



## Smithsonian features physics prof

Physics Professor Don Olson was featured in a major spread in the April issue of *Smithsonian* magazine. The article was an overview of the “forensic astronomy” that the astrophysicist has done over the past 20 years in researching the role played by astronomical events in art, literature and history.

He and his research partner, Senior Lecturer Russell Doescher, have explained astronomical phenomena in world-famous paintings, have examined astronomical references in world literature classics, and have solved many historical mysteries by showing how celestial events contributed to their outcomes. The *Smithsonian* story mentioned Olson’s work with Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*; paintings by Edvard Munch, Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet; photographs by Ansel Adams; the sinking of the Indianapolis and the assault on Tarawa during World War II; and Julius Caesar’s invasion of Britain.

Olson and Doescher, sometimes with co-author Marilyn Olson, professor of English, have examined some 50 pieces of art and literature and historical events. Results of his projects are often first reported in *Sky & Telescope* magazine.

### NCAA certifies Bobcats with no conditions

The Texas State Department of Athletics received notification of its recertification from the National Collegiate Athletic Association in April.

The certification process involves a thorough self-study led by a steering committee that includes the university’s president. A report from that study is forwarded to the NCAA’s Divi-

sion I Committee on Athletics Certification, which reviews it and provides a list of issues that require follow up. The university then hosts a visit by peer reviewers from other universities, who file a report regarding the university’s resolution of those issues before a final certification decision is rendered.

“It is gratifying to receive this certification because it demonstrates that we are operating our program according to the rules, and with the best interests of our student athletes in mind at all times. Our Department of Athletics is making great strides forward, and we believe this is another important measure of our success,” said President Denise Trauth.

### Seidman new science dean

Stephen Seidman, dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Central Arkansas since 2006, has been named dean of the College of Science at Texas State.



Seidman studied mathematics at City College of New York, earning his B.S. in 1964. He followed that with his master’s in 1965 and Ph.D. in 1969, both in mathematics from the University of Michigan.

Prior to his time at the University of Central Arkansas, Seidman was the founding dean of the College of Computing Sciences at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He has also served as professor and chair of computer science departments at Colorado State and Auburn universities and on the faculties of George Mason University and New York University.

## CD honors Keen, benefits center

A two-CD set, *Undone: A MusicFest Tribute to Robert Earl Keen*, is the outcome of a festival tribute co-hosted by Texas State's Center for Texas Music History that honors one of the state's most prolific and influential singer-songwriters. A portion of the sales of the CDs will benefit the center.

The tribute was recorded live in January 2008 at Dickson Productions' annual MusicFest in Steamboat Springs, Colo. It includes 37 of Keen's best-loved songs recorded by such popular young artists as Reckless Kelly, Randy Rogers, Cory Morrow, Cody Canada, Bonnie Bishop, Jason Boland and others. Keen and his band also perform five songs on the album.

The Center for Texas Music History, which has produced a series of other CDs by well-known Texas artists, co-produced *Undone* with the Austin-based Dickson Productions. To date, Dickson has helped the center raise some \$50,000 through a variety of projects. The CD is available through Amazon.com, Waterloo Records in Austin and other retailers.

## \$1 million donation to athletics

Jerry and Linda Fields of Houston have donated \$1 million to support Bobcat athletics, the second million dollar gift to athletics in two years.

The couple are among Texas State's most generous benefactors. Their recent gift brings their total contributions to the university to approximately \$3.8 million. They are co-chairs of Texas State's Pride in Action fundraising campaign. In the past, they have donated \$2.8 million in support of academic excellence, the alumni center and athletics.

"Our gift, along with the \$1 million gift by Darren Casey, has enabled the university to make huge strides in its move to the Football Bowl Subdivision," Jerry Fields said. "Look at the new baseball and softball complexes, and the records of our teams, and see the difference that these gifts have made. All one has to do is look at the progress of Bobcat Stadium and see that the time is right for supporting athletics."

Jerry Fields, a 1969 business graduate of Texas State, is founder, chairman and chief executive officer of J.D. Fields & Co., a worldwide supplier of steel products headquartered in Houston, with regional offices in Dallas, Tulsa, New

Orleans, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles and Guadalajara, Mexico. Linda Gregg Fields is a 1966 graduate.

## Faculty member on team that wins top computer science prize

A team of seven scientists that includes Byounghak Lee, assistant professor of physics, has won one of the highest honors given in the field of computer science. The team used Lawrence Berkeley National



Laboratory's high performance computing capabilities to work with nanostructures, materials 100,000 times smaller than a human hair. Solutions to energy independence and other breakthroughs could be the results of such research. The Bell Prize is typically given out once a year to the most important contribution made to the field of computer science.

## Bobcats win Commissioner's Cup

After winning five team championships in the fall and spring, Texas State athletics has won the 2009 Southland Conference Commissioner's Cup, given each year on a point system to the best overall athletics program in the SLC.

Texas State was awarded the Commissioner's Cup for the fifth time, which means the Bobcats have won the trophy more than any other member of the conference.

Texas State became the first Southland Conference school in history to win regular season championships in football, volleyball and soccer in the same year. In the spring the Bobcats became the first SLC school since 1995 and third school ever to win baseball and softball championships in the same year.

The three women's championships helped the Bobcats claim their ninth consecutive Women's All-Sports Trophy. It was the 11th time that Texas State has won that trophy. Southeastern Louisiana won the Men's All-Sports Trophy.

In addition to its overall success on the field, Texas State also had a record number of student-athletes earning their bachelor's degrees in 2008-09, with 44 student-athletes graduating in May, 19 in December and 10 more scheduled to graduate in August.

## Bobcat Promise covers fees for low-income Texans

Beginning next fall, Texas State will cover tuition and mandatory fees for new resident freshmen from Texas whose families have adjusted gross incomes of \$25,000 or less. As a special help to San Marcos High School students, the income figure is \$35,000 or less.

To be eligible for the program, students must be Texas residents, be accepted for admission and have a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submitted by April 1.

To remain eligible, students must complete 30 semester credit hours during each academic year (fall and spring semesters), maintain a cumulative Texas State grade point average of at least 2.0 and continue to have the specified family income. A FAFSA must be completed by April 1 prior to each upcoming academic year. The program applies only to undergraduate study.

Students may qualify for Bobcat Promise for up to eight continuous long semesters. The program will cover the cost of 15 credit hours of tuition and fees – an award in excess of \$7,000 per academic year. Those costs will be paid through a combination of federal, state and institutional funds – including grants, scholarships and college work study.

## Health Center gets perfect score

The Texas State Student Health Center has earned a perfect score on its review by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care. Texas State is one of only seven universities in the state that have AAAHC-accredited student health centers. The stellar score means that Texas State aced a series of rigorous and nationally recognized standards in providing the best possible care to students.

## National Science grant benefits San Marcos schools

A \$2.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation will allow eight to 10 aquatic resource doctoral students to conduct scientific research and to partner with teachers in San Marcos-area public schools to offer students hands-on experience with science. The grant will provide generous support for Project Flowing Waters for critical aquatic research being conducted at Texas State and will benefit San



### Ted Marek 1927-2009

Theodore Joseph "Ted" Marek, a financial officer at Texas State from 1966 until his retirement in 1993, died at his home in San Marcos on April 6.

A third-generation Czech-Texan whose family immigrated to the United States from Czechoslovakia in the 1860s, Marek was raised speaking Czech, learned English as a first grader and remained a proud member of the Austin Czech Historical Society until his death.

After attending the University of Texas at Austin, he was licensed as a certified public accountant in 1966. He worked in the private sector as an accountant, comptroller and partner from 1950 until 1963, when he went to work for the State Auditor's Office as an auditor. Marek came to Texas State in 1966 as director of accounting and became comptroller in 1977. He was named vice president of finance and management in 1981.

He is survived by Nel, his wife of 60 years, two children and two grandchildren.

Marcos CISD students and science teachers, who will have science graduate students acting as "resident scientists" in their classrooms each week.

### People

**Margarita Arellano**, who has worked in student services at the University of Texas at Austin since 1985, most recently as senior associate dean of students, is Texas State's new dean of students.

History faculty member **James McWilliams** has been awarded the 2009 Hiatt Prize in the Humanities from the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, a \$50,000 award that recognizes an emerging leader in the humanities. The prize was presented at a gala in April at the Dallas Museum of Art. McWilliams' work focuses on American history with a specialty in environmental, agricultural and economic history.

**Byron Augustin**, geography, and **Jonnie Wilson**, multicultural student affairs, are the recipients of the 2009 Mariel M. Muir Excellence in Mentoring Awards.

**Herman Horn**, former director of the Civil Rights Office for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, has been named chief diversity officer and director of equity and access.

**Sandy Rao**, journalism and mass communication, has been named assistant dean of the Graduate College. Rao, a faculty member since 1992, is also associate director for graduate studies in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

**William Ruger**, political science, along with a colleague from the University of Buffalo, Jason Sorens, authored a study ranking the states in order of the degree of personal freedoms enjoyed by their citizens. The study made headlines around the country, including in *U.S. News & World Report*.

**Paula Williamson**, biology, has been honored by the Southwestern Association of Naturalists with the 2009 Meritorious Service Award.

**Judy Oskam**, journalism and mass communication, is the 2009 winner of the Alan Scott Rising Star Award given by the Texas Public Relations Association to a member who shows potential for outstanding accomplishments in public relations and demonstrates leadership potential for the organization and the profession.

**Steven Davis**, author and assistant curator of the Wittliff Collections at Texas State, has been elected to membership in the elite Texas Institute of Letters. TIL is

a nonprofit organization founded in 1936 that recognizes distinctive literary achievement. Membership is granted through nomination by two current active members, a four-fifths majority vote by the TIL council and approval by the membership at large. Davis joins several other faculty in the distinction: English faculty members **John Blair**, **Mark Busby**, **Dagoberto Gilb**, **Tom Grimes**, **Debra Monroe**, **Kathleen Peirce**, **Miles Wilson** and **Steve Wilson**.

**Sandra West Moody**, biology, has earned the National Science Education Leadership Association's 2009 Outstanding Leader in Science Education Award for her work in ensuring the safety of students in science classrooms throughout the United States. Her study has yielded numerous findings that have had a lasting impact on how science classrooms are constructed and utilized throughout the nation.

**Chris Covo**, political science major from San Antonio, and **Tommy Luna**, public administration major from Austin, have been elected president and vice president, respectively, of Associated Student Government for 2009-2010.

Graduate English students **Bettina Ramon** and **Sarah Olivas** won two of 10 prestigious national awards to present their research at the 2009 Conference on College Composition and Communication in San Francisco in March. The awards support scholarship by historically underrepresented groups.

Six students – **Nick Mustachio**, **David Rosas**, **Rebecca Flores**, **Lydia Montano**, **David Myers** and **Michael Beebower** – went to Houston in June to perform a microgravity experiment as a part of NASA's Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunities Program. Each year, select groups of undergraduates are chosen from the best programs in the country to compete for the chance to propose, build and ultimately to fly and perform a reduced-gravity experiment. After taking off in a zero-gravity plane, the students performed their electrochemical experiment in a weightless environment making some 30 steep climbs followed by free falls over the Gulf of Mexico.

Distinguished Alumnus **James Rogers** '85 of San Marcos, retired Army colonel, died March 4.

Former English faculty member **Helen Wier Van Gundy** '53 of San Marcos died Jan. 20.



#### **Sodbusters One & Two by Bill Wittliff**

Bill Wittliff, left, and author Bud Shrake played the sodbusters who were shot, hanged and burned by the Suggs brothers in *Lonesome Dove*. Shrake died May 8.

## Lonesome Dove: 20th anniversary event postponed

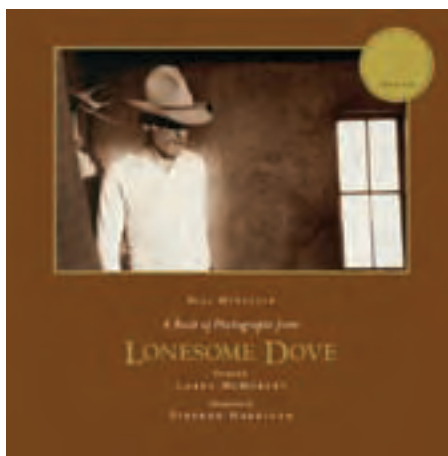
by Beverly Fondren

The Wittliff Collections have postponed the *Lonesome Dove* 20th Anniversary and Cast Reunion, originally planned for Oct. 2-3 in San Antonio. The event, which was to include a gala and symposium of panel discussions with principal cast, will be rescheduled.

The Wittliff Collections and members of the event's statewide committee made the decision in response to the economic downturn and its adverse effect on corporate sponsorships. Fundraising galas across the U.S. are being canceled, postponed or radically scaled back, as nonprofits find the costs of special events outweighing the benefits without substantial underwriting.

"It was a tough determination to make," said Wittliff Collections Curator Connie Todd, "but everyone involved firmly believes it was the right thing to do. *Lonesome Dove* is such a potentially significant fundraiser for the collections that better economic times are needed to create the finest event possible. Responses to the decision have been overwhelmingly positive as sponsors and individuals alike express appreciation for the postponement, which will allow them to participate once the economy strengthens."

The Wittliff Collections are maintaining an e-mail list of all persons interested in news regarding the rescheduling of the *Lonesome Dove* anniversary. Anyone wishing to be added to this list is asked to e-mail [thewittliffcollections@txstate.edu](mailto:thewittliffcollections@txstate.edu) or call 512.245.2313.



### **Commemorative book of photographs by Bill Wittliff**

Home to the *Lonesome Dove* production archives, the Wittliff Collections are still marking this 20th anniversary year of the CBS miniseries with the publication of a special edition of *A Book of Photographs from Lonesome Dove* by the film's

screenwriter and award-winning photographer Bill Wittliff. The large-format fine-art book, due out in June, is part of the Wittliff's Southwestern & Mexican Photography Series published by the University of Texas Press.

With 25,000 copies of the regular edition already sold, this anniversary edition – which is limited to 5,000 copies – will surely become a collectible. It features a deluxe dust jacket with new photographs of Robert Duvall and Tommy Lee Jones, as well as a specially designed commemorative sticker. E-mail or call the collections for information about purchasing signed copies of either edition.

This fall, the Wittliff Collections will also celebrate the grand re-opening of their expanded exhibition galleries, including the permanent exhibition room of *Lonesome Dove* props, costumes and other memorabilia from the making of the film. A full schedule of literary and photography exhibits and events is being planned.

Updates about the *Lonesome Dove* event, as well as the upcoming fall calendar, will be posted to the Web site: [www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu](http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu).★