and advanced the mission of the Program. We have formed our seventeenth class, enlarged the program from 57 to 100 current Scholars, strengthened the number and quality of applicants, enriched our programming, expanded our reputation, engaged the Alumni in the selection process and continued to follow the progress of 222 Alumni as they shape the university, our great city and the world.

With these accomplishments in mind and with new initiatives to be planned, it is time to look forward to the next chapter in the Program's future. Therefore, as of August 31, 2017, I have retired to the position of Director Emerita of the Eugene McDermott Scholars Program. I am thrilled about what we have built and where the Program will go and confident that, as I transition to this new chapter of my career, the Program will continue its stellar trajectory. The founding director, staff and leadership team took the vision of Margaret McDermott and Hobson Wildenthal and brought it into being. I feel that by following the guidance and direction of Mrs. McDermott and Dr. Wildenthal, the Program has continued to evolve and blossom.

Through their continued direction and guidance, The Eugene McDermott Undergraduate Scholars Program will be uniting with The Eugene McDermott Graduate Fellows Program under the leadership of one director. Upon conception, these programs were designed to be natural, synergistic partners in developing the most able young people into the most accomplished citizens. Together, the undergraduate scholars program and graduate fellows program will emerge stronger, enriching their participants in new ways to define the programs' roles and place at the heart of the university's endeavors.

With a history of dedication, professionalism, and friendship, Reena Schellenberg is the quintessential leader for this initiative. As a former Morehead Scholar at UNC, she had a major role in the design of the McDermott Scholars Program, as well as in its early implementation. During my time as a McDermott parent, followed by my time as program director, Reena has been a constant resource for not only myself, but also the staff, and most of all the scholars.

I know that this marks a big transition into a new era for the Program. At this time, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude to the entire University of Texas at Dallas community, and a great appreciation for the opportunities and the collaboration provided by our colleagues and students. In addition, the help and support from the McDermott staff that I've been given has been invaluable. I hold enthusiastic optimism for the future of this great Program and University.

I once again want to express my gratitude for being a part of such a great university, working with such gifted colleagues, and leading such exceptional students. This experience has been one of the most rewarding of my life, and I feel blessed beyond measure for the opportunity to be a part of this Program's history. I leave with a profound love for the McDermott Program, the McDermott Family and the University of Texas at Dallas. I invite you all to welcome Reena as she steps into this new role, as Director of both The Eugene McDermott Undergraduate Scholars Program and The Eugene McDermott Graduate Fellows Program.

Warmest Regards,
Molly

Molly Seeligson
Director Emerita, Eugene McDermott Scholars Program

REENA TAKES THE HELM

A note from our new Director



It is hard to believe that a decade with Molly Seeligson leading the Eugene McDermott Scholars Program has elapsed. I feel honored to be following Molly as director of the Scholars Program and to have the opportunity to develop the synergies between it and the Eugene McDermott Graduate Fellows Program.

Having been involved with the scholars program since its inception, and having worked at UT Dallas for almost 14 years – the last three building the fellows program – I feel well placed to help each

program continue to develop and to help them grow together in mutually beneficial ways. It is so fortunate that this transition is occurring under optimal conditions, with the university on a positive trajectory, the scholars program successfully established, and the fellows program maturing.

The scholar and fellow populations differ in important ways, but the essence of their programs is the same: identify and recruit outstanding individuals, and generously support them as they earn a degree. Both programs offer participants opportunities for growth and development, and are enriched in return. The fellow program's focus on research is one example of this, with graduate students gaining experience as research leaders while the undergraduates they mentor benefit through the research opportunities provided.

The uniting of the programs is founded on their shared mission; beneficial synergies will result. The programs' participants will be enriched in important new ways, particularly through the fellow-scholar mentoring that colocation will facilitate. The programs' place at the heart of the university will be strengthened, as will their impact beyond our institution. The McDermott legacy will be even more clearly defined.

This evolution is possible because of the significant support both programs enjoy. I am grateful to work with the McDermott Office staff, who now provide their characteristically outstanding assistance to both undergraduate scholars and graduate fellows. We will continue to partner with our excellent colleagues in the university's faculty and administration, and with our amazing alumni. We are so glad of the support of director emerita Molly and the other wise, caring external friends we are fortunate to have. We will always be guided by Eugene McDermott, Margaret McDermott, Mary McDermott Cook, and Hobson Wildenthal.

So many of the visionary ideas that were part of the genesis of the McDermott Programs have already become realities; I look forward to working with you to continue to develop them, and to bring new ones into being, to ensure the McDermott legacy.

Reena Schellenberg
Director

Eugene McDermott Undergraduate Scholars & Graduate Fellows Programs

Below: Reena with scholars and members of the McDermott family over the years



THE SANTA FE EXPERIENCE 2.0

(continued from Page 1)

Conquering Atalaya the second time around served as a sublime reminder of my journey as a scholar. Much like the steep climb up Atalaya, I navigated my McDermott scholar experience with excitement and vigor at the beginning, sacrifice and effort during the middle, and pride and admiration at the end - all with the help of very capable and talented people.

Although at heart I still feel like that kid from five years ago, I am now confidently equipped with experience, a degree, and a promising career thanks to all the opportunities and encouragement the program provided me. While I don't have to tell the alumni how much this program has meant for every one of us, I made sure the newest scholars got a chance to hear what it meant for me.

It was an absolute pleasure and privilege getting to meet the future leaders and difference-makers of UTD. Any advice I could give, I gave candidly and honestly whether it had to do with classes, careers, or learning from mistakes. The most meaningful lesson I took from my experience was that as scholars we are a family and we grow and support each other as a family.

Experiencing Santa Fe as an alumnus and meeting other alumni there made me realize that we'll be a family long after the four years of scholarship have passed. I feel confident that the program is stronger than ever and now that alumni get to be a part of Santa Fe, I hope to return for many years to come. Most importantly, I look forward to more active involvement with my fellow alumni and helping out the association in any way I can.

--Benjamin Cruz ('12)

It was wonderful to meet all the scholars this year! Reliving the Santa Fe experience was both nostalgic and inspiring. I'll definitely be going back to see old friends again and make new friends in the new classes.

--Steve Horne ('05)

*Let the record show
I did not die on the hike
But it was damn close*

--Hannah Frank ('04)

Are you interested in joining us next year? The Alumni Association wants to continue having a presence during the Santa Fe Experience. Keep an eye out for more information next summer so you can relive Santa Fe too!

Below Left: Only McDermott Alumni have the audacity to show their class pride in binary...

Below Right: Hannah, Michael, Eric, and Benji brave the rapids with one of the same river guides who've rafted with McDermott freshmen since 2001.



A '007 IN UNALASKA



Ten years and a handful of days ago was my tenth anniversary of becoming a McDermott scholar. Whether you count the exact moment I became a scholar as the day I accepted the offer, the moment I arrived in Santa Fe, the first steps I took in a UTD classroom, my first Leadership Dallas event, or my first Bat Signal meeting, I remember them all. In each of those moments I was filled with the same mixture of excitement, anxiousness, giddiness, and anticipation (except for early morning Bat Signal, during which I was filled mostly with coffee) about where I was, but mostly about where I was going.

For those of you who don't know, where I came from was a small town in rural south Texas called Three Rivers; population: 1,650. I didn't know exactly where I was going to end up during those moments in 2007, but I knew exactly where I didn't want to end up: another tiny, isolated, rural community like Three Rivers. Don't get me wrong, I don't harbor resentment for the town, its people, or those who choose the rural life. I just always knew I'd be happier spending my time in the world's major cities.

I had time to reflect on that sentiment three hours into my flight intended for Unalaska, Alaska (population: 4,437) as it was being re-routed back to Anchorage due to volcanic activity.

I was on a business trip to visit a customer I helped acquire called OptimERA. They are the only provider of broadband internet to the island community of Unalaska, the home of Dutch Harbor (of Deadliest Catch crab fishing fame). The company I work for, SES, provides the satellite connection necessary to provide internet to a place so remote, no fiber optic or cable connections currently reach it. We had already made the sale, but it was such a unique location, the company decided to send two of us out with a film crew to record interviews and footage to use for promo videos. I was scheduled to be the last of the group to arrive, and about two hours after boarding a propeller

plane with a total of 21 seats, the announcement came in that a volcano had spewed ash in our flightpath, and we'd have to try again the next day.

I was sure I was about to spend a week in a tiny town with no entertainment, overpriced and underwhelming food, surrounded by people I couldn't relate to, in unseasonably cold and misty weather for June. Once that loud, shaky plane finally landed back in Anchorage, I started wondering if it was all worth it. On top of it all, I wasn't the first choice to attend this trip, another colleague was asked first but had to decline due to a scheduling conflict.

Just two days into the trip, and I realized it really was worth it. The people made it fun, the food was surprisingly great, and the scenery and wildlife were beautiful. I saw more bald eagles in an hour than my entire life before. Much of Unalaska reminded me of Three Rivers, from the slow pace, to the wood paneled bar, to the single school in the center of town.

But, despite being a slightly larger town, they lacked a lot of what I had growing up. They didn't have a movie theater. Before OptimERA, they didn't have Internet any better than dial-up. They didn't have a place to rent the latest video games, and no fast food. But most of all, there's just no way off the island other than to charter a boat or take a flight, either option could cost at least hundreds of dollars. At least in Three Rivers we could hop in a car and be in San Antonio or Corpus Christi in under two hours. Teenagers in Unalaska don't get to just get away.

Nonetheless, Unalaskans are happy and proud. They do love the chance to meet new people, which I understand, and they have a few complaints about their isolation. But there's no resentment, no bitterness. They love to compare themselves to the 'spoiled' mainlanders in Anchorage or Juneau by saying "They're Alaskans, but we're UN-Alaskans." They've got it harder, but they know just by thriving on the edge of civilization, they've endured unusual circumstances not everyone could.

This job has sent me literally all over the world, to some of the world's largest and most amazing cities, and I can trace this amazing opportunity back to those first days at UTD, and the special opportunities granted by the McDermott Program. Even my study abroad in the program let me explore Tokyo, Singapore, and Berlin, some of my favorite cities still to this day. Those adventures brought me such a great appreciation for the what the world has to offer, but this one-week work assignment that wasn't even intended for me to begin with gave me a little more appreciation for where I started.

Happy 10th Anniversary, my fellow '007s!

--Brady Spenrath ('007)

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the success and uniqueness of our alumni



Braeden at Okryu-gwan, a restaurant in Dubai that is owned and operated by the North Korean government.

Name: Braeden Mayer

Class: 2009

Major: International Political Economy

Hometown: Flower Mound, TX

Home teams: I'm still mostly a Dallas sports guy. I love the Cowboys and I still root for the Rangers. My MLS team is in D.C. though— I love D.C. United.

Occupation: Communications Consultant

Current location: Finishing up a six-month stint in Abu Dhabi. I return to D.C. in September.

How did you end up in the Abu Dhabi?: I told my boss that I was getting antsy and wanted to live outside the country again. He asked me where I wanted to go. My response: "Pick a place on the map. I'll go there." So in mid-March of this year, he calls me up and asks me, "So, how does Abu Dhabi sound for ten weeks?" Of course I immediately said

yes. Ten weeks turned into five months... which then turned into six months. It's been a blast!

Cooler part about your job: Getting to work with people all over the world. It's 100% normal to start my day off with a call to Germany or Amsterdam and finish it off working with colleagues in Singapore or Hong Kong.

Dream end-of-career job: That's really a tough one! I've thought it would be cool to be the Secretary of Commerce or the USTR before, but it would also be cool to head up M&A at a big company or advisory firm. Or hell, I'd love to be a CEO.

Future non-career ambitions: I feel like it's a bit cliché, but I'd love to visit every continent. I want to do more theatre, go skydiving, SCUBA dive all over the world, go back to grad school, and spend most of my life outside of the U.S.

Outside talents: When I'm in D.C. I play weekly trivia with a team, and we're pretty badass. I can also shotgun a beer really quickly, and I love to volunteer my time teaching citizenship classes in Spanish.

The most dangerous / exciting thing you've done: After my Fulbright, I went backpacking for about six weeks through Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. In this town called Los Baños, Ecuador, there was a place where you could jump off a bridge and swing back and forth underneath it. At any place in the States, you'd expect to sign a whole bunch of waivers. Here, I handed the dude \$20 cash, he put a harness on me, and I jumped about two minutes later.

One surprising thing Alumni wouldn't know about you: Dionna Budd (08 Scholar) and I have a tradition of vacationing with each other!

Favorite part about UTD: That it's a place where you can really leave your mark. You don't feel lost in the crowd when you arrive (or maybe you do now!), but you really feel like you're a part of the university.

Favorite McDermott memory: Hanging out with everyone before graduation. I was off-campus for my entire senior year, so it had been awhile since I had seen anyone.

FEELING SOCIAL?

Keep us updated!

The Alumni Association wants to hear about exciting news in your life.

- * Get engaged or married?
- * Add a little one to the family?
- * Wild world travels?

Post on our facebook page:
facebook.com/groups/emspaa/

Inform us via the website:
mcdermottalumni.com

Or, email today at mcdermottalumni@gmail.com

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

An inside look at one of our beloved McDermott faculty members



IMPACT! caught up with Dr. Douglas Dow, Clinical Professor of Government and Politics and Associate Dean of the Hobson Wildenthal Honors College.

Name: Douglas Dow

Hometown: Issaquah, Washington, nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. That's near where David Lynch filmed *Twin Peaks*.

Family members: My wife Theresa, and our three year old Rottweiler, Molly. Beyond my household, I come from a small, close family. My parents and I. No siblings, or aunts and uncles. Distant cousins in Wyoming, Georgia, and Sweden.

Undergraduate and Graduate programs: B.A. from the University of Washington, and Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins University. Both degrees in Political Science.

Dissertation: "Juridical Sociability: The Problem of Liberality in Eighteenth Century and Contemporary Liberal Thought." Essentially the project was to articulate a historically res-

onant conception of liberalism, as if liberality not personal liberty, was the political doctrine's central normative commitment.

Teaching/Research Concentration: Political and Legal Thought; Constitutional Law; American Politics, Film and Political Culture.

Current Research: I am currently in the midst of a project examining the portrayal of landscape for the representation of what I am calling "haunted nationalism", within contemporary international cinema.

Coolest part of your job: The coolest part of my job is the ability to expand my own intellectual persona by teaching different types of classes, which then shape and alter my research. Ten years ago, I would not have imagined writing about film as a political theorist. Teaching and talking with students about film changed all that.

If you could teach any other elective, what would it be: Happily for me, I'm already teaching it: Film and Political Culture, my Collegium V Readings class.

Dream end-of-career job (besides UTD, obviously): I want to be the first non-lawyer to sit on the Supreme Court since Stanley Reed. Contemporary constitutional doctrine could use some fixing, and I've got a few ideas how to go about doing it!

Future non-career ambitions: I want to curate films for the New York Film Festival, review restaurants for the San Francisco Chronicle, and repair hiking trails throughout the Issaquah Alps.

Outside talents: I am pretty talented at washing dogs. Big dogs, small dogs, long or short haired, wiggly or still. Professional dog washer is not a dream end of career job for me, but I could do it if that position on the Supreme Court falls through.

Favorite part(s) about living in Dallas: I love to explore the broad array of cultural opportu-

nities Dallas provides, especially in art, theatre, film and music. Dallas's art scenes are eclectic and cosmopolitan, but without feeling elitist or inaccessible, which I experienced in Los Angeles.

One surprising thing UTD doesn't know about you: UTD doesn't know what I would do with \$1M. If they are curious, and would like to make that a reality, they should read on.

The most exciting thing you've done: I accepted a job offer as at UTD without having ever stepped foot in Dallas. Seventeen years later, I'm happy I took that risk.

What you would do with \$1 million: Half of it would go into a nicely diversified stock portfolio. \$100,000 would go to environmental and civil rights causes. \$100,000 would go into a fund for Theresa and me to travel the world. The remainder would fund construction on a deluxe bibliophile man-cave: floor to ceiling bookcases with a rolling ladder, espresso bar, and a miniature cinema.

What you would do with stopped time: I think it's hard to impart major historical changes on the world merely by stopping time (and presumably stopping the existence of everyone and everything existing in time, except me). So I would probably end up doing something lame, like reading all the books I don't have time for now – and I would probably end up breaking my glasses, like the guy in that *Twilight Zone* episode.

If you could have any superpower: Clearly, I would not choose to have the power to stop time. Maybe the power to go back in time, instead.

What you want to tell the Alumni Association: Send an email, why don't you? Let us know how you are doing.

Do you know a McDermott faculty member who would be a great candidate for the next edition of IMPACT? Send us a message!

NEW ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

Alumni Gather for the Opening of the Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center



Pictured above, Left to Right: Josh Brummet ('09), Monica Niewiarowski ('09), Pam Hughes ('03), Megan Coker ('06), Jonathan Coker ('06), Ted Harpham (Dean, Hobson Wildenthal Honors College), Alex Garcia-Topete ('07), Sydney Sherman ('15), Grace McClure ('14), Jessie Voit ('05), Umer Nadir ('15), Benedict Voit ('04)

The opening of the Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center was a great opportunity to see current students dance with older men wearing tights – of course I'm talking about the Le Freak concert! The concert was thoroughly enjoyed by all and brought immediate smiles to my wife's face. Perhaps it's because the men onstage had more hair than I do (FYI younger McDermotts, I don't have any hair).

After some fun with the concert we were excited to reconnect with alumni including several McDermott Scholars. Catching up on career changes and family updates was great. Memories of our time at UTD started to flood back, like that one time our ultimate frisbee team signed up under the team name "ZBT Gold" even though none of our team members were from ZBT and a certain fraternity had used that name for many previous seasons. Good times.

The Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center is well designed and executed wonderfully. Some of us were treated to an impromptu tour by Erin Dougherty, a fellow alum who was the Senior Director

of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving for UTD until 2015. In short, she had the inside scoop.

Of the many things we were told, the most memorable thing to me was this: The Davidsons wanted the alumni center to be a place for current students to enjoy, not just a partitioned piece of the campus. The design was intentionally created to provide an air-conditioned walkway of sorts for students going East-West between the ATEC building and one of the many new parking garages. It's not meant to be a refuge for alumni, but rather a place where alumni and current students interact. Cool beans, no?

Stop by next time you're in the area. It seems like every time I go there is some new building to explore. The campus of my days (2003-08) has been completely transformed, and it's been transformed for the better.

Baldy out.

--John Keese ('03)

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Development Committee - Ryan Marcotte, VP of Development

Did you know that you can support the Association by shopping with AmazonSmile? Use [this link](#) and Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of your purchases to our organization.

The Alumni Association's sponsorship of causes at UT Dallas and the greater Dallas community is made possible primarily by the generous financial support of our membership. We will soon kick off our annual year-end fundraising campaign. Please consider contributing so we can continue to carry out our mission!

Grants Committee - Andres Correa, Chair

The Grants Committee's inaugural project -- the Victor L. Worsfold Grants Program -- is now well into its second year and running smoothly under the administration of the University. Three projects have received funding for community service endeavors.

First, Mathew Salm designed a system to have volunteer students collect excess food from various sources on the UT Dallas campus. The student volunteers would then become food-safety certified, store the food, and ultimately transport it to local homeless shelters.

Second, the UTD Mural Artwork Project, a collaboration of two science students and two student government members, will conduct painting workshop events on campus to promote awareness of and engagement in the visual arts across the entire student body. Third, L.O.T.U.S. -- a partnership between Art UTD, Student Government, and University art professors and administrators -- will host rotating, site-specific, art exhibitions that display student art in unconventional locations to boost the visibility and appreciation of the arts at UTD.

The Grants Committee is now exploring how to build upon its inaugural work and support initiatives that partner UTD with its DFW community.

Legal Committee - Lissette Villarruel, Chair

As in previous years, the Legal Committee will focus its efforts on reviewing and revising the Alumni Association's Bylaws, including analyzing and proposing amendments. Further, the Committee will continue to provide the Association with legal support in its activities as a non-profit organization. One of the Committee's main goals this year will be to refine the Bylaws to be more accessible and geared towards the needs of the Association.

Programs & Events - Pam Hughes, Chair

The Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni helped dedicate the new Davidson-Gundy Alumni Center, joining the university for the Sept. 7 Concert on the Green. Disco band Le Freak entertained the crowd, while students and alums got an up-close look at the new on-campus home for alumni. The space is also a new campus event venue, with spaces ideal for conferences, meetings, and even weddings. Learn more at www.davidson-gundy.utdallas.edu.

Recruitment Committee - Monica Niewiarowski, Chair

After coordination with the Program, the Recruitment committee is preparing to assist with upcoming recruiting events. For anyone in the Dallas area, Sherry has requested volunteers for the following events. We look forward to helping recruit the next classes of scholars.

- **Sneak Peek:** Sneak Peek is a Saturday event (exact date TBD) where students who have begun applications to the Program can visit UTD and meet with the Program Staff, Scholars, and Alumni. The goal is to encourage students to finish their application and familiarize them with the culture of the Program. Sherry indicated that the office is still planning the Sneak Peeks, so watch for a Facebook or email announcement about specific dates and times!
- **Counselors' Workshop - Dinner at Blue Mesa:** The goal for this dinner is to acquaint high school counselors with the Program so they can recommend it to their students. The dinner will be at Blue Mesa on October 19th. Sherry has asked interested scholars and alumni to contact her (sherrys@utdallas.edu) if they would like to attend.
- **Program Applications:** If you are interested in reading applications this year, let Sherry know! We keep breaking records for the number of applications received, so your help will be appreciated.
- **Finalists' Weekend 2018:** The dates for Finalists' Weekend are March 2nd through March 4th, 2018. Mark your calendars!
- **Keep an eye out for an invitation to Broomball!** The annual event pitting the Evens against the Odds will take place around the time of UTD's Homecoming festivities.

We look forward to seeing many of you at Finalists Weekend, if not before.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Membership Committee - Brady Spenrath, Chair

I'm excited to serve as the head of the Membership Committee for the Alumni Association. In tracking and managing the membership, I have the opportunity to work with every other committee, and I get to stay in touch with my fellow alumni. The Membership Committee, previously headed by Liz Organ, who reached her term limit, facilitated the transition from one term to another, and coordinated with the President to run the elections and assign members to the various committees. Moving forward, we will keep the contact lists up to date, facilitate the election processes to allow the Association to make decisions, and look for ways to continuously improve our internal processes.

Communications Committee - Lewis Chang, Chair

The Communications Committee has several initiatives this year:

- Build a fresh website with assistance from the Development Committee, consolidating our websites and establishing a more polished web presence, providing access to events, news updates, and the McDermott social portal;
- Regularly publish the McDermott newsletter in the Fall, Spring, and Summer, with recurring features and additional contributions from fellow board members, alumni, and UT Dallas faculty; and,
- Continue operations-side items such as a conferencing service or miscellaneous promotional materials.

University Relations Committee - Sidd Sant, Chair

The University Relations Committee has been hard at work as the university's alumni activities and engagement continue to grow. Sidd Sant, Chair of the University Relations Committee, has attended several alumni receptions on behalf of the McDermott Alumni, as have Alex Garcia Topete and Megan Coker, among others.

Recently, Sidd Sant and Alex Garcia Topete attended a reception to meet with incoming freshman from the mid-cities and Austin areas of Texas and fielded their questions about UT Dallas. Many alumni from UT Dallas's earliest days also attended and were delighted to see the new progress at the university. The University Relations Committee's goals for this 2017-2018 year include:

1. Connecting alumni to professional opportunities on campus (such as the UT Dallas Seed Fund);
2. Making campus relationships more accessible to the executive committee and McDermott Alumni Board of Directors so that these relationships outlast the terms of individual officers;
3. Keeping UT Dallas updated on the progress of our McDermott Alumni and the McDermott Alumni up to date on news about UT Dallas.

