

The 'Varsity Lariat.

125 years of Baylor student media

Thursday, November 6, 2025

baylorlariat.com

PIE MAN & PLAYBOY
A4-A5

POP
CULTURE
MOMENTS
A7



CARRYING THE BANNER Celebrating the quasiquintennial of publication, The Lariat's first print publication looks a little bit different than the 12,245th editon that hit shlevles on Oct. 30, 2025.

The Lariat's living legacy

HANNAH WEBB
Focus Editor

Before the Wright brothers took flight or air conditioning cooled a single building, The Baylor Lariat was already in print. It was born into a world where newsprint was typeset by hand and the hum of a newsroom came from clattering typebars, not computer keys. Now, 125 years and roughly 12,250 issues later, Baylor's student-run newspaper continues to tell the university's story with the same curiosity and conviction that first inked its pages in 1900.

The debut issue of "The 'Varsity Lariat," published Nov. 8, 1900, boasted just \$1 for a year's subscription. It featured a poem to Maggie Houston, a football recap of Baylor's 11-0 victory over Austin College and a column titled "Anent the Lariat," which set the tone for every issue to follow: "The Lariat shall strive to be a true exponent of Baylor University life."

From that promise grew a publication that has witnessed and withstood more than a century of history. Its pages have outlasted two world wars, the rise of radio and television, the invention of the internet and the shift from hot metal type to digital screens. It chronicled the Branch Davidian siege, the 2013 explosion in West and the COVID-19 pandemic. It has told stories of championship wins, campus controversies and national reckonings. Through it all, The Lariat has remained what alumnus Nick Dean called "a first draft of history for what is happening on this campus."

Dean, who served as editor-in-chief in 2012, remembers long nights in the newsroom — and the lessons that stuck.

"I remember being in the newsroom and having to figure out how to cover this while also emotionally processing," he said. "We were all so proud that our name was on everything. What we put in the

paper could impact people."

For Fred Hartman Distinguished Professor Sommer Dean ('10), who started at The Lariat before becoming a media law attorney and teaching journalism at Baylor, the newsroom was where everything clicked.

"This sounds dramatic, but The Lariat honestly changed my life," she said. "It's where I learned to make a difference through words, through truth-telling and truth-seeking."

Her office now sits just across the hall from the newsroom where it all began.

"I'll hear groups of students in there laughing and telling stories, and it feels the same," she said. "The goal of

The Lariat, and all student journalists, should be to seek the truth and tell it — whether your school likes it or not."

That truth-telling spirit isn't new. Former Editor-in-Chief Dawn McMullan ('88) remembers how her staff, consisting of a mix of wide-eyed college students, worked through trial and error.

"It was a bunch of like 20, 21, 19-year-olds trying to work collaboratively," McMullan said. "We were all learning how to work together as a team. I think that's the beauty of it — and the challenge."

LARIAT HISTORY >> A8

Lariat 125th anniversary panel celebrates student journalism

ARDEN BERRY
Staff Writer

With a red carpet and refreshments to usher them in, seven decades of Lariat editors came together from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Friday in Castellaw 101 to reflect on their experiences and the importance of student journalism.

Director of Student Media Douglas Pils moderated the panel. Pils said he counted at least 205 Lariat editors-in-chief across the last 125 years.

"When I was going through the list, there are lots of recognizable names, like the Hartmans, Fred from 1928 — I pass by his picture every day when I go to my office — Bill in 1961 and '62, and then another Fred in the fall of 1986 was here as well," Pils said.

Louis Moore was the first graduate student to be editor-in-chief from 1968-69. Moore said the biggest news event during his time was Baylor working toward integration.

"When I entered



LEADING THE CHARGE Seven editors-in-chief from the last seven decades pose together during The Baylor Lariat's 125th Anniversary panel in the Castellaw Communications Center Friday afternoon.

Baylor, the very first Black student athlete was on the football team, and this young man was the first Black journalist and became a very dear friend of mine," Moore said. "[It was] also the year that Baylor got its first Black professor. She had been denied access to Baylor because of her color. But then Baylor decided it better get right with the Lord."

Willie White, the journalist Moore referred to, became the first Black editor-in-chief soon after in 1970.

"I don't always march to the same drumbeat that others march to," White said. "So unexpectedly, I submitted my name for editorship, and I was elected as editor, and that did not go well with my staff. So the challenge for me during that entire

period of my editorship was to maneuver and work through the relationship that I had with the staff."

White said working for The Lariat taught him not to "beat around the bush" when it came to asking questions.

"There are times when the facts are the facts, the situation is the situation," White said. "I have that

PANEL >> A8



UNIQUE SPECIALIST Baylor offers over 125 undergraduate majors, with 11 majors enrolling four or fewer students.

Baylor has 125+ majors

Some are smaller than your family

JOSH SIATKOWSKI
Staff Writer

On this 125th anniversary of The Baylor Lariat, it seems fitting to take a look at the complementary, ever-marketed arsenal of over 125 majors Baylor has to offer. From chemistry to aviation sciences to social work, there's something for everyone — provided you want to learn.

As diverse as Baylor's offerings are, though, the academic makeup of the student body is not exactly the intellectual rainbow that the triple-digit number suggests. The palette is probably better described

as dozens of thin strips with slightly different shades, sprinkled among a few very wide bands of dominant colors.

In fact, Baylor's top three majors, excluding the 1,600 corporate stem cells under the "pre-business" designation, account for about 20% of Baylor's 14,183 undergraduates. Biology, health science studies and nursing combine to make up 2,924 of those, according to the Office of Institutional Research's fall 2025 report. Add in 689 finance majors and 547 communications majors, and the top five

RARE MAJORS >> A8







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EDITORIAL

Editorial Board shares most memorable Lariat moments

In its 125 years, The Baylor Lariat has seen its fair share of news. Though we have had the privilege of being part of just a glimpse of The Lariat's lifetime, it's made a mark on us. From late print nights to early delivery mornings, from editorials to podcasts to TV news, The Lariat has grown and changed with the people who have been a part of it.

For just a moment in the grand scheme of The Lariat's history, we've had the privilege of sitting at desks that have been occupied by a variety of other editors and writers. We've had the honor of stewarding the responsibility of reporting the news to Baylor students, and it's an honor we take seriously. The first Varsity Lariat, published on Nov. 8, 1900, describes The Lariat's original intention.

"The Lariat is on the range for everything that will make it breezy and of interest," the first edition reads. "With all becoming dignity, fairness and non-partisanship in its dealings with every issue, it hopes to maintain a standard that will reflect credit on a loyal student body and the coming university."

To this day, 125 years later, we still strive to meet this standard. But meeting this standard has come with its fair share of difficulties. At times, we have fallen short and at other times, we have exceeded this standard. In honor of 125 years of Baylor's student publication, we thought it would be fitting to share our favorite memories and lessons at The Baylor Lariat.

Foster Nicholas
Editor-in-Chief

Across eight semesters with The Lariat, I've worked alongside some of the most relentless, ambitious and dedicated people who I'm proud to call friends. The world of journalism isn't flashy, but I've learned that the only thing holding you back is failing to take the initiative to create opportunities.

As a sports writer, I traveled to cover March Madness games in three major cities. As a play-by-play broadcaster, I have called north of 150 Baylor Athletics events. As a sports editor and now editor-in-chief, I've realized the most fulfilling moments on staff weren't the exciting sports getaways, but helping hungry colleagues reach their goals and improve as journalists and students.

While the next generation constantly finds itself receiving

grief, if Lariat journalists have any say in the future, be assured we're in good hands.

Ashlyn Beck
News Editor

After three years of working for The Lariat, I've moved from a reporter to a staff writer to the news editor, and I've learned lessons the hard way and the easy way. There have been countless misspellings, a plethora of facts gone unchecked and other mistakes that have shown me how to handle failure and success. Through it all, The Lariat has taught me that the truth matters, and I don't have to wait for those who are more experienced to share it.

Even as student journalists, we've learned how to report on heavy topics in a manner that hails back to The Lariat's original intention: with dignity, fairness and non-partisanship. Some of my favorite memories at The Lariat have been the times when we've been given the reins as true journalists and trusted with heavy stories.

So more than anything, I'm thankful to have been surrounded by people who inspire me to aim high as a journalist and help pick me back up when I make mistakes.

Mackenzie Grizzard
Asst. News Editor

Growing up, I had no Rory Gilmore-esque dreams of working for a big city paper or chasing down politicians and businessmen for quotes — I was just a girl who loved to write and watch the news with my dad. As my parents read the morning paper, I couldn't imagine what it would be like to know people care about what you write and, even crazier, rely on you to keep them informed.

Now I don't have to imagine anymore. There's something incredibly special about being a voice for our fellow students, and it's a humbling honor to represent them in all we do. Some of my favorite memories have been writing about issues Baylor students care about and being entrusted with the special privilege of informing readers. Decades of Baylor students have looked to The Lariat, and we are honored to carry that torch.

Olivia Turner
Arts & Life Editor



James Ellis | Cartoonist

More than anything, The Lariat has taught me how to listen.

I've found that when you're interviewing someone as a journalist, you're not just listening to what it is they are saying — you're reading their body language, noting how they speak, their tone and which words they choose to use. You're taking their answers to your questions, processing them as they speak and using your curiosity to pick their brain even further.

Likewise, when you're writing a story, you're not just transcribing someone else's quotes onto a document, you're picking which of their words are most powerful. In other words, I've discovered how to listen — really, truly listen to people — and as a result, write a story in a way that is both accurate and comprehensible, but also in a way that only I could do.

Kalena Reynolds
Opinion Editor

As some of my colleagues stated, I never dreamed of editorials and InDesign pages when thinking about my future career, until I realized the specialty of the field. Throughout my different positions at the newspaper, my most treasured experiences come from hearing people's stories.

I've learned that humanity is comprised of a collection of memories, each located in different places inside of us, each resting in distinct locations. Some memories we keep farther away, while others remain closer. As journalists, sometimes we get to visit those places. If we are

lucky, every once in a while, people take us to destinations so far into the backroads of their being that we see the precipice of humanity itself. And that experience is irreplaceable. It's electric.

Aside from the stories, The Lariat has brought me some of my closest friends and mentors. Being in the newsroom never fails to bring light into my day, and I treasure seeing the hustle, passion and ambition of my peers.

Hannah Webb
Focus Editor

This is only my second semester at The Lariat, and it's already an experience I wouldn't change for the world. This semester, I've written on every desk, and each story has stretched me in a new direction. The Lariat has given me a front-row seat to history as it unfolds, but it's also given me a newsroom full of friends who make late nights and hard deadlines feel like something worth chasing.

I always loved the idea of journalism from a safe distance, but somewhere in between staying up late for my first Morning Buzz to watching my articles start conversations, I fell in love with not the idea of journalism, but the practice itself.

I've learned that every story, no matter how small, carries a pulse. I've become more attentive to the world, and I am so grateful that those involved trusted me to learn, write, make mistakes and find my voice.

Braden Murray
Executive Producer

Over my eight semesters, I have risen through the ranks of Lariat TV News. Starting as a sports reporter, then becoming sports director and briefly managing editor. I didn't initially want to be a broadcast reporter; I originally applied to be a writer. But I am so glad I took the broadcast route; many opportunities were opened to me that would not have been otherwise.

I've traveled to three cities to cover March Madness, including an eight-hour drive to Memphis, Tenn., in 2024. I've covered field-stormings, upset wins and bowl games. Many of my favorite memories from my time here have been in the newsroom. I am thankful for all the past editors and advisers who have poured into and taught me over the years. Above all, I am thankful for the friendships I have made.

James Ellis
Cartoonist

I've only been with The Lariat for about a year and a half now, but it has honestly been one of the best experiences I've ever had during my time here at Baylor. I've gotten to meet so many creative and talented people, hear and read so many incredible and powerful stories, and my favorite part, draw dozens of cartoons for so many amazing stories and editorials.

I feel as though I've learned and experienced so many things I may never have, and I hope to continue learning and experiencing so much more.

Signed, sealed, opinionated: The power of the opinion page

HANNAH WEBB
Focus Editor

If there's one thing The Lariat's opinion section has proven over its 125 years, it's that society has never been short on thoughts — or feelings — about the world around them. They span from impactful to chaotic to simply random.

Together, they form a paper trail of conviction, curiosity and, occasionally, chaos.

The opinion section officially began running columns in the late 1970s, but



letters from readers came long before that. In 1978, a student named Bryan Munson sent a letter blasting Penland Dining Hall's "Chef's salad" for its suspicious lack of actual meat. "The amount of ham in a Chef's is so minimal," he wrote. "I doubt that it keeps the rats alive!" Two days later, he followed up with a victory lap: Penland

had responded, expanded the portions and restored his faith in campus dining. The people's voice had been heard — through lettuce and protest alike.

Not every letter created for The Lariat came from a dorm room. In 1974, one arrived from the Attica Correctional Facility, beginning with: "I am presently serving twenty years in prison." Edwin William w was looking for a pen pal, a correspondent, perhaps a friend. His note turned The Lariat into a bridge between Waco and the wider, weirder world. Who needs Twitter when you've got a post office and a dream?

By 1997, that bridge carried Lisa Zapata's column, "Women should not fear speaking up in class." Zapata's piece. It was thoughtful, sharp and deeply personal, calling out the subtle

ways women were silenced or overlooked in classrooms. She remembered being praised for her neat cursive while boys were pushed to improve their ideas. "Little boys may have received all the attention in 2nd grade," she wrote. "But now that we don't have to be afraid that they will pull our ponytails if we correct them, I would suggest we do just that."

Fast-forward a few decades, and The Lariat opinion page still balances the profound with the peculiar. In 2013, the Editorial Board endorsed "fart-filtering underwear" — a true story that deserves both admiration and maybe a little regret. More recently,

in 2024, a column ran urging readers to eat more cheese. The topics may vary wildly, but the instinct behind them hasn't changed: to make people think, laugh or argue a little.

That's the beauty of an opinion page. It's the place where the paper stops reporting on what's happening and starts reflecting on what it means. It's where students test their voices, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes brilliantly, but always honestly. It's where readers discover that words — even about a chef salad — can change something, whether it's cafeteria policy or how a community sees itself.

The Lariat's opinion writers

have argued, apologized, inspired and occasionally embarrassed themselves in print. But every piece carries the same heartbeat: Baylor students believing that what they think matters.

That belief — that words have weight, that conviction belongs in ink — is what makes the opinion section indispensable. It's where Baylor has worked out who it is. And if the past 125 years are any indication, the next great debate might not start in a courtroom or a classroom — but right here, in the letters and columns that remind us what it means to care enough to write.

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Opinion

The Baylor Lariat welcomes reader viewpoints through letters to the editor and guest columns. Opinions expressed in The Lariat are not necessarily those of the Baylor administration, the Baylor Board of Regents, the student body or the Student Publications Board.

Editorials, Columns & Letters

Editorials express the opinions of The Lariat Editorial Board. Lariat letters and columns are the opinions of an individual and not The Baylor Lariat.

Lariat Letters

To submit a Lariat Letter, email Lariat-Letters@baylor.edu. Letters should be a maximum of 400 words. The letter is not guaranteed to be published.

* Asterisks indicate members of The Editorial Board

Even in retirement, there’s Moore to cover

Baylor alumnus reflects on journey through journalism

ALEXIA FINNEY
Staff Writer

Long before social media, news print was the heartbeat of every community. Baylor Lariat alumnus Louis Moore made a name for himself covering religion, civil rights and history’s most significant moments at the Houston Chronicle. Even in his retirement, Moore still loves a good story.

Moore said he found his passion for journalism in an unconventional way.

“I came to Baylor thinking I would be a pastor,” Moore said. “I actually wanted to be a missionary. Then I took a journalism class and thought, ‘My gosh, I really like this.’ By the third semester, I was hooked.”

As he dug deeper into the world of journalism, Moore described the work as something he couldn’t resist.

“I just took to it like a duck to water,” Moore said.

Moore graduated in 1968 with his bachelor’s in journalism and continued his education by pursuing a master’s in religion. During his grad school years, Moore became The Baylor Lariat’s editor-in-chief — the first graduate student to serve in that position.

In the role, Moore said he witnessed historic moments on campus.

“The first anti-war demonstration on the Baylor campus, I came out of the chapel and there were protesters,” he said. “I thought, ‘Wow, I can’t believe I’m seeing this.’”

One of the most defining memories of his time at Baylor was when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. Moore said he remembered rain that day as he watched the nation reevaluate their values.

“When Dr. King was killed, Baylor had just begun to integrate,” Moore said. “There were only a handful of Black students here. It was an awakening for the university and it forced a lot of us to look at ourselves and ask hard questions.”

During the 1970s and 1980s, Moore’s career advanced. He was the religion editor of the Houston Chronicle and president of the Religion Newswriters Association, now known as the Religion News Association, from 1984 to 1986.

During his time at the Houston Chronicle, Moore combined his ambition and reporting experience to become a known figure in religious journalism. His assignments ventured from Texas Southern Baptist churches to the Vatican.

“I traveled with John Paul the Pope,” he said. “I met with the Dalai Lama of Tibet. The Chronicle gave me the world to cover and I thoroughly enjoyed it.”

His reporting earned national recognition, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1985 for a series on Soviet Jews known as “Refuseniks” who were unable to flee the communist regime.

“I went to the Soviet Union when you weren’t supposed to go,” Moore said. “For the first few days, I thought, ‘What in the world



Lariat file photo

PASSIONATE Lariat alumnus Louis Moore speaks on a panel with fellow editors at the Lariat’s 125th celebration on Oct. 31, 2025.

am I doing?’ Eventually, I understood. I was at the right moment, at the right place, at the right time.”

His decades-long career placed him at the forefront of history.

“When the Episcopal Church voted to ordain women for the first time, I was sitting right next to a woman who had spent her whole life fighting for that right,” Moore said. “She was ecstatic. I’ll never forget that.”

He also covered the 1979 Southern Baptist Convention, a turning point that would change the denomination forever.

“I was there when it all began, the big fight that affected Baylor and everything else in 1979,” Moore said.

When reflecting on his successful and meaningful career, Moore said he earned recognition for his merit and for his willingness to listen and remain unbiased toward people of different faiths.

“When I covered religion, I wanted to show that Houston wasn’t just Southern Baptists,” he said. “There were Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Jewish people, all part of the community. My goal was to introduce readers to people they might never meet otherwise.”

Moore’s wife, Kay, also worked at The Baylor Lariat and agreed with Louis.

“He really did bridge a gap,” Kay Moore said. “Communities were isolated back then. His reporting helped people realize, ‘They’re not so different from us.’”

Decades later, Louis Moore reads the New York Times,

Houston Chronicle, Dallas Morning News and The Baylor Lariat every morning.

Today, the couple leads Friends of Garland’s Historic Magic 11th Street, a preservation group spotlighting the stories of underrepresented communities in their hometown.

“We thought we’d be reporters forever,” Kay Moore said. “But journalism changed, publishing changed and we had to change, too. We’ve learned to reinvent ourselves — to keep using our gifts for something meaningful.”

Kay Moore said reinvention remains a constant theme in the couple’s life.

“When we worked in publishing, we thought we’d do that forever,” Kay Moore said. “Then, suddenly, everyone could publish their own book online. You think, ‘Well, what now?’ So you look for the next open window.”

Even today, Louis Moore continues to apply that same adaptability and commitment to storytelling, contributing to the couple’s mission at Garland.

“Journalism gave me a way to see the world and tell the truth about it,” he said. “It wasn’t about awards or recognition. It was about being a witness to the truth and helping my community understand the world around them.”

At nearly 80 years old, Louis Moore is the oldest living Baylor Lariat Editor-in-Chief still active in journalism, a testament to a career driven by more than ambition — but love for the practice.

Lariat alumni recall ‘09 Obama Inauguration

MADISON HUNT
Staff Writer

A cold morning that cut straight through coats and turned every fingertip numb was what four Baylor Lariat journalists experienced on Jan. 20, 2009.

National Mall thrummed as crowds of a million people bunched together and camcorders rose in unison, hoping for a glimpse of history. With flags waving, high hopes and wide smiles, the nation waited to witness the inauguration of America’s first black president, Barack Obama.

The Lariat journalists were charged with capturing a day that felt larger than the pages they had to fill. Today, those former writers remember the sounds and scenes as well as quotes from Obama’s 2008 victory speech.

“True strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth, but from the enduring power of our ideals: democracy, liberty, opportunity and unyielding hope,” Obama said.

Former staff writer Sommer Dean, formerly Sommer Ingram, said her first memory is the packed crowd. Even at low temperatures, excitement stayed high. During that moment, Dean discovered the true meaning of journalism.

“Standing with people from all over the country and all over the world, everyone was so kind and so excited,” Dean said. “I’ve never been colder in my entire life, but it also felt like pure magic. I remember thinking, ‘This is the point of becoming a journalist.’ You get to witness history. You get to record those moments, and I absolutely loved it.”

The coverage, like the day itself, was a collage of small conversations with big resonance. Former Lariat Editor-in-Chief Anite Lloyd, formerly Anite Pere, recalled what she learned from attending the inauguration as the ability to be flexible and adapt to changing situations quickly, no matter the circumstances.

“I learned to be resourceful and ready to work from anywhere,” Lloyd said. “I also learned the hard way to come dressed for the weather because it was cold and snowy, and I was wearing the wrong shoes. Reporting the inauguration was an extraordinary opportunity for me, and I’m grateful for it.”

In the Jan. 21, 2009, print edition of the Baylor Lariat, staff writer Ashley Corinne Killough recalled looking on as thousands streamed in hours before sunrise to get a glimpse of president-elect Barack Obama. By midmorning, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority had closed due to an influx of riders.



Roundup file photo

HISTORY Former President Barack Obama waves to the crowd outside the Canadian Embassy Jan 20, 2009 in Washington, D.C.

“Spectators ... waited as long as six hours for entrance due to limited security personnel,” the article read. “Stacked shoulder-to-shoulder, spectators crammed between federal buildings on 3rd Street from Maryland Avenue to C Street, where the view included only the dome of the Capitol building.”

A specific memory that stands out to Lloyd was a father-son duo trying to document a glimpse of Obama, even if it meant lying on top of portable toilets.

“The father unabashedly lifted up his son to sit on top of a row of portable toilets so he could get better photo,” Lloyd said. “When people behind him complained he was blocking their view, he lied down on his stomach. I think he lied there the whole inauguration, just clicking away.”

Looking back, attending the inauguration stands as one of the many meaningful experiences they had at Baylor — right alongside late nights in the Lariat newsroom and the stories that pushed them beyond campus. It was a lesson in purpose and perspective that traveled home with them and remained even decades later.

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The incredible true story of Pie Man

The confectionary criminal pied hundreds on Baylor campus for over a decade

JACKSON POSEY & HANNAH WEBB
Sports Editor | Focus Editor

The masked marauder grins, pearly whites flashing under a ski mask.

Baylor's most notorious criminal spent an entire paycheck at H-E-B, stacking piles of coconut cream pies inside a dingy minifridge. These were not desserts of whimsy. They were sweet ammunition for the unwitting.

"Simple Simon met a pieman/Going to the fair," a 1764 nursery rhyme reads. "Says Simple Simon to the pieman/Let me taste your ware."

Baylor met its own Pie Man over two centuries later.

A royal succession of confectionery criminals reigned over campus from 1976 to 1988. Just before Valentine's Day 1976, a small advertisement graced The Baylor Lariat. "FED UP OR JUST FOR FUN," it reads. "I throw pies in faces upon request."

What began with a harmless advertisement soon became mired in controversy, police defiance and a successful sting operation. During the Pie Man's reign of terror, he took hundreds of victims, pie-ing unsuspecting bystanders for small sums of money and the love of the game.

"A vigilante is just a man lost in the scramble for his own gratification," Ra's al Ghul once told Batman. "He can be destroyed or locked up. But if you make yourself more than just a man — if you devote yourself to an ideal — and if they can't stop you — then you become something else entirely ... Legend."

Every hit was meticulous. The Pie Man dressed in white pants, socks, shirt and a ski mask, crafting an untouchable aura while preparing his dashing escape. An escape route, getaway vehicle and "at least one blocker for protection" were aligned. The entire process took 30 minutes. Thousands of calls flooded the Pie Man's solicitation number, scrawled in chalk on sidewalks across campus.

He pied students and professors alike. He pied the student body president and vice president. He pied an evangelist. He pied a girl on the second floor of North Russell and even pulled off a rare "triple hit" in the SUB, hitting two students and returning to hit the girl who hired him.

"I love it," the Pie Man told The Lariat in 1980. "It gives me such a high to hit people!"

Dr. Charles Capone met his fate on Sept. 12, 1988.

"What I remember, of course, is just him coming at me in the classroom," Capone said. "He opened the door, ran in quickly. I remember bracing myself ... on my back leg and putting my right arm to block. The pie hit me in the shoulder and splashed on my face."

Capone still recalls the incident as abrupt and surprising.

"It was jarring; one doesn't expect that you'll be physically attacked," Capone said. "Certainly, the adrenaline starts flowing. You know it's a shocking experience."

In the Sept. 20, 1988, edition of The Lariat, Capone spoke about the incident from the prior week.

"Fortunately, it was whipped cream, which is better than other creams," he said. "But it stained my suit!"

The Pie Man had one more chance to attack this semester before meeting his demise.

With the help of two undercover police officers and The Lariat itself, Pie Man was apprehended after attacking Dr. James Hunt, an assistant professor at the time.

"With my superb athletic ability, I was able to dodge the pie," Hunt said at the time. "Most of the pie hit the blackboard."

The arrest was quick and surprising. The perpetrator was instructed to approach Capone with sincere remorse for his actions and disappear into the ether.

Following the arrest, radio silence cracked across the airwaves. Onlookers wondered if the filling had run out.



IN YOUR FACE The Pie Man finds a victim in Penland Hall Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1976 as interested bystanders enjoy the scene, marking the beginning of his reign of sweet terror.

"The institution of the Pie Man was assumed over," Preston Smith wrote in the Dec. 8, 1988, edition of The Lariat.

Meanwhile, the Pie Man plotted his triumphant return.

At 11:15 a.m., a man walked into the Hankamer School of Business with a gleam in his eye and a pie in his hand. The assailant opened the door of Professor Leslie Rasner's Business Law 3305 class, shouted an expletive and struck student Jim Wyatt in the face with a pie before running away.

Chris Colihan observed the attack up close.

"I was in class and this man opened the door," Colihan recalled. "He walked in, yelled a name, and said, 'This is from so-and-so!' and gave another name. He just hit her with the pie and turned around and ran out."

Wyatt's glasses were smattered with pie cream, so he never saw the culprit. He trudged to the bathroom to clean up, his classmates' laughter echoing behind him. But he wasn't out of the woods yet. Pie Man would strike again.

"When Wyatt went to the restroom, he still could not see because of cream covering his face, so he was not ready for the Pie Men waiting for him in the bathroom," Smith wrote of the Avengers-style sneak attack. "The assailants struck him with several more pies, but he still never saw the attackers."

Wyatt returned, "completely covered in pie cream," and mumbled, "there was more of them in the bathroom." He packed up his things and went home, but the Pie Man (and his henchmen) still weren't finished.

Footsteps foretold the third appearance.

"Hey, Gina," yelled a man poking his head through the door. "You're next!"

All hell broke loose. Several students leapt from their chairs to chase the man down, but he'd already escaped into his getaway car. He tried to wrest command from the female getaway driver, but by the time she switched seats, the pursuers were upon them. A screaming, wrestling match ensued.

Steve Spoonemore and Larry Vاسبinder, two students, assaulted the car from opposite angles. Vاسبinder failed to breach the passenger door, while Spoonemore managed to turn the car off twice from the driver's side — but couldn't wrench the keys out of the ignition. Spoonemore gave up the fight after the getaway car ran a stop sign at 20 miles per hour, at which point he pushed himself out of the car and rolled several times to a stop in the street.

Once again, the Pie Man had gotten away — this time, for good.

Wyatt, the victim, played the incident off as harmless fun. Gina Gee, the student threatened before the chase scene in episode three, seemed confused and upset at catching a stray. Professor Rasner did not find the incident amusing.

"If I had a deadly weapon, I would use it in my defense," Rasner told The Lariat in 1988. "It is embarrassing. It is degrading. This just should not go on in a university. It is past a joke."

Sixteen years after the last reported pie-ing at Baylor, Homer Simpson adopted a new alter ego. Upon seeing his daughter mistreated at the county fair, the star of The Simpsons donned a mask and splatted "The Rich Texan" in the face under a familiar guise. A hero was reborn.

"Whatever injustice shows its ugly face, I will be there, for I am the Pie Man," Simpson proclaimed.

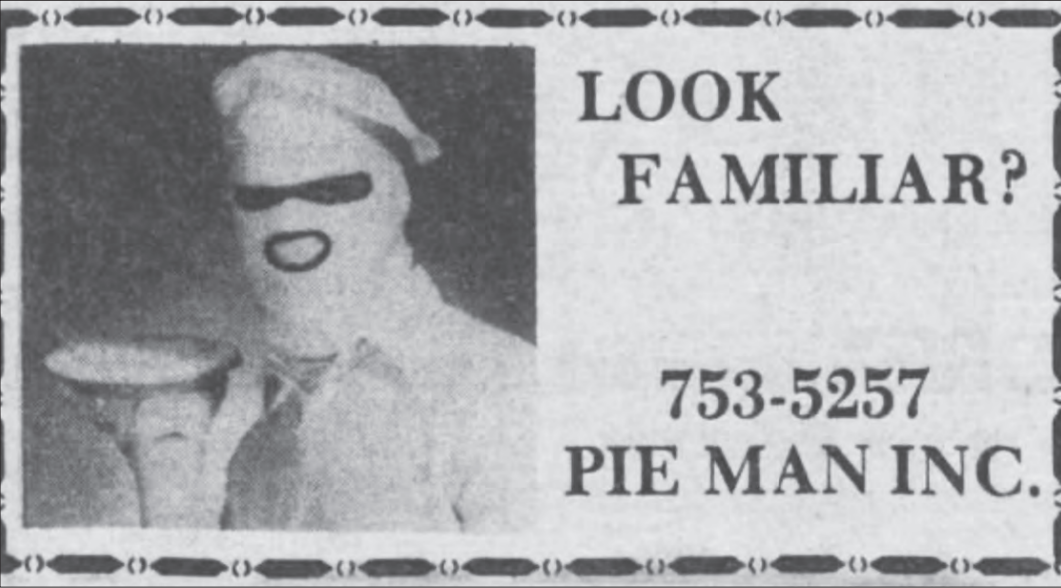
Baylor's Pie Man was not universally beloved. During fall 1976, he hiked prices from \$3.50 to \$7 and considered making T-shirts "to make this a national thing, like streaking." In November of that year, he told The Lariat people in his hall had set him up.

"They all had pies ready and hit me when I came in," he said, while another group was "waiting for me and rubbed cheese in my face and kicked me ... [But] they were disgracing themselves, not disgracing me."

The institution of the Pie Man has lain dormant at Baylor since those final attacks in 1988, with no whispers of a renewal this side of Springfield.

February will mark the 50th anniversary of the Pie Man's grand entrance to the vigilante stage. There's no record of his identity or current whereabouts. But somewhere, somehow, he's out there. Waiting, baking and plotting his return.

"Most of my pleasure's from the audience," Pie Man said in 1976. "That's what I'm in the business for: entertainment."



Lariat file photo

WANTED MAN This Pie Man ad ran in the Nov. 10, 1977, edition of The Baylor Lariat.



Lariat file photo

DELIVERY! Clay Morton, a member of The Lariat Editorial Board, looks up from his work Nov. 23, 1976, to find a masked crusader aiming his weapon.



Lariat file photo

FOR ME? Failing to believe any of his crew would betray him, Morton did not duck in time and Pie Man hit his mark once again.



Lariat file photo

YES. Morton, still in a state of shock, tries to figure out the best way to get the stuff off his face and still keep control over the newsroom.



Lariat file photo

CREAMED Stephen Jetton fell prey to Pie Man who has been gracing the campus with his pie attacks. Jetton was working in the Brazos Communications office in Feb. 1976 when he met his fate.



Lariat file photo

MASKED MARAUDER The whipped cream slinging Pie Man was pictured on the prowl again in the Nov. 13, 1980, edition of The Baylor Lariat.



Lariat file photo

MOMENTS BEFORE DISASTER The 1980 Lariat staff poses for a group photo prior to three editors being fired later that spring.



Lariat file photo

BREAKING NEWS The first editorial the Lariat published in opposition to Baylor President Abner McCall's decision to discipline any female Baylor student that posed for Playboy



Lariat file photo

PLAYBOY During the Playboy controversy, The Lariat ran this cartoon editorializing the issue.



Roundup file photo

SIGN OF THE TIMES Baylor student Jimmy Pucket protests the university's censorship of The Baylor Lariat.

1980 Playboy controversy halted 3 weeks of Lariat printing

MACKENZIE GRIZZARD
Assistant News Editor

For 125 years, The Baylor Lariat has been the constant, steady voice for Baylor students, by Baylor students. As administrations changed and the world carried on, Baylor's student journalists published the news, wrote opinion columns, covered athletic events and analyzed the arts.

But in the spring of 1980, the lights went out in the newsroom. Students still went to class and Fountain Mall still hummed with springtime chatter, but the newsstands remained empty.

The Baylor Lariat, the voice for the student body for the past 80 years, was silent. An empty newsroom was echoed only by the fateful last stand of the Feb. 22, 1980, editorial.

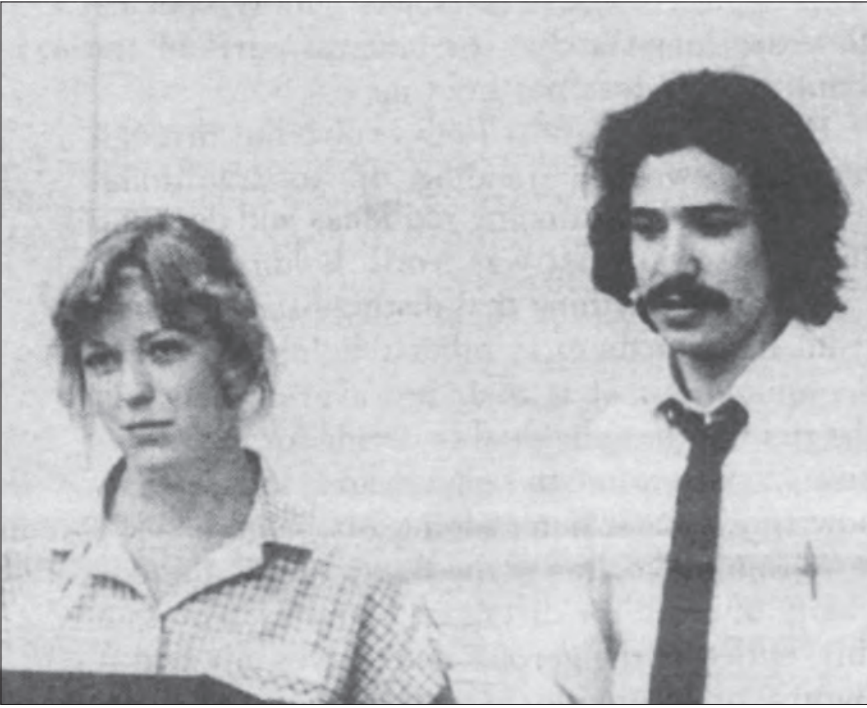
"When we opened this editorial page 30 Lariats ago, we promised an honest, hard-hitting page of opinion — our opinion," the editorial reads. "Now that's been denied us."

A month earlier, Playboy Magazine had its sights set on Baylor. Photographer David Chan had done features like "Girls of the Ivy League" and "Girls of the Pac 10" with plans to continue into the Southwest Conference, which included Baylor at the time.

When news of female students potentially being photographed nude reached a conservative, Christian institution like Baylor, it was met with apprehension by the administration.

"They ran a thing called 'Playgirls of the Southwest Conference,'" said Dr. Doug Ferdon, former chair of the journalism department. "At the time, it was a big deal to have women bare their breasts, but the Baylor girls did not; they just unbuttoned another button."

On Feb. 1, 1980, Baylor President Abner



Lariat file photo

CENSORSHIP Carla Wood, assistant city editor, and Jeff Barton, editor-in-chief of the Lariat, present their argument to student congress about the administration's censorship ruling.

McCall said any female student who posed nude for Playboy would face disciplinary consequences. Dean of Student Affairs W.C. Perry said the administration would not necessarily object to a clothed pose, such as a swimsuit, but nudity was a serious concern.

After McCall's official statement, a Playboy spokesperson told The Lariat that the company would assist students with legal aid if they faced disciplinary action.

On Feb. 19th, The Lariat officially put its hat in the ring, publishing an editorial that took a harsh stance against President McCall's decision.

"The moralist arguments against posing

to "handle her own affairs," calling it a "rallying point for fundamentalist support," "Around 1975 to 1985, the fundamentalists in Texas kept trying to take over Baylor," Ferdon said. "We were kind of the younger people they brought in to help buttress the faculty against fundamentalism."

On Feb. 21, McCall clapped back, accusing The Lariat of publishing an editorial that not only was against Baylor's Christian mission but also encouraged students to violate university policy. McCall and the administration declared that The Lariat would not be able to publish editorials or news stories that promote "ideas not keeping with traditional Baptist doctrines."

"If editors can do their job and report the news and get the facts straight, they won't have a problem," Ferdon said. "But once they start writing columns or editorials that are against something Baylor promotes, they'll run into trouble."

McCall told Barton and other Lariat editors that future editorials should focus on less serious topics and that The Lariat could continue covering news as long as it was the "right kind" of news.

"Herbert Reynolds and Abner McCall, who were in charge of Baylor at the time, didn't have a lot of choice because they were caught between the fundamentalists on one hand and student free speech on the other," Ferdon said.

The battle reached its climax in the Friday paper published that week, with another editorial announcing the walkouts by the editors and several staff members.

"We respect Dr. McCall a great deal — and we have made every effort to understand each plank of his position," the editorial reads. "He has accused us of attacking him personally and of blaspheming the precepts of this university.

Respectfully, we must argue that we have done neither. We often disagree with the president, and when we do, it is because we have an honest difference of opinion with his policies — not because we have any dislike for Dr. McCall as a man."

A few days later, McCall fired back with his own statement, emphasizing that Baylor was well within its rights to decide what is and what is not published.

"If any student editor or reporter sincerely feels that he or she cannot work within the policies herein set forth, he should resign from The Lariat staff," McCall said in the statement.

After a 50–100 person student protest outside Pat Neff on Feb. 27, an emboldened Barton continued to lobby student congress to make the administration reconsider its decision.

"As a private university, you have to either hope that there's some sort of local law or regulation in place that protects your editorial independence," said Sommer Dean, Fred Hartman distinguished professor of journalism and licensed attorney.

The next day, student congress voted 20–1 to support McCall, with some accusing The Lariat of only publishing favorable letters that agreed with the editor's stance.

Despite this loss, Barton, Kolar and News Editor Cyndy Slovak published one last editorial on Feb. 29 to defend their position.

"Even though the administration will be carrying on its policies to a new set of transients after we are gone, we hope students will no longer accept the tired rationale that what is said and done now will not matter," the editorial reads. "We hope the administration cares enough to listen. We hope students care enough to question. But that time may not have arrived. And that's too bad."

Shortly before publication, without the editors's consent, Lariat adviser Ralph Strother removed a section of the editorial to avoid further controversy. When the editors objected, he recommended firing Barton, Slovak and Kolar.

"It wasn't really the news in The Lariat that caused all the trouble," Ferdon said. "[Strother] went down to the tribunal that night and took one paragraph out, and that caused most of the trouble."

On March 3, the Baylor Board of Publications voted unanimously to fire all three editors. Over a hundred students gathered in protest, according to the Baylor Line.

Several other professors in the journalism department either resigned or were fired after expressing support for The Lariat, scholarships were cancelled and Baylor was removed from several national journalism societies.

Publication of The Lariat was suspended for three weeks. Students lost scholarships and professors lost tenure. McCall would later equate the controversy to "a wart on his toe."

"For me, personally, I'd probably be on the side of the journalists," Ferdon said. "I would be against them censoring that, but I was also aware that when I came in, I had to make a lot of people happy."

Several months later, the Playboy feature was published — and roughly 80 Baylor women had been photographed. According to Ferdon, he was not aware of any Baylor student posing completely nude for the final photos.

The Lariat resumed publication after the dust had settled, and the three fired editors did not return. The "wart" on McCall's foot was successfully lanced, but the deep scar of a censorship controversy remained a part of Baylor's campus — and Lariat history.

When bears roamed the field

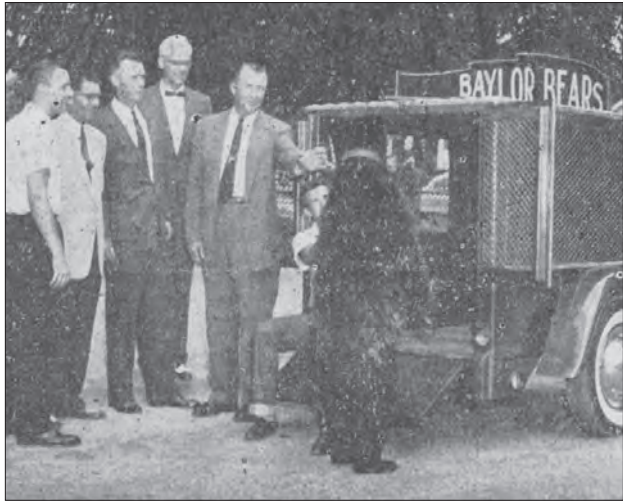
A history of Baylor’s live mascots on the gridiron



SWEET VICTORY Baylor showman Joe College pioneered the tradition of drinking Dr Pepper at football games. The practice was discontinued in 2003.



GET DOWN FROM THERE Baylor’s bear pit was the “most popular spot on campus” for tourists and students in 1959.



NIP IT IN THE BUD Baylor mascot Nip “gives a preview of her antics” before taking the spotlight in the 1955 season.



MEET AND GREET Freshman Linda Meyers was among the many fans of Baylor’s live bruin mascot in 1958.



IF NOT FRIEND, WHY FRIEND-SHAPED? Pancho was officially named Baylor’s cub mascot in 1955.

Baylor WBB turns heads in Paris, sets tone for season

MARISSA ESSENBURG
Sports Writer

No. 16 Baylor women’s basketball began its 2025-26 campaign with international flair, knocking off No. 7 Duke 58-52 at Adidas Arena in Paris to open the season on a high note.

With a roster that blends returners and experienced transfers, head coach Nicki Collen’s new-look Baylor squad already carries the cohesion of a team that’s been together far longer than a few months.

“I think this team’s definitely going to surprise a lot of people,” senior forward Darianna Littlepage-Buggs said at Big 12 Media Day. “We have returning players, but we also have a lot of new ones, and I think all of our different talents are going to mesh together. It’s going to be amazing.”

In her fifth year at the helm, Collen leads a Baylor team hungry to build on last season’s 28-8 finish, when losses to TCU in the Big 12 title game and Ole Miss in the second round of the NCAA tournament left unfinished business on the table.

After a demanding offseason, the Bears have already shown flashes of what they’re capable of — and this is just the beginning.

“I’m really excited to go out there and compete, to show fans what we’ve been working on all summer,” redshirt sophomore guard

Taliah Scott said. “We’ve had a hard summer, so being able to showcase that, rack up wins and hopefully make a deep run in the tournament means a lot.”

That shared drive stems from a foundation that’s been building for years.

In today’s era of NIL deals and the transfer portal, keeping an entire class together is practically unheard of. Yet Baylor stands out as one of only five Power Four programs with its entire 2022 class intact, led by a core of veterans that have been together since day one: Littlepage-Buggs, Bella Fontleroy and Kyla Abraham.

“Having those three who started with us, plus Jana in her fourth year, we have four players who understand the standards and expectations — and I’m not just talking about X’s and O’s,” Collen said. “I’m talking about the culture of the locker room, how we show up and how we treat one another.”

Two of those veterans have earned national recognition. Fontleroy was named to the Cheryl Miller Small Forward of the Year Award watch list, while Littlepage-Buggs was chosen for the Naismith Trophy WBB Player of the Year watch list and the Katrina McClain Power Forward of the Year watch list for the third straight season.

It didn’t take long for Baylor to make a statement on opening night — and it came from one of the team’s newest faces. Just one game



GREAT SCOTT! Redshirt sophomore guard Taliah Scott attacks during an exhibition against West Texas A&M. Scott scored 12 fourth-quarter points Monday to lift Baylor past No. 7 Duke 58-52.

into the season, Scott has proven to be one of the Bears’ biggest offseason pickups, already making headlines for her fearless style of play and relentlessness on both ends of the floor.

In her debut for the green and gold, the Auburn transfer and Ann Meyers-Drysdale Preseason Shooting Guard of the Year watch list honoree scored six points in the first 90 seconds of the fourth quarter and single-handedly outscored No. 7 Duke 12-9 in the period, lifting the Bears past the Blue Devils for a top-10 upset to open the season.

“Down the stretch, you saw why Taliah is at Baylor,” Collen said. “It was a really good game to kick off the season, and I’m super proud of how these guys battled against a really, really good team.”

After shaking off the rust in the opening half against West Texas A&M in a preseason scrimmage, the pieces began to fall in line and give Baylor fans a little glimpse into the season ahead.

Baylor is set to appear in 10 nationally-televised games this season, highlighted by neutral-site bouts with Iowa on Nov. 20 (ESPN2) and Texas on Dec. 14 (ABC).

With the national spotlight comes expectation, but for Baylor, that pressure only fuels the mission ahead.

“Everybody has in their mind that they want to win, and they’re willing to do anything,” Scott said. “I think that’s going to be essential for us this year and what we’re trying to do: win championships.”

Lariat legend & interview expert

Alumnus Preston Kirk talks student paper in ‘60s

O’CONNOR DANIEL
Reporter

Long before Preston Kirk (’68) covered Apollo missions, or the great heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali’s trial, he was meeting deadlines on a hundred-year-old flatbed press in the back of Baylor’s barracks building.

Kirk joined The Baylor Lariat on Feb. 1, 1967 — his birthday — just one year before graduating. As The Lariat celebrates its 125th anniversary on Friday, Kirk reminisced on a radically different newsroom — a wooden, military-style structure behind Old Main, perched over Waco Creek.

“There were linotype operators, that’s hot metal,” Kirk said. “So every story, every letter had to be set in a tray backwards and then printed. We might start at 8, 9, 10 o’clock at night to start getting that paper out. We’d have to print most of the night to get 3,000 copies... then they would get folded and sent out to the dorms and the Student Union Building.”

Kirk said he didn’t arrive at Baylor planning to be a journalist.

“I wanted to be a drama major,” he said. “So my major is drama [and] English and in my junior year, the professor at Baylor — he was a big man — put his arm around me and said, ‘Preston, you don’t really belong on the stage. You need to go back to the testing center and determine what your real aptitude is.’”

“Don’t be afraid to pebble back and ask the same question three times if you’re not getting the answer you want.”

PRESTON KIRK
FORMER STAFF WRITER

Kirk said he was crushed. Up until then, he was under the impression that he was a thriving actor, having won several awards and secured an entertainer role at Six Flags one summer.

When his test results came back, the recommendation was clear: he should be a pediatrician, a preacher or “something to do with writing.”

“I chose the third option because I had been a high school newspaper editor for two years,” Kirk said. “I had done the literary magazine. I had written for my local newspaper in town, The Bellmead News. So I thought this would work.”

A little over a year later, he became a journalist for The Lariat. Kirk poured himself into the work. He covered sports, profiled campus characters and wrote long-form features for the weekend supplement. One article documented a tragic hazing death. Another piece collected student opinions about Baylor football — shortly before fans burned the head coach in effigy behind the SUB.

“I was proud of every little snippet I could get in The Lariat,” he said, flipping through a thick, yellowed scrapbook of his old clippings — his “cutbook.”

He said he still remembers the Baylor Barracudas, the university’s short-lived synchronized swimming team, and the stories that never made it to print.

Kirk’s classmates also knew him for his motorcycle.

“The professor, David McCamp, would



Photo courtesy of Preston Kirk

HOT OFF THE PRESS Preston Kirk stands in The Baylor Lariat composing room in 1967.

always say while taking roll, ‘OK, I’m checking Preston Kirk, and I can hear his motorcycle. He’s coming, Kirk said.

He even wrote about helmet laws and campus bike safety, he said.

“So write what you know,” he said.

Two weeks before graduation, Kirk became editor of the Waco Lodestar for \$85 a week — his first job in journalism.

He went on to intern at The Galveston Daily News, then worked for United Press

International in Houston, where he covered groundbreaking medical transplants, civil rights hearings, the trials of LSD guru Timothy Leary and the Apollo 8-14 space missions.

His work earned national recognition. His investigative reporting led to a state probe of fraudulent land deals. In 1973, the U.S. Small Business Administration recognized his coverage in the Congressional Record. He later

PRESTON KIRK >> A8

Top 12 pop culture moments The Lariat was there for

OLIVIA TURNER
Arts & Life Editor

Since the turn of the 20th century, The Lariat has been reporting on the major events relevant to campus, Texas and our nation at large. Among these events were several pop culture moments, which defined generations and made each decade something to remember. Through all — the good, the bad, the funny and the sad, The Lariat was there.

Here are 12 major moments in Lariat history, hand plucked from the archives.

THE FIRST HOMECOMING (1909)

Little did Baylor know it had kick-started what would become one of the most iconic aspects of high school and university culture when it launched the nation’s first homecoming celebration in 1909. One print issue described the occasion as “a scene of activity” with “hundreds of old Baylorites” pouring into campus for a band concert, faculty reception and several special features from the individual departments.

WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE (1919)

In April 1919, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw came to speak at Baylor on the topic of women’s suffrage, which a Lariat reporter attended. In her speech, Shaw argued for women’s rights, reminding students that a democracy should promote equal rights for all people, and thus, women deserve the same advantages as men.

“The only way to refute that argument is to prove that women are not people,” Dr. Shaw said.

The coverage of this event marks the influence the women’s suffrage movement had on the nation, especially considering the 19th Amendment was passed only a year later, which finally gave women the right to vote.

THE U.S. ENTERS WWII (1941)

Only a day after America entered



Lariat file photo

BREAKING DOWN The front page of the Sept. 12 issue of The Lariat depicts the fall of the World Trade Center in a series of graphics above the headline.

the second World War, the largely printed words, “It Can’t Happen Here’ Attitude Fades As Baylor Readjusts To Reality Of War” stood out on the front page of the Dec. 9 Lariat paper. Under these words were a series of stories — headlines like “Registration is made difficult as news remains” and “Baylor Girls Feel Hardships of Crisis, Too” — which detailed all the complicated feelings of students, staff and faculty that came with joining yet another world war.

For the next four years, The Lariat would be littered with stories about battle victories, student war effort organizations and those students who were killed in action and would never return to Baylor campus. Like much of the rest of the country, some stories detailed women students stepping up to fill roles and complete tasks that the men who were drafted would typically do.

Regardless of the pain and sorrow detailed in these prints, The Lariat made clear that the students remained strong through it all and made every effort to help their boys overseas.

WWII ENDS (1945)

After all the loss and tragedy of war, the joyful announcement came on May 8: “War Ended in Europe.” Under the all-caps hammer, reads “Five Years, Eight Months, Six Days of War in Europe Concluded by Surrender.”

The end of the war marked a period of hope, renewal and rebuilding that too would be reflected in The Lariat editions following this one.

BILLY GRAHAM VISITS BAYLOR (1951)

With the rise of evangelism in America came Billy Graham, one of the most beloved spreaders of the Gospel at the time, and somewhat of a Christian celebrity.

One front page print details an address Graham gave at chapel class in Waco Hall on Jan. 11, 1951. Writer Catherine Osborne described a passionate speech in which the evangelist spoke on divine intervention, “the shrine of science” and how communism is “inspired, controlled and given supernatural power by the devil.”

THE HOLLYWOOD GOLDEN AGE (1958)

Through the late ‘50s and into the ‘60s, an increase in the production of films swept America with an overwhelming adoration of these Hollywood movies and the lovely actors and actresses who starred in them. These figures shaped everything from fashion and beauty standards at the time to expectations and stereotypes of romantic relationships.

Among the likes of legends like Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and Bridget Bardot were rising stars like actress and model Sandra Dee, who graced Baylor’s campus on Nov. 17, 1958, for a reception in the university drawing room in light



Lariat file photo

TEARS OF JOY An onlooker, who requested he remain anonymous, sheds a single tear as President Barack Obama is sworn into office Jan. 20, 2009.

of her recent role in the film “The Restless Years.”

RACE TO SPACE (1962)

Along with the rest of the nation, Baylor celebrated the U.S. getting the first man, John H. Glenn Jr., in space on Feb. 20, 1962, as told in this paper. Under the larger headline, “US Gets First Astronaut In Orbit,” The Lariat ran a wire from Cape Canaveral, Fla., where the rocket had launched, along with a piece which detailed student opinion poll results on whether or not they believed the government should have spent such a hefty sum on the accomplishment.

Some responses were positive, saying that the trip was necessary for further scientific development and saw the event as historic. Others weren’t so supportive, saying that “if God wanted us to fly, we’d have wings.”

The piece also noted that on the day, several students cut classes to witness the event on television or listen over the radio, even bringing portable radios with them to their

classes and meetings.

With the implications of the competition with Russian astronauts and the rapidly growing scientific discoveries occurring during the ‘60s, space flight was possibly the most defining moment of a generation.

Read more about some of The Lariat’s biggest stories by scanning the QR code below.



LARIAT LADIES A Lariat section from March 18, 1970, referred to as “The day of the woman” on the front page of the issue, includes articles on the state of the feminist movement and its reception at Baylor.

Lariat women have shaped headlines for 125 years

ARDEN BERRY
Staff Writer

Women have been involved in The Baylor Lariat since its inception 125 years ago. According to the Texas Collection Digital Archives, the first issue in 1900 included two female associate editors: Eunice Taylor and Sarah Rose Kendall.

According to a blog on the Texas Collection, a woman named Sara Rose Kendall Irvine, Class of 1902, wrote a letter with a firsthand account of how the green and gold colors were chosen.

“The time was spring, and as we sped along the train passed through a field abloom with wild dandelions,” Irvine wrote. “The vivid yellow and green were beautiful together, and somebody on that train said, ‘What a lovely combination!’ I was sitting with Charlie Ingram, the other member of the committee. I turned to him and said, ‘Charlie, there are our colors, except that we will say ‘green and gold’ instead of ‘green and yellow,’ if you like the idea.”

Assuming both Sara Rose Kendalls are the same, it was a female Lariat editor who gave Baylor its colors.

According to Collegestats, Baylor’s original campus at Independence was coeducational from its opening in 1845, though men and women had separate classes. It split in 1851, then reunited in 1887. By the time The Lariat began in 1900, the school it represented had been coeducational for several years.

Based on the archives and an article published in 2000, the first female Lariat editor was Martha Youngblood from 1918-1919.

“Martha Youngblood became the first woman editor of The Lariat in 1918; she lobbied for suffrage and an official journalism class,” a column written by Dr. John Tisdale, Dr. Kyle Cole and Dr. Brad Owens read.

According to the archives, the next female Lariat editor was Sarah Pool in 1945, who led a staff of several female editors and reporters.

Winnie Dudley was editor in 1946, Dot Jacobsen in 1951, Catherine Osborne in 1952, Gwyna Lee Parker, whose obituary stated that she was both an editor for The Lariat and Roundup yearbook, in 1953; Dorothy Cook in 1954, Jane Walker in 1958, Madeleine McDermott in 1960 and Ella Wall in 1962, the first female editor-in-chief.

Wall wrote an editorial on the Baylor faculty unanimously endorsing the acceptance of “all students regardless of race” during the period of integration.

“Those who have taken part in the actions deserve respect and recognition for leading the way to the eventual desegregation of Baylor,” Wall wrote.

“I didn’t think about any of this in 1988. I just thought we could do anything.”

DAWN MCMULLAN
1988 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Female writers before Wall also spoke out through The Lariat. In 1901, according to a HESA Baylor History Project blog post, The Lariat published a poem by Maria S. Porter titled “A College Girl of the Period,” in which she describes the knowledge a woman in college has, despite a “Dr. Clarke.”

“In the future, who can say, that she will not get fair play, and have opened to her every college door?” Porter wrote.

One article from 1958, titled “Tribute to a Gracious Lady,” praised Dean of Women Gladys Hicks by describing the conditions Baylor women endured

before her leadership and how Hicks remedied them.

“When Dean Hicks came to Baylor, girls had as many privileges [sic] as they did in the dark ages,” the article read. “The American Association of University Women did not approve of Baylor; the scholarship standing of Baylor women was not recognized, and many were living in converted army barracks.”

Even in 2017, The Lariat published an editorial on fighting for global equity for women.

“Although women’s rights have come a long way in the last 100 years, we still have a long way to go,” the editorial read.

The progress made thus far, however, has allowed many women to serve as editor-in-chief. In 1988, Dawn McMullan became editor-in-chief. By that time, McMullan said she never considered that there could be limitations on who could take the role.

“It didn’t even occur to me in 1988,” McMullan said. “Were there Black editors before me? Were there women editors before me? Were there gay editors? I didn’t know. I didn’t think about any of this in 1988. I just thought we could do anything.”

Torie Johnson, who was editor-in-chief from 2000-01, said she did not feel limited either, as there were many women in leadership positions during the four years she worked for The Lariat.

“I don’t think that I would say there was any material difference,” Johnson said. “There were lots of women on staff that I saw as I was coming up over the course of my time on staff that I was able to see. So it was a very attainable position when you’re seeing other folks, other women in senior leadership positions for the newspaper.”

From Porter in 1901 to a majority-female staff now in 2025, The Baylor Lariat has received much writing and leadership from female writers and editors even since it began.

RARE MAJORS from A1

make up nearly 30% of the undergraduate population.

What’s more, the top two majors (and even the top three to a slightly lesser extent) are quite similar. Biology and health science studies, while distinguished by their locations in separate colleges and different coursework emphases, are both represented significantly by pre-med students. For Plano senior Will Parks, the similarities are definitely there.

“The other science classes I take are certainly more biology and physiology,” Parks said. “If I had to pick [a most similar major], bio would certainly be near or at the top.”

Even in a 900-person major that’s a cousin to a department of 1,100, Parks still sees the value in smaller majors.

“I think you’re always going to have some majors that are more prominent than others,” Parks said. “But I think it’s cool that we have 120-plus majors, because I think it gives a lot of different individuals an opportunity to pursue what they enjoy.”

But when the top handful of disciplines make up a third of the class, a lot of those “less prominent” majors can shrink to the size of a nuclear family — or smaller. The Office of Institutional Research reports 11 majors with four or fewer students enrolled.

One of those tight-knit majors is piano pedagogy; Fort Worth senior Rachel Jageman is one of the four people enrolled. Jageman —

who comes from a family of Baylor alumni, including 1955 Baylor Lariat Editor Howard Legate Jr. — confirmed the size to back up the university’s report.

“I only know three others,” she said.

Part of the reason piano pedagogy is so small is because of its niche focus: piano education outside the school system.

“Piano pedagogy is for specifically teaching piano students, whether in a private studio or a community studio or group lessons,” Jageman said.

It’s also predominantly a graduate program at most universities, she said, which keeps undergraduate enrollment small nationwide. But despite the size, the little department stays connected.

“We interact with piano performance majors all the time,” Jageman said. “We’re in studio classes with piano performance majors, and there are church music majors who concentrate in piano. So I don’t feel like we’re isolated, even though it’s a major with only four people.”

But whether it’s one student or one thousand, Jageman said as long as there’s interest, a subject should be studied.

“There are lots of subjects that are really deserving of study, and not everyone is going to be interested in everything, but it’s nice to have a space for the few people that might be interested in,” she said.

PANEL from A1

same approach in my business work, family business with my employees.”

Dawn McMullan was editor-in-chief in 1988, when Ronald Reagan visited Baylor.

“I think we kind of knew what a big event it was,” McMullan said. “But when you got there and saw Secret Service just crawling all over the place, you were like, ‘Oh, this is big time here.”

McMullan said her professors inspired her.

“Sitting in this building, Dr. McCorkle said, ‘You’re such a good writer,’” McMullan said. “It was the first time anybody ever said that to me.”

Torie Johnson was the first Black female editor-in-chief from 2000-2001 and is currently the associate vice president for strategic communications and initiatives at Baylor.

“I think that there is such an important place when you have the opportunity to see the facts, tell the story in the context of an institution in a way that’s different, but it still has the potential to move the needle,” Johnson said.

After Johnson, John Drake was editor-in-chief from 2001-2002, when 9/11 occurred. He said The Lariat taught him resilience, critical thinking and analytical skills and to not be afraid to talk to people.

“I had an idea of what it would be like to be editor of The Lariat, and then on 9/11 it became making a global story very local for our community,” Drake said. “And it was very local in so many ways. We had Bush’s ranch in Crawford, right up the road.”

Nick Dean was editor-in-chief from 2010-11.

“I feel like I have a Lariat degree more than I have a Baylor degree,” Dean said. “I learned a lot of what I use now just from The Lariat.”

Foster Nicholas is the current editor-in-chief and continues work with social media and publishing content in a digital age.

“People aren’t going to always like the work you’re putting out because it is telling the facts, and it is the news that’s going on,” Nicholas said. “We’re battling a lot of the social media stuff that comes with that.”

After 125 years of technological advancements and changes, The Lariat remains in print. Over 50 years after his tenure as editor-in-chief ended, Moore said he still reads The Lariat.

“Every year, every morning, I read the New York Times, the Houston Chronicle, the Dallas Morning News and The Baylor Lariat,” Moore said.

LARIAT HISTORY from A1

She recalled the boldness of youth.

“I just had this naive thought that we could do anything we wanted; no matter what, we didn’t have limitations,” McMullan said. “There are things that student journalists write that start movements.”

That combination of courage and collaboration has carried Baylor Student Media far beyond campus. Collectively, The Lariat, Roundup yearbook, Lariat TV News and Focus magazine have won thousands of local, state and national awards, including multiple top honors from the Associated Collegiate Press and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The accolades aren’t just plaques on the wall — they’re proof of a tradition of excellence built issue by issue, story by story.

After a decade in media law, Sommer Dean said returning to Baylor felt like “coming home.”

“I love working with young journalists and just seeing the fire

you all have,” she said. “It inspires me. Coming back to Baylor was an easy choice.”

Through every shift in technology — from linotypes to livestreams, and typewriters to browser tabs — The Baylor Lariat has adapted without losing its voice. It now operates across print, digital, podcast and broadcast platforms, with students producing breaking news, feature stories, broadcast segments and more. Yet at its core, the mission remains the same: to represent Baylor’s community.

In 1900, The Lariat was born out of necessity — “a weekly publication demanded from within and out.” In 2025, that necessity endures. The medium may evolve, but the message doesn’t: The Baylor Lariat is always there — on the stands, online and in the lives of those who make it, chasing truth for the next 125 years and presenting news written “for the students, by the students.”

PRESTON KIRK from A7

founded his own PR firm and counseled CEOs through crises.

But the habits he developed at Baylor stayed with him.

Kirk said his best advice for student journalists is to remember the interview is not over until it’s really over.

“You say the interview is over and the subject will sometimes be more casual — because, oh, it’s over ... and then you toss in just one little soft question that turns into a fine, usable answer,” he said. “So it’s not over until you’re not in the same space as your subject.”

He said the best interviews come from slowing down and paying attention.

“I would say when you go to interview a person, always — if you can — interview them where they are comfortable, because where they are comfortable will reveal so much,” Kirk said. “I would go in to interview people. I would know everything on their desk. I would make a note of it.

“Are they into sports? Are they

showing their children’s pictures? Are there dead fish photos on the wall?” he continued. “Because then you can say, ‘Wow, that’s a great picture there. Are you a bass angler or do you like saltwater?’”

Kirk said the key to making people care about an interview is to show as a journalist that he cares about them and their interests.

“The first few questions, unless it’s an ambush interview, should be soft questions,” he said. “Put the person at comfort. Comment, ‘I appreciate you taking time from your family or your job.’ Find something personal to share with them. And always take a moment, just as we started, and introduce yourself.

“And don’t be afraid to pebble back and ask the same question three times if you’re not getting the answer you want,” he continued. “And if you have to close an interview by saying, ‘I don’t think you’ve answered this question,’ then maybe find out why.”

When reflecting on how student journalism has changed, Kirk said the

fundamentals haven’t, just the tools.

“There were important things, and important people coming to campus, just like today,” he said. “But I think the writing is sharper than it was. I think the graphics and the capabilities, the fact that you can read a story and then go to Lariat TV and see it in moving pictures.”

Professor Mia Moody, Ph.D., spoke Kirk’s high praises.

“Preston Kirk is an amazing alum and supporter of the journalism, public relations and new media department,” Moody said. “He has served on our advisory board for many years. We value his contributions to our department.”

Today, Kirk and his wife fund scholarships through the Baylor New Play Initiative — supporting students who can’t continue their studies after losing a parent.

But he traces the start of his career back to the old Lariat building behind Old Main.

“The Lariat helped establish my roots as a writer,” he said. “That’s why I give back now.”