

McDermott Alumni

The Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

APRIL 27, 2015

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Your McDermott Board will soon host elections to select representatives for our next session. If you are interested in becoming part of the Board, please contact us for more information. In addition, watch your inbox for emails informing you of the election dates and procedures.

PROGRAM AMBASSADORS

Are you in a city that will have a future McDermott Scholar? Do your part as a member of the Association and offer to meet or talk with these students before they begin their journey.

Also, consider forming contacts with the local high schools, and help recruit scholars for the Class of 2016.

REGIONAL HAPPY HOURS

Go to the Alumni website and see how many Scholars currently reside in your area. Then, consider hosting a dinner or happy hour with the group. These scholars will be incredible contacts - and hopefully friends! - for life.

A SPECIAL GATHERING

January 2015: Alumni are invited to Mrs. McDermott's house

--Megan Coker ('06)

Visiting Mrs. McDermott is always an eye-opening experience. From the pleasant, humbling surprise of encountering Water Lilies in the front room to hearing Mrs. McDermott speak about her life, I always depart inspired. Attending the McDermott Alumni gathering in January 2015 was no exception.

Mrs. McDermott invited local alumni, Provost Wildenthal, and Program staff to view her breathtaking collection of artwork, displayed in full throughout her home. Over time, Eugene and Margaret McDermott bought and displayed the artwork in specific places throughout their Highland Park residence. The collection is rarely complete because museums take various pieces on loan. Mrs. McDermott wanted to show us the art in its natural setting. She led us around the house, curating each work herself.



Monet's "Water Lilies - The Clouds," is part of the McDermott Collection at the DMA.

More than seeing the full collection, I enjoyed this intimate glimpse into the younger lives of Eugene and Margaret McDermott. They bought this piece while in Paris, she said, weighing whether to purchase it over dinner at one of their favorite restaurants. That impressionist painting in the bedroom had been relocated there as Eugene McDermott lay ill in bed—it was his favorite work in the house, and she wanted him to enjoy the view from his sickbed as much as possible... (story continues on page 4)

Exciting Travels?

Go to the Alumni website and add your location(s) to "Places Visited"!

Respond to Sherry!

Have you updated your personal information? Fill out the form today!

Share Your Stories!

Send the Association news to be published in the next edition of IMPACT!

McDERMOTT BOARD

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PRESIDENT'S DESK



"Where the Sun Never Sets"

Our reach as scholars has been global for 15 years, and today our influence and presence as Alumni extends just as much. Paraphrasing Dr. Wildenthal's remarks at the 2014 Welcome BBQ at the McDermott Ranch, we're turning into an Empire where the sun never sets.

Which brings me to my point for this piece—no, this is not a coup, I'm more than fine being el Presidente rather than Emperor—in order for our influence to reach its full potential, effectiveness, and meaning, we not only need the brand recognition as the McDermott Alumni beyond the hallowed grounds of UTD and the Dallas spheres, but we also need more self-awareness of our group.

We ought to know each other—who and where we are and what we do—no matter how vast or how fast our network grows. We must not rely only upon a few individual "hubs" or super-connectors who seem to know and keep in touch with almost everyone. Instead, we must put mechanisms, opportunities, and habits in place that make our interconnections as good as synapses.

Because no matter our class year, our degrees, or our current walks of life, we are all McDermott Alumni—and we must be the first ones to appreciate and foster that before anyone else.

That's why I want us to be ever more involved in the selection process of scholars. UTD may get them for 4 years, but we get these individuals for life.



That's why I want us to implement innovative-yet-non-intrusive ways to keep track of each other. For instance, a private Wiki page and a web map are in the works to that purpose.

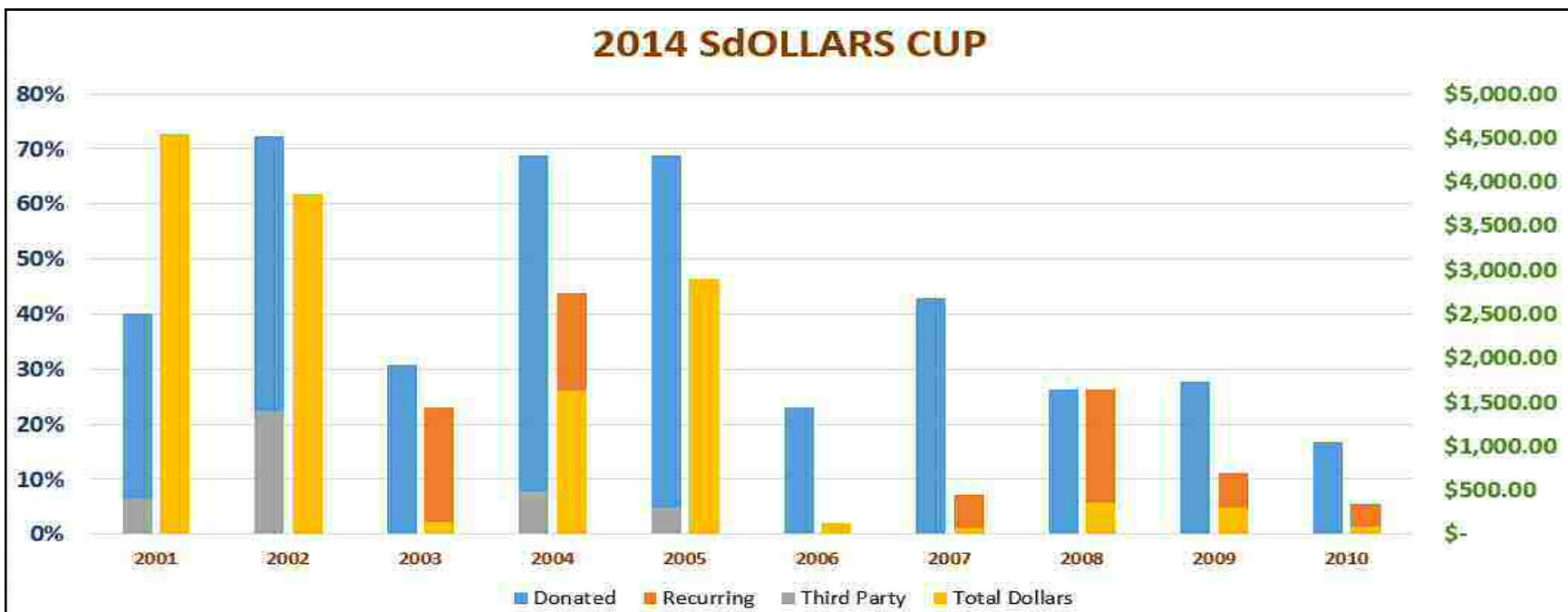
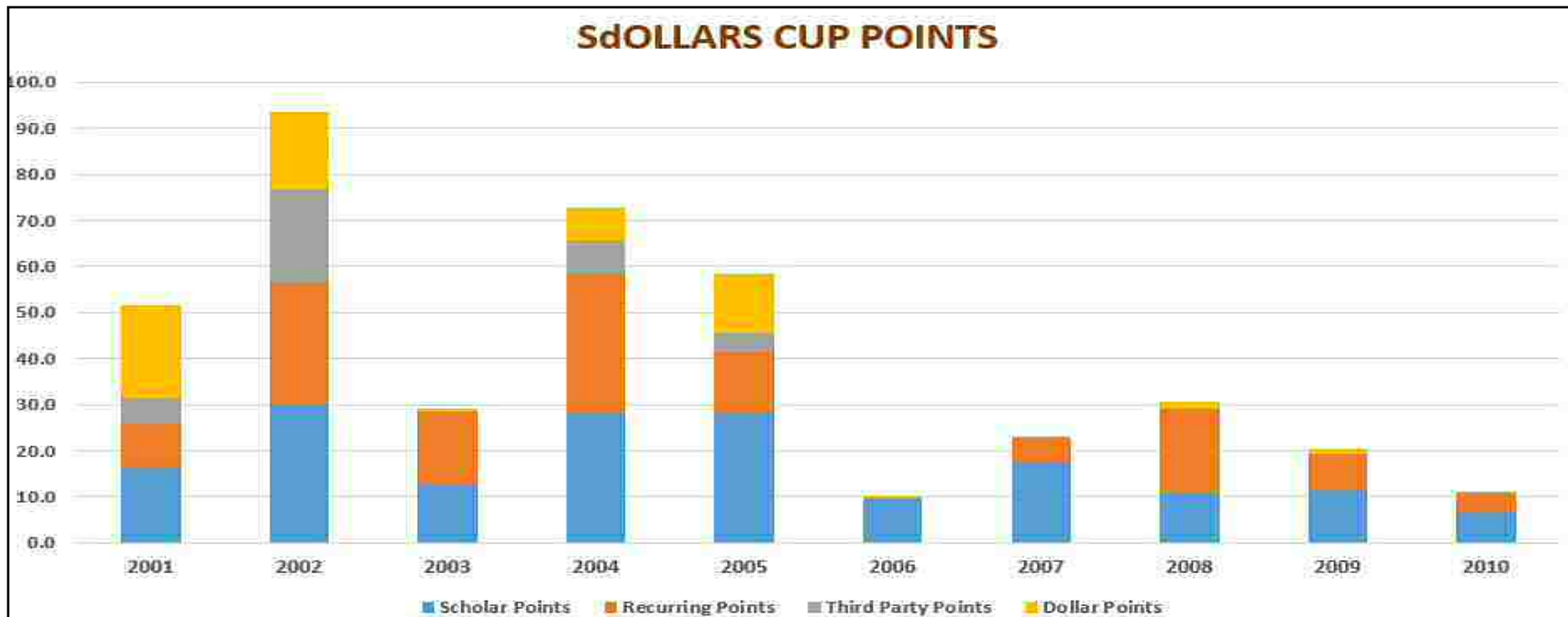
That's why I want us to strengthen the mentorship program, so that scholars, recent graduates, and even UTD students and alumni in general become well-connected parts of that network.

And that's why I also want more events and programs for us to be a part of and interact with each other. As more classes graduate, events will be increasingly important to meet new alumni and reinforce our bonds.

Ultimately, I want us to lay the foundations today – when we haven't yet hit the 200-members mark – that will allow us to preserve our cohesiveness, sense of belonging, and pride regardless of the time, distances, or grad school rivalries, for we are all McDermott Alumni, and that means more than a brand or even an Empire...

'02s TAKE SdOLLAR\$ CUP!

The class of 2002 claims the second Cup through total dollars, participation, and recurring payments



Congratulations to the Class of 2002!

After a riveting battle to claim the top prize, the Class of 2002 eeked out a victory to take the 2014 Cup.

In total, the Alumni Association raised over \$14,000. Of this total, more than \$3,000 came from recurring donations, and \$2,600 came from third party sources (parents and matched funds).

The 2002 class had the highest participation rate (72%), the 2004 class had the highest recurring payment rate (44%), and these two classes tied by each bringing in two outside donations. The 2001 class raised the most funds.

How will the money be used?

All funds donated will be used for

projects and operation of the Association as agreed upon by the Board:

- Fulfilling the Association's \$100,000 commitment to UTD for campus beautification and maintenance.
- Funding new projects via the Worsfold McDermott Alumni Fund.
- Bringing scholars and alumni together via happy hours or events.

SHE'S STILL AMAZING AT 103!

Mrs. McDermott, ever strong and impressive, celebrated her 103rd birthday in February

--Alex Garcia Topete ('07)

On February 18th, Mrs. McDermott decided in last-minute fashion to host at her house in Highland Park those closest to her who would like to wish her a happy birthday in person. The two designated sessions, noon and early evening, were therefore packed with family and friends of Mrs. McDermott. The Alumni were represented by former Association President Andres Correa, Dr. Walter Voit, Megan Coker, Michael Seeligson, and myself.

Mrs. McDermott thanked all her Alumni for the congratulations and warm wishes, and wanted to remind us all just how proud she is of us and the amazing things we're accomplishing—her favorite gift for her 103rd birthday.

Her birthday is doubly special for us: the date not only marks her birthday, but also the anniversary of the foundation of our Alumni Association. It was at the party to celebrate her 100th birthday that we announced the creation of the Association, voting-in right there and then the first Alumni Board Members. It was not only a nice gesture to please Mrs. McDermott, but also a symbolic event intended to represent the spirit of the Association—the literal embodiment and continuation of both Margaret's and Eugene's mission to change lives and leave a worthwhile legacy in this world.

As Alumni, we can only strive to live up to that challenge and symbol. The Association is excited about our mission and opportunities for the upcoming year. And, we look forward to sharing our successes with Mrs. McDermott next year at her 104th birthday party.



Dr. Walter Voit ('01) and Michael Seeligson ('02) talk with Mrs. McDermott at her party celebrating another successful rotation around the sun.

("Gathering" continued from Page 1)

As we listened to Mrs. McDermott and later caught up with each other and with the Program's newest developments, I felt like a Finalist again. Eugene and Margaret McDermott shared an insatiable curiosity and drive to improve their city and the world.

The Program has certainly been shaped in their image as directors, staff, students, and alumni create and

take advantage of the opportunity for growth. As a Finalist, that future of growth flashed before my eyes. It was filled with cultural experiences that would expand my viewpoint, expectations of service that would remind me of my civic and human responsibilities, mentors who would guide me through difficult decisions, and colleagues who would challenge me to develop my fullest potential.

Looking around at my fellow

alumni, I was proud to see that we are each living up to this promise. Even in times of scant sleep and wearisome work, I hope we can each channel that teenage Finalist who was so hungry to develop into their best self.

Interacting with this unique community certainly reminds me to draw on that spirit and keeps me continually grateful for my place in the McDermott Scholars Program.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the success and uniqueness of our alumni

IMPACT! caught up with '01 DeLisa:

Name: DeLisa Lay

Class: 2001

Major: Government and Politics

Graduate studies: JD, Yale Law School

Hometown: Kingwood, TX

Home team(s): What?

Current location: Washington, D.C.

Occupation: Investigative Counsel, Chairman Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

Coolest part of your job: Thank you e-mails from federal government whistleblowers who have come to us for help when they experience reprisal (loss of job, reputation, retaliatory investigations, etc.) for reporting wrongdoing and waste in the federal government. Working with a smart, talented, and down-to-earth team of individuals.

Dream end-of-career job: Who knows...

Future non-career ambitions: Learning to tango, becoming a florist, writing short stories.

Outside talents: Playing piano, making eggnog

One surprising thing Alumni wouldn't know about you: I don't think anything about me would surprise the Alumni.

The most dangerous / exciting thing you've done: Toss-up between sledding on Science Hill in New Haven, CT with a plastic container store lid at 2:00 am in 12-degree weather and interviewing sex workers in rural India for a project on the implementation of human trafficking laws.

Favorite part about UTD: The McDermotts!

A favorite McDermott memory: Opera tickets. Also, letting another scholar throw our Christmas tree off the third floor balcony at the Waterbury Park Apartment complex. Twice. (Do not do that.)

What you want to tell the McDermott Scholars: Three things:

- 1) Good networking is not about what other people can do for you. It's about what you can learn from them.
- 2) Advice from a partner at my former law firm: "Don't be mean." You'd be surprised at how often this will be relevant in your career. You may encounter situations where your decisions and actions will profoundly affect other people's lives—positively or negatively. Take the responsibility seriously.
- 3) There's more than one path to your goals. If you don't end up with your dream job immediately, it just means you have more to learn before you get there.

You could be next! Send in your information and help spread the McDermott love!



DeLisa Lay is part of the inaugural class of McDermotts in 2001. She currently works in Washington, D.C., but is still very popular, nonetheless.

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/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/emspaa/)

Inform us via the website:
www.mcdermottalumni.com/

Or, email Mitchell & Benedict at
mcdermottalumni@gmail.com

CHRONICLE OF A BLIZZARD

How many McDermotts does it take to salvage a Finalists Weekend amidst a winter storm?

--Alex Garcia Topete ('07)

Thanks to this year's FW, we now know that it takes about 60 current scholars, 50 alumni, and 7 staff members to prevent the event from falling apart come snow, rain, or ice.

For the alumni, the saga started on Friday night with the now-traditional Alumni Mixer at Fox & Hound in Richardson. Attendance was far from ideal due to the weather conditions, but the event turned out well in the end since several alumni and quite a few senior scholars showed up regardless.

On Saturday, the start of FW activities was delayed by a few hours—no early wake-up calls! All activities had to be rescheduled, with the kick-off lunch at the new res hall dining facility being pushed to 11:00. Finalists kept coming in throughout the day as flights allowed them to get to Dallas, while the participating alumni and faculty had the chance to wait for the snow to thaw before heading over to campus.

Of course, the delayed start meant that the Annual General Meeting of the

Alumni Association took place, albeit not quite as planned. All committees presented reports and most alumni who were in town for FW attended the meeting. There's a recording of it available online (link is available upon request, if you missed the email about it).

Back on the subject of FW, there were no campus tours because of the snow and ice. Nonetheless, the virtual tour that some current scholars concocted as an emergency alternative was well-received by the finalists and their parents. In fact, it was one of the most commented feats in evaluation forms and in face-to-face conversations with finalists.

The snow and ice also meant that the Saturday evening activities became a challenge when the matter of transportation had to be resolved. Alumni and staff managed to overcome the issues and get people to the Symphony downtown. Once again, the finalists and parents were impressed.

One last point to mention: the app developed for the purpose of scoring and documenting all comments about



Photo from www.utdallas.edu/news

the finalists made for a smoother Sunday session. It also provided clearer "data snapshots" about FW as a whole, which faculty, alumni, and staff used for efficiency and a "wiser" selection.

Let's see what challenges come with Finalists Weekend 2016!

DALLAS GETS EVEN MORE McDERMOTT!

The under-construction Margaret McDermott Bridge will be part of the new Interstate 30

--Benedict Voit, '04

The Dallas skyline will soon have another iconic structure. The new \$111 million Margaret McDermott Bridge took real shape in January with the start of construction of the two arches.

The bridge was designed by Santiago Calatrava who also has his name on the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge - already a staple of Dallas imagery. Spanish engineer Cala-

trava is described as "neofuturistic", and he will also be leading the design of a third bridge that will eventually span over the Trinity river. Upon its completion, Dallas will have claim to three Calatrava bridges, only matched by the Dutch county of Haarlemmermeer.

For now, though, all focus remains on the McDermott Bridge which is slated to open to traffic in 2017.



UTD HONORS: A NEW FACE

All together now: Collegium V, National Merit, the Terry Scholars, and the McDermott Scholars

--Dr. Edward Harpham,
Dean of the Honors College

There are many changes in honors at UTD. Other scholars programs have joined McDermott. Collegium V still exists. But we now have an Honors College that integrates a number of new programs together. As our updated website (<http://honors.utdallas.edu/>) states:

“The Honors College at the University of Texas at Dallas, established in 2014, houses eight programs dedicated to promoting excellence in undergraduate education.

Three programs offer a four-year cohort experience to participating students, with admission generally restricted to incoming college freshmen. The Collegium V Honors Program provides seminar instruction, personal mentoring and an enhanced academic environment.

The National Merit Scholars Program provides personal mentoring and an intellectual framework in addition to a generous financial scholarship for National Merit Scholars attending UT Dallas. National Merit Scholars at UT Dallas are eligible for membership in the Collegium V Honors Program.

The UT Dallas Terry Scholars Program provides ambitious student scholars the intellectual, social, cultural and financial support necessary for their preparation as the future leaders of Texas and our nation.

The other five programs in the Honors College enrich the academic experience of matriculated UT Dallas students. The Office of Distinguished Scholarships provides information, guidance, and mentoring to students applying for nationally competitive scholarship and fellowship programs.

The Archer Program combines Washington D.C. internship experience with classroom instruction for an intensive semester of political and policy education.

The UT Dallas Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi is the local chapter of the nation’s oldest, largest, and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Undergraduate and graduate students are inducted to Phi Kappa Phi each year.



T-shirts hang in the air within the atrium of the Honors building, home of the CV lounge and administrative offices.

The Prodigy Scholars Program offers bright high school students the opportunity to concurrently enroll in mathematics courses beyond calculus and linear algebra.”

In addition, a whole new wave of CV classes has been added to the curriculum. Along with traditional liberal arts classes, we have added honors courses in calculus, physics, computer science, biomedical engineering, and neuroscience. We have advanced cohort tracks in computer science and math that are integrated in the CV curriculum. Next year we are hoping to add electrical engineering classes and chemistry. It is a whole new world out there.

Next time you are on campus, come by the Honors College in the Cecil and Ida Green Center. You can see the new lounge, see the history of UTD t-shirts, and review the senior research posters from the 2014 graduating class.

MCDERMOTT CLASS OF 2015

The McDermott Program has completed its selection process for the incoming class of scholars

The 2015 class of Scholars is made up of eleven women and sixteen men. It includes sixteen students from Texas and eleven from eight other states.

Collectively, this class has an average two-part SAT score of 1542. Twenty-two of the twenty-seven received recognition from the National Merit Scholarship program, six were high school valedictorians, and two were Presidential Scholar nominees.

Mr. Bhargav Arimilli
Exeter, NH
Phillips Exeter Academy

Ms. Morganne Blaylock
San Antonio, TX
Ronald Reagan High School

Mr. Zachary Boullt
Lake Charles, LA
Saint Louis Catholic High School

Mr. Joey Campaign
Windsor, CO
Fossil Ridge High School

Mr. Matthew Carpenter
Austin, TX
Vandegrift High School

Mr. John Chan
Austin, TX
Liberal Arts & Science Academy

Mr. Christopher Chen
Broomfield, CO
Peak to Peak Charter School

Mr. Harris Chowdhary
Plano, TX
Greenhill School

Mr. Christian Cortes
Richardson, TX
St. Mark's School of Texas

Ms. Kiara Dandridge
Fresno, CA
Floyd B Buchanan High School

Ms. Jacqueline Doan
Plano, TX
Plano Senior High School

Ms. Emily Fine
Dallas, TX
Greenhill School

Ms. Joanna Haug
St. Rose, LA
Metairie Park Country Day School

Ms. Ayesha Karnik
Flower Mound, TX
Flower Mound High School

Ms. Rachel Kyes
Gainesville, FL
Eastside High School

Mr. Quang Le
Ann Arbor, MI
Steiner High School of Ann Arbor

Mr. Nidhish Lokesh
Flower Mound, TX
Flower Mound High School

Ms. Monica Lou
Plano, TX
Plano West Senior High School

Ms. Rachel Meade
Plano, TX
Coram Deo Academy

Mr. Umer Nadir
Plano, TX
St. Mark's School of Texas

Mr. Justin Raman
Lake Mary, FL
Seminole High School

Mr. Neel Reddy
Murphy, LA
LA School for Math, Science

Mr. Daniel Rodricks
Camas, WA
Union High School

Ms. Sydney Sherman
Wrightstown, PA
Archbishop Wood High School

Mr. Andrew Swanson
Grand Prairie, TX
South Grand Prairie High School

Mr. Richard Wu
Houston, TX
Clear Lake High School

Thanks to all of our Alumni who played a role at Finalist Weekend!