



# CLASS NOTES

## SPRING 2025

Compiled by the Office of Alumni Relations, Class Notes encompasses the accomplishments, milestones, and fond memories of Southwestern's alumni.  
January 1 - December 31, 2024

### **1959**

**William Moore '59**, Brevard, NC, is enjoying his 22nd year of retirement from Austin College at Brevard, North Carolina, in the most beautiful county of the Blue Ridge Parkway, uplifted by Keith Lockhart's Brevard Music Center. Moore is still active and teaching, locally at his retirement community and churches, previously at the lifelong learning program at UNC-Asheville.

### **1969**

**Wayne Price '69**, Temple Terrace, FL, was selected to receive the Florida Academy of Sciences Medalist award for 2023. The award is presented each year to a resident of the State of Florida who has contributed outstandingly to the promotion of scientific research, to the stimulation of interest in the sciences, or to the diffusion of scientific knowledge. Dr. Price is Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Tampa where he was a faculty member for 40 years.

### **1976**

**Donald J. Sherwood '76**, Dallas, TX, was recently honored and surprised by the International Right of Way Association by the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented at IRWA's annual conference held this year in Long Beach, CA. The award recognizes the many contributions and distinguished service to the organization over Sherwood's

career spanning 45 years. Sherwood has authored many articles and educational courses and was a highly successful appraiser and instructor. He represented IRWA throughout the US and internationally in Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, China, Russia and Lithuania.

### **1977**

**Carole Gordon '77**, The Villages, FL, retired after 39 years in medical practice. Her focus of practice included general urology/female urology, incontinence, and pelvic floor health. During her career Dr. Gordon participated in leadership in the American Urology Association (AUA), and is a past-president of the Society of Women in Urology. She was the first female urologist to receive the Presidential Citation for Leadership in 1997. Dr. Gordon will remain in The Villages, Florida.

### **1983**

**Curtis Green '83**, Burlington, VT, retired as Professor of Radiology and Cardiology at the University of Vermont College of Medicine on March 30 after a 44 year career in academic Radiology.

**Georgianne Bode Harms '83**, Barrington IL, wrote and published a compilation of essays. It is titled, "Heart Homes: A Mother's Essays on Living with Love & Loss." This compilation of essays was inspired by grief and heartache, yet it contains expressive descriptions of the ways compassion and

beauty can bring comfort and connection to our most difficult days. The essays range in length and are presented in sections reflective of the author's stages of adapting to a variety of life experiences. The book is carried by several excellent independent booksellers, including Book People in Austin, TX, the author's first Heart Home.

### **1984**

**Audie Alcorn '84**, Austin, TX, is now Director of Whole Life Learning Center, an educational alternative for pre-K thru 8th-grade students, located in south Austin.

### **1986**

**Debbie Williamson Taylor '86**, Marion, TX, retired after 34 years at St. Edward's University, where she most recently served as Associate Vice President of Athletics for the Hilltoppers.

### **1987**

**David Walter '87**, Hollywood, FL, has provided insurance and financial services with New York Life for 22 years, helping business owners and families for protection, retirement and estate planning.

*Dr. Vicente Villa, biology, told me one day I'd be a teacher, I laughed and said, "no way!" Funny how life has come full circle as all I do is teach and help people in this wonderful career and I love it!*

## 1988

**Christine Moulds Merritt '88** and her husband **Daniel (Lee) Merritt '90**, Longview, TX, accepted positions as Assistant Professors at the University of Texas Tyler in 2022, and they are training surgical residents and teaching medical students. They have two grown sons, **Daniel B. Merritt, III (Class of 2020)** and Matthew Ryan Merritt.

## 1990

**Scott Hecht '90**, Kansas City, MO, announced the launch of Scott Hecht LLC, a firm focused on mediating high-stakes legal matters. Hecht formerly practiced for three decades at Stinson LLP, where he represented businesses in a wide range of industries in litigation and other disputes. Over the past few years, he dedicated more of his practice to mediation, often facilitating the resolution of eight- and nine-figure disputes. Now, Scott Hecht LLC will offer lawyers in Kansas City and beyond a sophisticated mediation resource for complex commercial litigation, class action litigation and business insurance disputes. "Complex cases deserve more than just standard solutions – they require a personal touch, and an experienced neutral who is sharp, creative, prepared, and perseveres," Hecht said. "I started Scott Hecht LLC to provide a tailored mediation approach, characterized by availability, engagement, and persistence." Specific to business insurance disputes, Hecht brings nearly three decades of experience representing both policyholders and insurers across the full range of commercial policies, from cyber to criminal to contamination. A Fellow in the American College of Coverage Counsel and a "Band One" insurance lawyer in Chambers USA, he applies this industry knowledge to resolve insurance litigation through practical solutions.

**Lee Merritt '90**, Longview, TX, see Class of 1988.

## 1991

**Van Davis '91**, Austin, TX, was recently named Executive Director of WCET, the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies, a national higher education non-profit that focuses on the policy and practice of digital learning at colleges and universities across the United States. Additionally, Davis will be serving as Vice President for Digital Learning at WICHE, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, one of the nation's four regional higher education compacts.

**Felicia Leonard Donnelly '91**, Oldsmar, FL, was named a top 10 finalist for the national 2024 Leadership Trailblazer Award by the League of Women in Government (LWG). This award recognizes an accomplished woman who has demonstrated excellent leadership in local government, mentored and championed other women within the profession, and inspired other women to achieve executive-level positions. The award encourages more women to seek local government leadership positions by recognizing trailblazers in the profession. Donnelly serves as the City Manager for the City of Oldsmar.

**Jack Franklin '91**, Llano, TX, was appointed by Governor Abbott to the Task Force On Infectious Disease Preparedness And Response.

## 1992

**Kenda Jameson Evans '92**, Houston, TX, was named one of only 100 fellows worldwide of the international Society for Lab Automation and Screening. "Kenda earned this award through tireless volunteering and committee leadership..." stated her manager, Randy Bolger. In addition to other

volunteer efforts, she organizes and facilitates the Southwestern University 5K run in honor of her middle brother, Jaysn, who died in a scuba-diving accident. Thus far, the run has raised more than \$270,000 in scholarship dollars.

**Mark Holmes '92**, Dallas, TX was inducted into the J. Michael Duncan Province Court of Honor by the Kappa Alpha Order.



**Cassandra Moore McZeal '92**, Houston, TX, was a speaker at the Conference for African-American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences at Princeton University in 2024.

## 1993

**Joey King '93**, Kingsville, TX, has been named the President of the Presbyterian Pan-American School in South Texas.

## 1996

**Melissa Hillin Friedman '96** and David Friedman, Arlington, TX, are extremely proud to announce that their daughter, Annie, graduated from Colorado School of Mines in December 2023 with a degree in Chemical Engineering and a Minor in Biology. She is a Safety Specialist for Kiewit based at the Gross Reservoir Expansion project.

**Harriet Oberman '96**, Thousand Oaks, CA, was named a Woman of Influence by the Los Angeles Business Journal. She is an accomplished professional who holds an MBA from the Anderson School

of Management at UCLA. Oberman is a well-respected member of the California Society of CPAs and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. She is also an active member of the Rotary Club of Conejo Valley, and is involved with various philanthropic activities. She also serves as a mentor to executive MBA students, highlighting her passion for nurturing the next generation of professionals. Oberman has worked with SingerLewak since November 2023 and has quickly proved herself as dedicated to the team and an invaluable partner always looking for ways to engage and provide the clients with the utmost impeccable service.

## 1997

### Tiffany Thomas Sippial

'97, Tuscaloosa, AL, has been named the dean of The University of Alabama Honors College after serving Auburn University for five years as director of the Honors College where she was responsible for the vision, mission and overall success of the college.



## 1999

Katie Thames Chirhart '99, Shreveport, LA, was named the H. Norman Saurage III Service Award Winner for 2023-2024, a Caddo Parish District Finalist for Teacher of the Year, 2023-2024, the Shreve Island Teacher of the Year, 2023-2024, a LaCUE (Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators) Elementary Teacher of the Year, 2023-2024, and a Civil Air Patrol Challenge Coin Recipient, 2023.

Wenona Cave Martinez '99, Flynn, TX, married Julian Martinez on July 3, 2023. In November 2023, Wenona started a new position as Business Coordinator for Texas

## 2000

Jennifer Dunning Venghaus and Joseph Venghaus, both '00, Harker Heights, TX, were simultaneously promoted to the rank of colonel during a historic joint ceremony hosted by Maj. General William Thigpen, the U.S. Army South Commanding General.



A&M Task Force 1, a member of FEMA's nag toward a doctorate through Abilene Christian University.

## 2001

Tricia C. Bruce '01, Knoxville, TN, was among six new consultants appointed by Pope Francis to the General Secretariat of the Synod. She is currently the president-elect of the Association for the Sociology of Religion.

A'ndrea Berry Fisher '01, New Braunfels, TX, was one of only 50 educators awarded a Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship through National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions. The expedition went to Indonesia to learn about the people, culture, and region to share the experience with students back in the United States. She was also awarded Comal ISD Secondary Teacher of the Year at Pieper Ranch Middle School.

## 2002

Peter Walbridge '02, Houston, TX, see Class of 2006

## 2003

Jason Chapman '03, Evansdale, IA, began a new role as the Dean of Student Life & Inclusion at Coe College and married Cari Zubke on June 13, 2024, in Dripping Springs, TX.

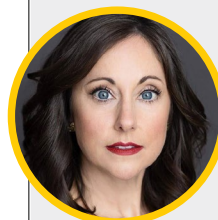
Michael Nguyen '03, San Francisco, CA, was elected to the San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee (DCCC). As a member of the SF DCCC, he represents

over 320,000 registered Democrats and helps engage, inform, and mobilize their members. He currently serves on the Special Committee on Sexual Assault and Harassment as well as on the Club Chartering Committee.

Phoebe Toups Dugas '03, Australia, was selected to be a Superstar of STEM by Science & Technology Australia. This program promotes and celebrates women and non-binary researchers to ensure role models for the next generation.

## 2004

Jordan Guidry '04, Austin, TX, his wife Chloe, and their daughter welcomed a new daughter and sister, Eloise Anne on July 29, 2024.



### Emily Latour '04,

Los Angeles, CA/ Marfa, TX recently joined Gartner Inc. as a Managing Partner within the Gartner

Consulting organization. For almost 20 years prior to Gartner, Emily served in senior leadership roles at Accenture. She remains highly active in giving back to the community and currently serves on the board of Women's Economic Ventures and the Marfa Education Foundation. Emily recently moved from Santa Barbara, CA to Los Angeles, CA in support of her husband, Marshall Ramsey's new appointment as Chief Information Officer

of LA County Public Health. Emily credits SU with providing her a strong foundation to rise as a woman leader in management consulting.

**Adam Winkler '04**, Spring, TX, was honored by the Texas Association of Broadcasters with the award for Best Sports Reporter - Large Market, and the award for Best Sports Story - Large Market.

### **2005**

**Lauren Niver Paver '05**, Austin, TX, was appointed COO at Texas-based education architecture firm, Pfluger Architects, to drive organizational growth as Chief Operating Officer as of Sept. 12, 2024. She will play a critical role in leading operational strategies across the firm's five Texas locations and 130 employees. In collaboration with the Pfluger leadership team, her work supports CEO Terry Hoyle's vision of creating engaging learning environments by advancing the firm's purpose of inspiring people to create a meaningful human experience.

**Grace Josey Pyka '05**, Georgetown, TX, was named Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations at Southwestern University. She has served her alma mater in the division of University Relations since 2009.

### **2006**

**Spencer Darr '06**, Jarrell, TX, was published in Volume 21, No. 4 of *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics*. The peer reviewed journal article is titled, 'Within or Behind or Beyond or Above': A narrative, dialogic exploration with generative Artificial Intelligence ChatGPT-4 of ethical frameworks for writing immersion journalism and memoir in isolation.

**Rebekah Perlstein '06**, Richardson, TX, was named a partner at her law firm, which is now Palmer Perlstein. She serves as Managing Partner and practices Criminal Defense in the Dallas metroplex.

**Anna Matis Walbridge '06**, Houston, TX, was promoted to Chief Product & Marketing Officer at Seidlitz Education. The second edition of her first book, "7 Steps to a Language-Rich, Interactive, World Language Classroom" was published in the summer of 2024. Anna and her husband **Peter Walbridge '02** celebrated the birth of their second son, Alexander Laszlo, on July 13, 2023.

### **2007**

**Iliana Sosa '07**, Austin, TX, directed, "La Frontera," part of the HBO Original Documentary Trilogy "God Save Texas," which premiered at Sundance 2024 and is now streaming on HBO Max.

**Myla Tutt '07**, Greenbrae, CA, and spouse Gareth Davis welcomed their daughter, Leila, in March 2024.

**Ramsey Smith '07**, Houston, TX, see Class of 2008

### **2008**

**SaraBeth Egle Smith '08** and **Ramsey Smith '07**, Houston, TX, welcomed their second baby, Matilda Lynn, in May 2023.

### **2009**

**Stephen Higdon '09**, Dallas, TX, a partner at Lyons & Simmons, LLP, was recognized in the prestigious Texas Rising Stars legal guide for the sixth consecutive year. He has also earned other prestigious honors including Lawdragon 500 Leading Consumer Plaintiff Lawyers, Best Lawyers in America's Ones to Watch, and *D Magazine's* Best Lawyers Under 40. He is a

member of the Texas Trial Lawyers Association, Dallas Trial Lawyers Association, Dallas Association of Young Lawyers, and the Association of Former Law Clerks of the Eastern District of Texas.

**Javier Jara '09**, Austin, TX, kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month with a special symphonic rendition of the "Our Rhythms, Our Voices" project at the Long Center. For the project, Ecuadorian singer-songwriter, Javier Jara, interviewed Latin American immigrants from all walks of life and turned those interviews into songs using a rhythm from the person's homeland. The project and the event aimed to celebrate Latin American immigrants in their diversity, cultural heritage and contributions to this country and beyond.

**Preston Morgan '09**, Houston, TX, was appointed by Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey to serve as senior pastor of West University United Methodist Church in Houston, effective July 1, 2024.

**Iona Tahiris '09**, Killeen, TX, published a coloring book titled, "Can't Her Bury Tales."

### **2010**

**Mariah Fink Arispe '10**, San Antonio, TX, started with Power Home Remodeling in August 2023 and has now been promoted three times since coming on board. Power Home Remodeling is the nation's largest exterior home remodeler and they have been around for over three decades with millions of happy customers. She is soon to be taking on her newest role as Quality Assurance Manager, helping to oversee all San Antonio territory projects. Prior to, she had been a Franchise Owner and Operator under Camp Gladiator, the nation's largest outdoor workout program.



**2012**

**Kristyna Uhles Bell '12**, Round Rock, TX, started a new position of Tax Reviewer at Ray, Libby, & Fischer CPA PC in Round Rock. Kristyna and Kyle Bell, announce the birth of their daughter, Marilyn, on November 11, 2023.

**Gabriella Gonzalez Biziou**

**'12**, Los Angeles, CA, starred in a beautifully executed and associate-produced short film about a couple confronted with two very different desires for their future, called "Foolhardy Love." It was screened at the Austin Spotlight Film Festival and the Austin Under the Stars Film Festival and was nominated for Best Narrative, Best Director, and Best Actress at both festivals.



**Jasmine Thomas '12**, Humble, TX, was named the Humble ISD Teacher of the Year for the entire school district in 2024. She teaches fourth grade at Autumn Creek Elementary School.

**2013**

**Kevin Ngo '13**, Round Rock, TX, was promoted to Team Lead for Service Fulfillment in March 2024 at Department of Information Resources, a state agency he's been at since December 2021, after previously working over six years at TxDMV.

**2014**

**Aimee Blake Shadrach '14**, Tempe, AZ, welcomed a baby girl, Mollie Mae Shadrach in January 2024.

**2015**

**Keegan Taylor '15**, Pflugerville, TX, received a master's in sustainable leadership from Arizona State University.

**2016**

**Katherine Ferrick '16**, Austin, TX, defended her thesis, "Adaptive control of proliferation through the Hippo-YAP signaling axis," at Stanford University on September 3, 2024 in Palo Alto, California.

**2017**

**Jermaine Dumes '17**, Pflugerville, TX, is the proud co-owner of Down South CaJun Eats in Pflugerville, TX, alongside his brother, **Jahmaal Dumes '17**. Jermaine also welcomed a baby named Meyan Anisa Dumes.

**2018**

**Audrey Barnard Dudley '18**, Burleson, TX, passed the Board Certified Behavior Analysis (BCBA) exam on May 30, 2024. She also accepted the BCBA position at Lighthouse Therapy Center of Fort Worth.

**Cara Chin Bradley '18**, Leander, TX, was promoted to Manager with Foundever.

**2019**



**Lydia Gregovic '19**, New York, NY, serves as an associate editor for Penguin Random House, and recently signed a book contract with Penguin Random

House that included the release of her first novel, *The Monstrous Kind*.

**Danielle Orbach Sicard '19**, Austin, TX, was married to Paul Sicard in April 2024.

**Jared Wiggins '19**, Kemah, TX, graduated law school from Texas Southern - Thurgood Marshall School of Law and sat for the Uniform Bar Exam in Texas in July 2024.

**2020**

**Teresa Cropper '20**, Denver, CO, graduated from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in May 2024. She passed the Colorado Bar exam and is newly registered as an attorney in Colorado.

**Madison Flores '20**, Austin, TX, relocated after living in Washington, D.C. for three years to start working on the production team for SXSW EDU. Previously, she worked with the National Geographic Society to develop their event registration websites and support production needs.

**Lauren Muskara '20**, Chicago, IL, started a new position as an instructional designer for the American College of Surgeons.

**2021**

**Jay Nava '21**, Helotes, TX, earned his master's degree in music from Texas State University and wrote and performed his original hip-hop opera ("hip-hopera") entitled, "Realize for Real Here's" for his composition recital.

**2022**

**Benjamin and Megan Richey Capps**, both '22, Rockwell, TX, announce the birth of Eleni Sophia Capps on May 28, 2024.

**Camille Krumwiede '22**, Grapevine, TX, began a post-grad internship at "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" in New York City.

**Juan Mojica '22**, East Boston, MA, completed the two year FAO Schwarz Fellowship at Breakthrough Greater Boston in September. He was offered and accepted

a full-time role at the organization as a Development and Operations Associate.

**2023**

**Skyler Chiella '23**, Austin, TX, has been working as a probation officer with a specialized caseload, Substance Abuse Aftercare.

**Alexys Matcuk '23**, Santa Maria, CA, started a new job through Aya Healthcare working as a Registered Behavioural Technician in Guadalupe, CA for the Guadalupe Union School District. She is responsible for aiding and teaching children with special needs to integrate into general education classes by working through their inhibiting behaviors and vocal/social/developmental delays.