



O'Daniel Campus Celebrates Windham, College Graduates

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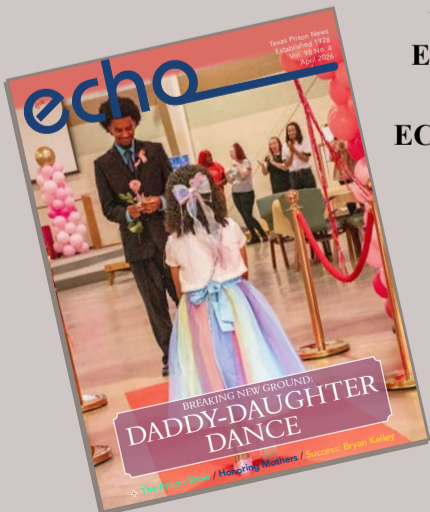
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Letter to the Editor

Bambi Kiser | Managing Editor



*The ECHO
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To the editor,

There are a lot of ministries that come to the Riverside/Crain Unit because they are doing what it says in the book of Hebrews 13:3 about remembering those in prison. I do not want to leave anyone out, so I would like to give them a shout out of thanks. I want to let them know that we truly appreciate what they are doing. To some of us, they are the only family we have. They give us hope and faith to believe in ourselves again.

A shout out of thanks to Life After Incarceration with K. Harris for providing a day of happiness and joy and showing love through a day of games, pictures, food and prizes.

A shout out of thanks to Chaplain Bowman on the Riverside/Crain Unit for the revival called “Jesus is the Reason for the Season” and also the Voyagers class that has impacted my life. A shout out of thanks to Chaplain Butler, wardens and staff for the first Kairos on the Riverside Unit, and to the inside and outside teams for a life changing experience.

A shout out of thanks also to [founder]C. Brown and Lionzbride Ministry for the holiday decorations and treats a while back. It put a smile on my face and joy in my heart. It was a touch of home in the dayroom.

Thanks to all for all you do. You are not forgotten.

**Katrina Lloyd
Crain Unit**

To the reader,

Thanks for writing and showing appreciation to those providing for you and your peers. We salute the volunteers and employees who dedicate themselves to making a positive difference in countless lives.

To the editor,

Hello! I am sending you some of my drawings to see if you think I am good enough to be an artist. Plus, I have been drawing since I was a kid. I have a lot more drawings if you would like to see them. I draw free-handed, by sight.

I would love to hear from you soon, and thank you for your time.

**H. Berryman
Baten Unit**

To the reader,

We accept artwork from any residents who want to submit to us for consideration, with the understanding that the artwork must be appropriate and that we are unable to return art to the artists. Thank you for writing and for your artwork.

To the editor,

Your paper is great, and I am interested in contributing to it. I enjoy writing, and I was even a finalist in your last fiction/non-fiction short story contest.

Letter to the Editor, Cont.

Bambi Kiser | Managing Editor



I would be happy to send some articles and stories about the great things we have going on here. We have programs from which residents are graduating, and there are always stories behind the pictures. I could capture those moments.

We also have four field ministers and two faith-based dorms. Not to mention the Faith and Fitness dorm and the Sober Living dorm. Even better is our Prayer over Prisoners (POP) team.

The POP team is a volunteer group of residents that stand outside the chow hall asking to pray over anyone who needs it. Many people have been prayed over and lives have been touched.

We have even had residents graduate Life Skills and then attend Kairos this year. I have been to both Kolbe and Kairos retreats, and I would love to tell these stories to your readership.

**Regan Jason Gorneault
Stevenson Unit**

To the reader,

We would gladly consider any submission you or any other aspiring writer sends us. You can also ask your unit's warden for approval to be a unit reporter if your facility does not currently have one. Check out the "staff box" in this issue (page 2 of newsprint version). We look forward to hearing back from you, and thanks for writing!

The ECHO Welcomes Newest Staff Member

By Steven Hamilton | Staff Writer

Working at *The ECHO* offers me a chance to continue in my self-improvement and develop new skills that I did not expect to be able to learn while still a resident of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). I am grateful to the Windham School District (Windham) and TDCJ staff that made this opportunity possible.

More than a decade ago, I was able to return to a campus that offered a postsecondary program after an extended period without such access. I had education goals that I was determined to fulfill, such as finishing the associate's degree I was within two courses of completing in 1999.

Prior to continuing my higher education, Windham Cognitive Intervention program (CIP) instructor K. Gant encouraged me, and all of her students, to begin writing a journal. It was a mandatory requirement of the curriculum, but after I completed the course and later helped as a CIP tutor for her class, writing became an established feature of my life.

I still make journal entries, and I now find myself with the chance to expand what I write with articles and features for this newspaper.

I hope that I can meaningfully contribute to the collaborative effort that is *The ECHO*. €





Dear Darby | Letters to the Darbster

Dear Darby,

Hello! I am John Ynfante at the Connally Unit, and I wanted to know can y'all send me a schedule of the Dallas Cowboys and the Houston Texans and all 2026 NFL games? Please, if y'all can help me, this is all I am asking. With this I end this letter. God bless y'all at *The ECHO*.

**John Ynfante
Connally Unit**

Dear John,

Wow — I never thought I'd write a "Dear John" letter! Unfortunately, we can't send you a schedule for yourself, but you'll find it in this issue of The ECHO! Enjoy the season, and thank you for writin'.

Dear Darby,

I felt so surprised and honored when I saw my poem, "Three Wise Wishes to an Angel" in *The ECHO's* poet-

ry corner. When I was first told that my poem had been published, I thought, "Yeah right!" but when I saw the February 2026 issue of the paper on the tablet, I was speechless and so happy. I would like to say thank you to whoever oversees the poetry corner.

On another note, there is a rumor going around here at the Hodge Unit saying that we are supposed to be getting a new updated tablet sometime soon. Could you look into this and verify? I am in need of your old school wisdom.

**Brandon Gober
Hodge Unit**

Dear G,

No problem on publishin' your poem — we enjoy sharin' good poetry with our readers! Now, about that new tablet rumor, don't believe it until you see it sittin' in your mitts — we don't wanna' spread rumors and disappoint folks!

Letters to D-Best | Dear Darla 

Dear Darla,

My bunkie is so disrespectful. I work first shift in the kitchen and I go to sleep around 5 p.m. every day. She yells over my head to her friend on the other row and laughs loud when she is on the phone. I've talked to her about it and all she does is roll her eyes and say, "This is prison. Get over it."

What can I do? 'Cause I'm getting real close to losing control!

**Thanks,
Frustrated**

***OMG! IT'S MY FIRST LETTER!!!!
NOBODY PANIC!***

Dear Frustrated,

Welcome to prison, where mattress pressing is a real job and sleep is calculated in overall total hours resting for the day. I remember camping as a youngster with my family and my cousin Darby would sleep-walk to the food cooler and leave wrappers all over the campsite.

So, she said to "get over it." That's actually good advice if you change your perspective. Why would you give into the "prison environment" by losing control?

I'm going to utilize my newfound cognitive skills and recommend not banging on the end of her cubicle when she finally decides to lay it down. I've been in your shoes before and what kept me grounded is knowing the only person I can control is myself. When we take things personally, it can lead to some misguided choices. Choosing to respond cordially rather than react maliciously should result in a better outcome. If that doesn't work, maybe tell her that the ants she finds in her cubicle just want to be friends with her. Just ask Darby; he has tons of ant friends. Lol!

Good luck, Frustrated, and remember, her actions reflect who she is, not who you are. Now stop reading and try to get some sleep!

**Sincerely,
D-Best Cousin Ever, Darla 😊**



COLE UNIT CONFERENCE STRENGTHENS MARRIAGES

By Doyal Garrett | Cole Unit Reporter

The third Strong Love Marriage Conference was held to honor the wives and marriages of men living in incarceration at the Cole Unit. One Community Church and Chaplain Randy Hill believe that marriage is God's idea, and when it's done His way, it becomes one of the most powerful testimonies of love, grace and unity the world will ever see.

This conference was about creating space for reconnection, healing old wounds, rekindling joy and deepening the participants' understanding of one another and God's purpose for their union.

The celebration began with a red-carpet rollout in the hallway of the education building leading to the chapel door. Six husbands patiently awaited the arrival of their wives.

Finally, amid laughter and loud applause from the volunteers, the ladies walked the red carpet and met up with their husbands.

"Man, it felt really spiritual," Justin Meagher said in response to the question of how he felt joining his wife on the red carpet. "If creating a grand entry was One Community's goal, they succeeded."

A welcome ceremony and prayer was held, followed by a breakfast of coffee and juice, doughnuts and bagels.

Praise and worship took place after the breakfast. Again, the chaplain didn't disappoint with his

last-minute call to bring in The Church of Growth Praise Team, led by Ray Montgomery. Following an opening invocation, the group experienced couples exercises and videos designed to rebuild and strengthen marriages. The lessons addressed topics such as "Rules for a Happy Marriage," "Communication Problems in Marriage," "Turning Tension into Teamwork" and "Marriage Under Stressure." Participants watched videos aligned with their workbooks. Husbands and wives completed workbooks independently and then compared responses and reflected on their thoughts. The revelations that came forth during this period of reflection were

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intended to promote strength and growth in marriage.

Participant Justin Meagher said his wife's responses were surprising. "I didn't realize how my wife felt about some things," Meagher said. "I hadn't thought to ask, but I'm glad I know these things [now] so I can address them moving forward."

Just when the couples thought the day couldn't get any better, volunteers appeared to take lunch orders as if the couples were dining at a nice restaurant. The menu consisted of lasagna, chicken alfredo and eggplant parmesan. Afterwards, participants posed for photos.

Other classrooms were also utilized to accommodate a fun "date night." One classroom featured a miniature golf putting green and bean bag toss, while a second room was filled with board games and arts and crafts. Husbands escorted their wives to whichever activity they wanted to join. Excitement and

laughter could be heard throughout the whole education building as the couples enjoyed being together. An anniversary celebration followed the games. Dancing was allowed, but the moment was also bittersweet as the couples realized their time together was coming to an end.

After the anniversary celebration, the couples were escorted to yet another classroom for a round table discussion of the day's events. One Community Church and Chaplain Hill listened to participants reflect on their day. Chaplain Hill made a surprising recommendation that in the 2026 Strong Love Conference, the event should include alumni from this year's event to participate and tell others how the conference helped their marriage. €

“This conference was about creating space for reconnection, healing old wounds, rekindling joy and deepening the participants' understanding of one another and God's purpose for their union.”



Professor Shares Expertise with Murray Students



By Pricila Maumalanga | ECHO Staff

Dr. L. Winslow, a college professor and director of a communication and international politics study abroad program, volunteered his time teaching Jovita González de Mireles High School students at the Murray campus during a six-week Effective Communication Workshop. During the workshop, Winslow shared his knowledge on the importance of communication.

“Communication is one of the most important skills that students can acquire for upper mobility and success in their future careers,” Winslow said.

Before teaching in Texas, Winslow taught at a university in California. There, he started a program which shared his communication knowledge with individuals in incarceration. He said he has always been interested in looking for creative ways to teach vital communication skills, and is motivated by student engagement.

continued on next page





“They got really interested in the ethnic and racial differences and how it affects people’s communication,” Winslow said. “They wanted to talk about it, and as a teacher, that is always just so gratifying because it’s not just you talking at the students; it’s the engagement.”

The enthusiasm and genuine interest of the students helped to encourage others to actively engage in conversation on a range of topics including mindful cultural communication, conflict resolution, professional communication and resume preparation.

“I think it’s really cool because we don’t even tend to think outside of the box about how cultures might communicate differently,” workshop participant Carman Ollison said. “I feel like this workshop is something that can definitely help you realize what you bring to the table.”

Ollison said gathering with her peers, hearing their perspectives on communication and knowing everyone’s different outlook was her favorite part of the program.

“I love going [to the workshop]; it makes the day easier,” Ollison said. “It intrigues me. I am genuinely interested in this topic of conversation. I am just grateful that we got this opportunity.”

Winslow shared he hopes the communication skills learned in the program will help the students become well-rounded individuals.

“I hope that the students have higher quality relationships,” Winslow said. “I hope that they’re better friends. I hope they are better mothers. Vocationally, I hope they are more employable. I hope they are more attractive to competitive positions. I hope they can use developing effective communication skills to empower themselves.” €



Boldly Going Where No One Has Gone: *America's Space Program*

By Will Hill | ECHO Staff

There are two types of events: historical and historic. Although people continually use the two terms interchangeably, they are not synonyms and have very different meanings. “Historical” refers to something that relates to history or past events (i.e. the historical society; historical documents). However, the word “historic” refers to an event that is notable in history, or significant in history, such as a Supreme Court decision, a famous battle or a great discovery. An easy way to remember the difference is that historic events are the ones that change the course of human history. One of the historic events that happened in my lifetime was the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster in January, 1986.



Origins of Space Program

The Space Age began on Oct. 4, 1957, when the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) launched the first artificial satellite named Sputnik. A few years later, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri A. Gagarin was the first person to orbit Earth. After the Soviets' success, the United States formed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958, and as George Jones famously sang, “The race is on.”

NASA's Space Shuttle program was born out of the triumphs and tragedy of the agency's previous space programs, such as the Apollo moon program. The first shuttle was the Enterprise, built in 1977; however, the first shuttle to fly an orbital mission was the Columbia with John W. Young and Robert L. Crippen aboard on April 12, 1981. That first flight lasted only 54 hours, but the mission was deemed a complete success. Seven months later, the same shuttle made a second orbital flight, proving that spacecraft can be reused.

Originally, shuttles were manned by two member crews, but as the missions grew longer in duration and more important, the size of the crew increased as well. Crews were separated into two categories: mission specialists (experts in operating the shuttle) and payload specialists (experts in the scientific research to be performed).

The shuttle program was used to perform a variety of missions, including launching and retrieving artificial satellites and probes. Almost one quarter of the shuttle missions had a military purpose. The astronauts sent special observation (spy) satellites into orbit and tested equipment. NASA stopped conducting military missions in the 1990s — or did they?

One of NASA's most successful missions was in 1993 when a crew from

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Art by Bertrelle Howard — Sanchez Unit

the Endeavor repaired the Hubble Space Telescope in orbit. The astronauts installed optical equipment to fix an error that had been made on Earth. They also replaced aging scientific instruments, solar panels and the gyroscopes which positioned the telescope correctly. In all, shuttles serviced the telescope five times, extending its life. The final mission in 2009 enabled the telescope to produce the most detailed images of the universe.

Challenger Disaster

The Challenger shuttle's 10th mission on Jan. 28, 1986, was the 25th launch of the shuttle program. While the first few launches of the space shuttles had mesmerized me; they had become so routine that I began to take them for granted. The crew consisted of mission commander Francis "Dick" Scobee, Gregory B. Jarvis, Ronald E. McNair, Ellison S. Onizuka, Judith A. Resnik, Michael J. Smith and Christa McAuliffe, a high school teacher from New Hampshire.

The launch seemed almost doomed from the beginning. The date for the launch had been delayed several times due to safety concerns. Eventually, NASA officials overruled the engineers and ordered the Challenger to launch on a cold Florida morning. The shuttle lifted off from Cape Canaveral and reached a speed twice of sound and an altitude of 46,000 feet.

One of the common misconceptions about the Challenger disaster is that the space shuttle exploded. Technically, structural failures caused the craft to break apart. The disintegration of Challenger was almost instantaneous, although there is evidence that the crew knew something was wrong and were able to turn on their emergency oxygen. The entire crew cabin tore away from the rest of the shuttle and fell through the atmosphere for three terror-inducing minutes before it smashed on impact.

I am too young to remember the Apollo missions, so the space shuttles are my first memories of astronauts and spacecraft outside of watching Star Trek. I watched every shuttle launch for the first few years, but then they became so regular and routine that I began to assume they would be successful. The astronauts who put their lives on the line deserve more from us than to take them for granted.

The Fallout from the Challenger Disaster

The immediate aftermath of the Challenger disaster was an instantaneous cessation of shuttle missions until a complete examination of the shuttle program could be

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conducted. The presidential commission was headed by former Secretary of State William P. Rogers and included former astronauts Neil Armstrong, Sally Ride and physicist Richard Feynman. The commission's official finding was that the disaster was a chain reaction that began with the failure of one O-ring seal of the right hand solid-fuel rocket booster (SRB). Interestingly, the O-ring failed due to the cold weather at the time of the launch (28° Fahrenheit), which was the reason that the launch was postponed several times in the first place.

The End of the Shuttle Program

In the aftermath of the Rogers Commission's report, NASA incorporated a major reevaluation and redesign of the space shuttle program. Launches were halted for 32 months while these changes were made. One of the important changes made was an increased role of the safety and engineering considerations in launch decisions.

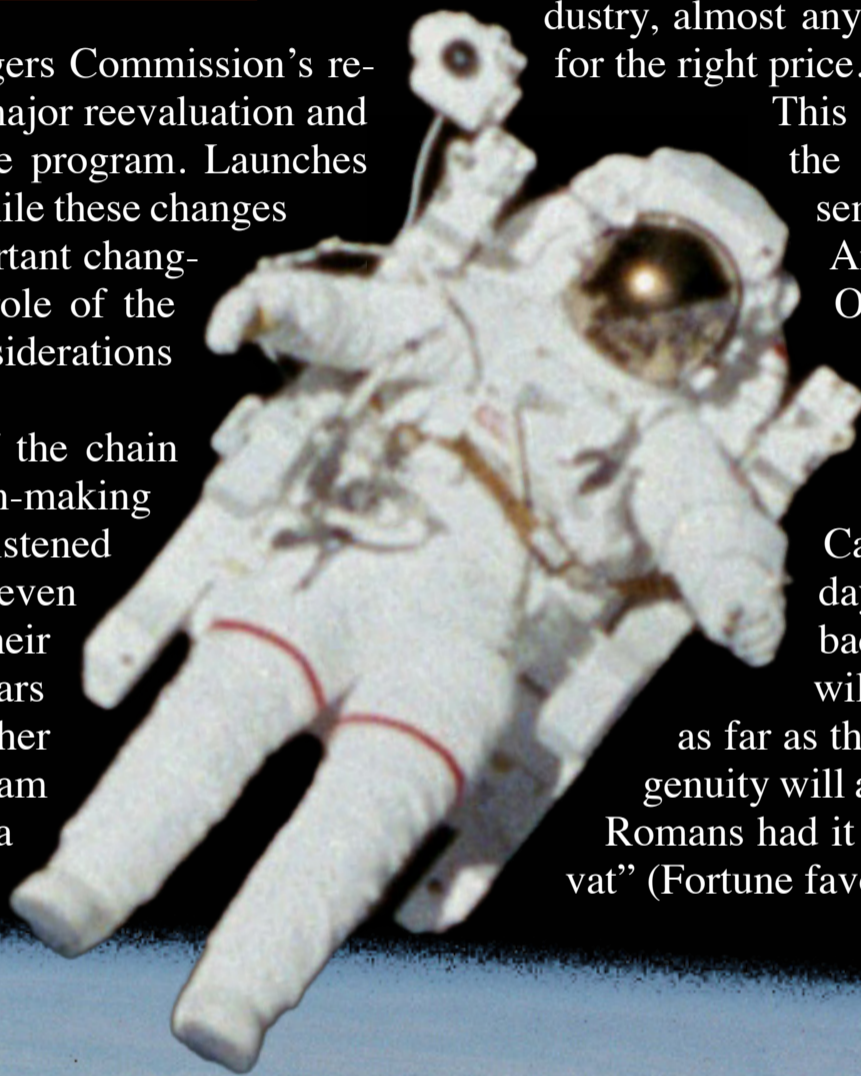
If the people at the top of the chain of command in the decision-making process of Challenger had listened to the engineers, perhaps seven people would not have lost their lives. To illustrate this, 15 years later NASA experienced another disaster in the shuttle program when the shuttle Columbia broke apart over Texas and

Louisiana as it prepared for landing at the Kennedy Space Center.

The Future of Space Exploration

There is always going to be an element of danger in launching people designed for life on planet Earth into space, but there is also always going to be a desire within mankind to explore the unknown. Today, this exploration is not relegated only to the astronauts at NASA. Thanks to the proliferation of private for-profit companies such as Blue Origin and SpaceX, who see big bucks in the burgeoning space tourism industry, almost anyone can travel into space — for the right price.

This year, the 40th anniversary of the Challenger disaster, NASA sent its first manned spacecraft, Artemis II, to orbit the moon. On April 1, 2026, astronauts Victor Glover, Christina Koch, Jeremy Hansen and commander Reid Wiseman blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on a 10-day journey past the moon and back. How far in the galaxy will mankind venture? Perhaps as far as the human imagination and ingenuity will allow. Apparently, the ancient Romans had it right: "Audentes Fortuna iuvat" (Fortune favors the bold). €



Let's Talk About Stress

By Kelly Roddy | ECHO Staff

Stress is a natural part of life, and I feel genuinely safe saying most of us have experienced it at some point in our lives. It can create a feeling of imbalance, which when experienced for long periods of time, can take a toll on you physically, mentally and spiritually.

This is where stress management tools and self-care practices become a vital part of our daily regimen. Whether stress comes from your job, family,

people around you or your own health and wellness journey, building a toolkit of skills to help you cope with stress is essential.

Identify the Source of Stress

In times of stress, it can be difficult to take a moment to step back and really examine what is going on. We may feel the need to just keep going, adjusting and just get through the day. Resisting the urge to let your survival mode kick in and take a step back can allow us the opportunity to reframe our thoughts and reshape the narrative of what is really going on. Give yourself time to recalibrate.

Identify Personal Triggers

Knowing your red flags can allow you to avoid triggers that may kick-start stress in your life. Journaling serves as a way to self-examine moments of stress and work backwards to identify common situations contributing to your levels of stress. Over time, you can even challenge your thinking patterns with healthier and more constructive outcomes.

Identify Your Healthy Coping Skills

Preemptively investing in a balanced lifestyle can lead to a reduced level of anxiety and stress. Having a good self-care regimen, including health and wellness, creative learning, spiritual development and community involvement, activates improved mental health and emotional regulation. This doesn't make us selfish, but instead allows us to authentically care for ourselves in a way that can benefit others as well.

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Identify Your Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms

It is equally important to have a handle on your maladaptive coping skills. In times of stress, it can be tempting to return to familiar habits that may feel good in the moment but are ultimately at odds with the life we want to build. Naming your unhealthy coping skills will keep you accountable to your goals and remind you of your boundaries as well as your non-negotiables.

Identify Your Sources of Support

I realize asking for help can be difficult, but there is no reward for toughing it out on your own. Whether your source of support is a coach, mentor, workout partner or even a motivational podcast, identify a support system and activate it when needed. Utilize the tools that are available and make the investment into your wellbeing. €

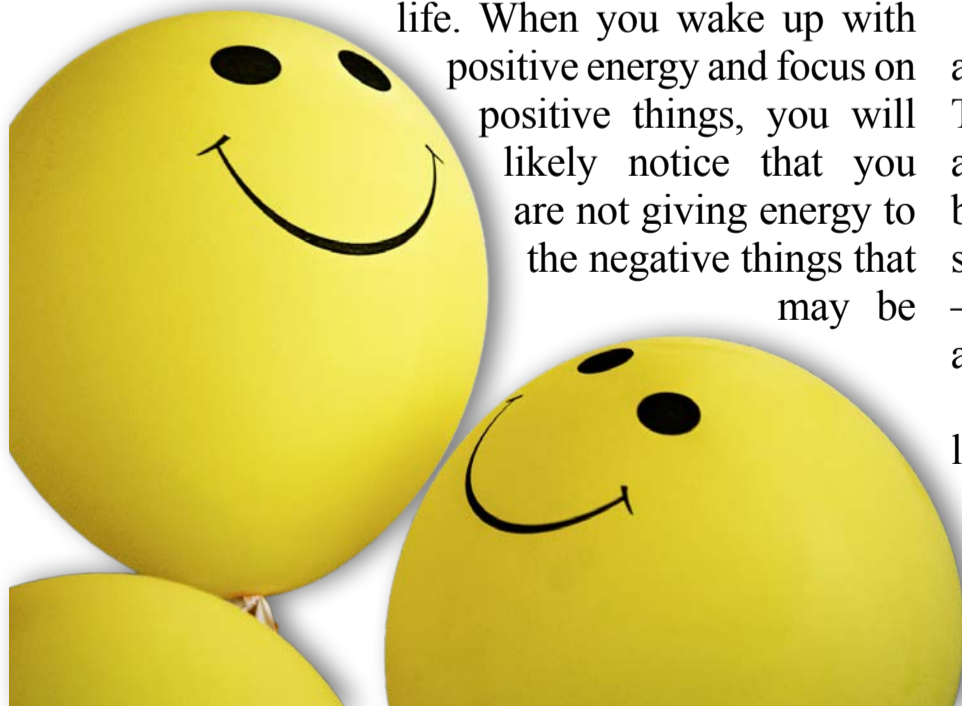
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Whether stress comes from your job, family, people around you or your own health and wellness journey, building a toolkit of skills to help you cope with stress is essential.
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By Gabriel Bailon | Wynne Unit

Looking for the positive things that surround you in life can change what you experience throughout your day. What do I mean by this? If you wake up and expect only to find the things that could go wrong, nothing but the negatives, what do you think you are going to find?

I want to introduce you to a method of transforming the way you see things and approach life. When you wake up with positive energy and focus on positive things, you will likely notice that you are not giving energy to the negative things that may be



happening. It may always seem like there is something going wrong. Negativity is a very real thing, and many people around you may be filled with it.

However, you do not have to be, and you do not have to see life that way. Wake up and tell yourself that it is going to be a good day. Follow through with that thought and those words by looking for all the things that are going right. Look for the good things happening to you and around you, and take a moment to appreciate them.

Think in a positive way and see the best in each situation. There are people around you who are worse off. There are people in the world who are in tougher situations. When you look at things in a positive light and begin to consistently see the good around you, you can shift your mindset. Speak positive things into existence — even if only in your mind — and you will feel better about your day and about yourself.

When all you are looking for is the negative, that is likely all you are going to find. However, when you focus on what is going right and on the things that are good and positive, you will begin to see more of them. Why focus on everything going wrong and continue to give it power? It is up to you — so why not look for the positive in your life? €



Celebrating ★
America's 250-Year
★ Story ★



O'Daniel Unit Color Guard Showcases Tradition



By **Ashley Morrison**
Staff Writer

The ceremonial significance of raising, lowering and presenting the flags is deeply embedded in American military history and is still seen today in active duty and veteran military services by the posting of the colors. Women veteran residents of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) at the O'Daniel Unit — Adrianna Veal, Angela Crocker, Ashley Salinas, Jessica Sierra and Tammy Wiggins — are some who carry this honor through their participation in the Color Guard in the Service Through Action Reveals Strength (S.T.A.R.S.) program.

Veal, an Army veteran, shared her knowledge of the history of color guards. “A lot of people don’t know this, but the history of the color guard goes

back to the beginning of the art,” Veal said. “So, knowing where your flags were on the field was a significant bit of information for any battle space commander to have — being able to look out and see that the flag is still standing, means the Army is still alive and we still have a country. If you look out and don’t see that flag, that is also significant.”

Army Veteran Sierra agreed, adding the significance of flags as communication started the U.S. Army’s Signal Corps.

“[The Signal Corps] was the beginning of telecommunication,” Sierra said.

Some of the women shared their personal reasons for joining the military.

“I wanted to do something with my career that I felt was impactful on a larger presence,” Veal said. “So, I had the

O'Daniel Unit's color guard presents the colors.



opportunity to commission in the Army.”

Salinas served in the Marine Corps in honor of her brother.

“I was originally enlisted in the delayed entry program for the Air Force, but my brother was for the Marines,” Salinas said. “He tore his ACL in football, so I decided to go to the Marine Corps instead, for him.”

Sierra said she wanted to honor her family by enlisting in the military, particularly making her mother proud. Wiggins said she joined the Air Force in order to further her career.

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As members of the Color Guard, they have the important job of posting the colors at numerous graduations and other special ceremonies at different women's units. They each expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate.

"It is an honor and a privilege to be part of the color guard," Crocker, an Air Force veteran, said. Sierra said putting up the flags and displaying them during ceremonies is especially reminiscent for her. "It takes me back to when I was in the military, and it brings back a lot of those old core values that they taught us in training," Sierra said. "I definitely appreciate the opportunity."

Presenting the colors holds special meaning for Salinas, who said it brings back a strong sense of purpose. "I feel those feelings [of pride] come back, knowing that I have something to push forward to," Salinas said.

The women reside in the S.T.A.R.S. dorm, where the occupants participate in raising the flag each morning and lowering it each evening. Whether they have been members for a few months or a few years, the role these women play in this program is significant, as well as the camaraderie it provides.

"When I first got to this program,

I didn't know a lot of things about benefits," Wiggins said. "But now that I've been here, we have the books, we have the resources. We have an awesome officer over us, Mr. Shelton, and he helps us in any way he can."

Veal also shared her opinion concerning the benefits of living in the veteran's dorm.

"It was a little bit challenging, living in other incarcerated environments outside of the veteran program," Veal said. "Just because there's not the same sense of shared understanding in working together for a common goal. So, in moving into the veteran program, you all at least have that background."

To join the S.T.A.R.S. program, residents must write to the State Classification Committee to see if they qualify. The women shared that they are continuously looking for new veterans to apply and provide new ideas to make the program better.

"We're always looking to innovate and add new services for our program because this is a Rehabilitation and Reentry Division program," Veal said. "Our objective is to get these ladies as many tools in their tool kit as possible before they leave here so they can thrive upon reentry." **E**

"It takes me back to when I was in the military, and it brings back a lot of those old core values that they taught us in training. I definitely appreciate the opportunity."

**Jessica Sierra,
Army veteran**

O'Daniel Unit's Color Guard serves multiple units within TDCJ.



Color Guards Honor America, Flag

Wynne Color Guard members
R. Sumstad, R. Carmona and D. Markham

By Will Hill
Staff Writer

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) currently has active color guards and honor guards on approximately 30 units statewide. While each group's official responsibilities varies depending on the unit, their main duty is honoring, reverencing and caring for the flag of the United States of America as well as the various military distinction flags of the branches of service.

For example, one constant at Wynne Unit graduations is the posting and retrieval of the nation's colors by the unit's resident honor guard.

"At the Wynne Unit, our services started with us posting the colors at the front of the unit," Wynne Unit Honor Guard member Ryan Sumstad said. "The administration showed a lot of trust in us to allow us to do it properly. Today, our main role is the posting of the colors for the various events on the unit, such as Wind-

ham School District (Windham) and Lee College graduations."

Posting the colors before a public ceremony or raising the flag every morning and taking it down in the evening carries more significance than a simple ritual. To the men of the Wynne Unit Honor Guard, presenting the colors at ceremonies is a way to remember the men and women who have fought and died for this nation.

"Having the opportunity to present our flag and salute it instills a sense of pride and honor," Sumstad said.

Donald Markham, a 15-year Air Force veteran — and the only original member of the Wynne Unit Honor Guard still active — says his time in the military created a sense of commitment to getting the job done.

"I get a sense of service to my country because I am honoring the flag and all the fallen soldiers ... it is a way for me to put my little two cents in, even if it is

just by raising the flag or playing taps," Markham said.

Army veteran and Wynne Unit Honor Guard member Richard Carmona developed a sense of camaraderie during his time in the service. Carmona said that before he enlisted in the United States Army, he was skeptical of people.

"The military taught me to be able to work together as a team and how to depend on others," Carmona said.

According to TDCJ Director of Veterans Support Services and 11-year Army veteran, P. Minot, there are approximately 6,000 veterans living in TDCJ. Honor and color guards are found throughout the system, with women serving in this role at the O'Daniel Unit and traveling to other women's units.

Minot also pointed out that in the military, honor guards and color guards are two separate details that perform distinctly different functions.

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“A color guard’s primary focus is to protect the colors,” Minot said. “The color guard carries and protects the national flag and organizational colors during official events. Members normally range from four service members but can extend from there depending on the number of organizational flags being carried. Unlike its origin, the color guard of today serves a purely ceremonial role, but the precision and discipline they bring to flag presentations reflect the depth and pride the military gives to its symbols of freedom.

“The honor guard’s role, on the other hand, is completely different,” Minot said. “An honor guard is a ceremonial unit trained to render formal honors at funerals, state events and public ceremonies. They are responsible for the playing of taps, folding and presenting the flag to the next of kin during funerals.”

Some honor and color guards in TDCJ also have other unique duties. One leader of the Bartlett Innovation Unit’s honor

guard is Anthony Garza, a 25-year Army veteran. In addition to their normal duties, the Bartlett Unit Honor Guard also salutes veterans who are returning to their community. At the front of the unit’s entrance, a Freedom Bell rings out every time a resident goes home.

“When a veteran returns home from this unit, we post the members of the honor guard at the front of the unit with the American flag, the Texas flag, the MIA-POW flag and the flag of the branch in which the veteran served,” Garza said. “We salute him after he rings the Freedom Bell.”

Whether you call them an honor guard or a color guard, these men and women perform a significant role for their unit. People notice and respect their service.

“I get people coming up to me every day saying thank you for your service, thank you for managing the flags,” Markham said. “For me, being able to do this is an honor and privilege.” €

“I get a sense of service to my country because I am honoring the flag and all the fallen soldiers ... it is a way for me to put my little two cents in, even if it is just by raising the flag or playing taps.”

Donald Markham,
Air Force veteran

Bartlett Honor
Guard member
A. Garza

AMERICA



“When a veteran returns home from this unit, we post the members of the honor guard at the front of the unit with the American flag, the Texas flag, the MIA-POW flag and the flag of the branch in which the veteran served. We salute him after he rings the Freedom Bell.”

Anthony Garza,
Army veteran



The 13 Folds of the American Flag

Editor's Note: This formal folding of an American flag is a dignified way to treat the flag, and it gives a powerful touch to patriotic ceremonies. Folding the American flag into a tight, triangular shape requires 13 crisp folds. While the U.S. government has no official definition for these folds, a popular patriotic narrative associates each one with a specific, deeply symbolic meaning. This procedure was common long before the more modern assigned meanings. The source and date of origin of the meanings is unknown, but for those who participate or witness a formal flag folding ceremony, the 13 meanings can create an uplifting experience. Here are meanings now associated with the 13 folds:

The *first fold* is a symbol of life.

The *second fold* is for our belief in eternal life.

The *third fold* is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing rank, who gave a portion of his or her life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

The *fourth fold* stands for our weaker nature; as American citizens trusting in God, it's to Him we turn to in times of peace as well as war for his divine guidance.

The *fifth fold* is a tribute to America. In the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The *sixth fold* is where our heart lies. It's with our flag that we pledge allegiance to and the republic it stands for.

The *seventh fold* is a tribute to our armed forces. For it is the armed forces that protect our country and flag against enemies, whether they are domestic or foreign.

The *eighth fold* is a tribute to the one who entered

into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor our mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The *ninth fold* is a tribute to womanhood, for it is through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the characters of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

The *10th fold* is a tribute to father, for he has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since he or she was first born.

The *11th fold*, in the eyes of Hebrew citizens, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The *12th fold*, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, which some consider the *13th fold*, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust."

Source: National Flag Foundation.



The George King Story

From Trouble To Triumph

By Robert Morgan
Staff Writer



George King

History is filled with examples of men and women who have defied the odds to overcome adversity. Their stories are told and retold, sharing the message that anything is possible.

George King, senior project administrator for Mississippi's Department of Corrections (MDOC), has one of these stories. He visited the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Wynne Unit to support the Chaplaincy and Volunteer Services Division (CVSD) and share his story of inspiration with residents.

Rising Through the Justice System

King's roles within the MDOC have included stints as chaplain and deputy warden. His rise through the justice system from resident to administrator is a testament of character, grit and second chances. Nearly 30 years ago, King served 21 years inside Louisiana's Department of Public Safety and Corrections (LA DPS&C). Despite being incarcerated, King used that opportunity to transform his life and become a version of himself that belied others' opinions.

"I was once in a dark place in my life, one that many people said I would never come out of," King said. "I was told as a kid that I wouldn't live past 21. When I came to prison, I couldn't read or write."

King pointed to a spiritual experience in 2002 in LA DPS&C that he said radically changed his life, becoming the primary rea-

son for his personal change.

"That day I turned away from everything that people were saying I could not do and would not ever do," King said.

Finding New Pursuits

Through sheer determination, King taught himself to read and paved the way to receive his high school equivalency certificate in 2004. This accomplishment was not the end of King's aspirations; rather, it enabled him to continue to pursue a brighter, more hopeful future.

"I had a desire to attend seminary and move forward with my new belief that all things are possible," King said.

While at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola), he went through the seminary program. With his newfound accomplishment and the support of institutional administrators, King helped establish a church within the prison.

"We [the church] began with 65 members," King said. "By the time it ended, we had over 300 members."

In addition to earning his bachelor's degree in Christian ministry, "King availed himself of every other program available there, including Toastmasters, horticulture, financial management, automotive, small engine repair, HVAC systems, culinary arts, welding, plumbing, electrical repairs and even cement finishing," according to America, The Jesuit Review (August 14, 2023).

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Upon his reentry to his community, King found employment using the career and technical education he gained while living in incarceration, eventually starting his own lawn care service.

Preparing for Opportunity

“While I was in prison, I invested in myself and took the opportunity to learn everything I could,” King said.

King said the extensive training options he selected paid off.

“I met a [customer of the lawn service] who heard about some of my accomplishments while incarcerated, and he asked me about my future plans,” King said. “I had written my plans down, creating a five-year plan for myself post-incarceration. I laid out what God had called me to do and told this man the vision of my life.”

King’s investment paid dividends by presenting him with a unique opportunity. After hearing his plans, the customer offered to pay King’s current salary for the next two years while he began living out his vision: creating his own ministry and serving God.

“When someone asks you about your plans, be prepared to give them a detailed answer,” King said.

King successfully established a church and worked for Total Community Action, Inc. and Team 5:18 in New Orleans, offering in-person training, teaching and coaching to men inside prison. Then, COVID-19 arrived. It was at this time King received the unique opportunity to begin his career in corrections.

Returning to Corrections

“I got a call from my former warden, Burl Cain, who was the MDOC commissioner,” King said. “He offered me the opportunity to be a chaplain inside of Mississippi prisons.”

Despite this unique invitation, King had reservations. He expressed the issue with his pastor and was advised to pray about it. King was surprised by the advice.

“I just prayed to get out of jail after 21 years. Why would I pray about going back to jail?” King said.

Two years after reentry, King once again reentered prison, this time as a chaplain in Mississippi, and he worked to rebuild the department. His positive impact was immediate, which resulted in the system offering more opportunities and responsibilities.

“I went from chaplain to program director at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, which was the largest population-wise in the state,” he said.

At this time, Mississippi experienced a statewide restricted movement due to gang riots and activity. Because of his unique background, King had success reaching the prison population to influence positive change. This resulted in him being offered the position of deputy warden in the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF). In his new role, King was charged with reducing the impact of gangs at the facility. He used that opportunity to share his story with residents. King inquired about their actions, seeking resolutions to end violence and other issues within the facility. As a result, he said he removed excuses to continue negative behavior.

Supporting Programs for Change

King was once again presented with an opportunity: becoming CMCF’s program director. During his earlier incarceration, King had co-sponsored many programs within his facility including Malachi Dads, that would later spread across the LA DPS&C and numerous other United States prison facilities. This program uses the Christian Bible to teach how to improve parenting skills.

As project administrator, King networked with work industries, such as Mississippi Construction Education Foundation, to provide individuals in incarceration the opportunity to obtain various work certifications. He also utilized the strengths and previous work experiences of facilitators living in incarceration to maximize the chances of the chosen program’s success.

King said ultimately, his work as a project manager also helps him complete his primary objective: successfully directing residents back into their communities. He said he does this by interacting with the residents.

“I interview guys, asking questions ranging from their age and family life growing up to their educational history and work history,” King said. “Then I put all of the information into a database that serves as our reference guide. I want to give guys a purpose by providing them the opportunity to perform the jobs they are skilled to do.”

This strategy underscores King’s parting advice to TDCJ residents: take advantage of the opportunities available.

“Don’t plan to wait until you return to your community to make positive changes. Change starts while you’re still inside,” King said. “You have to make every day count. Anything is possible.” €

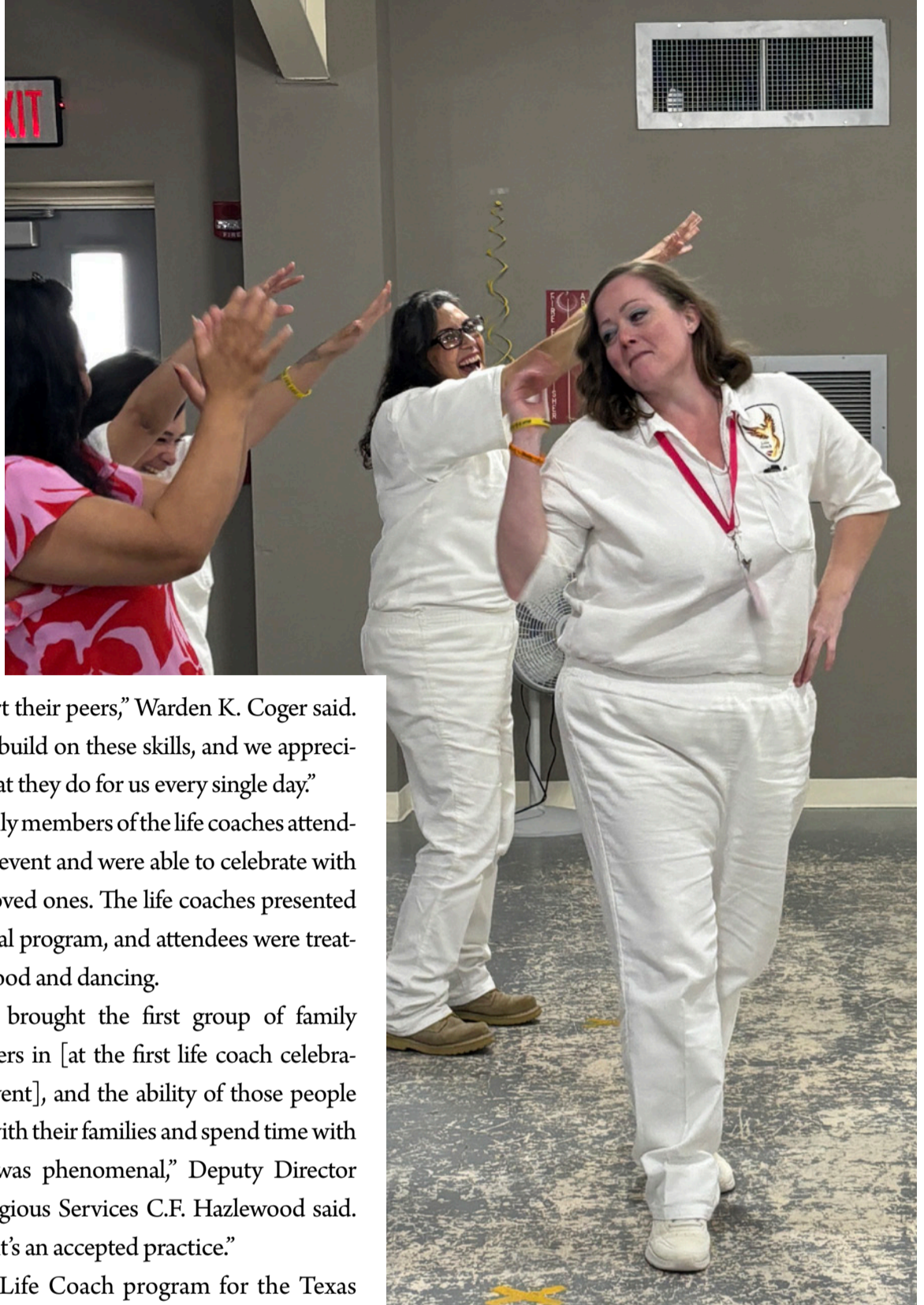
“Don’t plan to wait until you return to your community to make positive changes. Change starts while you’re still inside. You have to make every day count. Anything is possible.”

- George King



Celebration Honors Murray Life Coaches

By Pricila Maumalanga
Staff Writer



Life Coaches and their families attended a celebration to honor their hard work and dedication at the Murray Unit.

“These ladies have spent a lot of time and dedication to helping out their peers here on the Dr. Lane Murray Unit, and it takes a special type of person to give up their time to

support their peers,” Warden K. Coger said. “They build on these skills, and we appreciate what they do for us every single day.”

Family members of the life coaches attended the event and were able to celebrate with their loved ones. The life coaches presented a special program, and attendees were treated to food and dancing.

“We brought the first group of family members in [at the first life coach celebration event], and the ability of those people to be with their families and spend time with them was phenomenal,” Deputy Director of Religious Services C.F. Hazlewood said. “Now it’s an accepted practice.”

The Life Coach program for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) was implemented by Chaplaincy and Volunteer Services Division Director Chris Carter at the Wynne Unit in April, 2021, and at the O’Daniel Unit in July, 2021. Life coaches act as advisors who help others make logical decisions, set and accomplish goals or deal with day-to-day problems. The program utilizes shared experiences to build credibility among residents with the intent of individuals becoming more willing to embrace transformation.

“The best people to teach [residents] are going to be other [residents],” Hazlewood said. “They’re gifted, they have the skills and they have the ability. Plus, they’re living in the same place and they’re going to relate to each other better.”

The Cognitive Life Skills class, taught by

“I love giving women opportunities to have positive coping mechanisms. To sit down with them and say, ‘This is a trigger. You don’t have to bow down to this anymore,’ or to just give them the opportunity to live their best life and hopefully go home soon.”

Kelly Roddy, Former Life Coach

life coaches, gives students a structured basis on decision-making and taking responsibility for their own actions. The life coaches find their experience is transforming because they help others and support each other.

“I love giving women opportunities to have positive coping mechanisms,” former Life Coach Kelly Roddy said. “To sit down with them and say, ‘This is a trigger. You don’t have to bow down to this anymore,’ or to just give them the opportunity to live their best life and hopefully go home soon.”

These women work long, hard hours as valuable assets to the TDCJ residents.

“I want to tell each one of you who is a life coach how much I appreciate you and appreciate the work you’ve done — and how valuable you are to us,” Hazlewood said. “You are appreciated... by the people in this agency because we see the work that you are doing. We are extremely grateful.” **E**

COHORT 18 LIFE COACH GRADUATION SPEECH

Change is Always Present

By Jeffery Salinas Jr.
Huntsville Unit

Editor's Note: The Wynne Unit's Life Coach Academy is responsible for training life coaches to teach cognitive life skills to residents throughout TDCJ. Each cohort is comprised of a small number of residents selected by wardens and chaplains from units system wide. At every commencement, two life coaches are chosen to give an inspirational speech to their graduating class. Jeffery Salinas Jr. offered his observations as words of encouragement to Life Coach Academy Cohort 18.

“I heard someone say that the two most important days of a man's life are the day that he was born and the day he discovers why. Actually, I've heard it numerous times and I always think to myself, “Now, wouldn't it be nice if this ‘why’ was printed right onto our birth certificate in the form of our middle name?” Jeffery “Presenter of Ideas” Salinas. Kate “Titanic Movie” Winslet. Arnold “Muscles” Schwarzenegger. Like, why go through years of confusion and embarrassing social media posts only to get a clearer picture of who I am NOT?

There is a tension between want and have, goal-setting and goal completion

and life and death. This tension pulls us in a nonlinear direction, all the while leaving us small clues that are insights into who we are and why we are here. At first, we haven't quite developed the awareness to notice, but once we do, we begin to have these almost surreal moments of clarity where we look around and think, “Yeah, this is exactly where I'm supposed to be.”

Right now is one of those moments, and I believe that we've all had at least one of them during our time in the academy. What we are about to do now is guide other men into these moments and help them become aware that change is always present. It's just waiting on you to decide what to do with it.” €



“WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO DO NOW IS GUIDE OTHER MEN INTO THESE MOMENTS AND HELP THEM BECOME AWARE THAT CHANGE IS ALWAYS PRESENT. IT'S JUST WAITING ON YOU TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH IT.”

Life Coach Academy Recognizes Graduates

By Robert L. Gonzales
Staff Writer



TDCJ's Chaplaincy and Volunteer Services Division (CVSD) recently held a graduation ceremony at the Wynne Unit for Cohort 18 from the Life Coach Academy. Eighteen men participated in two months of intensive training before accepting the honor of carrying the philosophy of cognitive life skills to residents at their respective units. These men are trusted with the responsibility of teaching cognitive life skills to other residents while exemplifying TDCJ's core values: Integrity, Courage, Perseverance and Commitment. €

First TWU Bachelor's Degree Graduates:

O'Daniel Campus Celebrates Windham, College Graduates

By Ashley Morrison
Staff Writer



CTC graduates jump for joy after their degree conferral.

In a recent ceremony, the O'Daniel campus celebrated the first combined graduation between Windham School District, Central Texas College (CTC) and Texas Woman's University (TWU).

Over 40 students received their certificates or degrees. Four graduates received their High School Equivalency (HSE) certificates, 15 graduates received career and technical education (CTE) certificates, 18 students graduated from the Graphic Design apprenticeship program, four graduates received their Associate of Arts from CTC and three graduates received their Bachelor of Science in Sociology from

TWU. As the graduates walked the stage, a large crowd full of teachers, staff and family offered uproarious applause for their achievements.

Achievements

Nickolle Aguilar served as the valedictorian of her HSE class. She was passionate and shared her personal experience as she spoke on behalf of herself and fellow graduates.

"For a long time, I did not see the point in getting my HSE," Aguilar said. "My daughter was having trouble at school, so I decided to try [for her]. As I was in the process of getting my [certificate], I remembered how

much I missed learning."

Aguilar also congratulated the graduates on persevering.

"I just want to remind each and every one of you that, yes, life gets crazy, but we are more than able," Aguilar said. "We may not like where we are now but look around – we are here. We are doing amazing with what was given to us."

Aguilar shared that she plans to pursue a degree through CTC and offered a message of courage for everyone in attendance to keep moving forward.

"I'm sure at some point we might have thought 'What's the point?' or felt like nothing we do would change or shape our futures or ourselves for the better," Aguilar said. "I'm here to tell you that's a lie – this is just the beginning. There are so many doors opening for us, and we just need to be courageous enough to walk through them."

Tabitha Clemens, valedictorian of the CTC Associate of Arts graduates and member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS), shared empowerment with the group.

"Courage isn't the opposite of absence of fear, apprehensiveness or cowardice," Clemens said. "It is moving forward in spite of them."

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Courage is women moving forward through that which scares us, doing hard things, even though we are scared and being resilient and persevering even if we might fail.”

Clemens said the degree was a testament of defining self-worth for herself and all in attendance.

“Even if no one believes in you, even if it’s hard, believe in yourself,” Clemens said. “You deserve this. You are worth it. Be an example and encouragement to yourself and for yourself, your family and people around you.”

Cum Laude graduate of TWU’s inaugural graduating class, Stella Aguilar, wrapped up her commencement speech by expressing gratitude. “We are celebrating today because Texas Woman’s University [faculty] has opened their hearts to the women of the O’Daniel [campus],” Stella said. “They have dedicated themselves to teaching us the tools that will



High School Equivalency Valedictorian Nickolle Aguilar gives a speech during a recent graduation ceremony at the O’Daniel campus.

empower and enable us to be successful in today’s society.”

Stella shared her thankfulness for what TWU has created for current and potential students, which she said is motivating for all women.

“What TWU is doing is not only changing the culture – it is changing the world of education for women,” Stella said. “For what we do today will reflect on every single woman tomorrow. We have set ourselves a difficult task, but you will succeed if you persevere, and you will find joy in overcoming obstacles.”

Inspiration

Dr. Angela Bauer, keynote speaker, vice president for Academic Affairs and provost at TWU, spoke to the graduating classes. She has been prolific in advancing initiatives that strengthen academic excellence for over 15 years. She declared her pride for the women graduating.

“Today, we’re celebrating three distinct and equally meaningful accomplishments,” Bauer said. “There are some women who are receiving their [HSE certificate] from Windham. They did it. To the women receiving associates degrees from CTC, you committed to rigorous academic work and saw it through. Congratulations to

you. To the women receiving bachelor’s degrees in sociology from TWU, we have been waiting for this day. We cannot be prouder or more thrilled to be in this room with you at this moment.”

Bauer went on to share the inspiring story of Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement and the first African woman and environmentalist to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

“[Wangari Maathai] lost her marriage while she lost her freedom and her job,” Bauer said. “So, she had to decide who she was going to be on the other side of that loss, just as all of you have. And so, she decided to rise.. She began by doing something that seemed quite small at the time, but she knew exactly what she was doing and why ... You do not change the world from the top down. You change it by empowering the women standing next to you and trusting that what grows from that will be larger than anything you ever imagined on your own.”

Bauer ended her speech by reminding the graduates what they have learned goes beyond the classroom.

“To everyone receiving a diploma today: you chose to learn here under these conditions with what you had at the time,” Bauer said. “You kept going. And now that decision is yours to keep permanently. It belongs to no one else, and it cannot be taken from you. So, congratulations to you all.” €



Cum Laude Texas Woman’s University graduate Stella Aguilar speaks to the crowd during a recent graduation.

Lee College Huntsville Center Hosts Graduation at Wynne



2026 Lee College Graduates

“Sometimes you can make the wrong turn to get to the right place,” Jerome Barber, Lee College alumnus and former resident of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), said. Barber returned to the Wynne campus to give the commencement address for Lee College Huntsville Center’s 2026 graduating class of 85 students.

Graduates from the Ferguson, Holliday, Huntsville and Wynne campuses participated with the support of their families as well as faculty and staff from Windham School District (Windham), Lee College and TDCJ.

Prior to the ceremony at Wynne’s Rockwell Chapel on a spring Saturday morning, lively conversation and nervous energy circulated among Lee College scholars while others relaxed in quiet contemplation.

This day would mark a culmination of achievement for these students, each of whom faced adversities and challenges before making it to this moment.

“Education is what’s going to get you to the next stage — just do it,” graduate Walter Brown said as he waited with others from the Ferguson campus who traveled to Wynne for the ceremonies.

By Steven Hamilton
Staff Writer

Under the direction of Associate Vice President of the Lee College Huntsville Center Donna Zuniga, each man donned a cap and gown, stole and cords (the latter if earned), and prepared for graduation photographs taken by Lee College technology staff in the Wynne campus library.

“We all should be lifelong learners,” Zuniga said as she watched preparations for the ceremony. “Our faculty are there to help lead the students along the way.”

Zuniga talked about Lee College’s 60 years of providing educational services within TDCJ and discussed continued opportunities available to graduates. She explained the new Associate of Arts transfer degree that will be available in the Huntsville area for students interested in completing core requirements prior to transferring to bachelor’s degree programs.

A procession of Lee College faculty and staff led by Interim President Jacob Atkin then guided the graduates through the Wynne campus for the graduation ceremony. As they entered the chapel, the men were greeted by the cheers of family, educators, TDCJ security and staff.

“Students have found hope and opportunity, peace and reprieve,” Atkin related about conversations with students and what they shared concerning the college program. “For many it has become a safe haven on the road to redemption.”

Encouraging comments continued throughout the ceremony. Lee College Academic Division Chair Paul Allen emceed the proceedings and introduced the speakers, as well as music from the Wynne Ensemble.

“Education is the great equalizer. Graduation is the culmination of hard work, dedication and above all, perseverance,” Allen said.

Interim President Atkin gave special recognition to Allen and Zuniga, each of whom has served Lee College Huntsville Center

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with distinction for over 40 years.

“They have stewarded this program through tremendous difficulties...through periods of great growth. Their contributions cannot be overstated,” Atkin said of the longtime educators.

An opening invocation and prayer from Magna Cum Laude graduate Jeffrey Arnold set the tone for additional speakers and was bookended with a benediction from Cum Laude graduate and peer tutor Lonnie Johnson.

Commencement speaker and former resident Jerome Barber gave the graduation ceremony a serious yet humorous, and very relatable account, of his personal journey. He described his own addiction, crime and incarceration and how education and substance use treatment fueled his own recovery and rehabilitation.

Barber now holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in applied psychology and psychology, and he is a qualified substance use counselor and professional. He serves and volunteers to support and mentor adults and juveniles in the greater Houston and Galveston areas.

Barber recalled his own graduation as a resident 10 years earlier in the same Rockwell Chapel. His story illustrated to each man that the degree they just earned serves as their own personal start to redemption. He encouraged graduates with the affirmation that only they, not others, determine what they can achieve in this life.

“Keep pushing,” Barber said. “You’re going to get validation for the evidence of what does work... going to school.”

As the ceremonies concluded, the graduates were able to spend extended time with their families in the chapel. Faculty and staff personally congratulated each graduate and interacted with the families. The spirit of achievement, accomplishment and celebration was tangible, and each graduate shared in a once in a lifetime moment.

TDCJ residents seeking to attend Lee College at the nine Huntsville area campuses, or any other continuing education classes, are encouraged to write to the student advisor on their campus.

Editor’s Note: The Lee College Board of Regents voted May 26 to name Interim President Jacob Atkin as the lone finalist for the college’s presidency. €

“Students have found hope and opportunity, peace and reprieve [in education]. For many it has become a safe haven on the road to redemption.”

— Jacob Atkin
Lee College Interim President



Paul Allen, Jacob Atkin, Donna Zuniga



Lee graduate Jeffrey Arnold addresses assembly during the invocation.



Keynote speaker Jerome Barber and guest



Graduates and guests enjoy ceremony.



Graduate Testimonies



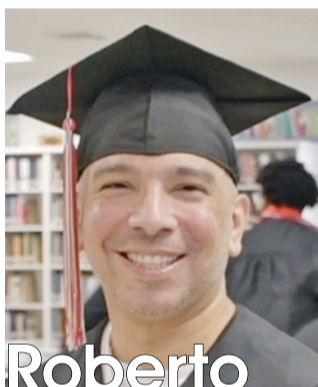
Herminio Bernard Cruz

“The best advice I ever received was to never give up. No matter where you are, or what you go through, you can always pick yourself up and keep moving forward.”



Walter Brown IV

“Education is key. This has helped me navigate trials and tribulations. Education is what is going to help you get to the next stage, and graduation is a representation of that.”



Roberto Flores

“The reason I pursued my education with Lee College is so I am able to effectively operate my business upon [reentry].”



Miguel Mireles

“Courage is not the strength to keep on going, but continuing on when you no longer have the strength to do so.”



Julian Charles Richardson

“If you look at school and education as an opportunity to learn, you can grow. Wholeheartedly, do the best you can and you will be able to better live with your results.”



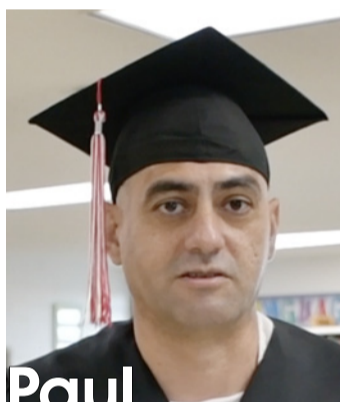
John Wesley McDuffie

“Graduating college was important to me because I became the first male in my family to do so. I live by the advice that you cannot change your past if you do not build your future.”



Morris Earl Madison Jr.

“I am a member of Lee College’s debate team, a Toastmaster and now a Lee College graduate. I always look forward to furthering my education when opportunity presents itself. I found my passion in Lee’s Horticulture program. My life advice: “Don’t leave any what ifs on the table; spend them. You do not want to get to the end of the road and have regrets, saying, ‘What if I would have done this or that?’ So, spend those what ifs and let life play itself out.”



Paul Teran

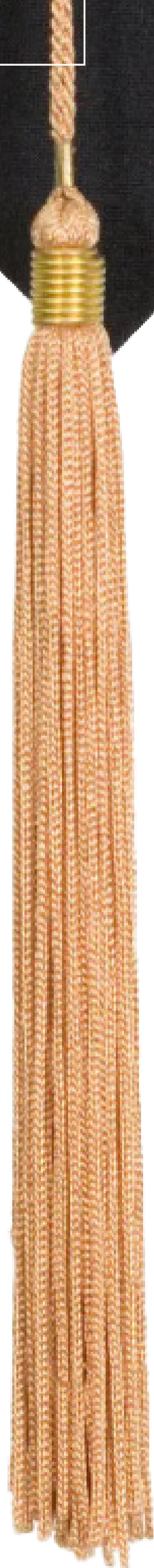
“I encourage everyone to go to college and continue their education so they are able to grow and develop themselves into productive citizens within [their community]. By educating ourselves, we are able to educate future generations. Everything you do provides an example to others.”



Andrais Greer

“In addition to being on Lee College’s debate team, I have attained an automotive degree and now my business degree through Lee College. This allowed me to become a teacher’s aide with Lee’s Automotive program. It allows me to pass on my knowledge and experience so that others can attain a higher education. I entered TDCJ without an education. I attained my [high school equivalency] and now an associate degree. For those looking to pursue an education, you have to take the initiative and take the risk. It is not impossible; rather, how you apply yourself. €

“Don’t leave any what ifs on the table; spend them. You do not want to get to the end of the road and have regrets, saying, ‘What if I would have done this or that?’”
 — Morris Earl Madison Jr., Lee graduate



Windham Students Celebrate Graduation



Newest Windham graduates at the Murray Campus

By Kelly Roddy
Staff Writer

Special guests, faculty, family and friends celebrated with over 35 Windham School District students during the Spring 2026 graduation ceremony at the Murray campus.

“We are gathered here to honor a group of individuals who have made the powerful choice to take a step forward towards a brighter future to embrace education, and to take a step to invest in themselves,” Murray campus Principal S. Cazares said.

Graduates received high school diplomas (HSD) through the Jovita González de Mireles High School, high school equivalency (HSE) certificates and career and technical education (CTE) certificates. Many of the graduates expressed that the path to graduation was a long and arduous journey.

“The road I traveled to get where I am right now was a very long one,” HSE valedictorian Alyssa Payne said. “Today, I stand before you, earning my HSE certificate and

I cannot even begin to express my gratitude for this opportunity. To me, this means my children have something they get to be proud of their momma for. I get to leave with so much more than I came in with.”

The defining moment of achieving their goals proved to be worth the struggle.

“Receiving this diploma today has made me realize that your past does not define you,” said Chasidy Messer, Jovita González de Mireles valedictorian. “No matter how many times you fall, you can always get back up again.”

The sentiment of getting back up was an overall theme of the ceremony and was shared by many.

“Life didn’t lay you down softly,” Travis Henderson, Texas Department of Criminal Justice volunteer and guest speaker for the event, said. “You weren’t welcomed with applause and opportunity. You got dropped. Maybe it was poverty, maybe it was trauma or maybe it was bad decisions,

yours or somebody else’s. Maybe it was addiction, loss, anger or the streets. Life kept on kicking. At some point, you have a choice. You can stay down, or you can learn to stand. You being here today shows everyone that you learned how to stand — not in comfort, not in freedom and not with every resource handed to you. You learned to stand in a place designed to keep people stuck. Every time you get back up, you get stronger. Now, your past may explain you, but it doesn’t have to define you.”

The resiliency to get back up was evident in each of the graduates as they walked the stage to receive their certificate.

“Our graduates have faced significant challenges and have chosen to rise above them,” Cazares said. “They have chosen to put in the hard work, stay committed and believe in the power of change.” €

EVERY STORY MATTERS

WOMEN JOIN PUBLICATION TEAM

The ECHO's Newest Members Expand Coverage in Texas

By Mary Ann ECHO Staff

Writing a New Chapter

In the past, women have contributed to The ECHO in a plethora of ways. However, there was no office established on a women's unit to collaborate with the team at the Wynne Unit. This changes with a new office staffed by three women at the Wynne campus.

This new chapter in the partnership between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and Windham School District (Windham) allows for an energetic blend of ideas, perspectives and talents.

"This endeavor creates new opportunities for women residents to create content and provide different perspectives, which will allow readers to learn more," ECHO Assistant Managing Editor Ellen Dager said. "The staff will be new in the new ECHO office preparing for upcoming coverage, and we are laying the ground running."

Priscilla Masmalanga, Ashley Morrison and Kelly Rocky were selected from among several qualified candidates to become the first women serving as resident staff members of The ECHO. They are eager to be part of this exciting undertaking while working long distances with the Wynne Unit team. **E**

Looking for the Future

Without the partnership between Windham and TDCJ this opportunity would not be possible, according to the team's supervisor. "I am grateful for the support of Brenda K. Cox, managing editor of The ECHO and her staff at the Wynne campus, the communications team at Windham, Murray Worken, Karriah Cooper, Murray Principal S. Claxton and all of the Lane Marney, Windham and TDCJ staff," Dager said. "Their efforts and support have laid the foundation for us to be successful in making The ECHO even better." **E**

Members of the ECHO

We get to learn hands-on, side by side with Ms. Dager. She has been so instrumental for quite some time and is prepared to teach on the skills required in journalism." Masmalanga said she is ready to write stories that are transforming, inspiring, motivating and empowering. "People need to hear your incredible story of change and transformation because there are other people who may not think it is possible for them," Masmalanga said. "It is all about being present and showing others it is never too late to follow your dreams. The possibilities are endless if you have faith." **E**

Priscilla Masmalanga

Masmalanga has accomplished numerous achievements as a TDCJ resident. Through Windham, she has learned skills in Introduction to Graphic Arts and Introduction to Construction. She has also received certificates of completion for many fundamental classes, including Cognitive Life Skills, Overcomes, Navigates and Resolves in Life. Masmalanga has grown personally as the staff by serving as a member of the Lane Marney band, learning to play the drums and overcoming her fear of singing and writing music.

She credits the late R. Green, who taught Introduction to Graphic Arts for Windham, for supporting her through his Graphic Arts curriculum and believing she could be one of the few chosen to work for The ECHO.

"Mr. Green was a positive influence and was absolutely brilliant in his field," Masmalanga shared. "He believed we could be transformed and we could grow after anything we wanted, but we had to start the change in us."

Training and teaching her how to edit and create different page layouts, Green became a vital part of Masmalanga's journey to The ECHO. After a visit from Murray Principal S. Claxton to Ms. Green's classroom to share the news of the new ECHO office, Masmalanga grew excited about the opportunity.

"I wanted this job because it was one of my dreams before it even became a possibility," Masmalanga said. "To get to contribute in the same way the Wynne staff members do, and it is revolutionary to be part of an event that could really change the world on a macro-level, starting at this campus. Some people plant the seeds and others water them, but we are lucky to harvest the fruits with the support of TDCJ and Windham."

"We get to contribute in the same way the Wynne staff members do, and it is revolutionary to be part of an event that could really change the world on a macro-level, starting at this campus."

— Priscilla Masmalanga, Wynne Unit ECHO staff member

THE ECHO
Vol. 98, No. 04
EVERY STORY MATTERS
APRIL 2026

TDCJ Hosts First-Ever Daddy-Daughter Dance at Wainwright

TDCJ Press Release

HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS, April 27, 2026—The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) held its inaugural Daddy-Daughter Dance and Dinner on April 25, 2026, at the Wainwright Unit in Lufkin, Texas. The event brought together 12 fathers in TDCJ and their 20 daughters for a special evening aimed at strengthening family bonds.

The Wainwright Unit's chaperone-gymnasium ballroom for the event, themed "A Memory of a Lifetime," TDCJ and Wainwright staff and volunteers set up a red carpet, balloon arch, headband game, photo booth, frame decorating area and cookie decorating station.

organize this unique event. The fathers participating in the event are part of Wainwright's Family Literacy program, a three-phase program designed to strengthen family engagement among parents and caregivers, supporting academic and emotional growth for both parents and children.

The Wainwright Unit's chaperone-gymnasium was transformed into a stunning ballroom for the event, themed "A Memory of a Lifetime." TDCJ and Wainwright staff and volunteers set up a red carpet, balloon arch, headband game, photo booth, frame decorating area and cookie decorating station.

with cookies made by Lee College's Culinary Arts class at Wainwright. A dance floor and dining area were also arranged to create a festive atmosphere.

At 1:30 p.m., the fathers prepared a designated area, donating suits and ties, donated by TDCJ's Rehabilitation and Reentry Division (RRD). In a separate area, their daughters chose dresses, shoes, jewelry, makeup and hair accessories, provided by the Texas Reentry Foundation (TRF). Fathers received bouquets and daughters received corsages.

"DANCE continued on pg. 4"

Graduates Earn Windham Certificates, CTC, TWU Diplomas

By Ashley Morrison, Staff Writer

The O'Daniel campus recently held the first combined graduation between Windham School District (Windham), Central Texas College (CTC) and Texas Woman's University (TWU), diplomas with over 40 students receiving certificates of graduation as a Windham and Texas Department of Criminal Justice postsecondary partner. **E**

TWU cross-trainee graduate Stella Appleby (right) holds her diploma at her O'Daniel campus.

Personal Success: Story of Bryan Kelley

Editor's Note: April is Second Chance Month, and the ECHO is featuring Bryan Kelley, a former resident of Texas Department of Criminal Justice, as he shares his personal story of reentry and recovery as he shares his story at the Center for Engagement and Challenge-Crosswalk Center in Houston. Kelley supports others in their reentry journey, using his experiences to facilitate lives transformed and hope restored.

"SUCCESS continued on pg. 5"

Prison Show Expands Coverage

By Todd R. Carman, Staff Writer

The Prison Show, created by former resident and activist Ray Hill on March 20, 1980, is a radio show that airs live every Friday from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m., and is broadcast on sharing information with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) resident population. The last hour of the show is dedicated to shoutouts, where family, friends and loved ones call in to the show and talk about those on the inside via the radio. Listeners can hear

air, reach the population and tell listeners in TDCJ what's going on or what they're actually doing for you (listeners of the second hour is about the shoutouts).

Recently, Kristina J. Hartman, Superintendent of Windham School District, participated in an interview highlighting educational programs available in TDCJ through the district and higher education partners. She spoke about career paths visible in Texas communities, managing with employers and recent funding from the 89th Texas Legislature to support digital literacy, technical training and college programs.

"RADIO continued on pg. 5"

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2026 MARCH ECHO

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TEXAS PRISON NEWS
Published April 2026
Vol. 98, No. 04

BREAKING NEW GROUND: DADDY-DAUGHTER DANCE

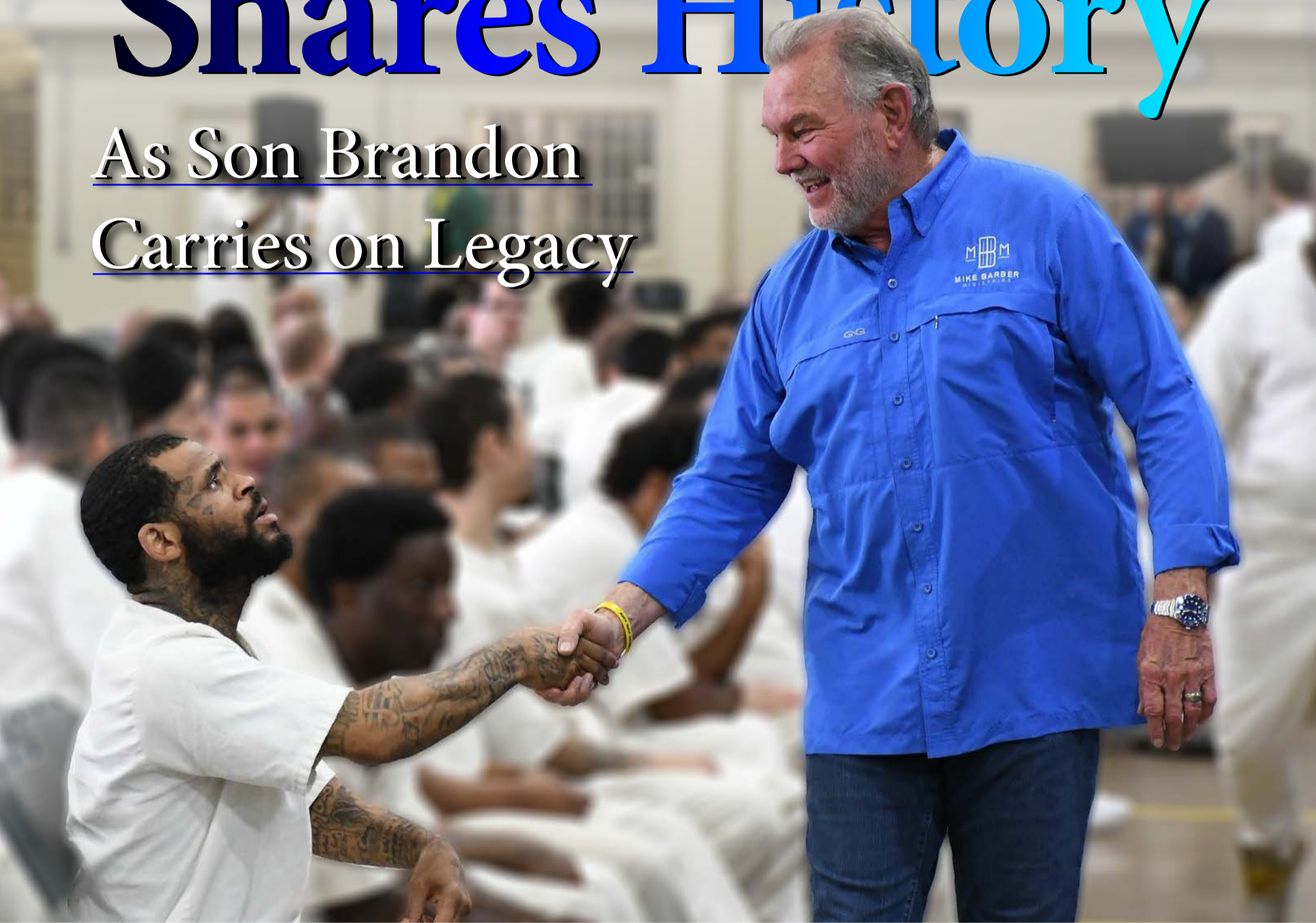
The Prison Show / Windham Mothers / Success: Bryan Kelley

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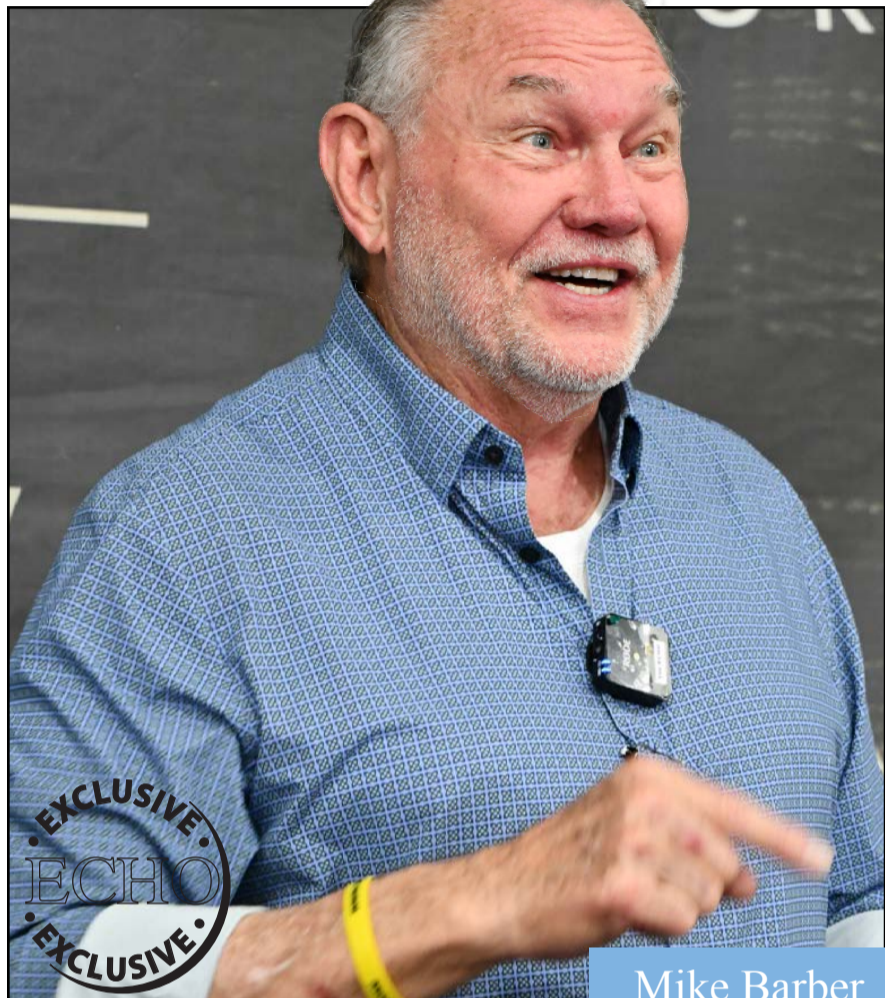
Mike Barber Shares History

As Son Brandon
Carries on Legacy



During a recent Spiritual Awareness Week at the Wynne Unit, *The ECHO* spoke with the father-son duo Mike and Brandon Barber of the Mike Barber Ministry (MBM). The outreach of the Barbers, their family, friends and an army of volunteers is renowned within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The ministry events began 40 years ago at the Ellis Unit. Today, MBM events in TDCJ facilities are earmarked as dynamic, joyful and far-reaching days of worship and witness. When they visit a unit, everyone will know it. MBM also arrives for these “Weekends of Excitement” with a host of volunteers. They visit cells, wings and dorms personally, making time to contact thousands of residents with a core mission of sharing the Gospel. €

An Insider's Story: Mike Barber Speaks to *The ECHO*



Mike Barber

By Robert Morgan | Staff Writer

“First of all, let me get one thing straight. It is absolutely not the truth [to the rumor], that I am a Dallas Cowgirl... I mean Cowboy, fan. Let's get that right. Truth of the matter is, if you're in Texas, I'm your fan!

“I've been doing prison ministry for over 40 years — since my last six years in the National Football League. Although today, I've pretty much passed the reigns to my son Brandon, who runs the ministry. At the time I started it, I was with the Houston Oilers and a gentleman by the name of Buddy Martin invited me to go into prison. He kept inviting me and I didn't want to go, but he wouldn't take no for an answer. I lived in Missouri City, so the unit was 20 minutes from my house. It couldn't have been more convenient. They announced over the speaker that number 86 of the Houston Oilers is in the gym. We found out that the warden had let everyone off work, so the gym was filled with nearly 200 men. I went and sat right in the middle of them, and it was overwhelming. The love and the respect were beyond words.

“Right before [the program] was over, I asked and

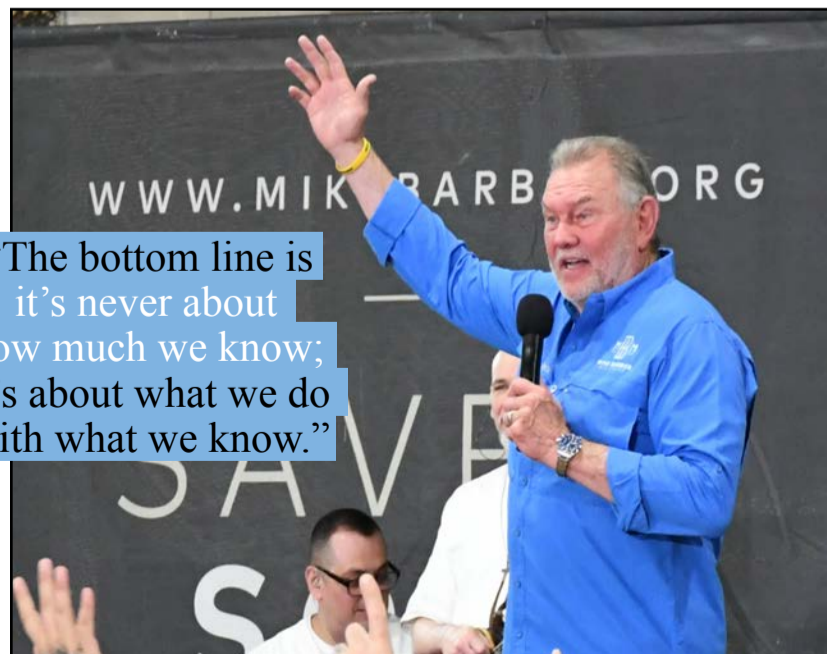
received permission to shake their hands. Every single one of them gave me a hug, and it changed my life.

“I went home, got in my recliner and said, ‘God, what just happened to me?’ Seemingly, in a clear voice, I received this answer: ‘I just delivered you from your stupidity.’ I realized that instead of going into professional football as a coach, that God had a new calling on my life. So, Mike Barber Ministries (MBM) is here because of a visit in prison and a hug. Now, I am the most blessed man in the world to be able to spend time with my brothers and sisters — doing everything I can to coach them up and let them know that they are not a mistake.

“During Spiritual Awareness Week, or Weekend of Excitement as I like to call it, MBM is able to bring in [volunteers], providing a platform for them to share their testimonies. Why do I do it? Easy answer. I've never been incarcerated and basically never been in trouble, so who can share testimony and get their [residents'] attention better than former residents? They have been here and done that — guys like Avaristo Garcia and C.J. Gomez, guys that have spent years in prison.

“When God called me to ministry, He didn't mean for me to preach. I tell people all the time, ‘I'm not a preacher.’ Yet, God called me to organize — to put it together. God said, ‘I'll supply you with all this equipment, not for you, but to give it to others to use.’ And I love giving, yet who can outgive God?

“The bottom line is that it's never about how much we know; it's about what we do with what we know. Keep going, because the best is yet to come.” €





Brandon Barber At Wynne Spiritual Awareness Week

A LETTER FROM BRANDON BARBER

hold this huge event [in Houston], which I still do. It is called Hope for Christmas, where we help thousands of kids and families in the City of Houston. So, it [the ministry] was twofold — connecting the gospel to the city that I love, H-Town, baby, and also reaching out to my friends that I have met inside.

“Our ministry has served all over the world: Russia, Ukraine, the jungles of Guatemala, Central and South America. We have also served within all 50 United States.

“For me, some of my favorite, most memorable moments are the water baptisms. I also love to talk and visit with the residents who are in restricted housing — having those one-on-one conversations — where it’s just me, them and the Lord. Yet, maybe my most memorable moment was serving in a prison that was in the jungles of Guatemala. The officers hesitated

continued on next page

By Robert Morgan | Staff Writer

“What’s up, friends, family and *The ECHO* nation? Brandon Barber here, and I have the honor of being the son of Mike Barber. I’ve been serving with my dad for 25 years — coming to the Wynne Unit since I can remember. So, Wynne has a special place in my heart, because we usually would visit here in December. I’m also a pastor in Houston, so I have been able to come to Wynne [in Huntsville] in the past and talk about God and then

to let me in and even then, I had to enter at my own risk. I'll never forget that moment going in. I said to myself, "Lord, either you are with me or you are not. This is either my last moment or it's going to be a beautiful moment."

"In addition to memorable moments, another aspect that I love about serving in ministry is providing the opportunity for someone that was incarcerated to minister to and share their testimony with current residents. They are able to ... relate more than my father and I.

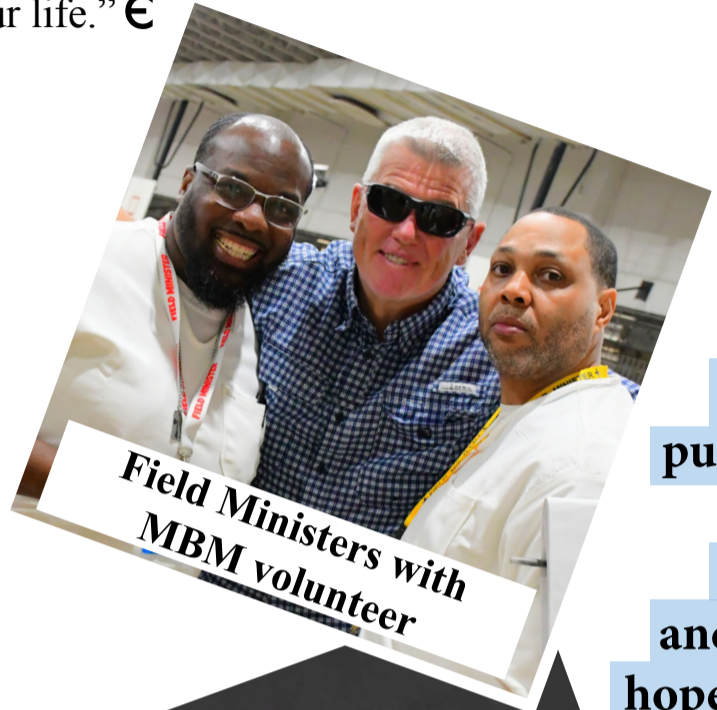
"One of the beauties of working with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is that our Mike Barber Ministry [MBM] relationship with TDCJ provides a platform for men and women to come back in and share their testimony, saying, 'Hey guys, because I was faithful on the inside, God has been faithful to me on the outside.' [Current residents] are then saying, 'If God did it for them, then God can do it for any of us.' That is why we love coming back as MBM — your stories inspire us. If we are able to change one life that comes back and changes others' hearts, that's the purpose behind it all.

"Throughout it all, the best advice I ever received comes from my hero, my father. One thing many do not know is that doing prison ministry is not easy; it's a grind, just like being a missionary. An interviewer asked my dad, 'Why do you think God chose you?' I'll never forget when my dad said, 'Because God knew I wouldn't quit.' So now I can always hear my dad saying 'Don't ever quit the call of God on your life.'

"My dad also said, 'Brandon, as long as you do things God's way, according to God's Word, you'll always

see God's best in your life.'

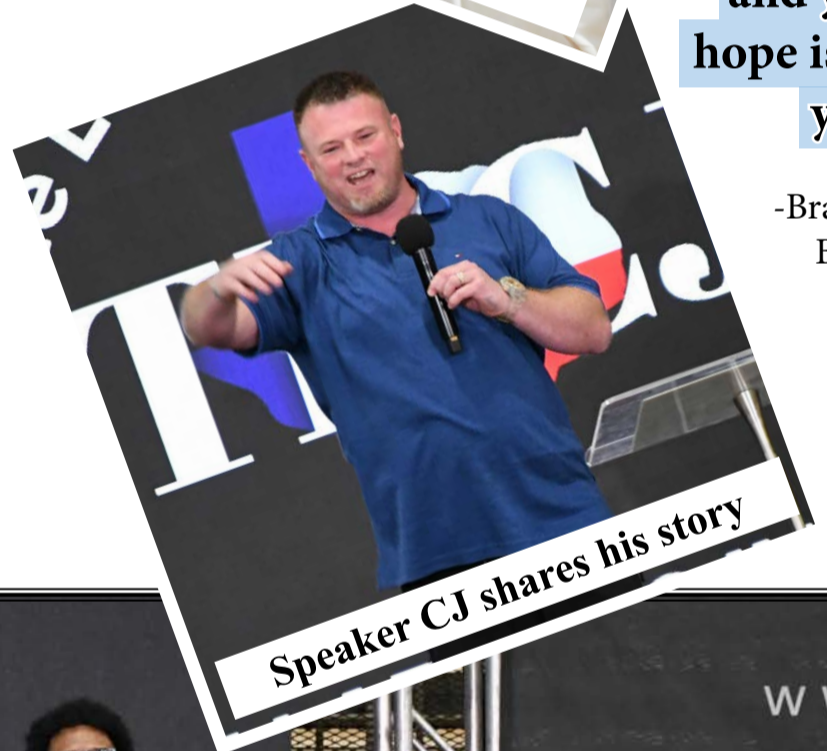
"I would also like to share with *The ECHO* readers on behalf of MBM family this message: we believe in you. Mistakes do not define you. Your purpose, your future and your hope is for you. I want to encourage you, like I just said, to do things God's way, according to God's Word, and you'll always see God's best in your life." €



Field Ministers with MBM volunteer

"Your purpose, your future and your hope is for you."

-Brandon Barber



Speaker CJ shares his story



Rockwell Chapel Band

TDCJ Worker Job Openings



Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL) Unit: Terrell

Position: Diesel Mechanic

Skills/qualifications needed to apply:

The ability to:

- Repair fuel, oil, cooling and charging systems on various diesel and gasoline engines.
- Use proper hand and air tools on engine components.
- Diagnose equipment to look for problems.
- Weld and cut using arc-welding and flame cutting equipment-preferred.
- Perform brake jobs on diesel and gasoline heavy duty trucks and buses.
- Replace wheel seals and bearings on diesel trucks and buses.
- Demonstrate knowledge of R-134A air conditioning systems preferred.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as G1.
- No medical/work restrictions.
- No major disciplinary within past year.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

An I-60 should be mailed to:
MAL HQ/IWTP
P.O. Box 4011
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Position: Automotive Mechanic

Skills/qualifications needed to apply:

The ability to:

- Repair and overhaul automotive vehicles.
- Repair or replace defective parts and reassembles.
- Repair or replace brake shoes and cylinders, adjusting is required.
- Repair or replace brakes and components.
- Replace and adjust headlights.
- Repair or replace shock absorbers.
- Rewire ignition system, lights and instrument panel.
- Replace spark plugs, ignition wiring, coil packs and filters as required.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as G1.
- No medical/work restrictions.
- No major disciplinary within past year.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

An I-60 should be mailed to:
MAL HQ/IWTP
P.O. Box 4011
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) Unit: Wynne

Position: Sign Painter (Sign and Plastics Factory)

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as G2 or G3 status.
- Have experience with airbrush painting and fine detail hand painting.
- Have experience painting on wood and sign foam.
- Must have a good attitude and work ethic.
- Must be able to work 4:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Monday — Friday.
- Must be able to accept constructive criticism.
- Have a minimum of two years left in TDCJ.
- Have no major disciplinary cases within the past year.
- No medical/work restrictions that would prohibit performing job duties.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

If you are interested, send an I-60 or letter with your work experience to:
Wynne Unit Sign and Plastics Factory
Ms. Whitney, Plant Manager
810 FM 2821
Huntsville, Texas 77349

Position: Carpenter (Sign and Plastics Factory)

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as G2 or G3 status.
- Must be skilled in usage of woodworking tools (table saw, chop saw, planer, joiner and router, etc.)
- Must have a good attitude and excellent work ethic.
- Must be able to work 4:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Monday — Friday.
- Must be able to accept constructive criticism.
- Have a minimum of two years left in TDCJ.
- Have no major disciplinary cases within the past year.
- No medical/work restrictions that would prohibit performing job duties.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

If you are interested, send an I-60 or letter with your work experience to:
Wynne Unit Sign and Plastics Factory
Ms. Whitney, Plant Manager
810 FM 2821
Huntsville, Texas 77349

Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL)

Unit: Wynne

Position: Diesel Mechanic (Tire Shop)

Skills/qualifications needed to apply:

The ability to:

- Repair fuel, oil, cooling and charging systems on various diesel and gasoline engines.
- Use proper hand and air tools on engine components.
- Diagnose equipment to look for problems.
- Weld and cut using arc-welding and flame cutting equipment-preferred.
- Perform brake jobs on diesel and gasoline heavy duty trucks and buses.
- Replace wheel seals and bearings on diesel trucks and buses.
- Demonstrate knowledge of R-134A air conditioning systems preferred.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as G1.
- No medical/work restrictions.
- No major disciplinary within past year.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

An I-60 should be mailed to:
MAL HQ/IWTP
P.O. Box 4011
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Position: Diesel Mechanic (Mechanical)

Skills/qualifications needed to apply:

The ability to:

- Repair/maintain diesel and gasoline engines used in machines including buses, trucks and construction machinery, using hand tools, precision-measuring instruments and machine tools.
- Diagnose trouble, disassemble engines and examine parts for defects and excessive wear.
- Recondition and replace parts.
- Utilize hand tools and precision-measuring instruments.
- Use technical manuals to check tolerances against manufacturer's specifications.
- Test/calibrate fuel injection systems used on various diesel engines.
- Use job specific personal protective equipment.
- Locate/repair using diagnostic equipment.
- Work on A/C and auto electrical systems.
- Repair medium duty diesel/gasoline class 7 & 8 vehicles.
- Perform other tasks when assigned by staff.
- Maintain good working relationship with fellow resident workers and supervisors.
- Adhere to all safety rules and regulations.

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be classified as a G2.
- No medical/work restrictions.
- No major disciplinary within past year.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

An I-60 should be mailed to:
MAL HQ/IWTP
P.O. Box 4011
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Facilities Division

Maintenance — Asbestos Operations

Unit: Statewide

Position: Asbestos Workers

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be able to understand written instructions and also write.
- Must be classified as G1.
- Have no medical or work restrictions that would prohibit performing job duties.
- Have no major disciplinary cases within the past year.
- Must be able to pass a physical and X-ray test.
- Must be able to pass written exam at the end of 32 hours of training.
- Extensive travel is involved.
- On-the-job training will be provided by an outside instructor.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

An I-60 should be mailed to:
Asbestos Operations
P.O. Box 4011
Huntsville, Texas 77342

Facilities Division

Wastewater & Water Attendant

Unit: Statewide

Position: Wastewater & Water Attendant

Minimum Requirements:

- Must be able to understand written instructions; have basic math skills (add, subtract, multiply and divide).
- Wastewater/water experience preferred but not required.
- Must be classified as G1.
- Have no medical or work restrictions.
- No major disciplinary within the past year.
- Knowledge of mechanical repairs.
- Ability to use or learn to use testing equipment such as pH, DO, chlorine and ammonia.

ATTENTION APPLICANTS:

An I-60 should be mailed to:
Wastewater/Water Operations
P.O. Box 4011
Huntsville, Texas 77342

All eligible workers are encouraged to apply.

Sports View

By Will Hill | Staff Writer

This sports column represents the viewpoints of sports fan and sportswriter Will Hill, reflecting his opinions and observations. These opinions do not represent official opinions of TDCJ or of *The ECHO*. Enjoy them; respond to them. *The ECHO* welcomes your letters and input!

Meet the Tigers, TDCJ's 1935 Baseball Team:

Texas Prison Tigers Sweep Doubleheader From Champion Baseball Team

Long before the Houston Astros and Texas Rangers baseball teams were a thing, the Lone Star State was a baseball hotbed. In addition to semi-professional baseball teams representing local businesses, several Major League Baseball teams had minor league affiliates in various cities across the state.

In 1935, the Brenham Sun Oilers, a semi-professional baseball team comprised of employees of the Sun Oil Company, was named the semi-pro baseball champions of Texas after winning the Houston Post's annual tournament. Yet they were unable to claim the crown of Texas' best baseball team that year — that honor went instead to the Texas Prison Tigers from the Huntsville Unit after the Tigers swept a doubleheader from the titleholders.

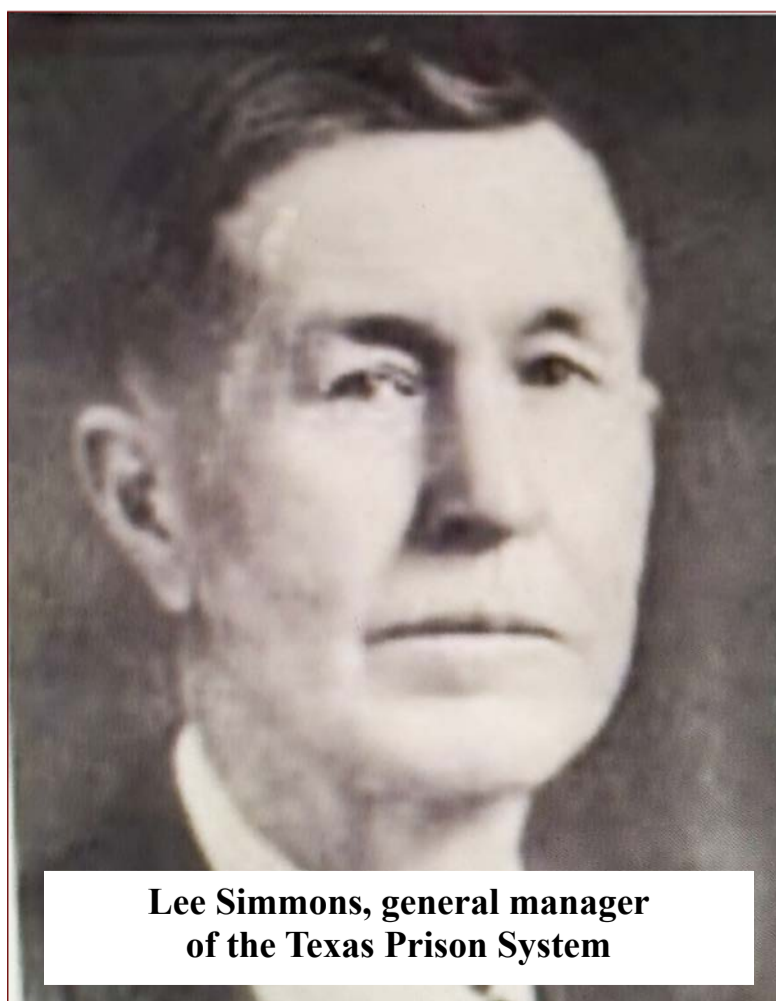
Lee Simmons, general manager of the Texas Prison System at the time, issued a chal-

lenge to Tom Angley, the manager of the Sun Oilers, to a best two-out-of-three series. While the Tigers and Oilers had played against each other a total of 10 times during the 1935 season, the Tigers won five, the Oilers won four and those other games had always been contested at the Tigers home field at the Huntsville Unit. However, the 1935 series was unique in that the games were played at the stadium of the

Houston Buffaloes, a minor league affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals.

The event drew a paid attendance of 6,483, which was the largest crowd to see a baseball game since the 1931 Dixie Series between the Birmingham Barons and the Houston Buffaloes. Like Major League Baseball's World Series, the Dixie Series pitted the champions of the Southern Association against the

continued on next page



Lee Simmons, general manager
of the Texas Prison System

winner of the Texas League. The best-of-seven series was held every season from 1920 -1958, except for 1943-1945 due to World War II. In addition to a couple of good baseball games, the paying crowd was also treated to a concert by the Prison Orchestra under the direction of Bob Silver. The public audience was not the only ones able to enjoy the festivities. Residents of the prison system were also enjoying the game. S.E. Barnett, the manager of the print shop, sat in the stadium's press box and telephoned in the play-by-play of the two games, which was then announced to the prison population assembled in the chapel.

Manager Albert Moore and his team took a double header 5 to 4 in extra innings and 1 to 0 in seven innings. The Tigers clearly out-hustled, out-fought and out-thought the Sun Oilers.

Game One: Play by Play

The Tigers scored first in the second inning. Littlejohn singled down the third base line and went to second when Eggleston singled off the second baseman's glove. Dalton bunted along both men, and Littlejohn scored on Armstrong's sacrifice fly to left field. Since Littlejohn scored the first run of the game, he received a basket of fruit and other snacks donated by Earnest Goff, manager of an A.B.C. store of Houston.

Brenham tied it up in the third inning. Lowenstein beat out a grounder over second base, stole second a couple of pitches later and scored on Moses' single to center. The Tigers defense blew up in the fourth inning, allowing Brenham to score three runs. Kieth doubled to left, Frank beat out a hit to deep short and Kieth scored. Frank went to second when Ravis threw the ball over the first baseman's head. Long was safe on Young's bobble, which allowed Frank to advance to third. Long stole second. Reichle singled to left, scoring both Frank and Long. After singles by Armstrong, Esparza and Young accounted for a Tigers' run in the eighth inning, with

continued on next page



1935 Texas Prison Tigers Baseball Team

Photo from *The ECHO*, October 1935

“

“Long before the Houston Astros and Texas Rangers baseball teams were a thing, the Lone Star State was a baseball hotbed.”

the team trailing by two runs going into the final inning of regulation.

Littlejohn led off the ninth inning with a single to the outfield. The fleetfooted Guinn was inserted as a pinch runner. Eggleston hit a deep drive to center for a double scoring Guinn. Dalton reached first on a little blooper that managed to evade the defenders' gloves. The Sun Oilers took out starting pitcher Albers in favor of Kasprowicz. Armstrong, who had previously been pinch run for by Guinn was reinserted into the batting order and lifted one deep into left field, allowing Eggleston to beat the relay throw home and tying the game at four.

In the tenth inning, Esparza grounded to short. Frank threw the ball over the first baseman's head into the dugout, and Esparza went to second base on the error. Trying to bunt Esparza to third, Young

popped up to the pitcher, but Guinn singled to center and the fleet Esparza scored easily.

The story in the October 1935 issue of *The ECHO* reported fans gathered around the dugout and showered bills and coins on the players after the game.

Game Two

In the night cap of the double header, the Prison Tigers defeated the Sun Oilers in a tightly-contested, errorless game with the final score of one to nothing. In the sixth inning, Guinn blasted a line drive off the center field fence for a triple, and the Houston crowd showed their support of their hometown product by cheering him long and loud. With a count of three balls and one strike, Littlejohn laid down a perfect squeeze bunt along the third base line for the only score of the game.

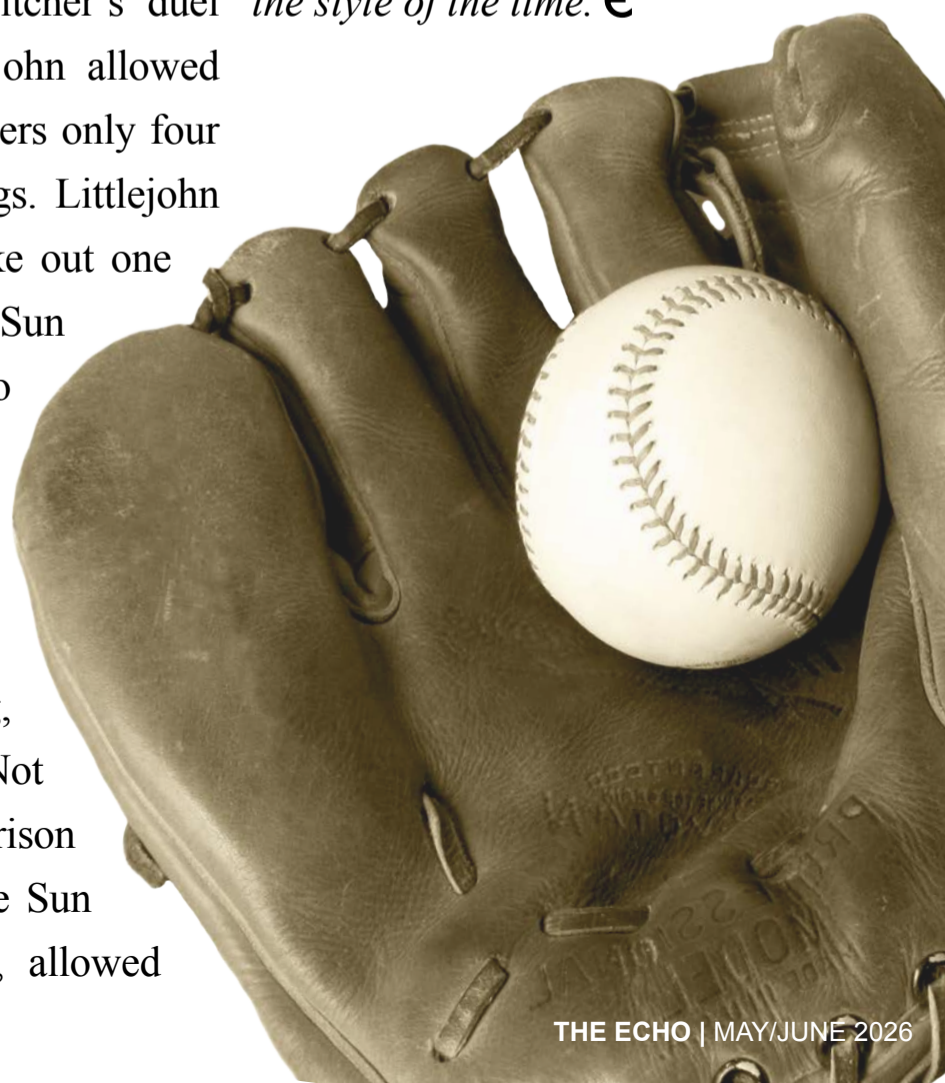
The game was a pitcher's duel from the start. Littlejohn allowed the champion Sun Oilers only four hits over seven innings. Littlejohn managed to only strike out one batter; however, the Sun Oilers were not able to get the ball out of the outfield with the exception of three lazy fly balls gathered in easily by Armstrong, Guinn and McCann. Not to be outdone by the Prison Tigers, Rosenberg, the Sun Oilers starting hurler, allowed

only seven base hits and struck out six players.

In addition to the high quality of play the Prison Tigers displayed, the players also demonstrated good sportsmanship. The Houston papers, as well as the fans in the stands, declared they had never seen a club play a cleaner brand of baseball. Lloyd Gregory, Houston Post Sports Editor, in his "Looking 'Em Over" column, wrote, "not a player with neither words or looks, disputed any of the decisions rendered by the umpires."

The exemplary play of the 1935 Tigers resulted in the record crowd acclaiming them the undisputed, yet uncrowned champions of Texas semi-professional baseball. Not bad for a bunch of "thieves."

Writer's Note: The information for this article came from the November 1935 issue of The ECHO using the style of the time. €



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Note: All times Central.
Select prime-time games are subject to change.

DALLAS COWBOYS



Sun. Sept. 13	at New York Giants	7:20 p.m. (NBC)
Sun. Sept. 20	Washington	3:25 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Sept. 27	Baltimore Ravens	3:25 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Oct. 4	at Houston Texans	12 p.m. (Fox)
Thurs. Oct. 8	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	7:15 p.m. (Amazon)
Sun. Oct. 18	at Green Bay Packers	7:20 p.m. (NBC)
Mon. Oct. 26	at Philadelphia Eagles	7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)
Sun. Nov. 1	Arizona Cardinals	12 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Nov. 8	at Indianapolis Colts	12 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Nov. 15	San Francisco 49ers	3:25 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Nov. 22	Tennessee Titans	12 p.m. (Fox)
Thurs. Nov. 26	Philadelphia Eagles	3:30 p.m. (Fox)
Mon. Dec. 7	at Seattle Seahawks	7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)
Sun. Dec. 13	BYE	
Sun. Dec. 20	at Los Angeles Rams	3:25 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Dec. 27	Jacksonville Jaguars	7:20 p.m. (NBC)
Sun. Jan. 3	New York Giants	12 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Jan. 10	at Washington	TBD (TBD)

HOUSTON TEXANS

Sun. Sept. 13	Buffalo Bills	12 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Sept. 20	Cincinnati Bengals	12 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Sept. 27	at Indianapolis Colts	12 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Oct. 4	Dallas Cowboys	12 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Oct. 11	at Tennessee Titans	12 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Oct. 18	vs. Jacksonville Jaguars	8:30 a.m. (NFLN)
Sun. Oct. 25	New York Giants	12 p.m. (Fox)
Sun. Nov. 1	BYE	
Sun. Nov. 8	at Los Angeles Chargers	3:05 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Nov. 15	at Cleveland Browns	12 p.m. (Fox)
Thurs. Nov. 19	Indianapolis Colts	7:15 p.m. (Amazon)
Sun. Nov. 29	Baltimore Ravens	12 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Dec. 6	at Pittsburgh Steelers	7:20 p.m. (NBC)
Sun. Dec. 13	at Washington	12 p.m. (CBS)
Sun. Dec. 20	Jacksonville Jaguars	12 p.m. (CBS)
Thurs. Dec. 24	at Philadelphia Eagles	7:15 p.m. (Amazon)
Mon. Jan. 4	at Green Bay Packers	7:15 p.m. (ESPN)
Sun. Jan. 10	Tennessee Titans	TBD (TBD)



WEEK 1

Wednesday, Sept. 9

New England Patriots at Seattle Seahawks, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Thursday, Sept. 10

San Francisco 49ers vs Los Angeles Rams, 7:35 p.m. (Netflix)

Sunday, Sept. 13

Chicago Bears at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Cincinnati Bengals, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New Orleans Saints at Detroit Lions, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Buffalo Bills at Houston Texans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Baltimore Ravens at Indianapolis Colts, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Cleveland Browns at Jacksonville Jaguars, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Atlanta Falcons at Pittsburgh Steelers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Jets at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Arizona Cardinals at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Miami Dolphins at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Green Bay Packers at Minnesota Vikings, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Washington Commanders at Philadelphia Eagles, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Dallas Cowboys at New York Giants, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Sept. 14

Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

WEEK 2

Thursday Sept. 17

Detroit Lions at Buffalo Bills, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday Sept. 20

Carolina Panthers at Atlanta Falcons, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New Orleans Saints at Baltimore Ravens, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Minnesota Vikings at Chicago Bears, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cincinnati Bengals at Houston Texans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Pittsburgh Steelers at New England Patriots, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Green Bay Packers at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cleveland Browns at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Philadelphia Eagles at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Denver Broncos, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Las Vegas Raiders at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Seattle Seahawks at Arizona Cardinals, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Washington Commanders at Dallas Cowboys, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Miami Dolphins at San Francisco 49ers, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Indianapolis Colts at Kansas City Chiefs, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Sept. 21

New York Giants at Los Angeles Rams, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

WEEK 3

Thursday Sept. 24

Atlanta Falcons at Green Bay Packers, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday Sept. 27

Los Angeles Chargers at Buffalo Bills, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Carolina Panthers at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Jets at Detroit Lions, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Houston Texans at Indianapolis Colts, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New England Patriots at Jacksonville Jaguars, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Kansas City Chiefs at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Tennessee Titans at New York Giants, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Cincinnati Bengals at Pittsburgh Steelers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Seattle Seahawks at Washington Commanders, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Arizona Cardinals at San Francisco 49ers, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Minnesota Vikings at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Baltimore Ravens vs Dallas Cowboys, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Las Vegas Raiders at New Orleans Saints, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Los Angeles Rams at Denver Broncos, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Sept. 28

Philadelphia Eagles at Chicago Bears, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)



WEEK 4

Thursday, Oct. 1

Pittsburgh Steelers at Cleveland Browns, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Oct. 4

Indianapolis Colts vs Washington Commanders, 8:30 a.m. (NFLN)

Tennessee Titans at Baltimore Ravens, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New England Patriots at Buffalo Bills, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New York Jets at Chicago Bears, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Cincinnati Bengals, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Dallas Cowboys at Houston Texans, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Arizona Cardinals at New York Giants, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Los Angeles Rams at Philadelphia Eagles, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Green Bay Packers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Miami Dolphins at Minnesota Vikings, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Kansas City Chiefs at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Los Angeles Chargers at Seattle Seahawks, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Denver Broncos at San Francisco 49ers, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Detroit Lions at Carolina Panthers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Oct. 5

Atlanta Falcons at New Orleans Saints, 7:15 p.m. ESPN

WEEK 5

Thursday, Oct. 8

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Dallas Cowboys, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Oct. 11

Philadelphia Eagles vs Jacksonville Jaguars, 8:30 a.m. (NFL Network)

Cincinnati Bengals at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Las Vegas Raiders at New England Patriots, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Minnesota Vikings at New Orleans Saints, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cleveland Browns at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Indianapolis Colts at Pittsburgh Steelers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Houston Texans at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New York Giants at Washington Commanders, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Denver Broncos at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Detroit Lions at Arizona Cardinals, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Chicago Bears at Green Bay Packers, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

San Francisco 49ers at Seattle Seahawks, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Baltimore Ravens at Atlanta Falcons, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Oct. 12

Buffalo Bills at Los Angeles Rams, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Bye week: Carolina Panthers, Kansas City Chiefs

WEEK 6

Thursday, Oct. 15

Seattle Seahawks at Denver Broncos, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Oct. 18

Houston Texans vs Jacksonville Jaguars, 9:30 a.m. (NFL Network)

Chicago Bears at Atlanta Falcons, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Baltimore Ravens at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Tennessee Titans at Indianapolis Colts, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Jets at New England Patriots, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New Orleans Saints at New York Giants, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Carolina Panthers at Philadelphia Eagles, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Arizona Cardinals at Los Angeles Rams, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Chargers at Kansas City Chiefs, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Buffalo Bills at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Dallas Cowboys at Green Bay Packers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)*

Monday, Oct. 19

Washington Commanders at San Francisco 49ers, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Bye week: Cincinnati Bengals, Detroit Lions, Miami Dolphins, Minnesota Vikings



WEEK 7

Thursday, Oct. 22

New England Patriots at Chicago Bears, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Oct. 25

Pittsburgh Steelers Vs. New Orleans Saints, 9:30 a.m. (NFL Network)

San Francisco 49ers at Atlanta Falcons, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cincinnati Bengals at Baltimore Ravens, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Giants at Houston Texans, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Indianapolis Colts at Minnesota Vikings, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Miami Dolphins at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Cleveland Browns at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Denver Broncos at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Green Bay Packers at Detroit Lions, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Rams at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Kansas City Chiefs at Seattle Seahawks, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Oct. 26

Dallas Cowboys at Philadelphia Eagles, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Bye week: Buffalo Bills, Jacksonville Jaguars, Los Angeles Chargers, Washington Commanders

WEEK 8

Thursday, Oct. 29

Carolina Panthers at Green Bay Packers, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Nov. 1

Baltimore Ravens at Buffalo Bills, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Tennessee Titans at Cincinnati Bengals, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Arizona Cardinals at Dallas Cowboys, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Minnesota Vikings at Detroit Lions, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Indianapolis Colts at Jacksonville Jaguars, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Las Vegas Raiders at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cleveland Browns at Pittsburgh Steelers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Atlanta Falcons at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Chargers at Los Angeles Rams, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Kansas City Chiefs at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

New England Patriots at Miami Dolphins, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Philadelphia Eagles at Washington Commanders, 8:20 (NBC)*

Monday, Nov. 2

Chicago Bears at Seattle Seahawks, 7:15 p.m. ESPN

Bye week: Houston Texans, New Orleans Saints, New York Giants, San Francisco 49ers

WEEK 9

Thursday, Nov. 5

Jacksonville Jaguars at Baltimore Ravens, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Nov. 8

Cincinnati Bengals vs Atlanta Falcons, 9:30 a.m. (NFL Network)

Denver Broncos at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Dallas Cowboys at Indianapolis Colts, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Jets at Kansas City Chiefs, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Detroit Lions at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cleveland Browns at New Orleans Saints, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New York Giants at Philadelphia Eagles, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Rams at Washington Commanders, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Houston Texans at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Las Vegas Raiders at San Francisco 49ers, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Green Bay Packers at New England Patriots, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Arizona Cardinals at Seattle Seahawks, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Chicago Bears, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Nov. 9

Buffalo Bills at Minnesota Vikings, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Bye week: Pittsburgh Steelers, Tennessee Titans



WEEK 10

Thursday, Nov. 12

Washington Commanders at New York Giants, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Nov. 15

New England Patriots vs Detroit Lions, 8:30 a.m. (Fox)

Kansas City Chiefs at Atlanta Falcons, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Houston Texans at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Minnesota Vikings at Green Bay Packers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Miami Dolphins at Indianapolis Colts, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Carolina Panthers at New Orleans Saints, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Buffalo Bills at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Rams at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Seattle Seahawks at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

San Francisco 49ers at Dallas Cowboys, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Cincinnati Bengals, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Nov. 16

Los Angeles Chargers at Baltimore Ravens, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

Bye week: Chicago Bears, Denver Broncos, Philadelphia Eagles, Tampa Bay Buccaneers

WEEK 11

Thursday, Nov. 19

Indianapolis Colts at Houston Texans, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Nov. 22

Miami Dolphins at Buffalo Bills, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Baltimore Ravens at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New Orleans Saints at Chicago Bears, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Tennessee Titans at Dallas Cowboys, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Detroit Lions, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Arizona Cardinals at Kansas City Chiefs, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Jacksonville Jaguars at New York Giants, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New York Jets at Los Angeles Chargers, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Las Vegas Raiders at Denver Broncos, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Philadelphia Eagles, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Minnesota Vikings vs San Francisco 49ers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Nov. 23

Cincinnati Bengals at Washington Commanders, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

Bye week: Atlanta Falcons, Cleveland Browns, Green Bay Packers, Los Angeles Rams, New England Patriots, Seattle Seahawks

WEEK 12

Wednesday, Nov. 25

Green Bay Packers at Los Angeles Rams, 7 p.m. (Netflix)

Thursday, Nov. 26 (Thanksgiving Day)

Chicago Bears at Detroit Lions, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Philadelphia Eagles at Dallas Cowboys, 3:30 p.m. (Fox)

Kansas City Chiefs at Buffalo Bills, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Friday, Nov. 27

Denver Broncos at Pittsburgh Steelers, 3 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Nov. 29

New Orleans Saints at Cincinnati Bengals, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Las Vegas Raiders at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Baltimore Ravens at Houston Texans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New York Giants at Indianapolis Colts, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Jets at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Atlanta Falcons at Minnesota Vikings, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Tennessee Titans at Jacksonville Jaguars, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Washington Commanders at Arizona Cardinals, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Seattle Seahawks at San Francisco 49ers, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

New England Patriots at Los Angeles Chargers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Nov. 30

Carolina Panthers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)



WEEK 13

Thursday, Dec. 3

Kansas City Chiefs at Los Angeles Rams, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Dec. 6

Detroit Lions at Atlanta Falcons, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Chicago Bears, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Cincinnati Bengals at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Green Bay Packers at New Orleans Saints, 12 p.m. (Fox)

San Francisco 49ers at New York Giants, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Chargers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Washington Commanders at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Philadelphia Eagles at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Miami Dolphins at Denver Broncos, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Carolina Panthers at Minnesota Vikings, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Buffalo Bills at New England Patriots, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Houston Texans at Pittsburgh Steelers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Dec. 7

Dallas Cowboys at Seattle Seahawks, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Bye week: Baltimore Ravens, Indianapolis Colts, Las Vegas Raiders, New York Jets

WEEK 14

Thursday, Dec. 10

Minnesota Vikings at New England Patriots, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Sunday, Dec. 13

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Baltimore Ravens, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New Orleans Saints at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Atlanta Falcons at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Tennessee Titans at Detroit Lions, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Chicago Bears at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Denver Broncos at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Indianapolis Colts at Philadelphia Eagles, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Houston Texans at Washington Commanders, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Los Angeles Chargers at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Kansas City Chiefs at Cincinnati Bengals, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

New York Giants at Seattle Seahawks, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Los Angeles Rams at San Francisco 49ers, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Buffalo Bills at Green Bay Packers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Dec. 14

Pittsburgh Steelers at Jacksonville Jaguars, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

Bye week: Arizona Cardinals, Dallas Cowboys

WEEK 15

Thursday, Dec. 17

San Francisco 49ers at Los Angeles Chargers, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Saturday, Dec. 19

Seattle Seahawks at Philadelphia Eagles, 4 p.m. (Fox)

Chicago Bears at Buffalo Bills, 7:20 p.m. (CBS)

Sunday, Dec. 20

Cincinnati Bengals at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Miami Dolphins at Green Bay Packers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Houston Texans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Cleveland Browns at New York Giants, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Baltimore Ravens at Pittsburgh Steelers, 12 p.m. (CBS)

New Orleans Saints at Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Indianapolis Colts at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Atlanta Falcons at Washington Commanders, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Jets at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

Dallas Cowboys at Los Angeles Rams, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Denver Broncos at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Detroit Lions at Minnesota Vikings, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Dec. 21

New England Patriots at Kansas City Chiefs, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)



WEEK 16

Thursday, Dec. 24

Houston Texans at Philadelphia Eagles, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Friday, Dec. 2 (Christmas Day)

Green Bay Packers at Chicago Bears, 12 p.m. (Netflix)

Buffalo Bills at Denver Broncos, 3:30 p.m. (Netflix)

Los Angeles Rams at Seattle Seahawks, 7:15 p.m. (Fox)

Saturday, Dec. 26

Matchup TBD, 3:30 p.m. (NFL Network)

Matchup TBD, 7 p.m. (NFL Network)

Week 16 matchup pool (Date/time/network TBD)

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Atlanta Falcons

Cincinnati Bengals at Indianapolis Colts

Washington Commanders at Minnesota Vikings

Carolina Panthers at Pittsburgh Steelers

Sunday Dec. 27

Cleveland Browns at Baltimore Ravens, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Los Angeles Chargers at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Arizona Cardinals at New Orleans Saints, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New England Patriots at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Tennessee Titans at Las Vegas Raiders, 3:05 p.m. (Fox)

San Francisco 49ers at Kansas City Chiefs, 3:25 p.m. (CBS)

Jacksonville Jaguars at Dallas Cowboys, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Dec. 28

New York Giants at Detroit Lions, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

WEEK 17

Thursday, Dec. 31

Baltimore Ravens at Cincinnati Bengals, 7:15 p.m. (Amazon)

Saturday, Jan. 2

Matchup TBD, 4:30 p.m. (NBC)

Matchup TBD, 7 p.m. (Peacock)

Week 17 matchup pool (Date/time/network TBD)

Washington Commanders at Jacksonville Jaguars

Kansas City Chiefs at Los Angeles Chargers

Denver Broncos at New England Patriots

Los Angeles Rams at Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Sunday Jan. 3

New Orleans Saints at Atlanta Falcons, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Seattle Seahawks at Carolina Panthers, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Indianapolis Colts at Cleveland Browns, 12 p.m. (Fox)

New York Giants at Dallas Cowboys, 12 p.m. (Fox)

Buffalo Bills at Miami Dolphins, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Minnesota Vikings at New York Jets, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Pittsburgh Steelers at Tennessee Titans, 12 p.m. (CBS)

Las Vegas Raiders at Arizona Cardinals, 3:05 p.m. (CBS)

Detroit Lions at Chicago Bears, 3:25 p.m. (Fox)

Philadelphia Eagles at San Francisco 49ers, 7:20 p.m. (NBC)

Monday, Jan. 4

Houston Texans at Green Bay Packers, 7:15 p.m. (ESPN)

WEEK 18

Week 18 matchup pool (Date/time/network TBD)

San Francisco 49ers at Arizona Cardinals

Pittsburgh Steelers at Baltimore Ravens

New York Jets at Buffalo Bills

Atlanta Falcons at Carolina Panthers

Cleveland Browns at Cincinnati Bengals

Los Angeles Chargers at Denver Broncos

Detroit Lions at Green Bay Packers

Tennessee Titans at Houston Texans

Jacksonville Jaguars at Indianapolis Colts

Las Vegas Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs

Seattle Seahawks at Los Angeles Rams

Chicago Bears at Minnesota Vikings

Miami Dolphins at New England Patriots

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at New Orleans Saints

Philadelphia Eagles at New York Giants

Dallas Cowboys at Washington Commanders





SETTING SUN

BY ROBERT L. GONZALES

STAFF WRITER

AN EPIC OF MYSTERY, WITH YOU AS THE SETTING SUN.
THIS PARADOX SIMMERING, BUT STILL, YOU CARRY ME ON.
THOUGH I FIGHT THE SONG YOU SING, IT IS EVERYWHERE I RUN,
AND ALL THROUGH OUR HISTORY, I HAVE ALSO BEEN YOUR SON.
A PLAY ON WORDS TO DANCE FOR YOUR DELIGHT.
THEY STILL FALL SHORT REACHING FOR YOUR GREAT HEIGHT.
THOUGH YOU'VE WAITED AN INDEFINITE TIME,
YOUR PATIENCE BRINGS YOU THIS RIDDLE AND RHYME.
WORDS OF LOVE, ONLY FOR YOU, FROM MY HEART SEALED AND CONTAINED.
BIRDS ABOVE WILL SING FOR YOU, SONGS OF LOVE IN THE SAME VEIN.
A SONG SO PURE FROM THEIR VIEW, BRINGING TEARS OF JOY UNTAMED.
AND LIKE THESE WORDS THAT DANCE FOR YOUR DELIGHT,
THEY STILL FALL SHORT REACHING FOR YOUR GREAT HEIGHT.
THOUGH YOU'VE WAITED AN INDEFINITE TIME,
YOUR PATIENCE BRINGS YOU THIS RIDDLE AND RHYME.
SO, HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY, MY SETTING SUN.
I LOVE YOU MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF TODAY.
PLEASE, NEVER FORGET THAT YOU'RE NUMBER ONE,
AND THE LIGHT THAT HASN'T FADED AWAY.

SON TO MOTHER

SUBMITTED BY CLIFTON B. HENNINGTON
CLEMENTS UNIT

WELL MAMA, I TELL YOU,
LIFE AIN'T BEEN NO FRUIT GARDEN.
IT'S HAD THORNS AND SPLINTERS,
AND BIG OL' STICKER BUGS FROM SURFACES,
WITH DIRT — HARDENED.
BUT ALL THIS TIME I'VE BEEN GROWING UP
AND SPROUTING SEED, ALSO SHOWING PULP.
SOMEDAYS FEEDING PIGEONS —
WHERE THERE ISN'T MUCH SUBSTANCE FOR ONE.
SO, MAMA, THANK YOU FOR SOWING,
MOWING, TRIMMING DEAD WEEDS
STEMMING FROM BATTERING RAINS
AGAINST MY WINDOW PANE OF ASPIRATION,
TOWARD LIBERTY.
FOR DEVELOPMENT WITH PURPOSE TO THRIVE.
TO WEATHER THE STORM, TO SOAK UP SUNRAYS,
TO BECOME LIKE SEQUOIA
PLANTED IN CONCRETE — HARDENED.
A DEEPLY ROOTED SOUL,
BLOSSOMING ONCE BITTER AND BITTERSWEET,
MUDDY, BLOODY STALKS
FROM TRAUMA AND TROUBLED THOUGHTS.
LIFE AIN'T BEEN NO FRUIT GARDEN.
YET, BENEATH CHARCOAL GREY SKIES
AND BARBWIRE STEEL, I SURVIVE.
I STRIVE WITH DRIVE TO ARRIVE
ON THE OTHER SIDE — HARDENED.
I REFUSE TO WITHER
WHEN FRUIT LOSES JUICES,
VINES LACK VIGOR.
I'VE BEEN SOWING INTO YOUNGER TREES,
GREENER LEAVES,
THAT'S MY PURPOSE IN THIS SEASON,
MY REASON TO BREATHE.
THROUGH PROGRAMS, WATERED DOWN SOIL,
I'VE BEEN LEARNING,
FLOURISHING AND STILL GROWING.
BUT, MAMA, I TELL YOU;
LIFE AIN'T BEEN NO FRUIT GARDEN.

Indigent Fan Program

The Indigent Fan Program will supply indigent TDCJ residents with a Registered Property fan for **FREE** from the commissary. The program runs from January 1 to August 31 each year, and you must submit your request within this time period.

To qualify for a **FREE** fan from this program, you must meet **ALL** eligibility requirements listed below:

1. Have less than a \$5 balance in your Trust Fund account.
2. Be classified with an indigent status for more than 180 days.
3. Have never received a fan through the TDCJ Indigent Fan Program.

Requests should include the following information:

I would like to request a fan from the Indigent Fan Program.

Name: _____

TDCJ # _____

Unit: _____

You must submit request through truck mail or regular mail to:

**Commissary & Trust Fund/
Indigent Fan Program
P.O. Box 629
Huntsville, TX 77342**



**“You can decide to be
somebody tomorrow that
you’re not today.”**

**DAVE RAMSEY
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER**