

McDermott Alumni

The Eugene McDermott Scholars Program Alumni Association

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

DECEMBER 6, 2014

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MRS. MCDERMOTT LUNCH

There will be a luncheon with Mrs. McDermott on January 16th. For those in Dallas, mark your calendars and watch for further information.

MERRY / TEARY SHERRY

The Marek family is moving to Reno where Jeff has a great opportunity with AT&T. But, Sherry will still be part of the Program. See her email for the details.

CHECK THE WEBSITE

Have there been big changes in your life? New family, degrees, careers? Make sure to go to our website and ensure your information is up to date.

SHARE YOUR STORIES

Send the Alumni Association news and events to be published in the next edition of **IMPACT!**

APPLICATION READING

This year will continue the trend of having the most applications for the Program. This is fantastic, but it does mean more work. You can help by prereading applications. Contact the Office for more information.

NEW GRAD FELLOWS!

University, McDermotts excited about new graduate program

Beginning in the fall of 2015, the Founders Distinguished Graduate Fellowships will generously support talented students as they earn a research-intensive Ph.D. in four years and gain experience as principal investigators and mentors of undergraduate researchers.

Ultimately 10-12 Fellows will be named per year, creating a steady-state cohort of 40-50 Fellows.

Besides the obvious educational and research aspects of the Fellows Program, there will be optional intellectual, cultural, and social elements (ranging from focused interactions with distinguished faculty and guest speakers to outings to the symphony and trips to national laboratories).

Applications were accepted until November 15, finalists will be invited to interview at UTD in January, and offers will be made starting in February for Fellows to begin their tenure in August.

The Fellowship application package resembles that of the NSF GRFP and other similar awards, so applicants may repurpose existing application materials.

This is another great and exciting step



Reena Schellenberg will direct the Founders Fellows program and is excited to be part of this transformative effort. She will move to the Provost's Office but will remain available to the McDermott Program as a resource and committed supporter. She looks forward to helping connect Scholars with the Fellows.

as the University expands its influence and its academic credentials.

Questions may be referred to: foundersfellows@utdallas.edu, and information is available at <http://www.utdallas.edu/foundersfellows/>

Exciting Travels?

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

SdOLLAR\$ CUP!

Do your part for Class and University! Donate today via the website!

Finalist Weekend!

2015 Finalist Weekend is February 27-28. Be there for our annual meeting!

McDERMOTT BOARD

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IMPACT! design

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PRESIDENT'S DESK



A message from President Alex Garcia Topete

The goal of last term's Association President Andres Correa and the Alumni Board was simple yet immensely challenging: to establish a proper NPO association from scratch—and yet, thanks to the enthusiasm and willpower that made up for the inexperience, that goal was fully accomplished.

But now, looking ahead and with the Association formally established, more challenges lie before us, ranging from fundraising to recruitment for the Program and UTD.

That is why, as President and with the support of the Association via the current Alumni Board, the compound objective of all of the upcoming Association's actions consists of supporting UT-Dallas to reach Tier-One status and enhance the McDermott Alumni's branding, both internally and among our community partners.

Our intended actions for those purposes include starting a signature fundraising event, expand our recruitment outreach and our involvement in the selection process for the Program, foster networking among alumni and between alumni and current scholars, and increase our general presence and reputation through the Worsfold



Grants and regular communications—such as this newsletter.

So stay tuned for interesting improvements and events to come during 2015!

Alex Garcia Topete, a 2007 Scholar, was elected as President of the Alumni Association this past summer.

Currently, Topete is a writer, director, and producer at Nowadays Orange Productions, a Dallas-based firm he founded in 2011. The company is currently working on a film "Bootstrapped: The Life and Times of Amon Carter".

Outside of work, Topete enjoys fashion, soccer, and long walks on the beach...

<http://nowadaysorange.com/>

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the success and uniqueness of our alumni

IMPACT! caught up with '04 Jordan:

Name: Jordan Youngblood

Class: 2004

Major: English

Graduate studies: M.A. in English, University of Mississippi; Ph.D in English, University of Florida

Hometown: Weatherford, TX

Home team(s): Texas Rangers, always and forever

Current location: Willimantic, CT

Occupation: Assistant professor of English at Eastern Connecticut State University

Coolest part of your job: I do a lot of research and teaching on digital media, meaning I get to teach classes on things like making short fiction via Twitter feeds and the cultural rhetoric of video games. I used to play games to avoid school work. Now it is my work.

Dream end-of-career job: The dream remains the same to potentially enter the game industry, but if that never pans out - teaching at an institution with the support and interest in making a digital humanities curriculum that really works.

Future non-career ambitions: If I stay in Connecticut? Find some decent Southern food up here. Three months in and I'm already in withdrawal.

Outside talents: I have been decimating Kids Week on Jeopardy the past few days. I feel like it's as much for the benefit of adults as it is for the kids

who go on the show. They meet Alex Trebek, we feel like trivia kings. Everyone wins.

One surprising thing Alumni wouldn't know about you: I don't know about all alumni, but it will likely surprise the '04 class that I actually wake up before noon on a regular basis now. Do you know how long it stays bright outside if you get up early? It was news to me!

The most dangerous / exciting thing you've done: Oh, that's easy. The most dangerous thing I ever did was believing the Rangers had game 6 locked up in 2011. I'm still not a whole person again.

Favorite part about UTD: Being able to attend a young, still-developing campus and seeing change develop over time. It's nice to go back and say "Oh, that's new." I hope the university continues to build while keeping its focus first and foremost on the lives of students.

A favorite McDermott memory: One of our meetings was catered with about a metric ton of barbeque that no one was going to eat. James Fickenscher and I ran back to Waterview, grabbed any available containers, and filled them with leftovers. I think I ate smoked sausage with sauce for about two weeks. They were the happiest two weeks of my life.

What you want to tell the McDermott Scholars: Despite recent claims, being all about that bass at the total expense of treble makes for a very poor listening experience. Support the balance of treble and bass. Your ears will thank you.



Dr. Youngblood's current areas of focus are: Digital Media; Queer Theory; and 20th Century American Literature.

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

CORREA'S PARTING WORDS

An outgoing interview with the Association's first President, 2001 Scholar Andres Correa

First, could you tell us about how you saw the Association progress under your leadership?

I had the privilege of watching the Association go from being nothing more than an idea to becoming an established 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation with nearly 150 members, 24 board members, 11 committees, and a \$100,000 commitment to the University to help maintain the campus improvement efforts funded by Mrs. McDermott.

In its first two years, the organization established a website; began active involvement in scholar recruitment and selection via campus visits and participation in the selection process; developed a grants program available to all undergraduates, later named the Victor Worsfold Grants Program, to fund special projects; raised nearly \$70,000 from scholars, alumni, parents, and, as always, Mrs. McDermott; set up recurring donation systems for alumni willing to donate every month; and received Green and Orange Award for Alumni Service, among many other activities too numerous to list.

Of course, what I watched was the initial spurt of energy from a new enterprise; what follows is the long-term development of our new organization, a much tougher task whose success will be exclusively contingent on the energy and commitment of its members.

Also, how do you see the association continuing to grow in the future, and what do you think Alex brings to his new role to help make that happen?

I believe the first and foremost priority of this organization going forward must be bringing fellow alumni scholars together, cementing a network which, when active, can achieve everything Mrs. McDermott hoped it would.

I see the association continuing its many efforts to be engaged with the program and the community, but chiefly it will likely work to ensure the alumni are in touch with and support one another and remain connected to the University.

I think Alex combines the sort of energy, creativity, organization and experience needed to continue this process.



Already he is refining and organizing our processes, and he is also communicating to our community that one key component of our success must be successful fundraising.

He has focused on strengthening the board's commitment to our mission and, from where I sit, he looks to be one of the alumni most in touch with and committed to fellow alumni scholars, which is of course critical to a president's success.

GET MORE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM!

There are a number of ways you can lend your alumni wisdom and expertise to help the Program

The future of the Program depends on the quality of the future scholars. Alumni can play a part in this process:

1) Volunteer to pre-read applications

Knowledge about the Program is spreading across the country quickly. While this is great, it does require a lot more work screening all of the applications.

As an alumna/us, you can help the office by putting in some time and reading through applications, even before the final deadline sets in.

2) Visit your local high schools

There are nearly 25,000 public high schools in the United States. Wherever you are in the country, you can visit a high school and talk with the counselors about UTD's opportunities.

3) Help with Finalist Weekend

Remember, Finalist Weekend for 2015 is February 27-28. If you will be in Dallas, consider putting your name in to help. Moreover, make sure to be in Dallas for our annual Alumni Association meeting and related activities.



WIN THE \$DOLLAR\$ CUP!

Can your class be forever engraved on the winners' Cup? Bring in the cash and claim victory!



This is our second installment of our wildly successful annual tradition!

How will the money be used?

All funds donated will be used for the projects and operation of the Association. At this stage, we expect that the funds will principally go to:

- Fulfilling the Association's \$100,000 commitment to UTD for campus beautification and maintenance.
- Funding new projects via the Wors-

fold McDermott Alumni Fund.

- Bringing scholars and alumni together via happy hours, lunches, mentoring, and other events.

How do I donate?

Visit www.mcdermottalumni.com.

- For a one-time donation, simply click on "Donate."
- For a recurring donation, select your desired monthly contribution, and click "Subscribe".

What if I someone wants to donate on behalf of my class?

- YES! Direct them to the website for a one-time or recurring donation.
- And tell them to make sure to select the class they are donating on behalf of prior to clicking "Subscribe."

For any questions email us:

mcdermottalumni@gmail.com

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!