Thursday, October 20, 2022

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A&L | **B1** Homecoming tradition lasts over a century



Sports | B5 Wacoan

student-athletes experience unique Homecoming

Adopted into tradition: Baylor alumni return to homecoming with three new daughters

MARIAH BENNETT Staff Writer

Baylor alumni Meredith and Sterling Shanks attended Baylor Homecoming in 2019 with two young girls they were fostering. At the time, the girls were placed with the couple as an emergency placement, but it has since turned into a forever home.

Three years later, the Shanks are planning to return for Baylor Homecoming as a family, with a third daughter in the picture. On April 14, the couple adopted three girls: 8-year-old Ke'lona, 7-year-old Lai'Anna and 2-year-old Ea'lona.

Meredith said her daughters are ecstatic to attend homecoming for the parade, candy and football game, as well as to see the community of "Baylor friends." She said the family is currently teaching Ea'lona how to

"She's doing pretty good," Meredith said. "She's going, 'Bears!"

The girls' love for all things Baylor was highlighted in an Oct. 7 Instagram Reel made by Sterling. The video included the two eldest girls celebrating homecoming a few months after they were placed with the couple. Sterling, a fourth-generation Bear himself, said he felt nostalgic

when seeing the video and decided to post it. "Baylor is just something that's near and dear to us," Sterling said. "We were excited to share that with them ... So it's our first time taking them to Baylor, legally, as our family."

However, the family's story starts a few years before 2019, when Meredith and Sterling met as next-door neighbors while attending Baylor. Meredith said while the two were dating, they began talking about future plans and their desire to adopt children one day. Later, when the Shanks began the process of growing their family, they said it looked like it wasn't going to be a possibility biologically.

'We were like, 'Well, we always wanted to adopt," Meredith said. "And so we started praying about what avenue that was going to look like. We felt like God put foster care on our hearts ... and we just answered the call."

Before their daughters came into their lives, the couple had fostered another child who ended up returning to live with their family.

FOREVER FAMILY >> **Page A3**



Courtesy of Meredith Shanks **ADOPTED BEARS** Meredith and Sterling Shanks pose for a photo with their three adopted daughters.



Baylor University NIGHT OF THE DIVINE NINE Strolling originated in African American culture and is now celebrated through many multicultural organizations. The annual Homecoming Stroll-Off was held in the Barfield Drawing Room in 2021.

Sixth annual Stroll-Off to showcase entertainment, custom, culture

The Barfield Drawing Room of the Bill Daniel Student Center will be lit up Friday as Baylor's Nu Zeta chapter of Phi Beta Sigma and National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) takes the stage. The sixth annual Royal and Pure Homecoming Stroll-Off starts at 7 p.m. and features strolling, a type of storytelling through dance.

Baylor's NPHC serves as the governing body of The Divine Nine — Baylor's historically Black sororities and fraternities. The Stroll-Off will showcase the talents of two NPHC sororities: the Pi Mu Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha and the Rho Eta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta. The evening will also feature two NPHC fraternities: the Xi Sigma

Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi and the Tau Alpha Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, the reigning champions of the Stroll-Off.

New Orleans senior Shelynbria Jackson, president of Baylor's NPHC, said strolling originated as a means to display African American culture during a time when African Americans faced racism and discrimination.

While strolling predates the existence of historically Black sororities and fraternities, Dallas senior Ayo Omolewa, president of Phi Beta Sigma, said NPHC chapters have played a large role in carrying

on the tradition. "[Strolling is] a piece of history," Omolewa said. "It's always with us, no matter what we do [or] where we go. I'll always know the strolls. I'll always know the steps.

Friday night's competitors will be strolling in three different rounds. The Deja Blu Round will feature throwback music, while the Slow Stroll and Free Round will display

contrasting paces. Each chapter will get three minutes per round to impress the judges — all NPHC alumni — with lights and props adding to the fun and supplementing the hard work

that went into crafting the routines. Omolewa said although Phi Beta Sigma's performance will not be officially scored because they are hosting the event, members have been practicing for three days a week since the beginning of the semester, with sessions lasting several hours.

STROLLING >> Page A3

Adding a link to the chain:

Homecoming queens pass crown down

LILY NUSSBAUM

Staff Writer

While the placement of a crown and the passing of the embellished dark green cape are clear indicators of a new queen each year, a smaller, more personal tradition occurs behind the curtains.

Alumna Kaylin Clemons, taking the unofficial title of "longest reigning homecoming queen" when crowned in 2019, said she was in shock when her name was announced. Her first thought: "They never taught us how to get down the steps, only up." Her second: "I am a part of Baylor history."

"I will never forget that moment," Clemons said. "There really is just this sense of joy but also excitement that we have a tradition of women leaders at Baylor that are so strong and have impacted the community."

After being announced as queen, Clemons said she was

whisked offstage and greeted by her parents, who the committee had called beforehand, along with her best friends.

In the bustle of pictures and excitement, Clemons said past queen and alumna Kennedy Knight pulled her aside. As Knight congratulated her, she took off a gold chain necklace with a pearl and placed it

"You know she was able to wear that necklace for a year, and then she was putting it on me during that ceremony to pass on the torch,"

Clemons said. "Since I was queen for two years [due to COVID-19], I actually got to wear it at my wedding." Knight said the moment was bittersweet but joyous. She said she had worn the necklace at significant events during her time as queen,

and it held many fond memories. By

passing the chain, she passed down

those memories to the next person.

"[Clemons] and I didn't really know each other," Knight said. "Our paths didn't cross. But because of our shared love for Baylor and specifically being chosen to be homecoming queens, we were able to have that strong bond that came before us and, of course, will continue on way after us."

The 1984 necklace is just one of the two major items from the box the queens receive. The other is a scrapbook filled with pictures and moments of advice from each of the past queens. Clemons said she began her homecoming weekend by flipping through the pages.

"Reading through the letters of these women who were selected because of their investment in the community and their achievements while on campus across the four years was just really encouraging,"

ROYAL LINE >> **Page A3**

Homecoming is fun, Diadeloso is oso tragic

EMMA WEIDMANN

Staff Writer



Homecoming events are more fun than Diadeloso events. There, I said it.

Before you write me off immediately, consider the events you went to on Dia. You probably went to none of them. You may have been

sleeping in, cherishing a random Tuesday off — that is, one that won't negatively affect your attendance. You may have been spending your time with friends off campus on your day off from classes.

Did you miss goat yoga? How about the ferris wheel and the slides? Were you one of the few people on Fountain Mall listening to Apollo LTD? I bet not.

However, you can expect to see hundreds, if not thousands, of students crowd Fountain Mall to watch the bonfire, hear the Golden Wave Band play and flock over to the Bill Daniel Student Center to watch the Stroll-Off.

Students actually care about the on-campus festivities held during homecoming. However, when it comes to Dia, the low turnout makes the whole event a pretty depressing ordeal, if you ask me. Fountain Mall is more crowded between classes than it is on Dia.

On the "Day of the Bear," campus lacks an alarming amount of school spirit. Where are all the Bears, you ask? I'll leave that to your imagination.

This phenomenon is partly due to the fact that people use their day off to either rot in their dorm rooms or apartments or do something fun with their time off campus. However, homecoming falls on a weekend like any other. Classes are in session, responsibilities persist and students still find the time to come out and show their school spirit.

Homecoming is also spread across an

entire week, with events beginning on the Monday of homecoming week that keep the excitement and school spirit going for much longer than just one Tuesday.

With a bonfire, a parade, a football game and more, there's simply more to enjoy during homecoming than on Dia.

To be clear, I wouldn't trade Dia for anything.

If you asked me if I'd rather go to homecoming events or take a day off, I'd take my free Tuesday any time.

But I believe homecoming inspires a lot more feelings of warm fuzziness for the university than Dia does, with zero risk of sunburn and a whole lot less sweaty grossness.

So, when you're watching the parade go by or staring into the bonfire this homecoming, enjoy the cooler temperatures and just think about how this spring you'll probably be spending your time stressed about finals, procrastinating your homework and running to CVS for aloe vera gel.



I believe homecoming inspires a lot more feelings of warm fuzziness for the university than Dia does, with zero risk of sunburn and a whole lot less sweaty grossness.

Grinch of homecoming

This tradition is overhyped

CAITLYN MEISNER

Staff Writer

Homecoming is very overhyped and overwhelming, even for the most spirited Baylor fans.

There are way too many homecoming activities for me to keep up with. Between the bonfire, the parade, the football game, Pigskin Revue and other random events, I really don't know what to do or where to go all weekend.

Entering Baylor as a freshman in fall 2020, I've only experienced two homecomings, both of which were at opposite ends of the capacity spectrum.

Most juniors and seniors remember homecoming 2020.

We sat in McLane Stadium for a few hours watching Pigskin Revue from the big screen and saw a couple of fireworks. Go Bears!

Homecoming 2021 was a completely different story. I couldn't keep up with all the events going on, especially with all of them



I've always felt like homecoming was more for the alumni. Most of the events seem tailored to them, especially if they were in Greek life. I mean. it is in the name: homecoming.

happening on Friday night and Saturday morning. It was utterly overwhelming.

Not to mention I am the first one in my family to even know about Baylor. I didn't have a family member or alum to walk me through or



familiarize me with the events when I was

I was going through homecoming completely alone, with the help of some other college kids my age who had never experienced a college homecoming — let alone a Baylor one.

Maybe it's my family or just the northern schools I grew up around, but returning to your alma mater for homecoming has never been a thing my parents did. It was something they did for their high schools, not college.

Now that the football game is set for 11 a.m. Saturday, all of the events in the morning are going to go by even faster so everyone can scramble to the game. And this means I have to wake up even earlier to find a good spot to watch the parade, if I have the willpower to go. Yay!

Even as an undergraduate student, I've always felt like homecoming was more for the alumni. Most of the events seem tailored to them, especially if they were in Greek life.

I mean, it is in the name: homecoming. Alumni are coming home. I already live here, so I'm really just coming to campus from my apartment.

So, yes. I am the Ebenezer Scrooge of Baylor Homecoming. Maybe my cold, nonsouthern heart will warm up to the idea of homecoming when I'm a senior next year and I realize it's my last one.

This year, though, I think I'll watch all the traffic and chaos happen from my apartment window, reading my Lariat homecoming print edition.

Baylor's bad gameday culture

Early football games kill school spirit

MATT KYLE Assistant News Editor

This weekend's homecoming football game is set for an 11 a.m. kickoff. It will be the third 11 a.m. game Baylor plays this season and the second morning game at home. We have had a 2:30 p.m. kickoff against Oklahoma State and a 6 p.m. kickoff against Albany

Not only is this early game another in a continuing trend, but the 11 a.m. start time has also pushed the start time of the homecoming parade up by an hour. While there is enough time between the end of the parade and the start of the game, there is



WAKEY, WAKEY The early homecoming football game causes a rushed schedule and interferes with gameday atmosphere

still a considerable overlap when it comes to

A good tailgate should go for two to three hours before the game, but this homecoming, fans will have to choose: watch the parade or tailgate.

For homecoming, I'm willing to wake up early for the parade. But it is also homecoming, and I would like to go to a tailgate before the game. And for all the

people participating in the parade, it creates a big time crunch between the parade and the game — not to mention the huge traffic jam that is bound to happen, though that happens every game day, and pretty much every other day in Waco.

I would like to tailgate before an 11 a.m. game any day, but I also want to sleep in on a Saturday and not have to wake up for a 9 a.m. tailgate. It just isn't exciting enough to wake up early on a Saturday to watch Baylor thrash Texas State.

Plus, morning and early afternoon games mean the games are in the hottest part of the day. I have little incentive to stay at the stadium when I'm tired and sweaty and the Bears are beating down some unknown team or getting their own butts kicked.

I know Baylor has very little to do with deciding what times their games are; that is all up to the TV networks. And we aren't doing well this year, so we aren't going to get primetime spots. However, Baylor fans can still make the most of this season and finally make Baylor game days

Early tailgates aren't the best, but we can make the best of them. As fans, we have to show up for our team. We can't only show love when Baylor is winning.

It took years for Baylor to build the great athletic programs we have now, and fans have to stick through a down year here and there. I'll be the first to admit that I leave at almost every halftime.

But if we aren't filling up McLane Stadium and making it loud, we can't keep the home-field advantage, and we won't get primetime games.



Illustration by Olivia Havre

PSL SEASON Switch up trendy hot drinks, try green tea.

JESSICA RAJKUMAR LTVN Reporter

Fall is coming:

Prep your kitchen to feast

Going out to the grocery store in the cold can be discouraging; however, with these additions to your kitchen, you will be inclined to cook a hot meal as soon as you come inside from the chilling air.



Scan here for more



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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.

STROLLING from Page A1

Jackson said the hours of preparation will produce a unique blend of motion in every stroll. Through rhythmic and synchronized movements, each chapter will express its identity — an identity built on respect for the trailblazers of the strolling tradition, according to Jackson.

"Here's how we represent those who we were founded upon," Jackson said.

echoed Omolewa Jackson's sentiments regarding the rich history of strolling.

"We want to make sure the history and legacy of what we do doesn't die out," Omolewa said.

The legacy of a homecoming strolling competition at Baylor began in 2016. At its inception, the event was titled the "Royal and Pure Homecoming Step Show." Although it is now called the "Royal and Pure Homecoming Stroll-Off," the same historical principles drive

"Stepping is when you make a beat with your hands and your body, while strolling is when you move along to another beat," Omolewa said.

The audience can expect to see passionate stepping and strolling on Friday night, with both traditions allowing members to display who they are culturally, Jackson said. The event will reflect the spirit of homecoming, as many alumni come back looking forward to this event in particular. Jackson said the Stroll-Off is an opportunity for NPHC alumni to see how their chapters have evolved over the since years they've left.

Delta Sigma Theta alumna Jaila Williams graduated last spring and is returning to campus for the Stroll-Off. She said she is excited to watch her sorority mentees from last year perform.

"I strongly value relationships with all of them," Williams said. "So it's important to me that they feel supported and know that the rapport we built

wasn't just circumstantial."

Williams said she is also anticipating connecting with fellow alumni, some of whom are traveling from Atlanta and California.

"To be able to see the people we've passed the torch to really expand on all of our legacies, and to do so together, is truly something to look forward to and celebrate," Williams said.

Alongside tradition and remembrance, the Stroll-Off reflects Phi Beta Sigma's motto — "Culture for service, service for humanity" - by partnering with Cure BU in an effort to raise money for children in need of



COMPETE Phi Beta Sigma's annual Homecoming Stroll-Off invites NPHC chapters to embrace tradition

surgeries. While there is no entry fee, Omolewa said attendees will have the opportunity to donate to the cause via QR codes.

According to Jackson, the Stroll-Off is pivotal to the life of The Divine Nine on campus, but the competition is not just for those who are familiar with the strolling tradition. Omolewa said he encourages people to attend if they want to be entertained and to experience a part of Baylor that isn't normally shown outside of the Black community.

"There are so many different sides of Baylor, so many different cultures, and it's just another one to experience," Omolewa said.

ROYAL LINE from Page A1 -

Clemons said. "There is a tradition of excellence in the women before us and that they are just as strong leaders that were built on the women before them that they were able to look up to."

Every queen gets to place her pictures, notes, blessings and mementos in the notebook. Knight said her pictures included one of her being crowned and others from throughout the weekend.

"It was sweet to look back and see all of the different queens before me and to know that this is a legacy," Knight said. "We get to represent not just us and who we are now, but all of those ladies previously. We represent one another."

While the homecoming court has grown to include a king alongside the queen, crowning a homecoming queen is one of the only women-rooted traditions in Baylor's history. The box and its contents represent this history and significance.

"Even though I might not know the queen 20 years ago or 20 years from now, we are able to share in those memories of the homecoming weekend, of being able to pass on the pearl the moment the crown hits your head and all of those shared traditions," Knight said.



Photo courtesy of Kennedy Knight

PEARLY WHITES Kaylin Clemmons (left) received the pearl from Kennedy Knight (right) backstage after the ceremony.

FOREVER FAMILY from Page A1 -

"We know and fully support reunification when it's possible," Meredith said. "We took foster care as our opportunity to minister to the birth family, whether that was taking care of that child for a period of time ... or taking care of them forever."

Meredith said it's important to know the birth families of children in foster care do love them. Sterling said stereotypes of birth families are a misconception.

'They just had different circumstances that made life harder, and that's not necessarily often their fault," Sterling said. "That is why foster care, foster parents and respite care providers are needed, because sometimes you just need to minister that family because they're in a hard place."

Sterling said there have been many times he has been told the couple's former placements or daughters "don't seem like foster kids," due to stereotypes.

'They're kids, like any other kids," Sterling said. "They just need their needs met and to be loved."

Meredith said when it comes to adoption, it's best if children can have a healthy connection to their birth family when possible. "Adoption can be beautiful when those two families can come

together," Meredith said. Sterling said it is important to know that when someone adopts a child, they must broaden their worldview and take on someone else's burdens, culture, life and practices.

"You're loving them well by letting their family become a part of your family too," Sterling said. "You're not just shoving them into a piece of your family; you're broadening what family looks like by taking on someone when adopting them."

Meredith said the couple received an overwhelming amount of support from their Baylor friends and community. Even people who they don't hear from in their day-to-day life, such as sorority sisters, have reached out.

"Once we were getting placements, I had so many reach out and say, 'Can I send you diapers? Can I help you with this? Can I send you a meal?" Meredith said. "That's Baylor to me ... It's a community that cares about you. They want to help and be there."

Sterling said his time at Baylor was crucial in forming his view of foster care and adoption, as he learned a lot about humility and servanthood.

of Jesus," Sterling said. "You need to be there to love those kids and families selflessly, with humility and with compassion." Meredith said children come to placements with nothing no beds, clothes or school supplies. She said students can help

"How I would view foster care and adoption is out of the love

by donating to organizations like Rainbow Room, Foster Closet

Sterling said another way for students to help foster families is to ask a Theta about getting involved with CASA — a nonprofit that advocates for foster care children.

Sterling said his children have radically changed how he looks at, speaks up for and treats others.

When they were placed with us, that was right before COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement," Sterling said. "My worldview and Meredith's changed by our family becoming an interracial family and realizing how sometimes the world treats and views people of other races."

Sterling said before, he didn't realize how many things in one's life were filled with microaggressions.

"The opposite of racism is not 'not being racist," Sterling said. "It's being anti-racist and speaking up and trying to, out of humility, let other people know when something's just not OK."

Meredith said their daughters have changed everything for them, including how they view the world.

"It just has given me more of a heart for people," Meredith said. "They've changed everything."

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YOURHOMEC

Safety first: Tips on staying safe throughout the e

ANA RUIZ BRICTSON

Staff Writer

As people prepare for, and travel to Waco during homecoming weekend, the Baylor University Police Department and Baylor Department of Public Safety offer several tips for staying safe throughout the eventful days.

BUPD assistant chief DJ Rodman said thousands of people come to Waco for the traditional weekend. Although some people may be familiar with the area, he said many tend not to be. The biggest safety tip Rodman gave is to plan ahead.

"We really wanted to try and get a message out to our students and to our community about the importance of planning ahead and taking care of each other to be able to have a safe and memorable homecoming," Rodman said.

Since there are so many activities that are happening on and around campus, Rodman said it's good for people to consider their exact routes and what to do at specific times of the day.

"When you are traveling, we want you to make sure that you have a situational awareness," Rodman said.

Rodman said people can maintain awareness of their surroundings by getting rid of distractions like earbuds and phones. He also recommends traveling with a group, staying in well-lit areas during evening events and downloading the BU Campus Guardian app.

The BU Campus Guardian app is a tool with multiple safety features the Baylor community can use. The app allows people to request a safety escort and to quickly dial 911 or connect with BUPD.

"We have over 87 emergency call boxes on campus and another 123 emergency telephones," Rodman said. "But everybody is carrying a mobile device today, and so literally, it gives you one of those emergency call boxes at the touch of your fingertips."

Rodman said one of the biggest things individuals should be careful of is underage drinking or drinking too much. He said he does not recommend accepting open containers from strangers.

Mark Childers, associate vice president for public safety, said the Baylor Department of Public Safety strives to provide the gold standard of campus safety, security and law enforcement through a layered security platform. He said although the department strives for these things, they cannot do it alone.

"We all are partners in this effort through our personal situation awareness, and if you see something, say something," Childers said. "Trust that intuition."

Additionally, Childers said those who see something that doesn't look



STAY SAFE Officer Scott Curry ensures student safety on Baylor campus.

or feel right should call 911 or BUPD's emergency line at 254-710-2222. Rodman also said the department looks forward to a successful homecoming and appreciates everyone's efforts to help keep the Baylor community safe.

"Our goal is to be able to support our community, to be able to have a fun

and safe homecoming, but also try to get that messa and to take care of each other," Rodman said. "That's well: We take care of each other in a way to where we other to make sure the events are going well."

THURSDAY, OCT. 20

PIGSKIN REVUE | 7 - 9:30 P.M. | WACO HALL

This annual production features the top eight acts from the All-University Sing spring performance.



Photo by Grace Fortier I Photographe

SING-OFF Alpha Phi will be one of many student organizations participating in this year's Pigskin.

MASS MEETING | 9 - 10:15 P.M. | FERRELL CENTER

This tradition welcomes first-year students to homecoming and features the retelling of the story of the Immortal Ten and the presentation of the Eternal Flame.



Photo by Josh Wilson | Roundup

PRAY ON Students sit through last year's Mass Meeting in the Ferrell Center wearing their Line

FRIDAY,

ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE | 9 A.M. - 1 P.M. | ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Baylor alumni, friends and family are welcome to kick off homecoming weekend with tours and treats from the Armstrong Browning Library.

HOMECOMING TEA AT TIDWELL | 4 - 5 P.M. | TIDWELL BIBLE BUILDING

Alumni from the history, religion and sociology departments are encouraged to attend this event to tour the recently renovated Tidwell building.

ROYAL AND PURE HOMECOMING STROLL-OFF | 7 - 9 P.M. | BARFIELD DRAWING ROOM IN BILL DANIEL STUDENT CENTER

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. with the help of the National Pan-Hellenic Council hosts this annual event, which showcases coordination, rhythm and skill.



Photo from Baylor University

DANCE OFF Students sit through and enjoy Phi Beta Sigma's traditional Stroll-Off after months of rehearsal

MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS HOMECOMING RECEPTION | 5 - 6:45 P.M. | BILL DANIEL STUDENT CENTER

The Multicultural Affairs Department and Baylor Alumni Alliances have partnered for this meet-and-greet networking and fellowship event.

OMNG GUIDE

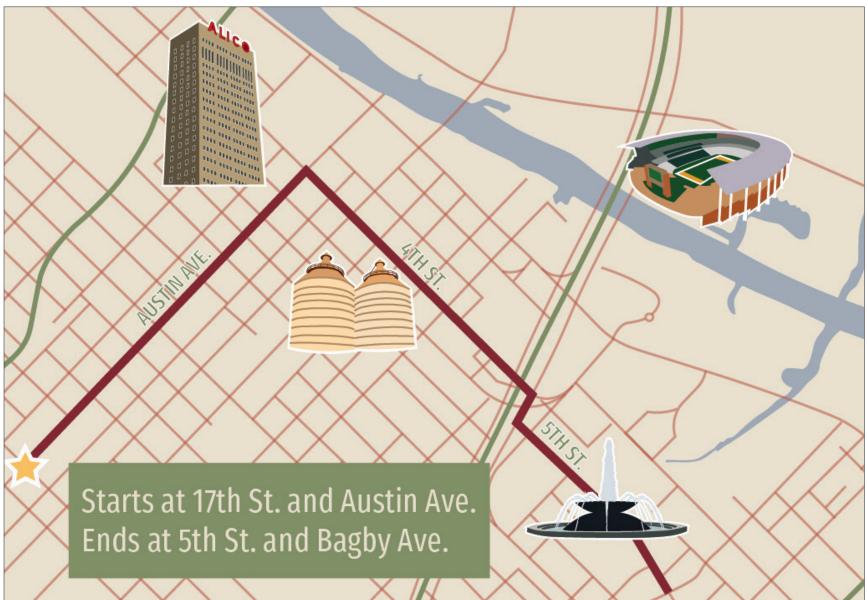
Where to start? Where to end? Here's your Parade Map



vents

Prabhakar | Photographer

age out early to be wise really what Baylor does e want to support each



OCT. 21

SINGSPIRATION! BAYLOR ALUMNI WORKSHOP SERVICE | 7 - 8:15 P.M. | SEVENTH AND JAMES **BAPTIST CHURCH**

This Baylor tradition goes back 70 years and features a variety of congregational singing and choral music.

GOLDEN GRAD 50TH REUNION | 6 - 7:30 P.M. | BAYLOR CLUB - SUITE LOUNGE

The class of 1972 will celebrate 50 years and receive their golden grad diploma during this annual

FIRST NIGHT FLASHBACK | 6 - 10 P.M. | BILL DANIEL STUDENT CENTER

Go back in time through Baylor's Homecoming history and traditions on the first floor of the SUB.

EXTRAVAGANZA, PEP RALLY AND BONFIRE | 6 - 10 P.M. | FOUNTAIN MALL

Join the Baylor Family in celebrating Homecoming weekend with family-friendly activities, food trucks, games, a bonfire and more.



Photo By Josh Wilson I Roundup **LIGHT IT UP** Baylor community gathered back in 2021 for the traditional Bonfire evening.

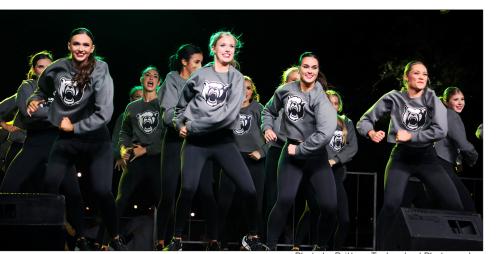


Photo by Brittany Tankersley | Photographe JUST DO IT Spirit squads perform in front of a big audience.

SATURDAY, OCT. 22

HOMECOMING PARADE I 7 - 9:30 A.M. I DOWN-TOWN AND FIFTH STREET

Join this celebration of community and Baylor pride in the nation's largest and oldest collegiate homecoming parade.



WE ALL FLOAT Students showcase their floats during the 2021 traditional homecoming parade after months of working on it.

BAYLOR ALUMNI TAILGATE VS KANSAS | 8-10 A.M. | TOUCHDOWN ALLEY ALUMNI TENT

Bring your family and friends to prepare to cheer on the Bears. This event requires registration through the Baylor Alumni website and is \$5 per person.

AFROTC HOMECOMING OPEN HOUSE | 8 - 10 A.M. SPEIGHT PARKING GARAGE

Stop by to meet staff and cadets, while grabbing light refreshments during and after the parade.

BAYLOR VS. KANSAS | 11 A.M. | MCLANE STADIUM

Come out to cheer on the Bears as they play Kansas for the Homecoming game.



HOMECOMING





Photo Courtesy of Eva Baker

THEN AND NOW Eva Baker, class of 2007, with her husband Mathias Baker at a Baylor football game in 2007 (left) and at the 2021 Baylor Homecoming football game (right). Baker said last year's Homecoming game was the first time she returned to campus since graduation.

Baylor is still home, even 15 years later

CAITLYN MEISNER

Staff Writer

Even if alumni graduated 10, 20 or 30 years ago, many say that Baylor is still home to them and that they continue to be proud of the improvements made since their undergrad years.

The Baylor Homecoming tradition was established in 1909 and has been held, whether virtually or in person, every year since 1915.

Baylor alumni come back in droves each year to watch the football game, meet up with their college friends and visit the campus they once walked through as students.

thousands Although of Baylor alumni attended during different times in Baylor history, their stories

and memories echo each other as they reflect on their time and how the university has changed.

Eva Baker, a 2007 graduate, said homecoming 2021 was the first time she had ever come back to campus since graduation.

"The campus and the city itself has grown so much, but it all still felt like home," Baker said. "I was so happy when I stepped back on campus. A lot was the same, so it made me feel very welcomed and excited to come back to a place that's been so meaningful to me."

Baker said her favorite part of Baylor Homecoming has always been the football game. She said she attended all but two home football games during her time as an undergraduate and master's student.

Chad and Mary Becker, 1995 and 1996 graduates, attended homecoming last year as alumni and parents. They came to homecoming soon after they graduated, around 1999 or 2000, and they attended homecoming 2021 with their daughter, Pasadena, Calif., junior Caeden Becker.

"When we came back as alumni, we came back to the Floyd Casey Stadium, and we went to a lot of bars and hung out with college friends," Chad said. "This time, we did none of that. We went to restaurants, made reservations and hung out with our daughter."

Chad and Mary said they had the opportunity to attend an alumni reunion for both their classes last year, since COVID-19 had pushed back Chad's reunion.

"They had [an event] at the Baylor Club in McLane Stadium," Chad said. "It wasn't super well attended, but it was cool that they did something."

Mary said it was nice to return to campus and feel welcomed, especially since they haven't had opportunities to return due to their busy schedules.

"Chad and I aren't the best alumni," Mary said. "We have not stayed in touch with the university except through Caeden."

Both Chad and Mary said they participated in Pigskin Revue as undergraduates. Chad said that was always his favorite part of the weekend, especially getting ready and performing. Mary said she

always enjoyed watching the parade.

"I think because it was an opportunity for the community to be a part of it," Mary said. "I loved seeing all the families that came with their little ones to enjoy the parade."

Alan Ratliff, a 1985 graduate, said he has come back for 15 homecomings since he graduated. He said homecoming weekend is a shared experience between alumni and students.

"From my perspective, homecoming always is and has been about a particular experience," Ratliff said. "You have things which are oriented to celebrate a particular [population], but the name 'homecoming' is really about those coming back."

Ratliff, Baker and the Beckers all said they are proud of the improvements Baylor has made since they were undergraduates.

"Since I graduated, there have been so many new buildings, so many new programs," Ratliff said. "It's three times as large in terms of the student body, and we didn't have a school of engineering when I was there."

Chad compared Baylor's growth to a child growing up.

"It's like when you don't see someone for 20 years; then they're thriving and doing well, and you're like, 'Oh, wow, you've grown up," Chad said. "You were an adolescent when I last saw you, and now you're an adult and thriving. You're not what you used to be, but you're still the same person."

Neighbor Nights:

CHARLIE WAILES

Reporter

Neighbor Nights, Better Together and the Coalition of Asian Students collaborated Tuesday at the Bobo Spiritual Life Center for a night of food, community and cultural understanding. The event included guest speaker Michelle Ami Reyes - vice president of the Asian American Christian Collaborative

Reyes writes regularly about faith and culture and said she is in the process of writing

"My husband and I are church planters in east Austin," Reyes said. "It's a multicultural community. East Austin is a disadvantaged Black and brown community, and everyday life is crossing cultures. The more I talked to other pastors, they didn't know how to do church across cultures. My first book was for the church and how we can do it with love and passion."

Reyes has also written a book entitled "Becoming All Things," which aims to help Christians interact more openly with cultures different from their own.

"I think for college students struggling to find their faith, we should spend more time with ourselves asking, 'What is my story, and what are the narratives born of my ethnic heritage?" Reyes said.

In her speech, one of the questions Reyes asked was how we can use cultural celebration to rectify social injustice.

'When it comes to activism and justice, it needs to be personal," Reyes said. "I want to encourage you all to think about deconstructing institutional racism. And our aim is not to burn things down or throw the metaphorical molotov cocktail; it is to make things better, and that path means not shaming people or labeling."

Dallas senior Nelley Sobh is one of the ganizers for Neighbor Nights and a civic interfaith leader with Better Together. Sobh said the goals of Better Together and Neighbor Nights are alike.

"Neighbor Nights and Better Together are under the same umbrella of spiritual life organizations," Sobh said. "They're so intertwined in values and missions. Better Together is more of a verbal exercise, while Neighbor Nights is putting our words into action."

Sobh said Neighbor Nights regularly have speakers from many different backgrounds.

"The student associations that we collaborated with for this event chose Reyes to speak on their behalf," Sobh said.

Students, faculty come together to enjoy food, company of others



Olivia Havre I Photographer

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR A Neighbor Night is hosted by Better Together and the Coalition of Asian Students

Neighbor Nights are dinners hosted by multicultural student organizations, and any Baylor students, faculty or staff are able to attend. Dr. Josh Ritter works in the department of spiritual life and student life and helps oversee

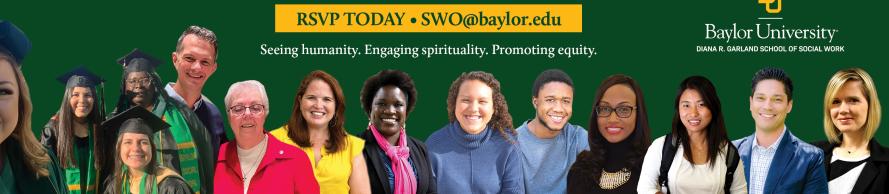
Neighbor Nights, which he said began in 2015. 'That's when spiritual life developed a partnership with spiritual affairs," Ritter said.

NEIGHBOR NIGHTS >> Page A7

CHANGEmakers MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS & ENTIRE COMMUNITIES. Come learn more about the versatility of social work and how you can join a community of mission-driven individuals continuing their education at the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work at Baylor University. Here, we believe social work is about service and justice, healing and restoration, and the dignity of each individual.

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Hundreds flock to Allbritton for Dinner with the Livingstones

SAMANTHA GARZA

Staff Writer

The university's annual Dinner with the Livingstones kicked off homecoming week Tuesday on the lawn of the Allbritton House. Hosted by the president and first gent, the event is a time for students to come together, celebrate and kickstart homecoming week.

The first ever Dinner with the Livingstones was hosted in 2017 when Dr. Linda Livingstone became president. Since then, she and her husband, Brad Livingstone, have made it a tradition for students to gather on the lawn of their home, eat good food and listen to live music.

Tables and chairs covered in green and gold filled up the lawn of the Allbritton House for students to sit down and enjoy their dinner. The live music and twinkling lights draped on the trees made it a special homecoming welcome for the war.

Like previous years, students were given a voucher for one free meal and one free drink or dessert. Arranged on Third and Fourth Streets, 18 popular Waco food trucks had

hundreds of students lining up to cash in their vouchers. Local fan favorites like Waco Cha,

Baylor is a very giving community and I think that this [event] represents that.

FRANCISCO RIVERA | BAYLOR SOPHOMORE

Pop's Lemonade, Nightlight Donuts and Shorty's Pizza Shack were present.

After grabbing something to eat, students

could line up right outside the Livingstones' door and take a picture with the president and first gent.

Cuernavaca, Mexico, senior Antonio Cano said this was his first time attending the event and that he decided to come out for the free food.

"I think it's something fun," Cano said. "I don't know if many universities have the same thing, so I appreciate it."

Houston freshman Alisa Donis said she and her friends were not only excited for the food but also looking forward to seeing, meeting and taking pictures with the Livingstones.

Mexico City sophomore Francisco Rivera said he enjoyed the event, although the lines to get food were too long.

"I think this is something unique that Baylor



Grace Everett | Photo Editor FAMILY FIRST President Linda Livingstone and first gent Brad

Livingstone take "family photos" with students.

has," Rivera said. "All my friends that go to UT or other schools — I've never heard of them having events like this. So I think that Baylor is a very giving community, and I think that this [event] represents that."

NEIGHBOR NIGHTS from Page A6



Olivia Havre | Photographer

DINNER AND A COMMUNITY Neighbor Nights are held to help bring different communities of Baylor students together.

"Neighbor Nights actually used to be called Cross-Cultural Dinners."

Ritter said Neighbor Nights aim to pair with more multicultural student organizations. Last month's dinner was a partnership with the Hispanic Student Association.

"We also started Better Together, which is the interfaith group on campus," Ritter said. "In fall 2015, we had a prayer time for students to let them know they were welcome here. Once that happened, we really started with Better Together, and that was when we did our first interest meeting and common ground issue, which was literacy."

Ritter said the purpose of Neighbor Nights is to encourage students and faculty to have conversations with people from different backgrounds.

"The question for us — the main question — is how do you love your neighbor if you don't know how to get to know them?" Ritter said.

Neighbor Nights have different ways to try to encourage communication, according to Ritter.

"We have conversation cards at the table or guided conversation or panel discussion or sometimes a speaker," Ritter said. "For our last Neighbor Night, we had Dr. Jorge Burmicky, who is also the speaker of the Hispanic Heritage Luncheon."

Ritter said he thinks Neighbor Nights help students create new relationships by sharing personal stories and creating connections.

"Research indicates that none of us are persuaded by logical argumentation," Ritter said. "But by personal stories and emotions, we can have amazing conversations and get to know each other without theological debates. We can highlight differences but still do good work together."

Katy senior Sanjana Natarajan has regularly attended Neighbor Nights and said the open atmosphere allows different cultural groups to make conversation over dinner.

"My experience with it was great as well," Natarajan said. "There is great food, and it's a sit-down conversation about The question for us

— the main question

— is how do you love
your neighbor if you
don't know how to get
to know them?

DR. JOSH RITTER | OVERSEES NEIGHBOR NIGHTS

anything really. There are cultural groups that go like ISSA, which is the Indian Subcontinent Student Association."

Natarajan said she encourages students to attend because Neighbor Nights promote diversity and shared cultural experiences.

"I think they do a good job with cultural events," Natarajan said. "Neighbor Nights always helps me feel welcome, and I'd highly recommend that anyone who hasn't been should go."





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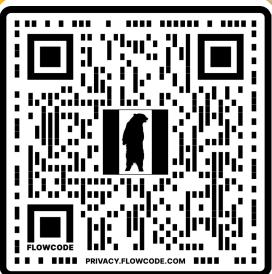




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RAISING STANDARDS

Read more about the Heart O'Texas Fair and Rodeo and its improvements

pg. B2



CHANGE OF PLANS

Find out how the early kickoff shifts homecoming plans

pg. B3



I obviously have more goals that I want to achieve. But so far, I feel really proud of what I've accomplished."

Victoria Smith of Dreamy Picnics talks her new business and its future. pg. B4

BaylorLariat.com

Homecoming Traditions reform through century of progress, set national precedent

EMMA WEIDMANN

Staff Writer

Baylor held nation's first homecoming celebration in 1909, sparking a tradition that has spread across the country. Throughout its history, Baylor's oldest and proudest celebration has changed as much as it has remained constant, Sylvia Hernandez, assistant librarian at the Texas Collection, said.

"Through time, you can see the way that the band is there, the cars are there and when floats were introduced," Hernandez said. "Now Pigskin is the bigger thing ... You're still getting the same weekend, but you're getting a bigger emphasis on different activities."

The first homecoming celebration kicked off with speeches by then-President Samuel Palmer Brooks and Dr. George Truett in Carroll Chapel. While Carroll Library still stands on campus, the chapel burned down in 1922, so opening worship services are now held on Fountain Mall through Vertical and the mass meeting in remembrance of the Immortal Ten.

The parade route in 1909 looked similar to that of today, beginning at Washington and 11th, though it ended in a spot that has changed drastically since.

The Golden Wave Band led the parade of cars with advertising by



Baylor Round Up File Photo

NO RAIN ON THIS PARADE The first homecoming parade was held in 1909 and followed a route familiar to parade-goers today.

local businesses. It finished at Carroll Field, where onlookers watched the Bears win the homecoming game against Texas Christian University. Now, the Bill Daniel Student Center stands on the site of that historic win and serves an equally central role in student life.

In a Nov. 26, 1909, edition of the Lariat, the Lariat condemned "foolish and reprehensible" behavior by

Baylor and TCU students after the homecoming game, in which students from both schools reportedly destroyed parade decorations downtown. The Lariat chalked up the students' conduct to "excited impulse" due to the

Hernandez said people to consider their ancestors to be more proper and straight-edge, but it was actually easier to get away with pranks and antics like

these because of the lack of social media.

"They did get a little bit rambunctious," Hernandez said. "Students are going to be students ... Somebody had to see you do it in order to report you doing it ... It's still very well-documented that students did get into shenanigans.

Literary societies like the Philomathesians and Erisophians and the allfemale Calliopean Society held alumni reunions similar to those that sororities and fraternities hold today for homecoming.

"The literary societies can be equated to Greek Life before Greek Life existed here at the university," Hernandez said.

"Seeing the growth over time and meeting new people is how the term 'Baylor family' is used. You always want to meet the next generation and see how

things are the same but have changed."

The celebration was not always as inclusive as it is today. In 1909, the university had not yet allowed Black students or any students of color admission. Instead, according to Hernandez, people of color were present on campus in roles of "domestic labor."

"[The first homecoming] was for the students who came here who were white students," Hernandez said. "There were people of color on campus who were doing behind-the-scenes sorts of jobs."

Since its creation in 1919, The Baylor Chamber of Commerce has turned homecoming into a weeklong event, beginning with the first "Good Will Week" in 1926, meant to deepen the sense of community on

"Homecoming originally established to welcome back alumni, and 10 years later, Chamber began," Cordero said. "Our underlying mission is to provide service to Baylor in any way that we can ... It's because we want to serve the Baylor community, that we have held down this tradition for so long. Ultimately, we just want students and anyone at the university to enjoy this tradition just like so many others before have."

Homecoming court expands reign with campuswide nominations

to nominate one male and female

student. Ma was selected by the

Baylor Bear Foundation and

Malone was nominated by Student

Senate, and they then filled out an application. The next step was a

group interview with a panel of three

judges who are alumni or prominent

AVERY BALLMANN

Staff Writer

As the first Asian American homecoming queen and the firstever homecoming king, alums Nicole Ma and Chris Malone are returning to campus to help this year's homecoming court.

Ma and Malone represented

Isabel Lea said the expanded homecoming court includes both men and women to have a better representation of the student body and to include more students in

of students to include people from all organizations on campus, because there's outstanding students even in

homecoming activities.

'We want that outstanding group the smallest student organization,"

members of the Waco community. Ma said after her interview she thought she botched it. She then realized she was treating the process too seriously in a negative way. Ma said she needed to "check herself" and once she did she was able to make connections with other nominees.

"I could start feeling like it was becoming sort of an identity thing," Ma said. "So whether I do or don't get any title at the end of the day, it was just an honor to be a part of so many students who are here together

In the end, Ma did receive the title, but she said her favorite part was that she gained friendships from people all over campus.

Malone said he also cherished the connections he made while on homecoming court. The court still keeps in touch with one another via group text.

"All of these people were some of the most incredible people I've met and lifelong friends that have equal service," Malone said. "They are all just as deserving, which was really neat

academics and spiritual commitment. Nominees who make the court



WINNER WINNER 2021 Homecoming Court King and Queen presented with

cannot make these outstanding spots

their crowns.

As Ma's name was announced in 2021, the queen's cape was placed upon her. The cape is a longstanding tradition that has been placed on Baylor's homecoming queens for years. The green velvet luscious cape claps along the neckline of the winner and it has gold fabric details hugging its train. The cape has some weight to it, physically and metaphorically.

"I get the opportunity to uphold this legacy that many people before me had held and they've had this cape too and so everything I felt was really symbolic," Ma said.

Since Malone was the first male student on the homecoming court, he and Ma plan to start a tradition of their own. Since 2014, the homecoming queen's passed down a pearl necklace and a scrapbook containing a picture of each queen information about

involvement at Baylor. Ma plans to add in a picture of Malone as the first homecoming king.

"I'm definitely excited for all the guys that get to be represented now at Baylor," Malone said. "So I think that part is really cool, and getting to know that I can be a part of it and then just kind of pass the torch to all

the other guys at Baylor." The homecoming court will be announced by Lea at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday in Waco Hall during Pigskin. Students can also see nominees at 7:00 a.m. Saturday in the homecoming parade.

"It's an opportunity for those organizations to say, we're backing this person, this person is incredible and they're a part of our organization," Lea said. "So that's why I think it's important we want even the small organizations to nominate and have someone representing them."



We want that outstanding group of students to include people from all organizations on campus, because there's outstanding students even in the smallest organizations.

> **ISABEL LEA BAYLOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT**

Chamber's plan to expand and invite more nominees to the homecoming court process. This year, the student body had 60 students nominated for their chance to make

Through a rigorous process of group interviews, only 14 students will officially be recognized on the homecoming court.

Cedar Park senior and President of Baylor Chamber of Commerce Lea said. "So we want them to be represented."

There are several ways the Chamber reinforces inclusion into the court. All nominees will have a spot in the homecoming parade, be recognized at the first Pigskin Revue show and for less-developed student organizations, Chamber will waive the \$55 application fee.

To include more students, each student organization is allowed

Chamber also recognizes the 'outstanding members' which are nominees that can be selected for philanthropy, Baylor involvement,

Heart O'Texas Fair and Rodeo 'raises standard' for 70th anniversary

ERIANNE LEWIS

Arts and Life Editor

The Heart O' Texas Fair and Rodeo concluded its 11-day event on Sunday, marking its 70th anniversary. The annual event, which is the largest fair and rodeo in Central Texas, was held at the Extraco Events Center in Waco.

This year's theme was Raising the Standard, said Melinda Adams, senior division manager for marketing and sponsorships.

"There are certain little things that maybe you won't notice just walking in, but overall, it starts to add up," Melinda said.

The Fair instituted smaller changes into its appearance to ensure a better fair and rodeo experience. All the tents in the fair were upgraded to structure tents, which allowed for better stability, and updated signage was displayed on the ground to instruct attendees where to go.

Heart O' Texas also encouraged visitors to use the new app format. QR codes throughout the property led attendees to download the app for easier access of the fairgrounds, attraction lists and tickets

Other additions to the fair and rodeo this year included a wine and beer garden, a pirate comedy show, as well as a new sea lion attraction, which has been seven years in the making.

Melinda said the size of the outdoor stage was also increased this year to accommodate the larger performers such as Clay Walker, Gary Allan and Midland. Target Solutions was a new sponsor this year and created a VIP lounge at the fair.

Melinda said this year's indoor vendor list was the largest the fair and rodeo has ever seen.

"They have all kinds of boutique shopping in there,"



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photographer

GIDDY UP A cowboy lassoes in a calf during the Heart O' Texas rodeo and fair.

Melinda said. "That's been raised up as well, because we didn't have as many vendors last year and there wasn't as much variety, whereas this year, you can find pretty much anything in there." Melissa Adams, co-owner of

Big Top Entertainment, a thirdparty group that coordinated exhibitors at Heart O' Texas, said Big Top had over 100 vendors that were offered. This was their second year bringing the Heart O' Texas Shops Marketplace to the Fair and Rodeo.

"You're going to find a little bit of everything here at the rodeo," Melissa said. "Whether you're looking for western wear or you want a custom-shaped hat, you want some 100% covered-inrhinestone boots, we're going to have that. Also, we are talking about salsas and homemade chocolates and home décor, even furniture made out of whiskey barrels."

Melissa started out as an exhibitor herself six years ago and said she wasn't sure exactly what she was doing, but she knew there was a need for this type of company.

"It was a smashing success and all of the exhibitors wanted more and more and so we started booking with two events a year and now we do about 30 events a year," Melissa said.

Melissa said she values the connections she makes with vendors.

"The most enjoyable part is getting to work with



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photographer FRIENDLY COMPETITION A mother and son attempt to win a prize at the Heart O' Texas Fair and Rodeo.



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photographer

BAAAAD LUCK Junior cowboy attemps to hang on during sheep run event.

the exhibitors one-on-one and seeing people start their business," Melissa said. "Maybe they started with a hobby, and they want to start selling some products. Really getting to mentor them from the experiences I've had and what I've learned along the way. We've had so many great success stories with people who've started with a table and one product and now they have a full-fledged business."





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Early kickoff poses conflicts for other traditions

AVERY BALLMANN

STAFF WRITER

The 11 a.m. kickoff for Baylor's homecoming game against Kansas has shifted the plans of student and alumni organizations' homecoming traditions.

Since ESPN chooses the game time organizations had short notice of the kickoff and resulting in last minute plans.

One of the groups affected is student government. Each year, the organization holds an alumni luncheon to reconnect, network with one another and communicate about bylaws. Because of the 11 a.m. kickoff, student government had to cancel its luncheon.

The Woodlands junior and External Vice President of student government Nick Madincea they were having trouble rescheduling due to the lack of space available on campus. "An early kickoff is proving to be nothing short of an extreme inconvenience

to our schedule with it," Madincea said. "So that's been quite unfortunate."

Madincea said he was able to participate in this student government tradition last year.

"It was a great opportunity to meet some of the StuGov legends, so to speak, and learn a lot about our bylaws and the way that they were written from inception," Madincea said.

Richardson freshman and Director of Communications of the External VP Madi Cano has yet to experience this tradition.

"Going back to what Nick said how he experienced really learning from those in the past because student government, we are here serving Baylor as a whole," Cano said. "And we're learning from them, just so we can make a greater impact on the community."

Another tradition affected by the early kickoff is the alumni tailgate. They've



BRIGHTEN THE MOOD Baylor fans adorned in gold throw up a sic 'em on Oct. 1 at McLane Stadium.

"The tailgate has certainly been one of our most popular events for alumni and their families before football games, home and away"

LORI FOGLEMAN | UNIVERSITY SPOKESPERSON worked around an 11 a.m. kickoff before so instead of serving lunch, interim director of alumni engagement Heather Beck said they will serve breakfast and end the tailgate before the game. However, alumni now have to decide to either go to the parade or the tailgate.

"We understand and support that the

homecoming parade is the primary draw for the Baylor family, but we will be ready to welcome them if they decide to stop by the Baylor alumni tailgate before the game starts," Beck said.

Beck said most of the tailgate guests register in advance and have been notified of the early start time, and they have updated their web pages accordingly.

Baylor

spokesperson Lori Fogleman said the alumni tailgate has been around for several years now, even after it was moved from Floyd Casey Stadium to Touchdown Alley.

Though the alumni tailgate has been structurally unaffected, the alumni wanting to attend will have to decide which events to go to. Student government being a smaller entity, suffered by canceling their event.

"The tailgate has certainly been one of our most popular events for alumni and their families before football games, home and away," Fogleman said. "Whether kickoff is at 6 p.m. or 11 a.m., Baylor alumni of all years enjoy the opportunity to fellowship with one another over a meal, listen to the pregame tailgate show and get ready to cheer on the Bears."





DR. PEPPER FLOATS AND PRIZES!



A WARM WELCOME BACK Students view the works of eight professors at Martin Museum of Art's showcase reception Tuesday night.

Retired art professors honored with showcase

EMMA WEIDMANN

Staff Writer

The Martin Museum of Art kicked off homecoming week with a celebration of its own — a reception for Coming Home: A Retired Faculty Showcase on Tuesday night in which the works of eight retired Baylor professors were on display.

The professors to be honored are Mark Anderson; the late Bill Jensen, Ph.D.; Berry Klingman; John McClanahan; Paul McCoy; Terry Roller; Mary Ruth Smith, Ph.D. and Karl Umlaf. Three of these professors retired in 2020 during the pandemic, meaning the art department was unable to give them a proper send-off.

Dr. Heidi Hornik, Ph.D., chair of the art and art history department at Baylor, said this showcase is the department's way of honoring these professors' decades-long careers.

"These are people who have been with us, and most of them committed their entire life and career to Baylor," Hornik said. "This is my 33rd year [in the art department], so I've worked with all of these people and I really have immense respect for all of them, their efforts for the students, their productivity as artists and scholars."

Professor Emeritus Mark Anderson served as chair of the art department from 2010 to 2020. He said for his art to be on display is an honor.

"[I think about] history in the making, passage of time," Anderson said. "I'm glad to see all these people come back."

Hornik said this showcase is meaningful because the retired faculty members touched the lives of thousands of students during their time at the university. She said she wants alumni to see the showcase and be reminded of their

time at Baylor through these works. This is the first year retired faculty's works have been on display for homecoming, Hornik said.

"We hope that people who have had these professors will come back, so they can stop in and be reminded of the works that they probably knew about as they were being produced by these artists while they were professors," Hornik said. "Just as the students are coming home, so are these professors to the department."

Many of the works on display are part of the John S. Belew Collection, a permanent collection of works by each member of the art department. When a studio artist joins the faculty, they are asked to donate one of their pieces to the collection.

In addition to paintings, there are as many different types of works on display as there are disciplines in the art department, such as sculpture, textiles and printmaking.

Belton sophomore Sharon Almon, a studio art major, attended the showcase. Almon said she enjoys coming to arts events and admires the art for the legacy it represents, although each professor retired before she came to Baylor.

"I didn't know any of them, but I know that they made an impact on the art department," Almon said. "It's really cool to see everybody come together for these events and appreciate the work of people who worked here."

Anderson said what he misses the most about Baylor and being the chair of the art department is the people — meeting them, getting to know them and helping them.

"My favorite part was helping to solve problems, supporting the faculty and walking through the hallways and staying in touch with people," Anderson said. "Those were probably my favorite things ... It's the people."

Life's a picnic for new business

AVERY BALLMANN

Staff Writer

Bohemian rugs are carefully placed across the grassy scape of the park, and comfy decorative pillows are scattered along the blankets. Candlesticks, catered food, drinks and themed decor: This is what customers can expect when using Victoria Smith's business Dreamy Picnics.

Smith launched Dreamy Picnics, a customizable luxury picnic experience, in August. Smith moved to Waco a week before the pandemic hit. They didn't have a babysitter, so Smith started putting on date nights for her husband — this is how she began her picnic business.

"When I started my business, I really wanted to partner with a lot of other local businesses, and incorporate them into my business to make it a true Waco experience for people," Smith said.

Smith has collaborated with many local businesses in her venture. She thrifts her decor at Central Goods, a local antique store, and she also uses Paris Party Platters as an add-on to her picnic services.

Anniesa Paris, owner of Paris Party Platters, began her business three years ago after she received inquiries about a charcuterie board she posted for her family's get-together on Easter. Smith found Paris on social media, and the two businesses frequently collaborate with each other.

"The more people you work with, it's such a benefit to you. It's a win-win; there's nothing negative about it in my opinion," Paris said.

Paris prepares the boards the day of the picnic because everything she creates is fresh, even down to the mustard served on the side.

Smith meets up with Paris to grab the board and then uses her creativity to design the space for the customer.

"It's fun to listen to the feedback, that feedback that you get when you watch people really enjoy what you're giving them," Paris said. "It's very, very rewarding."

Dreamy Picnics offers 12 types of picnic packages including holiday themes, kidnics, photo shoot rentals and the coffee and carb picnic. The coffee and carb picnic features pastries and custom lattes from Be Kind Coffee.

This particular package is what Smith thinks is best suited for college students. This option is \$40 per person and also includes a polaroid with film, Jenga and board games, a bluetooth speaker and utensils for the pastries and lattes.

Another add on customers can include to their picnic experience is Smith's hand-stamped jewelry. Smith holds a pop-up shop once every other week to promote her business, and she brings along her jewelry and other items featured in her picnics.

"I try to give an experience at the pop-up for people so they can sit down and experience what it would be like to book a picnic with me," Smith said.

To book a picnic, people can go through Dreamy Picnic's Linktree. Smith has a fall-themed picnic until November, and she is collaborating with Cultivate 7Twelve to create an indoor Christmas-themed picnic.

"When I went into this, I didn't think that I would be as successful as fast as it's been happening," Smith said. "I obviously have more goals that I want to achieve. But so far, I feel really proud of what I've accomplished."



Grace Everett | Photo Edito

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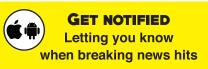


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as a leader

Men's basketball transfer Grimes overcomes odds, paves path to Baylor

GIO GENNERO

Sports Writer

Over this offseason, Baylor men's basketball acquired junior guard Dantwan Grimes, adding even more depth to the Bears' stacked backcourt. Grimes comes from Kilgore College where he led the team in scoring and assists, while also helping the team reach two consecutive NJCAA National Tournaments.

"Out of high school I had no offers," Grimes said. "Nobody really wanted to take a chance on me. I was an undersized guard, I wasn't really athletic, so I decided to go to a junior college."

Grimes credits a lot of his success to Cody McCoy, assistant coach at Kilgore who previously was on the coaching staff for Baylor. Grimes said when he first arrived, he didn't fully understand what it took to be great yet and McCoy was instrumental in that process.

"McCoy was the one who taught me those things, like discipline, setting goals and working every day," Grimes said. "Not really focusing on the end goal for a moment, just work and let all that pay off in the future."

McCoy said Grimes was his first recruit to Kilgore, where they built their relationship. McCoy said they had a special connection from the start because of their similar personalities and starting similar journeys together.

"I remember picking him up from the airport, and he's with his mom and he's nervous because it was his first time on a plane," McCoy said. "You know, from the very first practice you could just tell he had something different about him, and he had no

McCoy said he would tell Grimes stories about Davion Mitchell and other Baylor players' work ethic and how it led to something bigger than themselves. He said Grimes came ready to work, and that he just did his best to help him along the way.

"These are the possibilities you can pull off, but it's not going to be easy," McCoy told Grimes. "Kilgore is an opportunity to springboard yourself somewhere different where a lot of people don't think you can go. It's going to be hard and it's not always going to be fun."

Fortunately for Grimes, motivation is something he has never lacked. His journey is bigger than basketball for him. His

determination stems from his childhood in Ocala, Fla. He said his mom is his biggest inspiration to keep working in hopes of a better future.

"It was rough out there, so it was kind of rough growing up," Grimes said. "My mom was someone who really influenced me. She had me young, so it felt like we grew up together. Having to see the things she had to go through put a drive in me to be successful and help her and my family have a better life."

Despite not having a lot of time here under his belt, Grimes said he is enjoying the transition, and he likes what he sees from the team. He said the team gels very well on and off the court and he wants to give his all during his next few seasons in green and gold.

"The biggest thing for me is trusting the process," Grimes said. "I got three years here so I'm not rushing. I'm going to come in and do my best and do the best I can for the team. Do my job and play as hard as I can, just trying to help us get to a national championship."



You know, from the very first practice you could just tell he had something different about him, and he had no clue.

CODY MCCOY | ASSISTANT COACH AT KILGORE COLLEGE



Photo courtesy of Elijah Pittman

JUCO TURNED D-I Baylor men's basketball junior guard Dantwan Grimes spots up in the corner and takes a shot.

Kenneth Prabhakar | Photographer

ALL SMILES Baylor baseball head coach Mitch Thompson smiles as he watches practice on Oct. 18 at Baylor Ballpark.

Coach Thompson celebrates personal homecoming back at Baylor Ballpark

MICHAEL HAAG

Sports Editor

As Baylor celebrates its annual Homecoming this weekend, all eyes will be on the timeless parade Saturday morning or the football game a few hours later. What some may not know is that a certain someone is in the midst of a homecoming of his own.

That person would be Mitch Thompson, who took the reins of the Baylor baseball program over the summer following a woeful 2022 campaign, led by former skipper Steve Rodriguez.

Neither Baylor Ballpark or Waco is a mystery maze for Thompson, who spent 18 years as an assistant coach with the green and gold. Thompson then became the head coach at McLennan Community College, where he found lots of success at the junior college level.

Nine years later, Thompson was awarded the job as Baylor's skipper and it was time for him to return home. Although just down the road, Thompson found his happy place, which lies on the banks of the Brazos River at Baylor Ballpark.

"Every day I walk into the ballpark, I've got an immediate smile on my face," Thompson said. "It's been unbelievable. I mean, the whole experience to come back."

Since taking the job and now still settling in, the longtime Bear said he's received loads of support from his old players. Thompson said in recent weeks he once had six to eight former players stop by to give him hugs and check in.

Those tight bonds have helped give Thompson quite the reputation in the Waco area. He set the bar with his arrival to the

FINALLY HOME >> Page B6

Reppin' the green and gold on their home turf: Player, Ables, Castle talk upcoming festivities

ANNAGRACE HALE

Sports Writer

Baylor Homecoming holds something special for everyone, and for student-athletes from Waco, this tradition may even be more special. After growing up with the annual celebration, the players gained a new perspective on what homecoming is, not only as a student, but also as an athlete.

This homecoming for defensive lineman Jaxon Player is more unique. After graduating from Waco's Midway High School in 2018, Player ventured to Oklahoma to play at the University of Tulsa. Now a fifth-year senior, he has returned home to represent his childhood team, the Baylor Bears. Player said he still has pictures of himself at Floyd Casey Stadium, decked out

in the green and gold.

"I've been loving Baylor since I was a kid," Player said.
"I finally get to rep the green and gold."

Player's family is still in Waco, which makes the move back that much sweeter. Home is just down the road.

sweeter. Home is just down the road.

"I'm a big family guy. With my family being eight minutes away from me, all

my friends and family can

come to my games," Player



WACOAN WARRIORS Jaxon Player (left) by Baylor Athletics, Kayley Ables (middle) by Olivia Havre | Photographer and Cortlan Castle (right) by Assoah Ndomo | Photographer.

said. "When I'm done with football for the day, I can go relax with them. It's way better than being six hours away like I was [at Tulsa]."

Baylor baseball sophomore catcher Courtlan Castle is also a Midway High School graduate. Castle said he is very familiar with Homecoming.

Homecoming.

"I think Baylor has one of the best Homecoming traditions of all time," Castle said. "I'm looking forward to the parade. I'll be there. The floats are all really cool. Some of my friends are involved in

that."

Baylor soccer defender

Kayley Ables checks in next

as a local native. The Waco High School graduate has seen many homecomings, but she said she had never been to the parade until she was committed to play for the Bears.

Now as a student athlete, Ables sees another side of Homecoming. Because soccer is in season and often has games on Sundays, the players don't get to attend the Homecoming football games.

"If we have a Sunday game, they limit [attending the game] just because they don't want us on our feet," Ables said. "So they limit how long we can be there, or

if it's a night game, probably not [allowed to watch]."

not [allowed to watch]."

Even though Ables and her teammates miss some of the Homecoming traditions, that doesn't make the weekend any less special. Ables said being from Waco, she takes more pride in

Baylor Homecoming.

"I'm planning on moving to Houston in May," Ables said. "So, I think it's just going to be weird because Waco has just always been home. It has a special place in my heart. So, I can definitely see myself coming back to Waco and going back to parades in the future. It definitely is a special place."

Baylor men's tennis' Bass takes ITA Regional singles title

ANNAGRACE HALE

STAFF WRITER

Baylor men's tennis senior Finn Bass claimed the ITA Texas Regional singles title Tuesday afternoon at the Hurd Tennis Center. After six days of play in Waco, the tournament came to a close with Bass at the top of the singles bracket following a 6-2, 6-2 win.

Head coach Michael Woodson said Bass has been putting in the work the last few years and was just waiting for his time to be right. Now is

"Finn has been doing the right things for a while now, but you don't always see the fruits of your labor in the time that you would necessarily want it," Woodson said. "[It] certainly doesn't happen overnight. So, it's been really impressive to see him, I would say over the last two years, doing everything he needs to do to give himself the best chance to raise his level."

Leading up to the final, Bass faced TCU's Sebastian Gorzny and stole the match.

"[I won] 6-1, 6-2 against



STEPPING UP TO SERVE Head coach Michael Woodson discusses senior Finn Bass' singles match in between sets on Oct. 18, at the Hurd Tennis Center.

a TCU player, which is never easy." Bass said. "Super tough, but tactically played really well. Didn't make a lot of errors and still played really aggressive."

On Tuesday, Bass stepped onto the court against Texas A&M's Pierce Rollins. The match was a chilly one, but the Brit said his lockedin concentration gave him

"We are both aggressive players," Bass said. "I think what I did better is I managed to hold my mental ability a bit better than he did in tricky conditions. When it's cold and the balls are kind of flying, not playing as fast as [the courts] usually would, you just have to play a bit more

within yourself."

As one of the seniors this season, Bass has stepped into a leadership role for this Baylor team.

"Really enjoying my time as captain and helping the freshmen settle in," Bass said. "They've got great talent. We've got a lot of potential in the team this year. It's just making

sure we're all working together for the same common goal and just being the best versions of ourselves every day."

The squad has lost some senior leadership after Sven Lah and Matias Soto graduated last season. Additionally, former court one star Adrian Boitan began his pro journey this year. Both losses leave some big shoes to fill. Now, the program has welcomed two new freshmen, Zsombor Velcz of Hungary and Martin Breysach of France.

This local tournament was an opportunity for the team to come together in one place. The fall season is very individualized with participating in different tournaments across the country. With athletes scattered, this weekend was beneficial to get the team on the same page.

"It's not that often we see everyone together and work through things or talk through stuff," Woodson said, "We've welcomed the opportunity to host regionals so that everybody can be together and kind of regroup at the end of every day."

After this regional win, Bass has secured a place in the ITA Fall Nationals in San Diego starting Nov. 2. Throughout the rest of the fall, the Bears will compete individually in different tournaments.

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green and gold in 1995, yet it's only increased and trickled down into younger generations that are now playing for him.

"Being from Waco and around the Waco area, Coach Thompson's reputation precedes itself," junior infielder Cole Posey said. "Phenomenal man, great coach, knows how to win, but is really invested in the people. And so, I feel like it's kind of the perfect storm we have going on so far."

Sophomore catcher Cortlan Castle remembers watching games at the ballpark growing up, during Thompson's first stint with Baylor. Castle said as he got older, he then transitioned to MCC games once Thompson moved there.

Thompson's influence, paired with a family connection between him and Castle, brought another unique bond that lasts to this

"His daughter is in my sister's grade, so we've kind of known that family [and] seen him around Waco for a long time," Castle said. "Now that our relationship has changed from someone that I kind of know to now someone that's my head coach, it's been really cool to have that."

It hasn't been long since Thompson started fall practice with his group, but one of his first points of emphasis was to build team camaraderie. The way he did this is by making team members learn each other's name, hometown and previous school - whether IUCO, Division 1 or high

Thompson did this and told the squad he would quiz them over it at some pointlater in the year. Fifth-year senior righthanded pitcher Blake Helton said the assessment has yet to happen, but that he's prepared and ready if the day came

where they would be tested. He said this is a helpful tactic to gain chemistry with so many new faces. As of right now, out of everyone that is practicing on the diamond, a little under half of them are returners from

"So, really studying kind of everybody's background helps getting to know everyone really quickly and what everybody's about," Helton said. "That has played a huge role in getting to know everyone and we're much closer for it."

So much of Thompson's likeability is already rubbing off on his players just a week into fall practice. This is the case for Castle, who said Thompson looks at his athletes as more than just objects.

Castle compared it to what we've seen head football coach Dave Aranda speak about before: A person over player mentality.

"He just really pushes culture and always pushes person over player which is huge for all of us," Castle said. "Because if you can believe in us off the field, then it's easy for us to believe in each other on the field. So, person over player is the biggest thing that I really, really enjoy about him."

The honeymoon phase is still looming over Baylor Ballpark, as the homecoming for Thompson is a feel-good story in itself, at least for right now. He said that although it's been such a great time being back home, he understands how quickly things can turn when the season begins and games start to matter.

"So, the homecoming has been great," Thompson said. "And it'll keep being great until that first loss and then it'll just be wins and losses, right? So, we're looking forward to getting that part of it started

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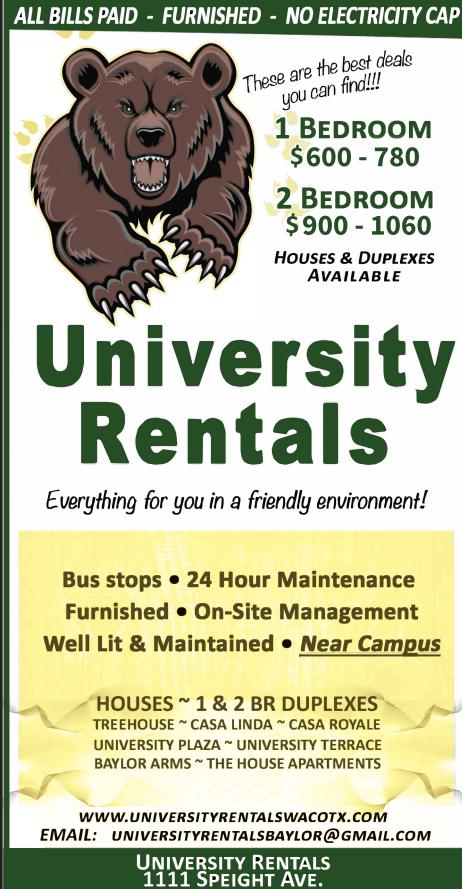


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PASSION Coach Dave Aranda fires up players from the sidelines at Sept. 3 game against the University of Albany.

Baylor football hopes to avoid three-game skid

MICHAEL HAAG Sports Editor

It hasn't been an ideal start for Baylor football to this point, but it has a chance to get back on track with a homecoming contest against the University of Kansas on Saturday. The game will showcase two programs on the cusp of a three-game losing

The Bears (3-3, 1-2 Big 12) have underperformed to this point, while the Jayhawks (5-2, 2-2 Big 12) have shattered expectations.

The two were expected to be polar opposites, as Baylor was picked to repeat as conference champions in the preseason media poll, while Kansas was voted to finish in last place.

The tables have turned, and the Bears are hoping to find the success they found in 2021-22 whereas the Jayhawks hope to continue making statements and proving they deserve to be taken seriously.

Monday head coach Dave Aranda said the status of sophomore quarterback Blake Shapen and junior running back Craig "Sqwirl" Williams was unknown and that they needed further testing.

Both Shapen and Williams suffered head injuries during the team's 43-40 loss to West Virginia University this past Thursday.

With Shapen's status in the air, redshirt freshman slinger Kyron Drones would be in line to get the start under center on Saturday. Drones was thrust into a tough spot on Thursday, but showed poise and ability, according to Aranda.

Whether Drones or Shapen suits up and starts, fifth-year senior tight end Ben Sims said he has the same amount of confidence either way.

"Kyron's got the same abilities," Sims said. "I mean, like y'all saw in the game, he came in and didn't skip a beat. So, the confidence that the offense has in Kyron is second-tonone. We're ready for him to play if he needs to."

History would tell you that Baylor will dominate this weekend, as the green and gold hosts a 17-4 all-time record over KU, winning the last 12 consecutive meetings.

The Bears have outscored the Jayhawks 578-99 during that streak. This year is much different since KU is taking the league by surprise.

"We go into Kansas historically maybe not the best team - but we tell ourselves every year that this is not the same Kansas team as it was the vear before," Sims said. "And that keeps guys focused and I think it holds a lot of truth. So, going into it with the mentality that they're the best team in the Big 12 might be necessary."

Aranda said he's still worrying about where the team is putting its focus each and every day. He said that falls on him and how he directs the

"I worry about being so outcome focused at the start of all of it," Aranda said. "Because that is probably something I didn't have a handle on in the beginning and got us to where we're at in this place anyways.

"And so, to get back on what we have to do today, what we have to do this afternoon. What we have to do with this meeting, with this walkthrough, with this practice, is really where the focus needs to be."

Over the last two games, the Bears have given up 18 points on nontraditional scores.

In those same two matches, they've only lost by a combined 14

When looking at that and where the issue stems from, Aranda said it falls on coaching.

He said "we're getting guys that are panicking trying to make plays."

He said it's his job to make connections in player meetings to fully establish that trust among the athletes.

"We've got to be able to do our 1/11th instead of chasing these plays,"

Aranda said. "Let's be where we're supposed to be, and these plays will come to us ... When the losses are finding you, it's funny how you start helping those losses find you. And we're in that space right now. So, the trust part is a big part to get us out."

Both Aranda and defensive lineman Siaki "Apu" Ika said improvements start in practice. They said more specifically, finishing through drills rather than getting it over with is how the team is attacking the week.

"I have to hold them to higher standards at the end of a play," Aranda said. "We generally have a quick whistle in practice and I think the finish of a defensive play can be

Apu added that the increased intensity of practice will help reduce tackling issues seen in Baylor's loss to

"Put ourselves in those positions that we're going to be in on Saturday, not something that we're just running through just to get the period over with," Apu said.

Kickoff Saturday's homecoming contest between the Bears and Jayhawks is set for 11 a.m. at McLane Stadium. The game will be broadcast on ESPN2 and can be listened to on ESPN Central Texas 1660 AM.

In homecoming games, Baylor is 49-43-4 all-time, winning three consecutive along with 10 of the last 11 matchups.

Earlier in the year, the squad felt like they were playing green, or to their standard as they moved into conference play.

With back-to-back losses now, Apu said the group needs to find a way to get back to its identity.

'We've got to play faster, get back to playing green," Apu said. "I feel like during practice when the lights aren't on and the pressure isn't felt, it's easy to play fast. We've just got to do it when the lights come on."

Baylor athletes seek jobs in sports field

ANNA GRACE HALE

Sports Writer

Division I athletes pour their hearts, souls and time into playing their sports at the highest level to the best of their ability. With so much of their life devoted to the game, many cannot imagine life without sports — so they simply

Multiple Baylor athletes are looking to pursue a career in the sports sector and in that way, they never have to fully say goodbye to the thing they love.

softball Baylor outfielder McKenzie Wilson is a fifth-year senior and thinking about the next steps after collegiate ball.

"I love sports. I always tell people this, that I'm not going to be able to play softball forever," Wilson said. "I still have another year of eligibility after, and man, my body is hurting. So I know there is a time I'm going to hang up the cleats and say goodbye to playing on the softball field."

However, the ominous day of leaving the diamond for the last time does not scare Wilson. She has no intention of leaving the world of sports.

"I feel like I'll still be able to share my passion for sports with the world through sports broadcasting, whether it's sideline reporting [or] whether it's being a TV news anchor," Wilson said.

The Long Beach, Calif., native realized her passion for reporting in high school.

Wilson's first time in front of a camera was during a week long week broadcasting camp. Initially, Wilson said she was nervous but once the camera turned on her personality started to shine through.

"Several people have told me that I look very comfortable in front of the camera and that I speak well," Wilson said. "Receiving those affirmations kind of was like okay, this is for

From there, Wilson entered university as a mass communications and broadcastjournalism major and never looked back.

Additionally, being a Baylor student athlete has allowed her to make connections with others in this profession and in this way, Wilson has a leg up going into the professional world.

The platform that student athletes have, especially with NIL, allows us to make connections," Wilson said. "It's all about the people you know."

For some student athletes the privilege of name, and likeness has aided them to get a foot in the door professionally.

In fact, an NIL deal was how Baylor volleyball's Faith Lynch landing an internship with Sicem365, a sports news source focused on Baylor athletics. The red-shirt freshman was at a tailgate with Sicem365 as part of an NIL deal, when she started talking with Ashley Hodge, about her hope to one day be a sideline reporter.

"I was kind of telling him what I want to do, what I think I want to do," Lynch said. "He was like 'Well we're always looking for females to come on staff or to intern. I would love to give you the opportunity to sit and listen." In July, Lynch started hosting

her own podcast. On "Dear Sports with Faith Lynch," the sixth-generation Baylor Bear gets to explore what she loves and share other athletes' stories. As an athlete herself, Lynch said she has a passion for showing that athletes are more than just their

"I want people to see that we're actual people and there are [other] things about us. I like to bake. I like to do other things. And so I want people's stories to be shared in a special way." Lynch

Lynch said student athletes may have an advantage when looking for a career in sports, especially coming from Baylor.

"We have Student Athletes Center for Excellence, SACE, and they do a great job of providing us with resources," Lynch said. "I recently just applied to a Nike internship for communications. I never would have even thought about that."

Baylor soccer junior defender Sarah Hornyak just completed an internship at Nike headquarters in Beaverton, Ore., this summer. Hornyak got a glimpse of what working in sports would look like and it solidified her career path.

Initially, Hornyak said she was hesitant going into the internship because she didn't feel as if she was qualified. Division I soccer is a full time job, so she had limited exposure to internships prior.

However, being an athlete, she was able to provide a unique perspective because she relates to Nike's mission on a different level.

"I play soccer every day. 'Why not use your sport to help you?' That's what my mom told me." Hornak said. "'So, what if you're using it as a crutch if it helps you?' So, I was able to talk about experiences as an athlete."

Hornyak is a Sports, Strategy and Sales major and said she is excited to continue working in this field.

"I'm doing [S3] right now and it's really cool to be learning all about working in sports," Hornyak said. "The connections in S3 are insane."

Baylor athletes dream big and are on their way to do big things off the field or court. Maybe in the future you will see Lynch's name on ESPN, Wilson's podcast on faith and sports or Hornyak's impact in the sales and strategy realm. In a few years they may not be playing on the field for the green and gold, but they will always be connected to something they love.

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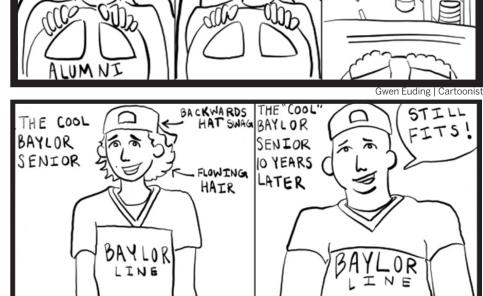
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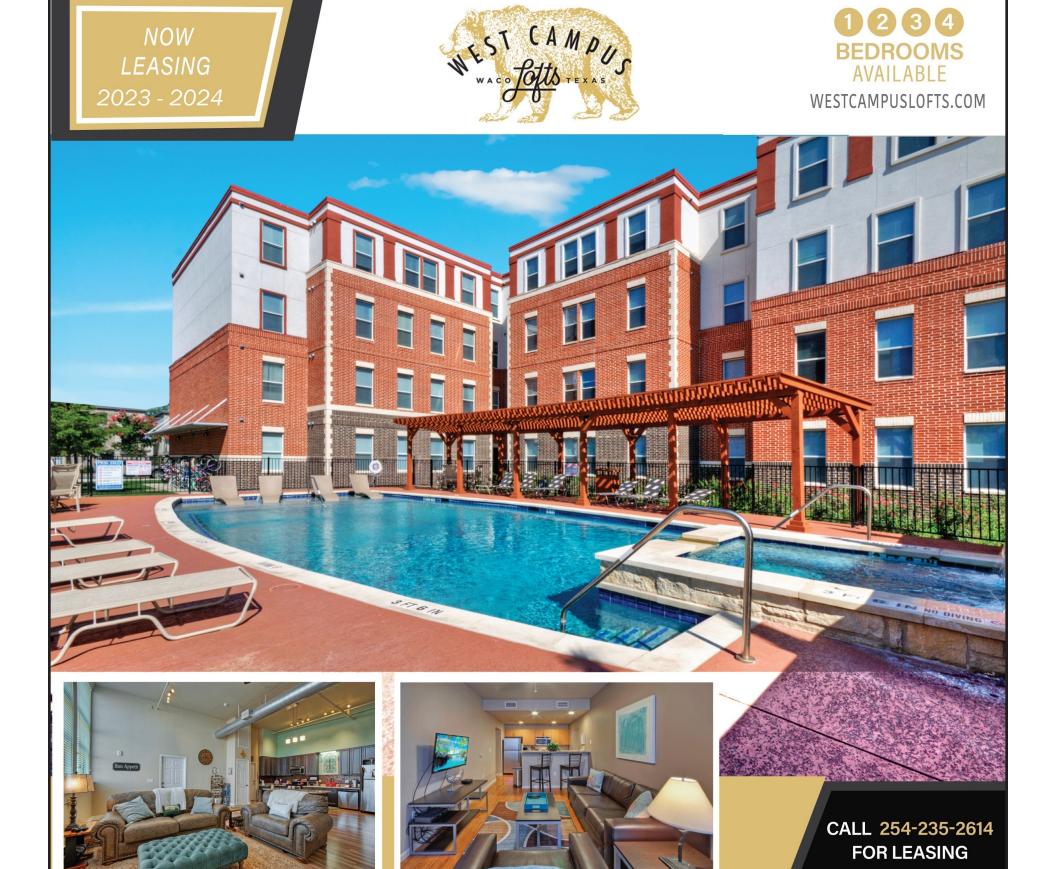
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