

SING 2024

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71 years of Sing, 33 years of marriage

SARAH GALLAHER
Staff Writer

In 1988, two Baylor students met while participating in Lambda Chi Alpha and The Twist's All-University Sing act. A casual meeting during rehearsal led to a lifelong commitment, and 36 years later, the Baylor alumni are happily married with two children.

Ray and Paige Buckingham live in Lawrence, Kan., working as a church facility manager and educational consultant, respectively. The pair graduated from Baylor in 1990 and married the next year.

Ray, who was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity, said a group of women known as The Twist joined their act after the brothers determined they needed extra help. Rather than pairing with a sorority, the fraternity decided to find dance partners in a different way.

"We had a few good singers, but we were horrible at dancing," Ray said. "We figured we would do something new, something that we were pretty sure hadn't been done before. We had open auditions for the female students that would like to be in Sing and do a co-ed act with us."

Paige, alongside an estimated 25 women, began practicing with the brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha for their performance entitled "Fright Night at the Drive-in." She said the partnership

was one of the first ones to include performers outside of Greek Life.

"A couple of years before that, Sing had only been for Greek groups," Paige said. "I think there was a lot of pushback because it's called All-University Sing. Either that year or the year before was the first year they allowed anybody not Greek to be in it, so this was kind of revolutionary in having people be in it that weren't in a fraternity or a sorority."

Paige's mother told her she would meet a member of Lambda Chi Alpha, fall in love and get married — but Paige didn't believe her until she met Ray. She "thought he was cute" and asked a mutual friend to introduce them, later asking him out on a date to go kite-flying at Lake Waco. He declined, saying he had to study for a test, but their romance began shortly after.

"After that, it was more of a mutual thing," Ray said. "I knew she was interested, and I really did have to study."

Although neither Ray nor Paige expected to find their significant other while participating in Sing, they said it was a welcome surprise. To Ray, finding a spouse in college was something he had always envisioned for himself.

"I had every expectation going to college that I would probably find someone that I would be interested in marrying," Ray said. "I dated for a purpose. I wasn't going to date just to

date. If I was going to date someone, I was going to be serious about the right one."

Ray and Paige began dating in February 1988, toward the end of Sing rehearsals, and continued their relationship through graduation. On June 8, 1991, they got married and moved to Lawrence, Kan., where they raised their two children, Reid, 28, and Heather, 23. The Buckinghams attribute the success of their nearly 33 years of marriage to their lasting friendship. They said they enjoy spending time together traveling, going to the theater and attending sporting events when Baylor plays at the University of Kansas.

"I think if you asked us both the same question of 'What do you like most about your spouse?' we'd probably both say the same answer, which is 'I married my best friend,'" Ray said. "We're still best friends."

Though marriage can be difficult, Ray and Paige still share the same spark they had while performing in Sing. Ray said their years of marriage have only brought them closer together, particularly while raising their two children.

"We not only still love each other; we still really like each other," Paige said. "I married my best friend. I married somebody that, through the hard times, you press on — somebody that you can go to that is there for you and loves you unconditionally."

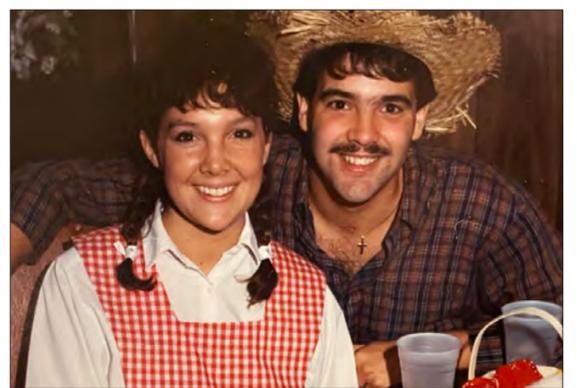


Photo courtesy of Paige Buckingham
FROM THE STAGE Ray and Paige Buckingham met in Lambda Chi Alpha and The Twist's Sing Act in 1988.



Photo courtesy of Paige Buckingham
TO THE ALTAR The Buckinghams got married in 1990 and currently live in Lawrence, Kan.

Meet Mitch Gilly: Sing's arranger

CALEB WHEELER
Staff Writer

All-University Sing requires weeks of long hours from all of those involved — but there is one man behind the scenes who works with students to ensure the best experience possible for performers and audiences alike.

Mitch Gilly, a freelance composer and arranger, received an invitation to take up the task of directing Sing when he was a graduate student at Baylor. Since then, Gilly has graduated, but he has continued to return to campus to compose and arrange for one of the university's largest events.

"I enjoy working with the groups as we bring our artistic vision to life, and I get satisfaction putting new shows together and finding ways to make the songs connect with each other," Gilly said. "More often than not, it'd be songs we would never think would be put together. So to me, it's like a puzzle — trying to figure out how to seamlessly transition between the songs so it all sounds like one homogenous show and not like a Frankenstein of songs just mashed together."

This will be Gilly's third year arranging Sing, which typically has 20 acts. In his first year, he partnered with an arranger from Dallas, and each of them took half of the songs. However, last year and this year, he has worked alone.

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Calling non-Greek organizations

JOSH SIATKOWSKI
Staff Writer

Student Productions and performers agree Baylor needs more non-Greek representation in All-University Sing. Although participation from other organizations is highly encouraged, these groups should understand that a 2025 Sing act is more than a sign-up sheet away.

Olivia Moses, associate director of Student Productions, said the entire university wants to diversify its Sing portfolio.

"We'd really like an All-University Sing to represent more of an all-university field," Moses said.

Moses said she meant this in multiple ways. One method to more holistically represent Baylor is to get participation from other groups, whether they be cultural organizations, clubs or even residence halls. However, Moses said another way is to diversify the acts themselves. She said she wants students to understand that the criteria for a Sing act are less constricting than they seem.

There is no rule that says who can and cannot make a Sing act, nor does an act have to be the typical Broadway-style

production — two common misconceptions that Moses said she hears often. In fact, as long as the group is composed of 20-200 Baylor students and complies with the rules of All-University Sing, any team has the creative freedom to design the act they want.

Although any group can, in theory, enter Sing, there are a number of challenges that make this easier said than done.

The first reason is that Sing is competitive, and that competition begins as soon as registration opens. According to Moses, when registration opens in April, nearly all of the 20 available spots are taken "within seconds." While there is high demand for the available spots in Sing, Moses said there isn't much that can be done to increase the total number of acts. In the weeks leading up to the shows, Moses said Student Productions and Waco Hall are totally booked.

"There's literally no room to add another organization," Moses said. "Our schedule is completely full!"

Even if a new group does manage to fill one of the elusive

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VOTE

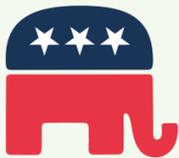
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Stop the YikYak yapping: Refrain from spreading hate during Sing

EMMA WEIDMANN
Arts & Life Editor

All-University Sing — one of the favorite pastimes of Baylor students, where we can all come together to see what our peers have spent long, grueling hours creating and cheer them on no matter who we want to see go to Pigskin Revue in the fall.

That's how it would be in a perfect world, but we live in a very imperfect one where many of us love to see others fail and relish in mockery on social media. And because YikYak, the anonymous community posting app, is so popular on this campus, Sing is often a time of staunch competition and cruel negativity.

This will be my second year writing the Sing reviews for The Lariat, and what I tried to keep in mind last year was that the need to be exacting and witty with the reviews was outweighed by the real commitment and effort on the part of the performers, as well as their deservedness of a fair and honest evaluation.

Partly, the reviews serve to give campus a

good idea of what went down on the first night of acts, as many readers may not have been able to score tickets. I would guess a large group of them are parents of performers who were unable to attend as well. That's why I use the same judging criteria as the Sing judges.



It's an exercise in the difference between honesty — a fair and respectfully given opinion — and brutal honesty — a thinly veiled excuse for being a jerk.

Last year, as I will continue to do this year, I made it a point to balance my opinions and funny quips with respect for the performers and for the acts themselves. I strived to mix valid, constructive comments with wording that would be entertaining and evocative for the reader.

I can't say that what I have seen in past years on YikYak has the same commitment. For the most part, posts have ranged from saying one group "fopped" or "was trash" to hyping up others — and very often, they have little to do with the performance as a whole and are aimed at specific performers, whether they did a good

job or croaked a note on accident.

While it can be entertaining to point out flaws and have a giggle at some of the funnier moments of Sing, it's important to try to put yourself in the shoes of a performer before you post something degrading about their act.

Would you want to get off that stage, pull out your phone and see yourself name-dropped for all to see and sneer at? I highly doubt it, and if you did, that would make you kind of a masochist.

Too often, we assume that just because we don't know someone, they won't see or be hurt by what we've posted about them. The chances of them

seeing that post, whether by scrolling on the app themselves or being shown a screenshot,

are higher than it flying under their radar altogether. And by the way, most people who post hate comments anonymously wouldn't dare to do it if their name was tied to it and everyone could see how rude they were.

Posting about Sing in general is not a bad thing at all. The event provides an opportunity for campus to come together and have a common subject of conversation for the two weekends it spans. So by all means, share your thoughts on YikYak or wherever you want, but I challenge you to keep your urge to be a hater to a minimum, even if only for these next couple weeks.

“It's an exercise in the difference between honesty — a fair and respectfully given opinion — and brutal honesty — a thinly veiled excuse for being a jerk.”

Sing is best, biggest tradition at Baylor

KAITLIN SIDES
LTVN Reporter/Anchor

All-University Sing is a special tradition for Baylor. Many other schools host similar events, but nothing quite as extraordinary, which is why it is Baylor's best event.

Participating groups spend all year preparing for their seven-minute acts, which captivate those watching online or in person. Many people say the homecoming bonfire is their favorite tradition, but what exactly is fun about standing in a crowd and waiting to see logs set on fire? Pigskin Revue is a close second, but there is nothing like watching acts for the first time. Sing is packed with different surprises each year since participating groups aren't allowed to repeat themes of any group from past years.

Although musical performances may not be everyone's cup of tea, there is something special about seeing your friends' hard work come to life. As the roommate of a Sing chair, I believe the efforts they put into their acts should not be overlooked. They put in countless hours of work making sure everything is clean and perfect — all while balancing a normal college life.

Participating groups aren't the only ones putting in hard work for Sing. Members of Student Productions are too. They help make sure the logistics run smoothly for every act. Next time you attend, think more about how much work was put in behind the scenes, from the band to the annual

jokes of host Dr. Blair Browning.

The judging and scoring process is just another part of the tradition. After two weeks of shows, there is so much excitement building up for Pigskin, especially when the act you've been hyping up for all of your friends wins. The addition of the People's Choice Awards also makes it feel like you have a small part in the Sing process, even if you are unaffiliated.



As someone who is not involved in Greek Life, I can still appreciate these acts and recognize the hard work that goes into each one. You don't even have to be involved in Greek Life to participate yourself, because Sing Alliance is welcome to everyone.

Tickets are very hard to come by, but if you're lucky enough to score one, soak up every minute of the performances. Keep in mind there are many parents who don't have the

chance to see their child perform due to tickets being sold out. I understand why people believe Sing is not Baylor's best tradition solely because of lack of tickets, but I don't believe that should

make them hate Sing as a whole. Just because one part of it needs improvement doesn't mean the acts don't deserve your time.

If you are unable to watch Sing in person, you can watch the acts via livestream online from the comfort of your home, surrounded by friends.

Baylor has a lot of different traditions to offer, especially in the fall, but the reward of waiting for Sing to come around in the spring is the best. Appreciate every moment of it.

“Pigskin Revue is a close second, but there is nothing like watching acts for the first time.”

Six standards that can make or break a Sing act

JULIANNE FULLERTON
Copy Editor

GROUP SING

All-University Sing, one of Baylor's most beloved traditions, is not just for fun. It's also a competition. With only eight acts advancing to Pigskin Revue in the fall, competition can be fierce, especially in years like this one, with 20 Broadway-style performances from different organizations. There are various categories that factor into the judges' scoresheets, but here are six elements that can make or break any Sing act.

COSTUMES

A Sing act must appeal to judges in more ways than one, but especially visually. Colors, patterns, designs and even types of costumes are specifically chosen to make acts look their absolute best. It was no accident that "It's a Gnome's World" took first place in 2022 with Kappa Omega Tau's symmetrical hats, white socks and complementary color costumes.

The color of costumes can be key in making lines look cleaner and choreography look sharper, especially by wearing white sleeves and white socks. On the flip side, if choreography isn't all together, this costume will reveal how unclean and disorganized an act is.

PLOT

Did you know judges aren't given a copy of the program that everyone else in the audience receives? This means they don't have access to a written description of the story each act is supposed to tell.

If I'm conscious of how much time has passed during a Sing act, it significantly impacts my thoughts on the act. A winning Sing act has a distinguishable and original plot that moves the act along, just like "A Day at the Derby" performed by Alpha Tau Omega and Chi Omega. Song choice, choreography and facials all play a part in advancing the plot, so these choices must be made with precision.

BACKDROP & PROPS

It's safe to say no one wins Sing solely by having a stunning backdrop or innovative props. But these two elements can either add another level of "wow" to an act or make it look completely average. You could have the best choreography and vocals in the world, but if your backdrop is bland, it will take away from the overarching picture of the act. Delta Delta Delta's backdrop from the "We Got the Reef" act of 2022 immersed audience members in their underwater world. As I've mentioned before, a Sing act needs to be visually appealing to judges, not just musically.

Every group has vocalists, some of whom will absolutely blow the audience's mind with the power and intensity with which they sing. As important as these vocalists are, there is an element called "group sing" that is just as important. Every group that enters Sing is required to have at least one minute and 15 seconds of group sing. However, if groups cannot be heard over the band or don't reach the total, points will be deducted from their score.

Musical quality and choreography each contribute to 20% of the scoresheet, so stellar choreography can't make up for the lack of group sing. This aspect can make or break an act in the way it's delivered, how loud it is, which lyrics are emphasized and if you can understand what the performers are saying in the first place. Pi Beta Phi's "Be My Girl" of 2023 demonstrates what powerful group sing sounds like.

SHARPNESS

To someone who hasn't seen or been a part of Sing before, the term "sharpness" might not make sense. Sharpness is when choreography is performed in a clean and precise way, meaning each movement is done exactly in sync with everyone else on stage.

Every group has choreography. In fact, many acts will probably share some of the same moves. The distinction between placing and not making it to Pigskin at all comes from how sharp an act is. Look up old Sing acts and watch people's arms, legs, shoes and even heads. For an act to win, it takes hitting each movement with exact precision, making it look visually appealing for all seven minutes.

ENERGY

To me, this is the most important one. With "entertainment value" making up 30% of the score, the energy of a group can make or break an entire act. If you can tell the performers don't care about the act or aren't proud of it, the audience and judges will reciprocate the same energy.

Audience engagement factors into the judge's scoresheet. No one cheers for performers who look like they are forced to be there.

Winning acts are full of people who are working together and having fun in the process. Sigma Chi's "Basement Full of Blues," which can be viewed on Youtube, had electric energy back in 1984 that groups should still strive for today. There is a clear distinction between groups who are having the time of their lives onstage and those who forget to slap a smile on their faces. With only seven minutes to shine, the energy of any group contributes to their victory or to their downfall.

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Keep the score: Ins and outs of judging Sing

ASHLYN BECK
Staff Writer

Of the 16 judges coming to Waco Hall to judge All-University Sing this year, some will be traveling across the country, while others will simply take a walk from the Student Activities office.

Olivia Moses, assistant director of Student Productions, said the process of judge selection includes choosing four experts in dance, four in music and four in theater production. The remaining four judges represent Baylor's Student Activities department.

"We try to get a mix of people who are real-life practitioners, so professional musicians and professional dancers," Moses said.

Susannah Chapman, graduate apprentice for Student Productions, worked closely with Moses in judge selection. She said the process included many meetings in which they threw around ideas and narrowed the search, looking for faculty from colleges nationwide.

"We want to have the perspective of someone who's doing this professionally for their job, but also someone who understands that this is an immature production in college," Chapman said.

"We want to make sure that the judges recognize that [these are] students, and they are putting in a lot of work and hours outside of also going to school."



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

SCORESHEET The 16 judges are chosen based on a variety of merits and criteria.

Chapman said the process of judge selection aims to bring well-rounded perspectives in every area because they want acts to receive full credit and recognition for their excellence in dance, music and theater production.

"The main value that we're trying to find when we look for judges is always equity," Chapman said.

Moses said another factor that adds to the fairness of the judging panel is if judges have never heard of Sing before — as is the case for most judges. One of the most notable judges

in the past was "High School Musical" actor Corbin Bleu, who Moses said was shocked by the production value.

"It's really rare that anyone has ever seen or heard of it," Moses said. "We really want that, because it gives us a chance to have a really unbiased perspective of the production."

According to the Student Activities website, judging is divided into five criteria: entertainment value, musical quality, choreography, creativity and theme development. Scores are tallied after the last judged night, and the results are sealed for announcement.

Moses said Student Productions doesn't give away much about the competition to judges before they see it. Rather, they allow them to have an open-minded view of the show.

"We just give them an overview of some of the competition rules, but we really don't tell them much — because again, the expertise that they have is enough to judge the competition," Moses said. "These are working professionals and academic experts in whatever their area is."

Additionally, Moses said the final four judges represent Student Activities to account for the fact that many students aren't actually involved in the art of dance, music and theater production.

"It's to kind of add a bit of that real-life flare," Moses said. "Most of, if not all of our students are not musical theater students, [and] this is an extracurricular activity, and so we add a little bit of that realism."

The first All-University Sing took place in April 1953, and since then, Chapman said Sing has united generations of students and families.

Additionally, Chapman said Sing helps form a sense of camaraderie among the students who participate.

"It binds people together and bonds them," Chapman said. "It's something that, once you go through it together, you've made a lot of friendships and a lot of really meaningful memories."

Weekly meetings encourage prayer for Baylor family

RORY DULOCK
Staff Writer

The Christ-Centered Diversity and Belonging Council is holding weekly prayer meetings from noon to 1 p.m. every Friday in Room 322 of the Foster Campus for Business and Innovation.

"We seek to embody Christ's teachings of love and inclusivity across boundaries of racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, religious and other expressions of human difference," the diversity and inclusion website reads.

Dr. Cindy Wu, professor of management and associate dean of diversity and belonging at the Hankamer School of Business, said the council was created from a mission for the business school.

"This is a council out of the need of our initiatives for promoting

Christ in diversity and inclusion," Wu said. "When our dean stepped into the position, he came up with the three pillars for the business school, the vision basically for us. And one is impactful research, the second one is innovative and experiential learning and the third one is Christ-centered diversity. So this is one of the three pillars that we're trying to pursue."

Wu said the business school can incorporate Christ-centered ideas on diversity, equity and inclusion because of Baylor's Christian tradition.

"I often tell my prayer meeting attendees that we are doing this behind-the-scenes work, we're pleading behind the scenes to God," Wu said. "And then, when we pray together and gather together, the Lord is with us. Jesus is right there with us. So it's powerful."

Wu said anyone who wants to join is welcome, including faculty and students of all different departments and majors.

"The objective is to have a gathering place for whoever wants to come," Wu said. "Bring their burden, lay their burden down and lay their burden at the foot of Christ, but also carry each other's burden. So talk about belonging — we see this as a big piece of building that community."

For those who are unable to come to the weekly prayer meeting, Wu said an alternative way to participate is to scan a QR code and put in a prayer request.

"Part of [building a community] is building this prayer request form, that QR code," Wu said. "If you don't feel like you want to come, but you do want somebody to hear you and want to know that your concern is prayed

for and is addressed, you have a way to send us your prayer request. And it can be anonymous; you don't need to let us know who you are. But if you choose to, and you want to talk to someone, we will find a person to connect with you."

Amarillo sophomore Chloe Miller said she started going to the weekly prayer meeting so she could connect with faculty and students.

"It's just a time to gather and make connections throughout the business school with people who I wouldn't usually see, professors or staff that I wouldn't know," Miller said. "It's also a good way to end the week, just to focus on what really matters, to focus on God."

Miller said a typical meeting usually consists of praying over the requests.

"We always start with the prayer

requests that are put in through the [Hankamer School of Business] QR code for prayer requests," Miller said. "We usually use the ACTS way of praying — so adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication — and if we're not walking around Foster, we just kind of go around the table, and we each pray for a certain prayer request."

Miller said she encourages faculty and students to come to the weekly prayer meeting because of the community it offers.

"I think it's a great way to engage with people that you don't normally see," Miller said. "We go to a Christian school, so I think it's really cool to learn from faculty. ... It's really cool to see their commitment to it, and it encourages me as a student to grow up and become more of a servant of Christ."

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Alumni return, reflect on Sing tradition

LUKE LATTANZI
Staff Writer

Every year, Baylor alumni who participated in All-University Sing during their time as students return to see the performances put on by their organizations. For many, coming back to campus as former Sing performers is about staying in touch with a community they valued as well as connecting with other alumni.

Pi Beta Phi alumna Dawn Watson, who graduated in 1991, said she participated in Sing her sophomore and junior years, first as a dancer, then as a singer. Even though she had no prior dance experience, Watson said Sing was a great way for her to make friends.

"Everybody [back then] could be in Sing if they wanted to," Watson said. "You didn't have to try out or anything like that. It was a great way to get to know them on a deeper level, like some that maybe you didn't know as well that were in different pledge classes and things, and it was just fun."

Since graduating in 1991 and moving to Colorado Springs, Colo., Watson said she initially didn't come back to Baylor very often. However, after her son began attending Baylor and joined Alpha Tau

Omega, returning for Sing became a family tradition.

"Once he was there, of course, we started coming back to visit him," Watson said. "We came back for homecoming. ... My mom is in Houston, and so all four years, minus the [COVID-19] year, ... I would go to Houston and get my mom, and my mom and I would drive up and spend the weekend and go to Sing."

Even though her son has since graduated and begun graduate school, Watson said it is still a family tradition for her and her mom to travel to Waco every year to see Sing acts.

She said she has always run into other Sing alumni, as the community is continued by their children, who are now attending Baylor and participating in Sing themselves.

"It's fun now because I run into people," Watson said. "We were at Baylor together, and we have kids that are now there together. And they're all in different groups, but we're there in Waco Hall, and I'm cheering because their daughter's up there performing with [Chi Omega] or with Pi Phi or different clubs."

Sing Alliance alumna Kaitlyn Tremble, who graduated in 2023, got her start in the tradition her freshman

year with Sing Alliance, a non-Greek organization that allows students who aren't in a fraternity or sorority to participate in Sing.

"We're pretty much the only consistent non-Greek organization that participates [and also a] consistently co-ed organization," Tremble said.

Tremble said she originally found Sing Alliance at Late Night and became interested due to her background as a dancer.

In 2022, Tremble became a Sing chair helping design costumes. She said she's returning despite the numerous logistical challenges.

"The reason I invested so much time and effort ... is because Sing Alliance is a family to me, and it's such a great group, and there's just so many amazing people in it," Tremble said. "I'm so excited to see where they've taken it this year."

While Sing is stressful, Tremble said she encourages students to enjoy their experience.

"Savor the time you have — and really, just don't let it pass you by," Tremble said. "I feel like in school, you're always like, 'Oh, I just need to get past this week; or, 'I just need to get past this deadline.' Especially for Sing performers, it's always, 'Once the



Lariat File Photo
UMBRELLA Members of the 1991 Pi Beta Phi Sing group pose together after performing their act, "Singing in the Rain."

season is over, I can relax.' But don't forget to enjoy the actual season while it lasts, because it always goes so fast."

Watson also said that despite the additional obligations of Sing, it was nevertheless worth the effort due to the relationships and bonds she made

throughout her time at Baylor.

"But I would tell [students] it's so worth the effort, because the memories you'll have and the time you'll have with the people in your group — you will cherish that for years after," Watson said.

GILLY from Page 1



Lilly Yablou | Photographer

BEHIND THE TUNES Baylor alum Mitch Gilly does the arranging for every Sing act.

"There were several weeks in a row where I was working 9 a.m. to 12 a.m., so 15 hours a day," Gilly said. "It's a massive undertaking, but it's a lot of fun to do."

Gilly said he works to ensure the students see their act come to life, and he is there to make that product as close to what they want as he can.

"Typically, they either pick the sound effects themselves, or if there's a particular kind of thing, I can make a sound effect myself," Gilly said. "And then after that, I just keep meeting with the groups until they are happy with the product that they have. And then, when it comes time, I rehearse the bands, and we perform."

Dr. Scott McAllister, who was Gilly's professor for six years, recommended Gilly for the position of directing Sing and spoke highly of his abilities.

"I would say [Gilly is] a triple threat as a musician: He is [a] wonderful composer, arranger and is a fantastic performer," McAllister said.

McAllister said he has been impressed with Gilly's ability to put together music for a great show while guiding the student musicians who play in the band.

"The School of Music is very proud to be involved in this," McAllister said. "I went the last couple of years and was impressed. ... [Gilly's] not just doing a basic arrangement of a piece of music, but he actually puts his own composing skills to make the music a little more interesting."

McAllister's office is next to the Sing rehearsal space, and he said the audience can expect an eclectic and exciting roster of performances that will reflect the hard work that has been poured into the endeavor.


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VETS program aims for success of students transitioning from the military to Baylor

LUKE LATTANZI
Staff Writer

Each year, Baylor veteran students receive help during their transition from the military to college life through the Veterans Education and Transitional Services program.

The VETS program was founded in 2011 by now-retired professor of educational psychology, Dr. Janet Bagby. Despite the wide array of services the VETS program now provides, it originally started as an informal grassroots movement.

"I had no road map. I had no business plan," Bagby said. "I just literally started knocking on doors on campus and asking, 'Who will help me get services for our veterans?' And I'm thrilled to say that I've never been prouder of Baylor. Every door I knocked on, I was received very graciously — from the president's office [downward] — and was told oftentimes, 'We knew we needed to be doing something to support our student veterans during the transition from being in the military to being a full-time college student.'"

The program initially began as a student organization, Veterans of Baylor, which still exists today. Bagby was then granted an office in the Baylor ROTC building, and for the first years of the program, she ran it part time with the help of a graduate assistant. Eventually, the university hired Kevin Davis, the current manager of the VETS program, to run it full time.

Out of more than 1,300 military-connected students on campus (whose parents or spouses have served), there are just under 100 undergraduate students and roughly 350 graduate students with past military experience, according to Davis. While the VETS program is aimed at assisting all military-connected students on campus, the undergraduate veteran population is often the chief focus.

"A lot of the gaps exist there because they're post traditional students," Davis said. "They're older students. They're married, have kids. They've got this other kind of stage of life that they've been through that's unique."

For undergraduate veteran students, the VETS program integrates onboarding activities alongside traditional new student traditions, such as orientation and Welcome Week.

"We want them to experience the big Baylor atmosphere and culture and tradition. We want

them to be part of Baylor," Davis said. "But a lot of times, they're sometimes 25 to 55 years old coming to college, and so if we haven't built a good on-ramp, a lot of times they just aren't going to participate in those things."

That "on-ramp" comes in the form of a veteran student orientation, as well as readiness workshops over the summer to help them become reacquainted with academia. The VETS program also has a new student experience class tailored to first-year veteran students.

"The whole idea behind all of that is that we're creating a launchpad, right?" Davis said. "We want you to find your home base so that you engage in your classroom so that you don't just sit in the back and not talk, right? We want you to engage and share your global perspectives that you have, your profound leadership experience, the heart for service. All these things that make Baylor, Baylor, our veterans really embody, and we want them to be part of the campus."

Wylie senior Caroline Burten — a 30-year-old health sciences major and a Marine Corps veteran — came to Baylor from a community college in North Carolina and is now the president of the student organization, Veterans of Baylor. As a nontraditional undergraduate student, Burten said the VETS program was a turning point in her experience at Baylor.

"I was unable to attend any of the transfer events or anything on campus or any tours," Burten said. "So we showed up the week before classes started, and I knew nothing about the campus and nothing about my classes. It was awful, and I just kind of wandered around lost and asked people, 'Do you know where the VETS center is?' And everybody was like, 'I have no idea what you're talking about.'"

After meandering a bit more, Burten found Davis and the VETS program, allowing her to get the help she needed to navigate college life. She said the VETS program encouraged her to apply the skills she learned while serving as a Marine to her college career. While in Afghanistan, Burten served as a linguist fluent in Farsi, Dari and Pashto — languages commonly spoken in the country. When injured Afghans came to the emergency room, she translated for them, and it was there that she found her passion for medicine.

While the military gave Burten the drive, motivation and discipline to attend classes, she said she needed the VETS program to teach her how to navigate campus for the first time.



Mia Crawford | Photographer

TEACHING TRANSITIONS The Veterans Education and Transitional Services program also aims to encourage awareness for faculty and staff members on accommodating veteran students.

"I didn't have the knowledge of how to do college," Burten said. "Because I'm 30 years old, it's been a while since I've been in school. And so, [Davis] and the VETS program definitely used our strengths — used the discipline that we have and the drive that we have and the ability to get up early and work hard — [and] taught us how to funnel that into organizing your classes and scheduling appropriately."

Despite how far the VETS program has come, there are still challenges. For example, Bagby said awareness about veteran students on campus is still lacking.

"More times than several, we would have Baylor students, very well-intentioned, come up to our veterans and say, 'What is a veteran?'" Bagby said. "They did not know what a veteran was, ... so they really had no frame of reference. So we realized early on that not only did we need to provide services for our student veterans, but we needed to also help educate our student body about what it means to serve in the military."

This semester, one of the objectives for Veterans of Baylor is to encourage veteran students to become more involved throughout campus.

"A lot of people don't even really know we're

here," Burten said. "They don't know we exist. I told a student one time that I was a vet, and she [said], 'Oh, you're in veterinary school?' And I [said], 'No, I'm a veteran.' And she [said], 'You've gone to Baylor before, and you're coming back?' That wasn't a dumb thing to say. It made sense. [But no,] I was in the military, and now I'm here."

The VETS program also promotes awareness by providing training to faculty and staff on how to properly accommodate veteran students.

Davis said he encourages first-time veteran students to tune out what he calls the imposter syndrome that many struggle with when coming to Baylor for the first time.

He also said that first-time veteran students should strive to get out of their comfort zone, whether that means getting involved in campus activities or being more avid participants in class.

"I would encourage anyone, but especially our vets who can be that loudest voice, you are here for a reason," Davis said. "Baylor's been doing this admissions thing for quite some time, and they're not making mistakes. You're here for a reason. You can be successful. Lean on those skills you developed in the military and before."



Lariat file photo

TRUST THE PROCESS Preparations for All-University Sing often start about a year in advance.

Behind the curtain: How Sing Acts come together

JACOB BOONE
Staff Writer

While All-University Sing only takes place during two weekends in February, preparation for the seven-minute acts begins almost a year beforehand. Few are familiar with the full timeline behind and process of creating a Sing act.

The journey starts when fraternities, sororities and other participating clubs elect Sing chairs to lead the brainstorming and planning. Bentonville, Ark., senior and 2024 Alpha Tau Omega Sing chair Will Deal said groups often choose their chairs immediately following the conclusion of the previous Sing season.

Throughout the year, deadlines ensure the submission of the many intricate components that make a polished Sing act, culminating in the six shows in February. Waco junior and 2024 Chi Omega Sing chair Claire Coley said groups generally develop a theme early on to tie their song and dance selections together. Initial registration for organizations opens June 2, after which groups can submit themes and songs for approval.

"I think that song selection makes or breaks an act," Coley said. "Making sure it conveys the plot well, isn't confusing, keeps the energy up and appeals to all generations takes a lot of attention to detail."

The creation of the act kicks into high gear in the fall semester, while groups that placed the previous Sing season rehearse for their Pigskin Revue performances. Before the end

of September, groups must submit preliminary ideas for backdrops, costumes, props and other elements.

Groups must then get approval from Waco Hall staff and Student Productions members to execute their proposed designs, especially for complex stunts, moving set pieces or lighting effects. They finalize many major aspects around the beginning of October.

After submissions wrap up in November, the real construction and choreography work begins. Professional artists are often contracted to help bring large-scale backdrop renderings to life, while students submit detailed prop drawings to be built. The maturity of an act accelerates quickly in the spring semester. Starting Jan. 1, groups can schedule up to 10 hours of dance and vocal practice each week.

Outside of group rehearsals, Sing chairs meet regularly with the production crew to ensure acts comply with all competition guidelines and deadlines. Leading up to the performances, groups apply the final touches. Completed props are loaded into Waco Hall by late January for integration during technical rehearsals. Lighting and audio cues are refined through collaboration between the production team and a live pit band.

After nearly a year of planning, creation and rehearsal, this year's 20 Sing acts will be finally unveiled across six shows and judged by a select panel.

"It's one of the coolest things to see something you've envisioned for more than a year come to life, especially when it works the way you wanted it to for so long," Deal said.

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The story behind the stage: Waco Hall plays integral yet overlooked role in Sing

RORY DULOCK
Staff Writer

Waco Hall's historic stage has been host to All-University Sing, one of Baylor's most well-known traditions.

Olivia Moses, assistant director of Student Productions, said it's her job to oversee many large-scale performances. Moses said Sing has not always been held in Waco Hall, although the event has been held there for the majority of the hall's history.

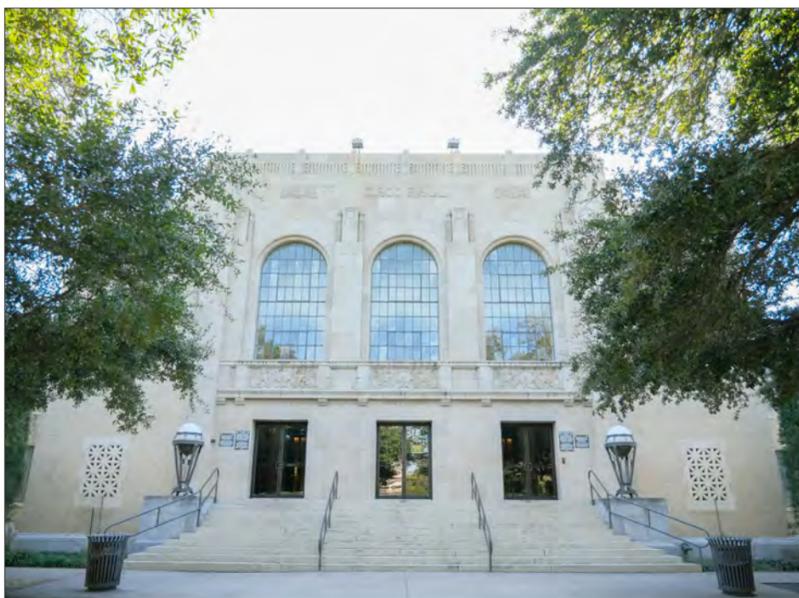
"Everything actually started in Barfield," Moses said. "The first year, they did it in the SUB, and that was because the show design itself was different. You know, Sing started as an opportunity for students to come to sing about Baylor, and they did it on the risers, like choir risers, and it was for fun. And then it evolved to a competition, and it got bigger."

The drastic evolution of the tradition was what eventually led to the change of location.

"They moved it to Waco Hall, which was the largest performance space on campus and still is," Moses said. "And so as the tradition grew and we added more production elements, they started adding costumes. They started adding props, and they started adding lighting."

Several decades later, Waco Hall is the only practical location to host Sing, Moses said.

"[Waco Hall is] really necessary now," Moses said. "Because of the way that the competition has evolved for it to be in a performance space, because it is a theatrical production, there's not other places on campus that can match the



Camie Jobe | Photographer

HIDDEN HISTORY Waco Hall, the iconic location that hosts All-University Sing, has spotlighted generations of Baylor students and has become an integral part of the tradition.

production level and the production elements we need without sort of maximizing time, budget and staff."

Bentonville, Ark., senior and Alpha Tau Omega Sing chair Will Deal said Waco Hall provides many advantages when hosting Sing.

"[Waco Hall] is a really big space that does accommodate a lot of people," Deal said. "The way that they allow the process of you going in

and getting to get familiar with the space, I think is great. And the fact that you're able to practice on stage several times before you even perform is a great advantage."

Deal said students, alumni and the Baylor family will always remember their time in Waco Hall.

"I think that for myself and anyone who's a senior right now — at this point, now that

they've done the three years or so of getting to perform in Waco Hall — there's all these really cool memories," Deal said. "And I don't think I'm going to forget a lot of the memories that I have from performing inside of Waco Hall."

Further, Moses said several generations of the Baylor Family have witnessed and experienced Sing in Waco Hall.

"If you were someone who performed in the 1960s, you performed at Waco Hall," Moses said. "And the same people who maybe have had kids now or grandkids, their kids are performing on that same stage. So there's something really beautiful about being able to sort of follow the legacy of the tradition in the same space."

Moses said Waco Hall has become a foundational element of many campus traditions since its construction.

"We're about to come on the 100-year [anniversary] for Waco Hall on campus," Moses said. "And the building of Waco Hall, like the actual choice to build it, was one of the main reasons that Baylor University stayed in Waco."

Moses said Waco Hall has become a major part of the Sing tradition, and its significance to the event should not be overlooked.

"It's not only literally necessary for us to do [All-University Sing] in Waco Hall, but there is a story tradition ... in the history of Baylor of how Waco Hall has been such a statement piece," Moses said. "It's such an iconic location, I think, for one of our largest on-campus traditions. It's just a beautiful space to have it in."

STUPRO from Page 1

spots, Moses said it is only the first step on a long, but rewarding, road. Sing is a huge commitment and workload, especially for a group that doesn't have the decadeslong history that most do today.

"We're happy to help any group that wants to join, but it's a big undertaking," Moses said.

Dallas senior Bryant Falconer is the president of Sing Alliance, the only non-Greek organization in Sing

this year, as is the case in most years.

Like Moses, Falconer said he wants to see more diversity in Sing, but the workload is not to be understated. However, he also said interested groups shouldn't shy away from the challenge.

"You're going to have some very, very late nights and a lot of work on your hands, but when you get up on that stage and see your performance and how many people are excited,

I think that makes it all worth it," Falconer said.

Falconer also said the impact of a non-Greek organization participating in Sing would represent something bigger.

"I think community is what Baylor does best," Falconer said. "Having non-Greek organizations in Sing, it shows people that you can find that community outside the typical avenue."

Though the odds aren't exactly in the favor of Sing first-timers — in terms of both entering and winning — there is something that could help new groups find a way into the Baylor tradition.

With the increasing popularity of partner acts, like 2023 winners Alpha Tau Omega and Alpha Chi Omega, there is an opportunity for another group to take a spot. It may not reduce the workload or eliminate the

long and stressful nights, but for the group that's interested and willing to take a risk, it creates a chance.

There will be two interest meetings in April for groups interested in joining Sing. Student Productions can be reached at olivia_moses@baylor.edu.

"What I recommend for an organization that has never done Sing is reach out sooner than later," Moses said.



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Tau Kappa Epsilon makes Sing comeback after 48-year hiatus

KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

This year, Tau Kappa Epsilon is competing in its first All-University Sing since 1976.

For New Milford, Conn., senior and TKE Sing chair Anthony Izzo, being part of Sing is something exciting that members are ready to participate in and learn from as they embark on a new journey for the chapter.

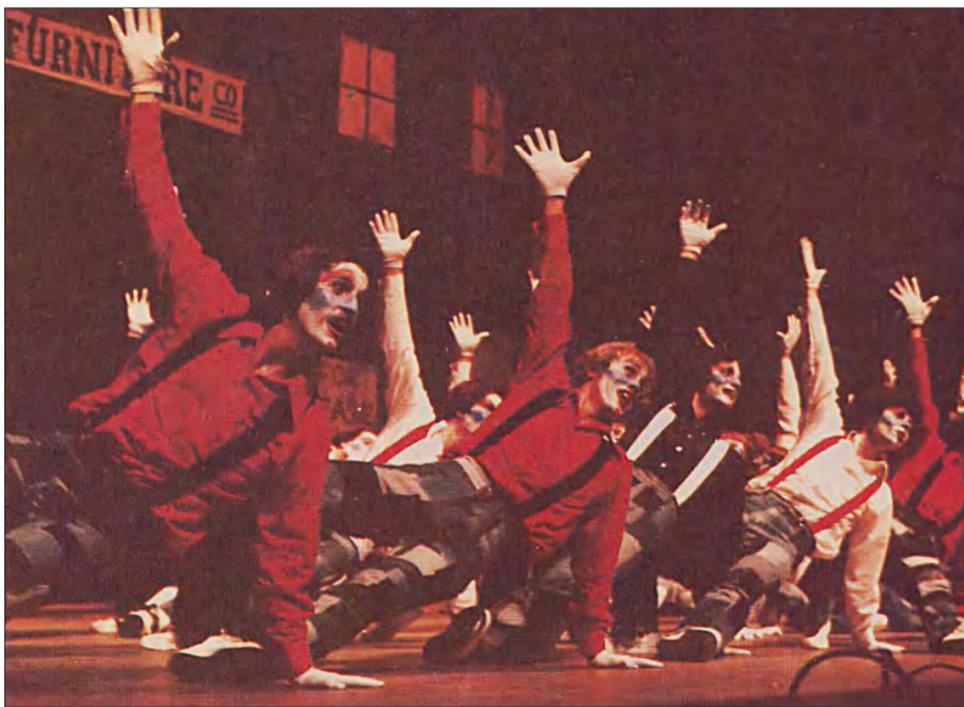
In the past, TKE didn't have enough members to compete in Sing and felt unequipped to handle such a large production, Izzo said since the growth of the chapter in recent years, he said members voted on whether to participate this year and were overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

"We have crazy good energy," Izzo said. "Everyone's just really excited to do it. I definitely am really happy to be there, so it was just the influence of wanting to do it and then being big enough to do it."

Izzo attributed most of the TKE's energetic approach to not having been a part of the event since its first and only performance 48 years ago, which revolved around the theme "Celebrate Today."

According to the 1976 Baylor Roundup Yearbook, "the performance included an abstract background with multicolored lights and an overhead sign that descended and included the words 'Celebrate Today.'"

In the act, TKE had three soloists and performed the song "Celebrate" by Three Dog Night. However, the act wasn't well received, and the chapter didn't participate in Sing afterward.



Roundup File Photo

THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TAU Tau Kappa Epsilon has not performed in All-University Sing since 1976, when they performed the act "Celebrate Today."

1980 Baylor graduate and TKE alumnus Lee Fuqua recalled what Sing was like before the chapter took a hiatus.

"We were the very first club to rent and hire a backdrop — for an opera or musical or something like that — out of New York," Fuqua said. "This backdrop came in this big giant roll that was like 50 feet, and we unrolled it and pulled it up and hung it up

behind us."

Fuqua said TKE worked multiple nights a week in order to put the act together.

"We would practice three or four nights a week, and we would start off with first move and then second move and then third move," Fuqua said. "Then we start adding the music to it, and the choreographer gal would help us get it down, and we had lots of

people who could dance."

Aside from the excitement for performances, Izzo said today's group is finding a sense of community and joy in the production and rehearsal process.

"I think that's something new that we'd never done, so I think the excitement of not knowing what we're doing and figuring it out and learning as we go, that's been an exciting part

for me," Izzo said.

Izzo is working alongside Denver senior and student producer Trinity Fay to help bring his vision to life.

"He had this awesome theme idea, and I was like, 'Oh my goodness, you have to do that,' because it's such a cute theme," Fay said. "And so, here we are."

Fay said working with TKE has been an "exciting challenge" since the group is new to the Sing process. In 2022, Fay worked with Kappa Omega Tau on its winning act, and in 2023, she worked with Sigma Chi and Kappa Omega Tau on their Pigskin Revue-placing acts. This year, Fay is also working with Kappa Alpha on its first-ever Sing act.

"I've worked with groups that kind of have the same curriculum down, where they know exactly how to choreograph and know exactly where they're going to practice," Fay said. "But I really loved working with TKE this year because it's just been an exciting challenge and adventure, if you will."

Izzo and Fay have been working to choreograph the routines and teach them to the rest of the group at Arthur Murray Dance Studio in Waco.

St Louis, Mo., junior and TKE member Nick Imo said the group expects the extensive time spent in rehearsals to pay off in its performance.

"I think it's going to shock people, because I don't think people are prepared," Imo said. "I mean, it's our first performance, and usually in the past, the first one can be very rough, maybe a little bit rocky, but we're really giving it our all."

Sing alumna returns to campus as Phi Gamma Delta choreographer

ERIKA KUEHL
Staff Writer

If Baylor alumna Kendall Burton can command a room full of college men, she can do anything.

Burton works for the Houston Texans Cheerleaders and choreographs for high school drill teams on the side — but ever since Mission senior and Phi Gamma Delta Sing chair Christian Cavazos reached out to her in October, she has been collaborating with the fraternity to choreograph its All-University Sing act.

"She completely streamlined everything for us and was just always open and available to answer questions and to kind of fix things," Cavazos said. "There were a few practices that I would text her in the middle of practice and ask for help, and she had an answer for me immediately. Being able to work with her and her coming on to help us has been the most amazing experience I could have ever asked for with any choreographer."

Burton said she has been choreographing since she

was in high school and has always had a talent for it.

"I'm not good with words, but I'm really good at movement," Burton said. "I feel like dance is a wonderful way to get a point across or tell a story, and so that's my favorite part of choreography — telling a story."

Last year, Burton was a Sing chair for Zeta Tau Alpha. She said there have been significant differences between working with Zeta and working with FIJI.

"For teaching an all-girl group in the past, there's probably around a third of the group [that] has either danced in high school or has some sort of dance background that they can help teach and catch up on choreography quick," Burton said. "With the guys, none of these guys have had dance experience besides Sing, and so it's a lot different teaching a group full of mostly beginners compared to a group who's had advanced dancers."

However, Burton said one of her favorite parts about choreographing for FIJI is the group's adaptability.

"I think it's the fact that they trusted me to do my thing, and even if something seems a little weird or funky at first, they're down to try whatever I throw at them," Burton said. "Sometimes in the past, I've had ideas that will get some strange looks, but they've been down for anything."

Last year was the first time FIJI participated in Sing in three years. Cavazos said many members hadn't performed in Sing during their time at Baylor, so Burton provided clarity and direction.

"[She was not only] a choreographer but also just a really good friend to our chapter and sitting us down and saying, 'You guys can do this, but it's up to you,'" Cavazos said. "Kendall has been so amazing, and we don't want all of her hard work to be in vain."

Burton said seeing Zeta's act from last Sing at Pigskin Revue was a very touching moment, and she would love to come back to choreograph another act in the future.

"I can imagine I'm going to get the same sense of being humbled and proud in the work I do, because I am proud of the work I put on stage and I give to my clients," Burton said. "And so seeing them enjoy it and then put on an amazing act, that brings me a lot of happiness. It'll be nice to sit from the audience this time."

Burton wishes good luck to the members of FIJI performing in Sing.

"I'm super proud of them," Burton said. "I have not been easy on them in terms of choreography. I've been challenging them every step of the way, and they have not faltered one bit. So I just want them to know that I'm super proud of them, and I can't wait to watch them."



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

REIGNING CHAMPS Chi Omega and Alpha Tau Omega performed their first-place act "A Day at the Derby" during Pigskin Revue in 2023.

2023 Sing winners reveal what it takes to advance to Pigskin

KALENA REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

Every year, student organizations compete for a spot in the top eight acts of All-University Sing in hopes of making it to Pigskin Revue in the fall. The preparation is extensive, and the themes are priceless, but certain aspects of the performances set the best ones apart from the rest.

In 2023, Chi Omega and Alpha Tau Omega collaborated to take home the No. 1 spot with "A Day at the Derby." Coppell junior and Chi Omega president Tallulah Rushton and Bentonville, Ark., senior and Alpha Tau Omega Sing chair Will Deal discuss their journey to first place.



Photo courtesy of Reilly Tarte

ENCORE Kendall Burton, recent Baylor graduate, has returned to campus to use her talents from serving as a Zeta Tau Alpha Sing Chair and as a Baylor Songleader.

Sing Alliance



The Buzz at the Bee

Sing Alliance brought the spelling bee to college with a huge appeal, and there's no need to spell it out. The singing was well done, but the backdrop should have stayed in elementary school.

Kappa Omega Tau



Sweet Gingerbread Man

Kappa Omega Tau might have stunned the audience, but their choreo was half-baked and could have used some icing on top. Although the act had many wow factors, including the missing limb, it left a burnt taste and many crumbs. The act has its typical sweetness but never fails to win the baking contest.

Alpha Chi Omega



The Show Must Go On

Alpha Chi Omega stole the show with the best soloists of the night. The staging gave these girls their proper time to shine before being joined by the rest of the performers. The energy was there, and they succeeded in keeping the crowd engaged with a costume change. This act takes a hit because of the backdrop that should have been present throughout and because of its less-than-present plotline.

Alpha Delta Pi



Beach Bash!

Alpha Delta Pi surfed in and soon crashed as their theme lacked authenticity — it felt like a movie we've seen before. There was high energy and high tides in the middle, but the silence throughout the act left you feeling underwater. Although sharks are not a fan favorite, ADPi will surely be.

Kappa Alpha Theta



The Great Katsby

Kappa Alpha Theta did not electrify with this act. Cute costumes couldn't make up for lackluster solos and wobbly choreography, and the use of a single prop — the flashlights — didn't give such a grand impression as the title of their theme would suggest.

Alpha Tau Omega



Nothing Set in Stone

This act has a double-edged sword. On one hand, it was undeniably well done but not legendary. Vocally, ATO was loud and energetic, and their solos did the job. This is another theme that lacks points in creativity, as the tale of King Arthur and Excalibur is one that can no longer be surprising or contain a plot twist.

Delta Delta Delta



Weather or not!

There's something about the sunshine, and Tri Delta brought it to Waco. The high energy and stellar choreo kept the audience engaged, and their facials will surely blow you away. This theme was a clean sweep, and there is no rain in this Sing forecast.

Kappa Chi Alpha & Beta Upsilon Chi



Dream On!

Soloists from BYX saved this act, but this dream turned into a nightmare when the male and female vocals failed to mesh. With high energy in the middle, sweet dreams were on the way, but nothing could save them from their slow ending that will surely leave you dreaming for a while.

Alpha Phi



Troop 1872: Sweet as can Phi

Alpha Phi baked up some good solos, but more harmonies would have been sweet. The prop choices on stage earned them our badge of approval, as they not only looked great but communicated their theme perfectly. Their song choices really sold it — Alpha Phi are troopers, and you can expect to see them at Pigskin.

Kappa Alpha



Mardi Gras Madness

Kappa Alpha sure brought a Pardi to the stage, but the rest of the audience was not feeling the Mardi Gras activities. The costumes were subpar and the glow-in-the-dark specialties couldn't bring this act to life, leaving it bare-boned.

Delta Tau Delta



Fists of Fury

Delta Tau Delta sure failed their black belt test as their cool tricks did not wow the audience. The use of Justin Timberlake's early 2000s hit could have only been used by a master sensei. The crowd loved the "fight scenes," but this was the only aspect that really packed a punch.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon



Cold Feet

An anti-ring-by-spring theme is a bold choice for a school like Baylor, but it seems like SAE has commitment issues. Their lack of props for most of the act made it feel somewhat empty, but the set design was lovely. We loved the functional chapel double-doors on stage, which lended a special something to the overall design. Pigskin bells may be

Zeta Tau Alpha



Panic at the Disco!

ZTA had sharp choreography, dazzling disco costumes and energy that made the whole crowd want to boogie along. With an outstanding set full of light, diverse costume groups and groovy set design, this act was one of our favorites. There was no shortage of props, and they truly added something — they weren't just there for show. The ladies of ZTA won't be in any trouble when it comes to moving on to Pigskin.

Phi Kappa Chi



The Good Newsies

Breaking news — Phi Chi is our best of show on opening night. No, we aren't giving them extra points for their Lariat look-alike props, but the interactive portion where they ran into the audience with little newspapers of their own was one of a kind amongst the other acts, who kept themselves mostly restrained to the stage. Starting off with a hymn was a risky move, but it paid off in putting their vocal talent on the front page, and their strong choreography was a perfect sidebar.

Pi Beta Phi



Our State Fair

Great choreography, such as the roller coaster move, and prize-worthy vocals made for an amusing act. But in all "fair-ness," the storyline was a little bit like a house of mirrors at first — a little obscure, a little confusing. Cute props kept this carnival running, and the cutting of the ribbon was a prop use that was fresh and unexpected.

Kappa Kappa Gamma & Sigma Chi



A Walk in The Park

Rain or shine, KKG and SigChi are going to put on a good show. We loved the vintage-style costumes, and the use of umbrellas drew on the theme from the iconic musical, "Singin' in the Rain," without feeling completely unoriginal. However, the plot of this act was a little cloudy. Despite all that, the skies are looking clear for this pairing.



REVIEWS

EMMA WEIDMANN
Arts and Life Editor

KAITLIN SIDES
LTVN Anchor/Reporter

Phi Gamma Delta



USS FIJI: Sailors Against the Deep

Though their choreography was at times choppy, FIJI had massive crowd appeal on opening night. The sea monster battle was well done and funny. There was something fishy about the solo singers, but the group vocals went swimmingly. Whether FIJI will sink or sail could be up to how they perform on the following nights.

Beta Theta Pi & Friends



Fratty-Shack

Bet on it — Beta won't be making it to Pigskin. The vocals left a lot to be desired, and the backdrop and set design were a swing and a miss. The choreography lacked energy, and these dancers could hardly be described as masters.

Tau Kappa Epsilon



Papa Tiki's, Balliamo!

TKE had a respectable performance for a chapter who hasn't performed in 48 years, especially compared to chapters that perform every year. Though their dancing and staging could have had more flavor, the props and theme have us in "amoré," and their use of "Ave Maria" was just... *chef's kiss.*

Chi Omega



Caught red-handed

Chi O executed their theme well, but it wasn't all just a walk in the woods. Though entertaining, theirs was a theme that was practically written for them in the children's books. However, their choreography was incredibly clean, and the audience seemed to love it.



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ALL-UNIVERSITY



GET READY TO ROAR Members of Kappa Alpha Theta take inspiration from F. Scott Fitzgerald in its act, "The Great Katsby."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



IN THE TRENCHES Phi Gamma Delta gets lost at sea with "USS FIJI: Sailors Against the Deep."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



GET YOUR TICKET Pi Beta Phi performs at "Our State Fair."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



STARRY EYES Kappa Chi Alpha and Beta Upsilon Chi present "Dream On."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



PAR NONE Beta Theta Pi takes a drive to the "Fratty Shack."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



KICKIN' IT Members of Delta Tau Delta try their hands at karate in "Fists of Fury."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



SHARK ATTACK Alpha Delta Pi heads to the seaside in its act, "Beach Bash!"

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



SWEETNESS OVERLOAD Members of Alpha Phi sell their act to the audience in "Troop 1872: Sweet as can Phi."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



SINGIN' IN THE RAIN Kappa Kappa Gamma presents a "Walk in the Park" on a Saturday afternoon.



A STAR IS BORN Alpha Chi Omega presents its act, "The Show Must Go On."

Abby Roper | Photographer



WEDDING BELLS? Members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon battle "Cold Feet."

Abby Roper | Photographer



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS Delta Delta Delta takes the stage, rain or shine, in "Weather or Not."

SING: IN PHOTOS



DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS Members of Kappa Alpha have a ball in "Mardi Gras Madness."



GET THAT BREAD Kappa Omega Tau strikes its final pose in its act, "Sweet Gingerbread Man."



PAPA WHO? Tau Kappa Epsilon takes the audience to the pizza shop in "Papa Tiki's, Balliamo!"



BOOGIE ON BY Police and dancers join forces in Zeta Tau Alpha's "Panic at the Disco."



STORY TIME Chi Omega reenacts Little Red Riding Hood in "Caught Red-Handed."



ALL THE BUZZ Sing Alliance, the only non-Greek group, takes the audience back to school in "The Buzz at the Bee."



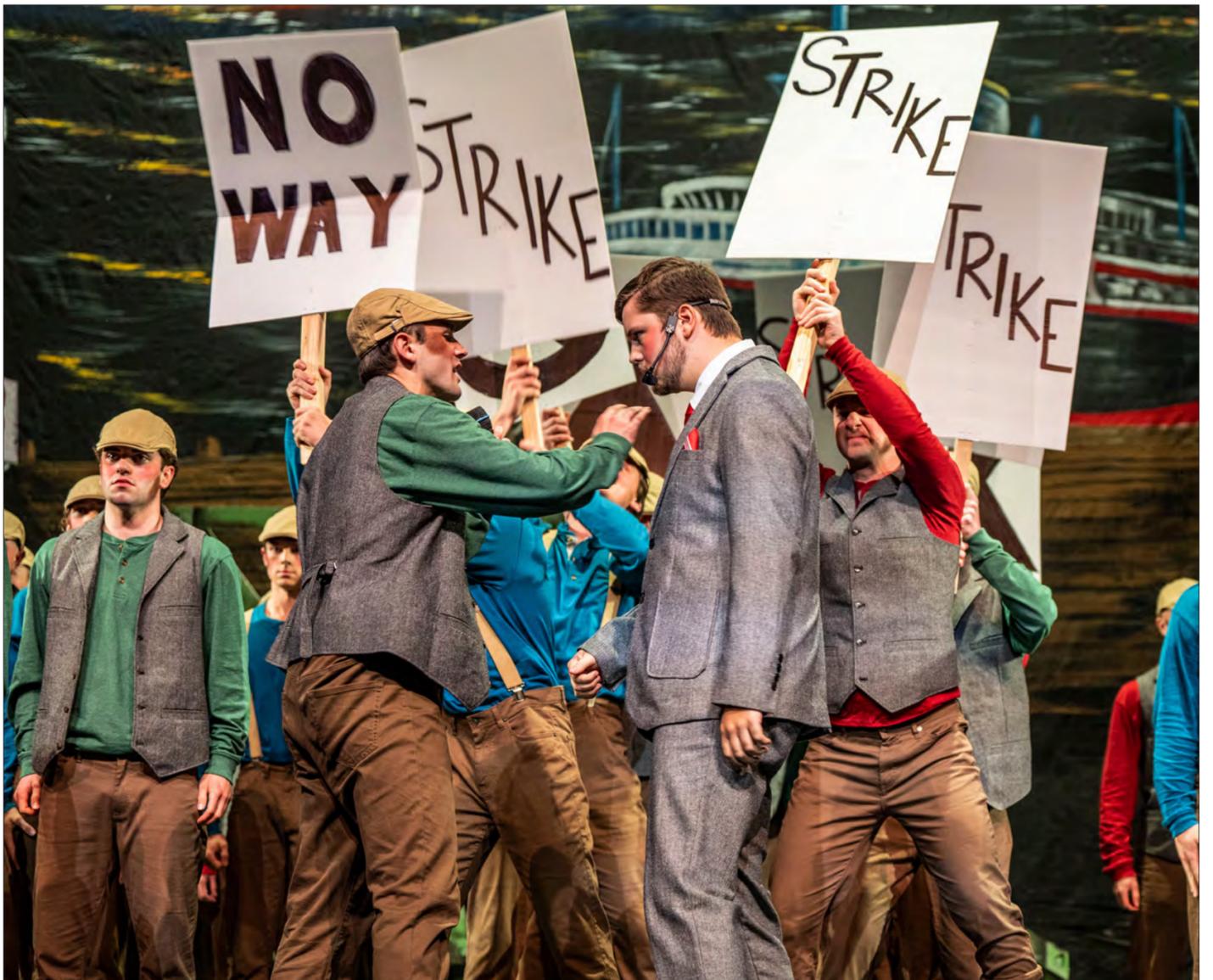
DRAW YOUR SWORD Members of Alpha Tau Omega strike their final pose in "Nothing Set in Stone."



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor
Gamma and Sigma Chi take afternoon.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT Phi Kappa Chi strikes out the bad with "The Good Newsies."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



Photo courtesy of Tryston Obevoen

UPCOMING PROJECTS Houston junior Tryston Obevoen, also known as Sinoda, is set to drop new music in coming months.

Student musician set to release new music

ERIKA KUEHL
Staff Writer

Houston junior and student musician Tryston Obevoen, also known as Sinoda, is set to release new music within the next few months. He began making music before he was in middle school, and now, more than halfway through his college career, he has a manager and almost 500,000 monthly listeners on Spotify.

"I've been making music since I was a baby," Obevoen said. "But I started releasing in high school, my junior year of high school, but it just always clicked. I taught myself a bunch of instruments, and it just made sense."

Obevoen said when he gets an idea for a song, he typically starts by recording it in his room.

"I have a little setup in my room that I can put up, but that's more for just fun," Obevoen said. "I'll send it out to somebody to master, but if I really want a high-quality tape, then I'll go to a studio in Houston."

In his upcoming album, which has the tentative name of "Soundtrack To My Suicide," Obevoen said half of the songs will be happy, while the other half will be darker in tone. He plans to release the songs as singles first.

"There's a lot of Dua Lipa sort of sounding songs, very pop-y," Obevoen said. "Then there are some that are a lot like Lil Uzi. And then there are some that are a lot like Gunna and quite a bit of Drake vibes."

Obevoen said one of his favorite unreleased songs, "Letter To My Ex-Lover," was therapeutic to record.

"It was just cool to write that because it's almost like closure, and whenever I'm in weird predicaments, I write songs," Obevoen said. "And so that was a good one because it actually sounds good too."

Obevoen said his top artist on Spotify last year was Lana Del Rey, and his dream collaboration would be with her and The Weeknd.

"Her music is very calming and soothing," Obevoen said. "And her lyrics, even though I'm not a girl, it sounds very relatable. Then it's also her aesthetic. It's almost like her voice puts me in a spell. I'm in a trance when I listen to her music."

After taking a break from releasing new music to focus on school this past year, Obevoen said he is ready to continue.

"I hopped off for a bit," Obevoen said. "I was kind of off it for a minute because I tried to focus on school. And then, now that I got my grades up and [class] chilled out, school is not hard to manage."

Obevoen said his advice for aspiring student musicians is to focus on what they enjoy making rather than on other people's opinions.

"Honestly, just push it out without caring if people are going to like it," Obevoen said. "And don't overthink yourself, because usually, if you think the song is good, it's probably good."

Post-graduation, Obevoen said he plans to pursue a professional career while making music on the side.

"It's like a hobby," Obevoen said. "I'm always going to make music till I die, because I'm good at it, and I find solace, and it's almost therapeutic in a way. It's also just the one thing I understand really well. I'm not very good at any subject in particular, like sports, but I'm actually good at music. It makes sense in my mind, so I'm always going to do it, but in terms of rapping and releasing music and stuff, time will just tell. If I would blow up, then for sure."

Largo, Fla., junior Tilon Thompson is a good friend of Obevoen and said he likes the upcoming album more than anything Obevoen has released in the past.

"I think he's gone from a lot more of rapping to incorporating a lot of different styles of music into his songs," Thompson said. "And I think he's done a very good job of that. He sounds like he's taken a little bit from all the major artists and made his own niche in the music industry."

Church photographers reflect on capturing holy moments

JACKSON POSEY
Staff Writer

From Christ Pantocrator in the sixth century to the Sistine Chapel in the 16th, the past 1,500 years of Christian art have primarily arisen from the bristles of a paintbrush. Today, that brush has been replaced by a Sony A7IV.

"I feel like God has given me passions and abilities with media for a purpose," Highlands Ranch, Colo., junior Rocky Holloway, who serves as FM72's media director, said. "And those are not to go and be selfish, but it's to reflect Him well. ... When I'm at the church, I'm sitting and I'm starting to think about, 'How can I capture what the Lord is doing and what's going on with His people? What is going on in this place, and how can I tell that story in a succinct way?'"

Holloway, like other Generation Z Christians, grew up in a cultural environment that sees digitization and documentation as core values. This is the "pics or it didn't happen" generation — a mantra that has rubbed some church leaders the wrong way.

"The Mass is not a show. It is to go to meet the passion and resurrection of the Lord," Pope Francis said in 2017. "And I tell you that it gives me so much sadness when I celebrate here in the Piazza or Basilica and I see so many raised cellphones — not just of the faithful, even of some priests and even bishops."

Francis, who called the increase in church technology use "a very ugly thing," satirically challenged the use of cell phones during Mass by contrasting it with historical liturgical sayings.

"The priest says, 'Lift up your hearts,'" Francis said. "He does not

say, 'Lift up your cell phones to take pictures.'"

That anti-technological posture is increasingly becoming the minority view, as the COVID-19 pandemic served as a breaking point for many camera-shy churches. Many congregations around the world now livestream their services to scores of remote viewers, pushing preachers to occasionally address those watching online.

And it isn't just Sunday mornings. Digital Bible software is on the rise too. According to research conducted by Jon Dyer for his 2022 book, "People of the Screen," 45% of Evangelicals use their phones to read the Bible "devotionally." That isn't countercultural anymore; it is the culture.

And yet, from the broader perspective of American media culture, Christians remain in the minority. Big hitters like "The Chosen" and "He Gets Us" stand out precisely because of their uniqueness in the industry. In some ways, Christian media seems to be a half-step behind the pack. But for many Gen Z Christians with artistic inclinations, good Christian media can provide something nothing else can — documentation of genuine encounters with God.

"My personal style and flair is going to be to lean away maybe from always capturing what's onstage and focus on what's happening in the room," Holloway said. "Because you're trying to use a physical medium to capture something that's intangible, right? And that's really interesting, but what we do understand is faces, is people, is stories, is connection. And so [I use] that to try to illustrate that something 'not normal' is going on in this room."

Austin senior Jenna Rigney, a

former Harris Creek photographer who is also on the Kamp Love and FM72 media teams, takes a different approach. Rather than drawing attention to individual stories, she focuses on the broader environment of the room.

"To me, I don't ever really want to get people's faces, just because those are really intimate moments where they're just purely worshipping God," Rigney said. "To me, those aren't moments that I should be capturing. I will capture them from behind, showing their hands raised. Or if I want to put on a low shutter speed, I will get some blurry photos maybe if anything, to capture kind of the mood and the movement of the space."

There's certainly nuance there. Rigney noted that different environments and moments can change the calculus. Some are more upbeat, like when Kamp Love devotees were "shouting worship songs and jumping around." But in the more somber, reflective times, her default is to leave extra room.

"Overall, I think it's just a judgment of, 'What's the tone of the space?' Is it more reflective or full of confession or prayer?" Rigney said. "I'm going to take time to step away, maybe take some further-away shots, just to honor people and where they're at in the space, because I wouldn't want people putting a camera in my face when I'm crying, you know?"

Taking that sort of hands-off posture, even with hands still on the camera, isn't unique to Rigney. St. Louis, Mo., sophomore Jackson Lawrence, a Harris Creek videographer, is intent on keeping the holiness of God the main thing.

"I definitely think there should be some strict boundaries of keeping a space sacred," Lawrence said. "I know during Kamp Love, they won't allow

anyone to go into the prayer room except for people on the prayer team or some of the leadership, because a camera does not need to be there. They want to keep that space sacred."

There's a philosophical idea that "everything is theological" — that everything Christians do, especially within a worship space, reveals something of what they think of God. Paul writes in Ephesians 1:23 that the church is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Therefore, it's no wonder that one's perspective on God will practically be lived out in the things they do.

That same concept is equally true for preaching as it is for greeting, as it is for mopping floors, as it is for creating Christian media content. Lawrence, reflecting on his position, sees creating excellent artwork as a reflection of the God who created all excellencies.

"I think being faithful with my job is accurately showing what it looks like to follow Jesus," Lawrence said. "I don't see a problem with trying to make that look as good as possible, because that's exactly what Christ did. I'm reminded of when Jesus is talking with the woman at the well, and He appeals to her thirst and her need for water. And He says to the woman, 'Do you not ever want to be thirsty again? Do you want to drink from a better water?' And He's speaking it about Himself. He is sort of marketing Himself, in a way. And so I think being faithful [in] my job is marketing Christ, following Jesus in the best light possible."

In the book of Exodus, God gives a particular blessing to a craftsman named Bezalel. God tells Moses that He has "filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic

designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft."

Bezalel, among others, is tasked with building the Tabernacle, where God will meet with humanity. From the tent of meeting and ark of the testimony to "the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place," God chooses artists to frame the place where He will meet with His people. In many ways, modern Christian artists are seeking to do the same.

"If it's just me capturing beautiful moments to glorify God and help people remember who He is and be in awe of Him through that, then we're doing something," Rigney said. "I think there is beauty in how He's given each of us as creatives a specific eye for things. ... And I'm not saying erase my identity from that, because God is using me for this, but ... there's so many different ways to capture God's glory, and it's beautiful."

The quality of the artwork certainly matters — shooting with the lens cap on doesn't help anyone. But in worship photography, the goals are different. More important than the composition or the lighting or the angle is the ultimate subject: God. In the most important shoots of their lives, the pressure is all off.

"[I want to] be excellent in it, don't get me wrong," Holloway said. "But it's also stepping into that room and stopping, trying to still myself and asking the Lord, 'Hey, I want to reflect you well, and I want this to glorify you, so would you help me in that?' It's almost like partnering with the Holy Spirit in capturing that moment and capturing those photos and understanding it's not a matter of perfection; it's more an act of obedience. [That's] where I want to line my heart up to be."



Photo courtesy of Rocky Holloway

SNAPSHOTS FOR THE KINGDOM In this day and age, photos are the center of memories. Church photographers speak on how they help spread their message of God through images.

A playlist of Sing's greatest hits

ISABELLE RUFF
Arts & Life Intern

Since the 1950s, Baylor students have choreographed dances, chosen popular songs, changed lyrics to fit a theme and then put it all together into a cohesive act for All-University Sing. Looking back Sing over the years, here are some of the best songs.

1. "COME ON EILEEN" BY DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS

The winners of Sing 2023 — Chi Omega and Alpha Tau Omega — used "Come on Eileen" by Dexys Midnight Runners and Kevin Rowland, but they changed the lyric to "Come on 18." Their theme being "A Day at the Derby," 18 was the number of the jockey they cheered for in the act. This song was the peak of the performance, everything before having built up to the actual derby. This song stood out with all the performers chanting "come on 18" before the music of the song started, until everyone was singing the lyrics and the jockey won the race.

2. "MAN OR MUPPET" BY JASON SEGEL

Also during Sing 2023, Beta Theta Pi performed the iconic song "Man or Muppet" by Jason Segel from "The Muppets," but they changed the lyric from "muppet" to "mathlete" for their act, "Man or Mathlete." This song not only got a few laughs and cheers from the audience but was also a dramatic ballad — a duet between a man and a mathlete.

3. "MATERIAL GIRL" BY MADONNA

Another act from Sing 2023 that moved on to Pigskin Revue was Pi Beta Phi's "Be My Girl," in which a little girl chose between two dolls in a toy store. One section of dolls sang Madonna's "Material Girl" in a minor key, and the other sang Adele's "Someone Like You." But what really stood out was the mashup of the two that followed. Together, the songs captured the essence of the theme while showcasing the talent of Pi Beta Phi's Sing chairs, who put together the set list.

4. "MAGIC" BY B.O.B.

Going beyond last year's acts, Alpha Phi's 2022 act "Magic in Phi" made it to Pigskin after using B.o.B's song "Magic." Uniquely, the soloists not only sang parts of this song, but one also rapped. Finishing the act with this song and every performer on stage, Alpha Phi had the audience clapping along with its catchy finale.

5. "I WILL SURVIVE" BY GLORIA GAYNOR

Chi Omega also had a perfectly on-theme song in 2022 when Medusa's victims in their "Taken for Granite" act sang "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor. After a dramatic solo by Medusa herself and a costume change from the other performers, this song brought the act home.

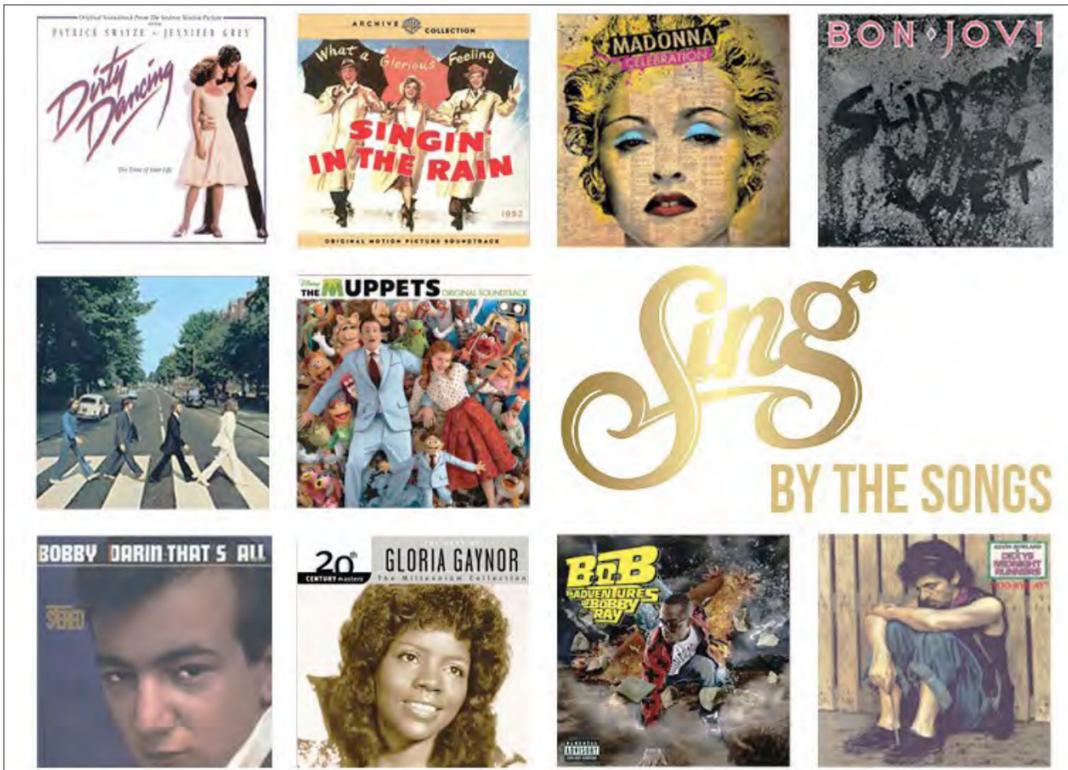


Photo courtesy of Baylor University and Spotify

6. "BEYOND THE SEA" BY BOBBY DARIN

Although there was no Sing in spring 2021 because of COVID-19, there was still Pigskin in the fall. Kappa Kappa Gamma paired with Kappa Sigma and performed "Ship of Dreams." One of their first songs was an oldie, "Beyond the Sea" by Bobby Darin. This set the stage for the lighthearted fun of being on the ship of dreams. The pair ultimately won with this act.

7. "LIVIN' ON A PRAYER" BY BON JOVI

During Sing 2012, Alpha Chi Omega performed "Livin' On a Prayer" by Bon Jovi for its theme, "Juke Box Heroes." There was a section of the stage dedicated to a "band" that was performing all of the classic rock songs. On the other side were all the dancers who were performing as passionately as the song encouraged.

8. "SINGIN' IN THE RAIN" BY GENE KELLY

In 1990, Pi Beta Phi performed "Singin' in the Rain" from

the 1952 musical in their act, "I Ought to be in the Pictures." A fan-favorite now and then, "Singin' in the Rain" captured the attention of the audience as the performers spun umbrellas and tap danced across the stage.

9. "THE TIME OF MY LIFE" BY BILL MEDLEY AND JENNIFER WARNES

During Sing 1988, Zeta Tau Alpha performed "The Time of My Life" by Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes in their act, "Back to Paradise." This song had just become popular after its debut in "Dirty Dancing" in 1987, making it a modern hit during Sing 1988. Zeta placed this song after a slower one, using it to build the performance back up until the finale.

10. "HEY JUDE" BY THE BEATLES

In Sing 1973, Kappa Omega Tau sang "Hey Jude" by The Beatles in their act, "Lonely Hearts Club." All the lights on the stage went out except for a spotlight on four performers, who mimicked The Beatles and sang it like a dramatic ballad before building their performance back up with catchy music. The song created a heart-to-heart moment with the audience beyond the other catchy songs and dances.

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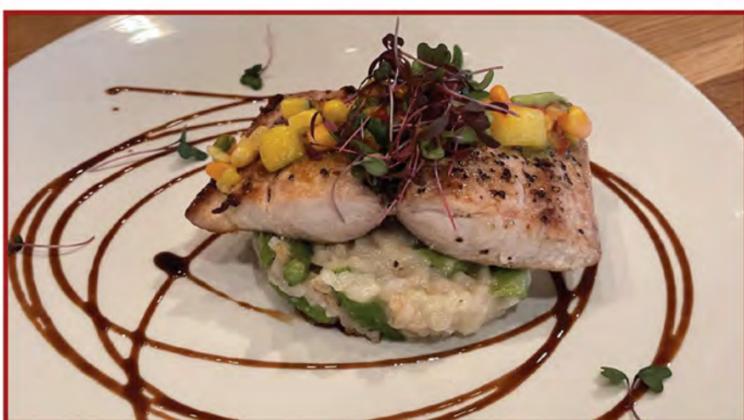
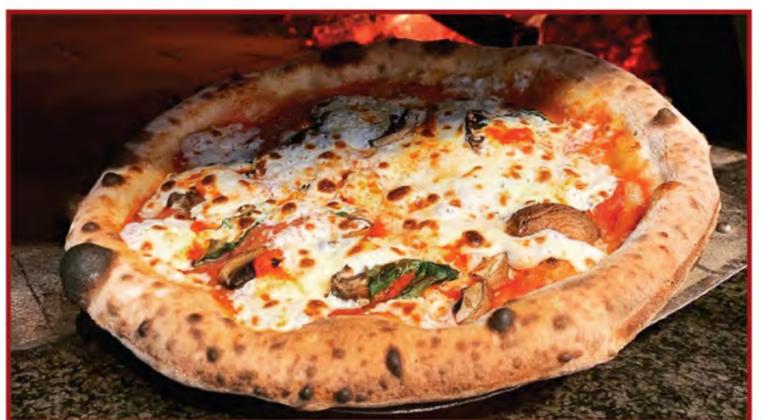


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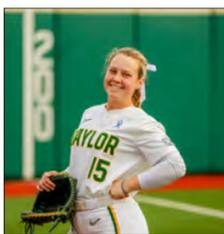
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Tune in to Baylor Lariat Radio's weekly sports podcast for the latest on everything to do with Baylor athletics

SOFTBALL FEATURE

Get an inside look at senior Sydney Collazos, the Bears' chatty backstop who hopes to become a doctor **pg. C6**

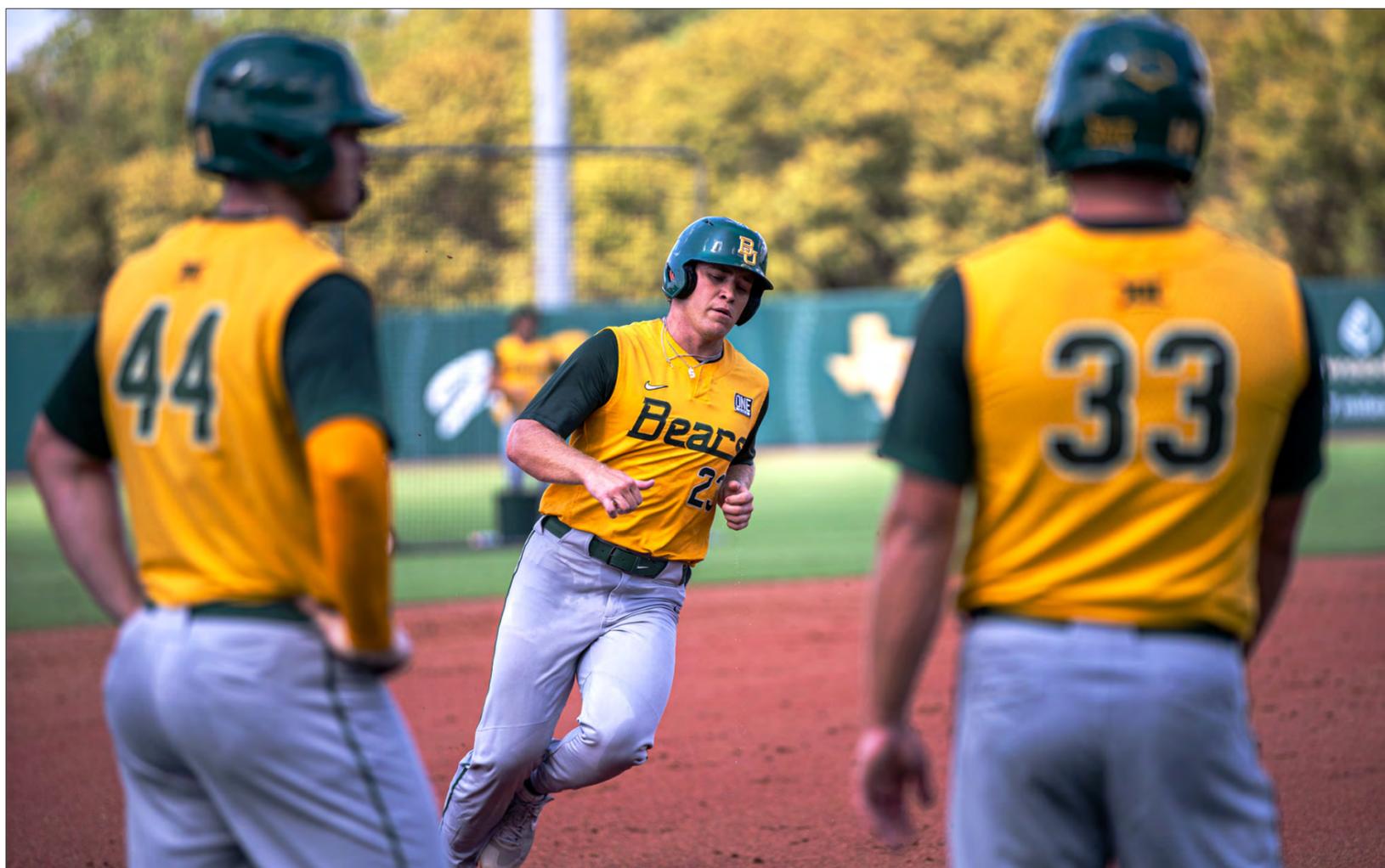


Former Lady Bears legend Brittney Griner will have her jersey retired on Sunday

Check out Griner's photo collage on Page C2, as well as a column about the big day on C7

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Lilly Yablon | Photographer

TURN THE CORNER Junior outfielder Ty Johnson (23) and the Bears are looking to bounce back from a 20-35 season in which they missed the Big 12 Tournament for the first time in school history.

Baylor baseball's road to redemption starts with series at Globe Life Field

FOSTER NICHOLAS
Sports Writer

After waiting in the on-deck circle for a couple of months, Baylor baseball is back on the Brazos River. The Bears will open the season with the 2024 Shriners Children's College Showdown at Globe Life Field in Arlington this weekend. They will face Nebraska at 11 a.m. today, Oregon at 11 a.m. on Saturday and No. 9 Tennessee at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday.

With a year under his belt, head coach Mitch Thompson enters year two with a new motto: "To be the best, you have to beat the best." And the Bears will get a chance to do just that as the first month of their season features the most difficult schedule in Division I, based on last year's win percentage and RPI.

"My expectation is to go win," Thompson said. "But at the same time, there have been some things that say that the first month of the season, we have the No. 1-ranked schedule in the country. Well, there are 300 Division I teams, so if we're playing the No. 1-ranked schedule in the country, that means our schedule is really good. There's just no tiptoeing into the season. You better be ready to throw some blows early, and you better be ready to fight."

"Those are the people we're going to have to beat to be in NCAA Regionals, to play in the tournament and advance to Super Regionals [and then to] Omaha. That's where you have to go. So we may as well play them. And that's kind of been the thought process."

Coming off a disappointing 20-35 season and missing out on the Big 12 Tournament for the first time in program history, the Bears are hoping

to right the ship in 2024. Some tweaks are flashier, like a brand new scoreboard that will clue fans in on pitch speeds and exit velocities, and others will be less noticeable but equally important.

"Every year, you gain experience," Thompson said. "You gain experience as to what you thought you liked and what you thought you could do better in preparing your team. Probably the biggest change people will see is I plan to be in the dugout this year."

"I'll put coach [Jim] Blair at third base and coach [Zach] Dillon at first. I'll be in the dugout, and that'll allow me the freedom to think both offense and defense the whole game as we're going through it."

The Bears are already a step ahead of where they were a season ago, bringing back several key players who had breakout seasons in 2023. Junior third baseman Hunter Teplansky (six home runs, 34 RBI, .308 batting average), senior left fielder Hunter Simmons (four home runs, 34 RBI, .298 batting average) and junior catcher Cortlan Castle (35 hits, .299 batting average) highlight a group of returning starters who could build on individual success.

"Last year, we returned two home runs on the entire ball club when we started the season. I mean, we were starting from scratch," Thompson said. "When you play experienced ball clubs, you may be facing a hitter who's in his senior year. He's probably had 600 or 700 at-bats in college baseball. When we started the year, we had maybe 600 or 700 combined total at-bats on our team."

In addition to the returning starters, the Bears brought

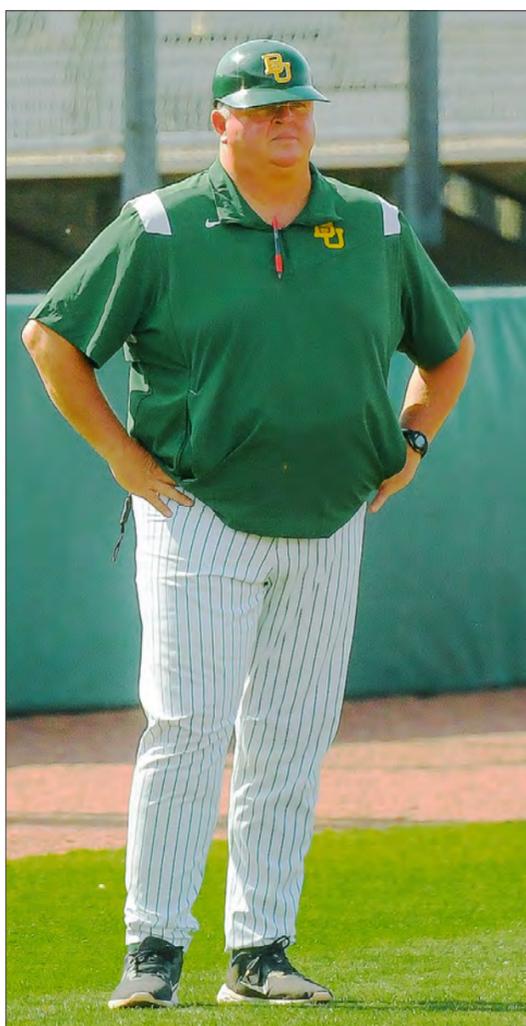


Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

BEARS' SKIPPER Baylor head coach Mitch Thompson is entering his second year at the helm in Waco.

in potential instant-impact bats from the transfer portal, including redshirt junior right fielder Enzo Apodaca (Gonzaga), junior center fielder Ty Johnson (McLennan Community College), sophomore middle infielder Jack Little (Wichita State) and junior shortstop Tyriq Kemp (Western Oklahoma

State College). The four of them could bring plus contact, defense and speed to a roster that was the worst in the Big 12 in batting average and stolen bases.

"I think we'll have more stolen bases," Thompson said. "I think we can run better up and down the lineup. I think that's, you know, what

you're hoping for — is that with added power and with added speed, you're hoping for better."

Not only was speed a factor, but power was equally key. Simmons and Teplansky stayed in Waco along with other Bears during the offseason and focused on adding muscle. While they came to camp looking to be stronger, Baylor also added junior outfielder Wesley Jordan, a transfer from Navarro College, where he led the team with 16 home runs. Thompson said Jordan has "light tower power."

"I'll be disappointed if we don't have two or three guys that can hit 10 home runs," Thompson said. "We didn't have anybody hit 10, and we didn't have anybody hit more than I think six last year. I think there'll be some significant improvements there, power-wise."

While the bats aim to be the strength of the team, Baylor added to the pitching staff and will look for improved strikeout numbers while decreasing free passes. Junior right-handed pitcher Mason Marriott and senior right-handed pitcher Jared Matheson are a pair of returners who will have opportunities to earn starts.

Redshirt freshman right-handed pitchers Tanner Duke and Collin McKinney each missed the 2023 season recovering from Tommy John surgery but can play an important role as starters or high-leverage relievers. The pair each consistently find the mid 90s on their fastball, with McKinney topping out at 97 in a spring intrasquad scrimmage.

Baylor only rostered one scholarship left-handed pitcher a year ago but will feature seven on its 40-man

roster in 2024.

"We have more quality arms. We have a deeper pitching staff that can throw the ball," Thompson said. "We had 17 different guys during the fall that touched at least 90 miles an hour on the gun. We had seven guys that were able to get 93 or better."

Nothing will be easy for the Bears as they face three teams who finished top-50 in RPI a season ago at Globe Life Field to open the 2024 season. But after months of training and preparation, playing on the big stage is exactly what they've been working toward, according to Johnson.

"It's going to be exciting. It's going to be a good test for us," Johnson said. "Getting to play in the defending champions' stadium, that's going to be fun too, especially being a Rangers fan. I'm super excited about that."

The countdown is on, and baseball is on the way. While questions remain for the ball club on the Brazos, one thing is for sure among the team: The Bears are ready to defy expectations.

"We expect to come out there with a few wins and to show people that Baylor baseball is here to play," Marriott said.

Following the three-game set in Arlington, the Bears will take on Indiana (Lexington Regional) and Oral Roberts (College World Series) — two teams that made deep postseason runs in 2023.

"We have an incredible opportunity with the schedule that we play because we're going to find out exactly how much we have improved," Thompson said. "We're going to find exactly out how tough we are and how much fight we have in us. That'll be exciting."

Welcome home, BG!



Lariat file photo

PERFECTION Brittney Griner and the Bears celebrate their 40-0 national championship season after defeating Notre Dame 80-61 on April 3, 2012, in Denver.



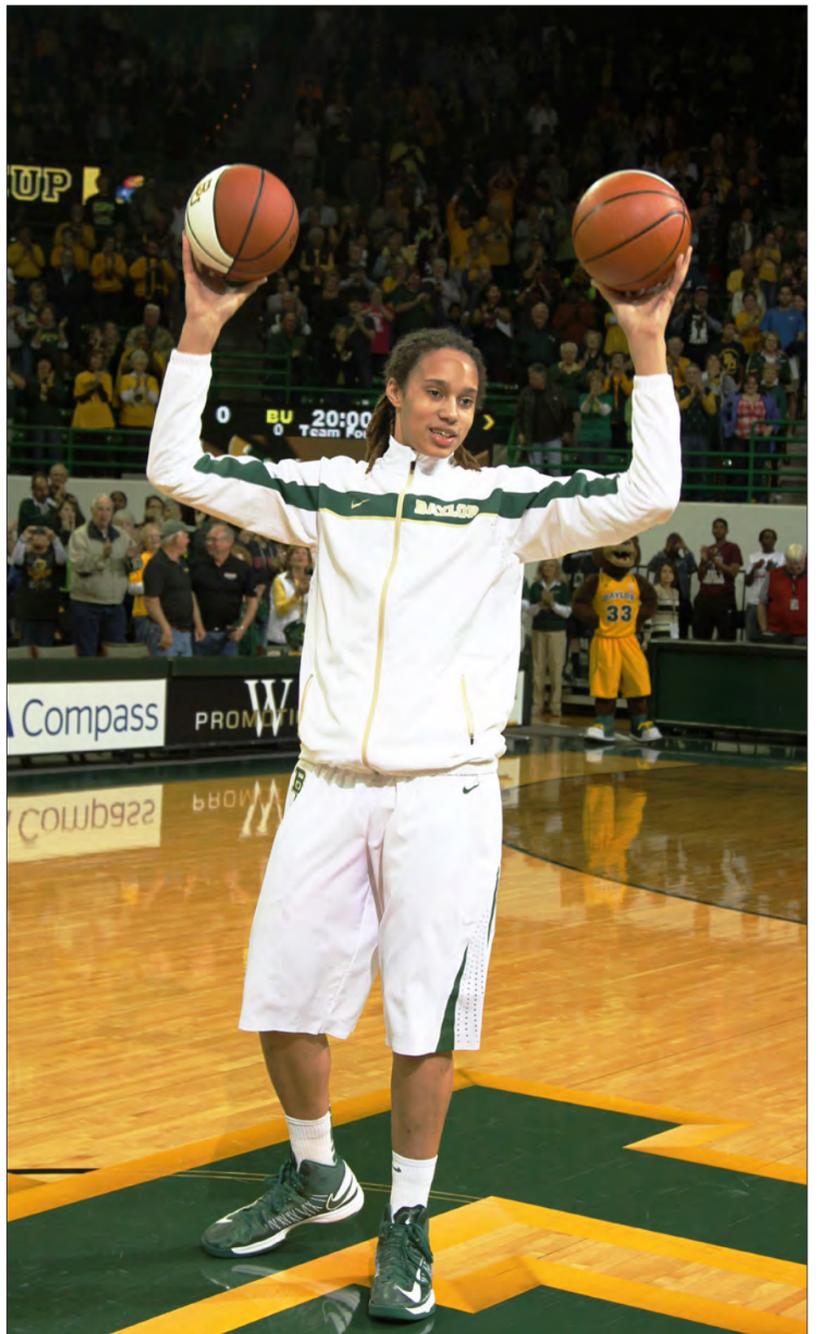
Lariat file photo

BRING IT HOME Brittney Griner kisses the trophy after the Bears destroyed Iowa State 75-47 in the Big 12 Tournament on March 11, 2013, in the American Airlines Center in Dallas.



Associated Press

LEAGUE HER Brittney Griner was selected No.1 overall by the Phoenix Mercury in the 2013 WNBA Draft. Griner is still with the Mercury after 10 seasons.



Lariat file photo

RAISE THE ROOF The Houston native celebrates after moving to 10th all time on the Division I scoring list (2,929 career points) after Baylor's 86-45 win over Kansas in the Ferrell Center.



Lariat file photo

WITH AUTHORITY The 6-foot-9 forward slams down one of her 18 career dunks during Baylor's 85-47 win over Florida State in the second round of the 2013 NCAA Tournament in Waco.



Lariat file photo

STRETCHED OUT Brittney Griner poses with her teammates after the Bears secured their third straight regular season Big 12 championship, courtesy of a 20-point victory over Texas in Waco.

Baylor men's golf hopes to carry over fall momentum, start fast at The Prestige

TYLER WHITE
Sports Writer

Baylor men's golf is set to begin its spring season on Feb. 19 at The Prestige in California. The Bears have been working hard since the fall portion ended, with the goal being to be ready for the spring slate.

Head coach Mike McGraw said his group is ready to get out and compete against other athletes. He said the Bears have had great weather to prepare and practice outside, and they are ready for The Prestige to kick off the season.

"It's a month long of anticipation waiting to compete and we haven't competed in little over three months, so we're ready and excited," McGraw said.

McGraw said they had a couple of rounds of qualifying, as well as intrasquad tournaments to prepare the lineup of five for The Prestige, yet all of the golfers are going to perform individually as well as with the team. He said they've been working hard since coming back from break, and they are ready to finally square off with other people.

"It's been nice to be able to get outside and play and practice and compete with each other," McGraw said. "But they're trying to beat up on each other — they'd like to go try some other teams."

He said that as a coach, he is anticipating to see how his coaching and preparation has set this team for success. He said he is ready to hopefully see the results of all the prep over the break and beginning of the semester with the team.

"I think the anticipation for a coach is always great because



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

OFF THE TEE The Prestige has included notable collegiate golfers including U.S. Open Champions Wyndham Clark, John Rahm and Gary Woodland, as well as 2023 Ryder Cup participants Ludvig Aberg, Victor Hovland, Rahm, Sam Burns, Clark and more.

you hope you've done a good enough job of getting them ready for the competition, you hope you've done a good enough job of coaching," McGraw said. "You know, you hope that things that you've created, the environment you created, has been a positive one where they can thrive."

Graduate student Luke Dossey said the entire team has been working hard every day to prepare for the beginning of the season. He said they have been taking any extra time out of their day to put the work in and get extra practice in.

"This is probably like the hardest I've seen everyone

as a team collectively work," Dossey said. "A lot of the guys are putting in a lot of early hours before classes and stuff. We had a good fall season, but the spring is kind of where it's the main focus of our season, you could say, when we start getting into postseason and regionals and nationals. I

think just as a team, everyone's kind of putting in that extra work already."

Dossey, alongside graduate students Tyler Isenhart and Johnny Keefer, is a fifth-year golfer and hoping to make a strong final impression. He said that it's motivation to push for excellence so that they can

go out on a high note.

"This is kind of our going out party, and so we want to kind of finish off on a good note," Dossey said.

As he prepares for his final season of golf at Baylor, he said he wants to strive to be an impactful leader for the team. As a few seniors and graduate students leave the program, he said he wants to make a lasting mark that will help the younger golfers on the team.

"I'm just doing whatever I can to just be a servant leader, be a vocal leader, and just do things the right way on and off the golf course to set an example for the younger guys so that they can step into that leadership role well," Dossey said.

He said after a disappointing end to nationals last year, the team is ready to get back on track and leave off with a great performance. He said they are ready to show all the work they've been putting in and showcase their talent.

"I think we're just ready to get back to that stage ... just to kind of show that at the end of the year and kind of show all the work that we've been putting in."

McGraw said the team is just anticipating the beginning of the season. After weeks of work, he said they are ready to get out there and compete against others.

"We prepared, we're excited, we've waited and now we're getting ready to go compete," McGraw said.

McGraw has not announced his five-man lineup for the three-day event yet, but the Bears will tee off on Monday in Palm Springs. It will come to a close on Wednesday.

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A sporty side to Sing: Most 'active' performances of recent memory

TYLER WHITE
Sports Writer

It's always fun to see the different themes and styles of performances that take place throughout All-University Sing. However, one theme that isn't heavily featured offers some of the most unique and energetic acts: fitness and sports.

In the last few years, there have only been a select few performances that have featured fitness or sports as the main theme. However, they have all been rather unique and interesting, each with its own style.

DELTA MOTOR SPEEDWAY

The most recent sports act was Delta Delta Delta's "Delta Motor Speedway" from 2023. The most impressive part of the display was the backdrop, which was highly detailed with a



Lariat file photo

NEED FOR SPEED Delta Delta Delta's 2023 act, "Delta Motor Speedway," incorporated a detailed backdrop and costumes to tell the story of a race car catching on fire during a race.

crowd and a racetrack full of vibrant colors. The costumes, though simplistic, accentuated the backdrop with their red, blue and yellow colors and their fireman attire. Following the story of a race car catching fire mid-race, the performance had strong flow with unique lyrical changes to signify key moments in the plot, such as pit stops and extinguishing the fire.

RING BY SING

In 2020, Zeta Tau Alpha put on "Ring by Sing" — a story that followed the preparation for a boxing match. Full of athletic attire and fight-centric choreography, the performance featured a countdown to the big event, full of jump-roping and practice fighting from both "teams" in the show. With the final scene, the background dancers mimicked the fighters in the boxing ring amid a backdrop of flashing

lights and a crowd of onlookers. Although it was a simple storyline, the act was full of great energy and fun choreography.

SWEATIN' WITH SING ALLIANCE

2018 was a big year for sports-focused performances, with three separate groups putting their own spin on fitness. To begin, Sing Alliance put on a unique performance of training in "Sweatin' with Sing Alliance." Although there was no particular storyline, the choreography and design was really well done, full of dances centered around exercises with vocalists acting like fitness instructors. The vibrant backdrop added an amplified energy, making it feel more like a Zumba class than a Broadway-esque number.

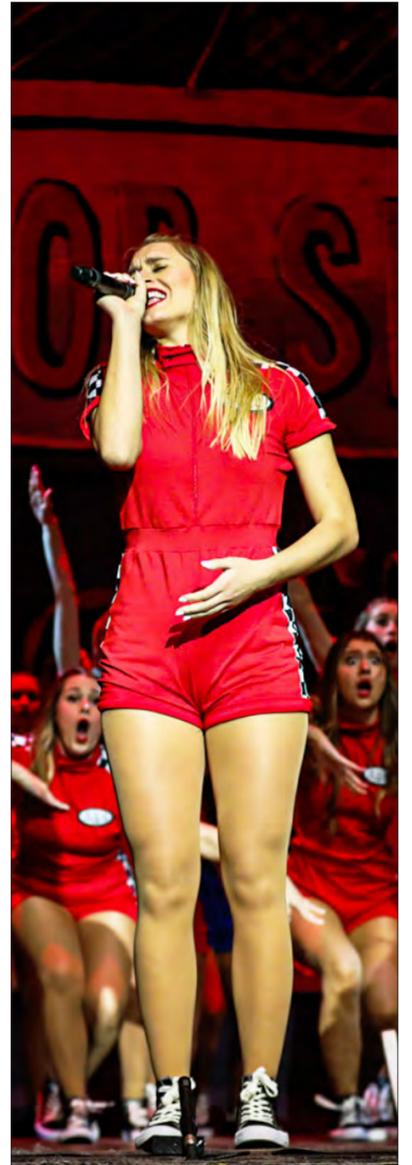
ALLEY CATS

Additionally, Kappa Alpha Theta took its act to the bowling lanes in "Alley Cats." With a simple backdrop of a bowling alley, the dances took the spotlight, utilizing unique choreography that incorporated bowling balls in a way that seamlessly transitioned between songs. Moreover, a funny section of dancers dressed as bowling pins being hit by a strike gave way to a cool ripple finale that brought the performance to the next level.

FOOSIN' AROUND

Lastly, Phi Gamma Delta put on what might be the most unique sports-focused performance of the last few years with "Foosin' Around." The performers, who acted as foosball players, were so full of energy and enthusiasm that it brought the act to a higher level. With impressive sections like a glow-in-the-dark ball floating through the air into the goal and hilarious ones like the referees wearing tear-away pants for "Can't Touch This," the act had a great mix of interest and humor.

Though there haven't been many fitness and sports performances in Sing over the years, the ones that have been put on tape have been nothing short of excellence.



Lariat file photo

SPORTY SORORITY Delta Delta Delta's 2023 Sing Act also made it to Pigskin Revue.



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Photo courtesy of The Blade

NEW SLINGER Dequan Finn has one year of eligibility remaining after helping lead Toledo to the MAC championship in 2023, throwing for 2,657 yards, 22 touchdowns and nine interceptions this year.

Breaking down Baylor football's 2024 transfers

ZACH BABAJANOF-RUSTRIAN
Staff Writer

Although Baylor football is in its offseason, the team has brought in some new additions with the transfer portal. In total, there are nine transfers joining the Bears, and they're looking to help the team grow. Here's a look at every transfer coming to Waco.

STEVE LINTON

Fifth-year senior edge Steve Linton is a three-star prospect transferring from Texas Tech. Linton is from Dublin, Ga., and he stands at 6 feet, 5 inches tall and weighs 235 pounds. He originally signed to Syracuse in 2019, where he played for four years before transferring to the Red Raiders in 2023. After playing at Texas Tech for a season, Linton is joining the Bears.

JAMAAL BELL

Senior wide receiver Jamaal Bell is a three-star transfer. Bell is 5 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 171 pounds, and he's from Lancaster, Calif. Bell signed to Nevada in 2019 and played there for four years. He entered the transfer portal on Dec. 31, 2023, and committed to the Bears on Jan. 13.

MICHAEL TRIGG

Junior tight end Michael Trigg is a three-star transfer. Trigg is from Tampa, Fla., and he stands at 6 feet, 3 inches tall and weighs 240 pounds. He originally enrolled at USC in 2021, where he played for a season. In 2022, he entered the transfer portal before signing with Ole Miss. After playing with the Rebels for

two years, Trigg once again entered the transfer portal and signed to Baylor on Jan. 12.

KENDRICK SIMPKINS

Senior safety Kendrick Simpkins is a three-star prospect coming from Western Kentucky. Simpkins is originally from Montgomery, Ala. He is 6 feet tall and weighs 196 pounds. He signed to WKU in 2020 and played there for four years before he entered the transfer portal on Dec. 17, 2023. Simpkins signed to the Bears on Jan. 8.

ASHTYN HAWKINS

Junior wide receiver Ashtyn Hawkins is a three-star transfer. Hawkins is from DeSoto, and he played at Texas powerhouse DeSoto High School. Hawkins is 5 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 170 pounds. He originally signed to Texas State in 2021, and he played there for three seasons. Hawkins entered the transfer portal on Dec. 15, 2023, and signed to the Bears on Jan. 7.

KURT DANNEKER

Sixth-year senior offensive lineman Kurt Danneker is a three-star transfer. Danneker is from Williamsport, Pa. He is 6 feet, 4 inches tall and weighs 332 pounds. He signed to the Ohio Bobcats in 2018 and played six seasons with them before entering the transfer portal on Dec. 17, 2023. Danneker committed to the Bears on Jan. 5.

OMAR AIGBEDION

Sophomore offensive lineman Omar Aigbedion is a three-star transfer coming from Montana State. Aigbedion is from Katy and stands at 6 feet, 3 inches tall and weighs 308 pounds. He

played for the Bobcats for two seasons before deciding to enter the transfer portal on Dec. 4, 2023. When he entered the transfer portal, Aigbedion received offers from 11 different schools, including UCF, BYU and Texas Tech. Aigbedion committed to the Bears on Dec. 19, 2023.

CAMEREN JENKINS

Freshman safety Cameren Jenkins is a three-star transfer coming from UNLV. Jenkins is from Lewisville, where he went to Lewisville High School. He is 6-foot-one tall and weighs 185 pounds. Before signing to UNLV in 2023, Jenkins received 19 different offers, with the first offer being given to him when he was a sophomore in high school from the Northern Arizona Lumberjacks. Jenkins played for UNLV for one season before entering the transfer portal on Dec. 12, 2023. He signed to the Bears on Dec. 18, 2023. Jenkins' brother, Caden, was a Second-Team Freshman All-American for the 2023 season, according to "The Athletic."

DEQUAN FINN

Fifth-year senior quarterback Dequan Finn is a four-star transfer coming from the Toledo Rockets. Finn is from Detroit, where he went to high school at Martin Luther King High School. He is 6 feet, 2 inches tall and weighs 205 pounds. In April 2018, Finn committed to the Central Michigan Chippewas. However, in November of that year, he decommitted and signed to the Toledo Rockets. Finn played for the Rockets for five seasons before entering the transfer portal on Dec. 4, 2023. Finn signed to the Bears on Dec. 17, 2023.

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Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

ALL SMILES Baylor softball senior catcher Sydney Collazos is entering her fourth and final year with the Bears, and she enters her third year as the starting catcher behind home plate.

Softball's Collazos leaves loud legacy

MICHAEL HAAG
Sports Writer

Folks may think they know Sydney Collazos after talking to her for five minutes.

After all, the self-described “extrovert bordering on obnoxious” could probably befriend a tree stump that quickly. That’s who the senior Baylor softball backstop has always been, though. Someone who cracks a joke to loosen her team up when things get too serious, or the catcher that fans see chatting with the umpire behind home plate every other pitch.

It’s a loudmouth role the Bears are more than used to by now as she starts her fourth and final year at Baylor.

“Things will be a lot quieter around here next year,” head coach Glenn Moore quipped. “She asks us every day if we’re going to miss her, so I think she’s brainwashing us to think we will.”

Collazos can’t imagine softball practices any other way, though. She said there has to be some fun amid the grind of a season.

“I tell them all the time — good luck finding somebody to fill my shoes in that department because it’s a blast,” Collazos said. “I’m not saying it’s all me, but it’s a lot. [Moore’s] going to be really bored without me. I take a lot of pride in being loud and obnoxious because it’s fun.”

Although outgoing around the team, media and fans as part of her sport, it’s a polar opposite in a classroom setting. The health science studies major called speaking in class her “worst nightmare.”

“I sit in the very back and I do not speak,” Collazos said. “There’s only been one class where we’ve been called on and had to — like, you didn’t really get a choice — and it triggered my fight or flight.”

But being afraid to speak in class hasn’t stopped Collazos from her ultimate goal of becoming some sort of doctor. Collazos has juggled being a student-athlete on the pre-med track for over three years now, and she’s closing in on her undergrad degree.

When she’s not behind home plate, in the box at bat or even playing third base, Collazos is frantically studying for an intense exam or scampering over to Ascension Providence Hospital in Waco to work and learn more about her doctoral future.

Senior outfielder Emily Hott, who’s spent her entire Baylor journey with Collazos, is still comprehending how the chatty backstop has that kind of career trajectory — as well as the brains to have that potential.

“She’s the smartest person ever,” Hott said. “She always jokes about tests and how she’s struggling but comes back with a 98. And it’s like, out of anybody I would guess to be stupid, it’d be Sydney, but she’s not.”

Senior outfielder McKenzie Wilson, who started living with Collazos this year, said Collazos has a “photographic memory.”

“She has brains, books, all the things,” Wilson said. “I’m definitely excited for her future. It is kind of scary to think that she could be a doctor one day. But yeah, [I’m] excited for her, excited for her future.”

It’s like two different people in one. Collazos has her goofy side with softball or around her friends, and then she can lock in and be one of the smartest students on campus. She said most people she encounters fails to realize the latter, though.

People in Collazos’ future

industry tend to overlook her ability or assume she’s going into something more mundane.

“I get that a lot,” Collazos said. “Shoot, even today I go to pick up my hospital badge ... and people ask me if I’m going into medical administration or nursing. They don’t assume that somebody who — I wear my athletic gear, I’m a female. Nobody likes to assume that we have the potential that we do. And so I do take a lot of pride in proving a lot of people wrong.”

But it’s still a deflating feeling to know you belong in a profession and still find folks with preconceived notions.

“It is hard,” Collazos said. “You can go into the jock stigma. ... You get your tests back and your classmates are looking around for some reason. ... And they see what you’re doing, they hear your GPA, they hear what you do, and then they have a little bit more respect for you.”

“It’s funny how that works.”

The 2023 CSC Academic All-American said she just rolls with the punches, though. In

fact, those doubters have pushed her to keep going in hopes of bringing more women into a male-dominated profession.

The Georgetown native added that her outgoing side won’t leave her once she becomes a doctor. She fully expects her future patients to leave an appointment smiling or giggling, which is important to her.

“The best doctors you’ve ever had, they’re not quiet, and they like to make you feel comfortable,” Collazos said. “So I think that’s something that’s going to be really beneficial for me in the future, is being able to make your patients feel comfortable so that they trust you.”

It’ll be a while before Collazos steps into that role, though. She’s on track to graduate in May, and then she plans to spend a year as a medical scribe, probably with an emergency room doctor at Ascension Providence Hospital.

Then she’ll have four years in medical school where she’ll get to figure out what area she wants to go into. She added that residencies from there can vary from five to

seven years.

“And then after I start growing gray hairs, I get to practice medicine, but hopefully, God-willing, I stick to that plan, because it is a long time,” Collazos said.

As excited as Collazos is about continuing her medical journey, she knows she’s in the midst of an important softball season. Baylor (0-2) is coming off its first 40-win season since 2017 and was on the cusp of hosting an NCAA Regional in Waco.

Collazos has seen the Bears’ growth over her four-year career, and with a veteran roster that returned all but one member of the 2023 squad, she said the sky is the limit for this team.

She just has to remind herself to soak it all in.

“As each year has gone by, I’ve gotten progressively less nervous,” Collazos said. “I would never say I’m never nervous because that’s just not the truth. But this time, it’s a lot more like, just be in the moment. Don’t plan for two games ahead. Don’t plan for a weekend ahead, knowing who we’re going to play. It’s just, tackling the day one day at a time.”

Collazos has been Moore’s trusty catcher since her sophomore season, but her bat hasn’t always been so reliable. Her batting average has seen significant increases over her three years with the program.

She batted .091 in 2021, .285 in 2022 and then hit .348 (second-best on the team) with 49 hits, 24 RBIs and two home runs last season.

That growth — both on the diamond and off it — is a testament to what she said she’s learned since committing to Baylor the summer before her sophomore year at Georgetown High School.

“I can’t even begin to explain it,” Collazos said. “And it’s never been smooth sailing that everyone likes to think it will be. But I’ve just grown so much as a person and as a player. ... And I failed. I failed so many times. But I’ve gotten so much stronger each time I failed.”

“I can go on and on about this because this experience has been life-changing. And I know that sounds cliché but it really is. This is unlike what I imagined in the best possible way. I’m just glad I got to spend my time here.”



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

IN THE MITT Collazos is a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, Peer Buddies, PALS and Blue Crew. She also volunteered with the Georgetown Youth Girls Softball Association and the Ace League.

Sharon Hetherington, M.Ed., LPC, Board Certified Coach

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Sports Take: Brittney Griner's jersey retirement overdue but well-deserved

MICHAEL HAAG
Sports Editor

The day is almost here. Former Lady Bears legend Brittney Griner is getting her jersey retired, and boy is it a long time coming. Students on campus — including me — didn't have the luxury of watching the 6-foot-9 forward feast on Baylor's opposition, but it doesn't take more than a simple Google search to know this honor is no shocker.

If someone put together a "Greatest Baylor Athletes Mount Rushmore," Griner might have the biggest head. Sure, Heisman-Trophy-winning Robert Griffin III or four-time Olympic gold medalist Michael Johnson are no slouches.

But let's be real — Griner reached a level that even those greats may have not attained. It's like playing a video game on rookie difficulty: She was simply unfair in her time at Baylor.

Let's unpack just how dominant she was. In four years with the then-Lady Bears, the Houston native totaled 3,283 career points and 1,305 rebounds. Griner was a two-time consensus National Player of the Year and was named to the All-Big 12 First Team and All-Defensive Team every single year in college.

Griner won the league's Defensive Player of the Year award four times, as well as the Player of the Year trophy every year except her freshman year (2009-2010). Her nation-leading average of 6.4 blocks per game during her freshman year made everyone else's numbers look like chump change.

She changed the game. Griner holds conference records that no one may ever sniff, like Big 12 Player of the Week honors (21), points scored (3,283), field goals made (1,247), free throws made (787) and attempted (1,054) and blocks (748). She also still holds the NCAA blocks record for a single season (223) and career.

A three-time All-American by five different outlets, Griner remains as the only player in NCAA women's basketball history to have over 2,000 career points and 500 career blocks.

There were only two games in her career in which she failed to reach double-digit points (148 career games). 146 games in double figures is the second most in NCAA history.

Oh, and I haven't even mentioned Baylor's 40-0 national championship team that Griner spearheaded in 2012, her junior season. Or the fact that the Lady Bears held a 135-15



Lariat file photo

HANDS IN THE AIR Brittney Griner was a three-time All-American by five different outlets during her four years with Baylor women's basketball.

record over her four-year career, including 40 consecutive Big 12 Conference regular-season wins to conclude her time in the green and gold.

What's mind-blowing is that — with all that attached to her name at Baylor — people find a way to be nag on her on social media. A couple of scrolls through the comments of Baylor Athletics' Facebook post on Jan. 31 regarding the announcement is all the proof you need.

Yeah, it's probably about 50/50 between positive and negative reactions, but isn't somewhere in the ballpark of a direct split still sad? Political beliefs or Griner's comments about former head coach Kim Mulkey and Baylor on her way out of Waco shouldn't hold Griner back from arguably the highest honor in collegiate athletics — having your jersey retired.

People keep clinging to the fact that she used to protest the national anthem, but it wasn't

because she didn't love this country. In fact, she's a two-time Olympic gold medalist in which she had no issue repping that "USA" across her chest.

Her dad also served in the Vietnam War, and she grew up wanting to be a cop. Are we really sure Griner was so gung-ho about disrespecting the nation and what it means?

Put all that nonsense to the side and appreciate Griner for what she did as a Lady Bear. A huge part of Baylor's legacy and tradition of success can be attributed to both her and Mulkey.

But I'd be willing to bet Mulkey would've had to fight harder to land Lauren Cox, Kelani Brown or NaLyssa Smith in the wake of the Griner era, had the dominant center never been a Lady Bear.

Here's a proposition — and let's see how

this sounds.

Maybe the Baylor Family should pack the Foster Pavilion and celebrate Griner's return to Waco on Sunday.

Don't be the stickler that's clinging to lazy, overblurred narratives surrounding Griner's name in the wake of her playing days.

She's safe, she's back with the Phoenix Mercury and she'll finally get the honor she's earned when the Bears host the Lady Raiders at 3 p.m. Sunday.

The pregame ceremony will take place at approximately 2:45 p.m., and every seat in the Pavilion will have a gold commemorative BG T-shirt.

Hey, "BG," go get your favorite Health Camp burger combo and remind us how big your smile is when that jersey is unveiled from the rafters. You deserve this.

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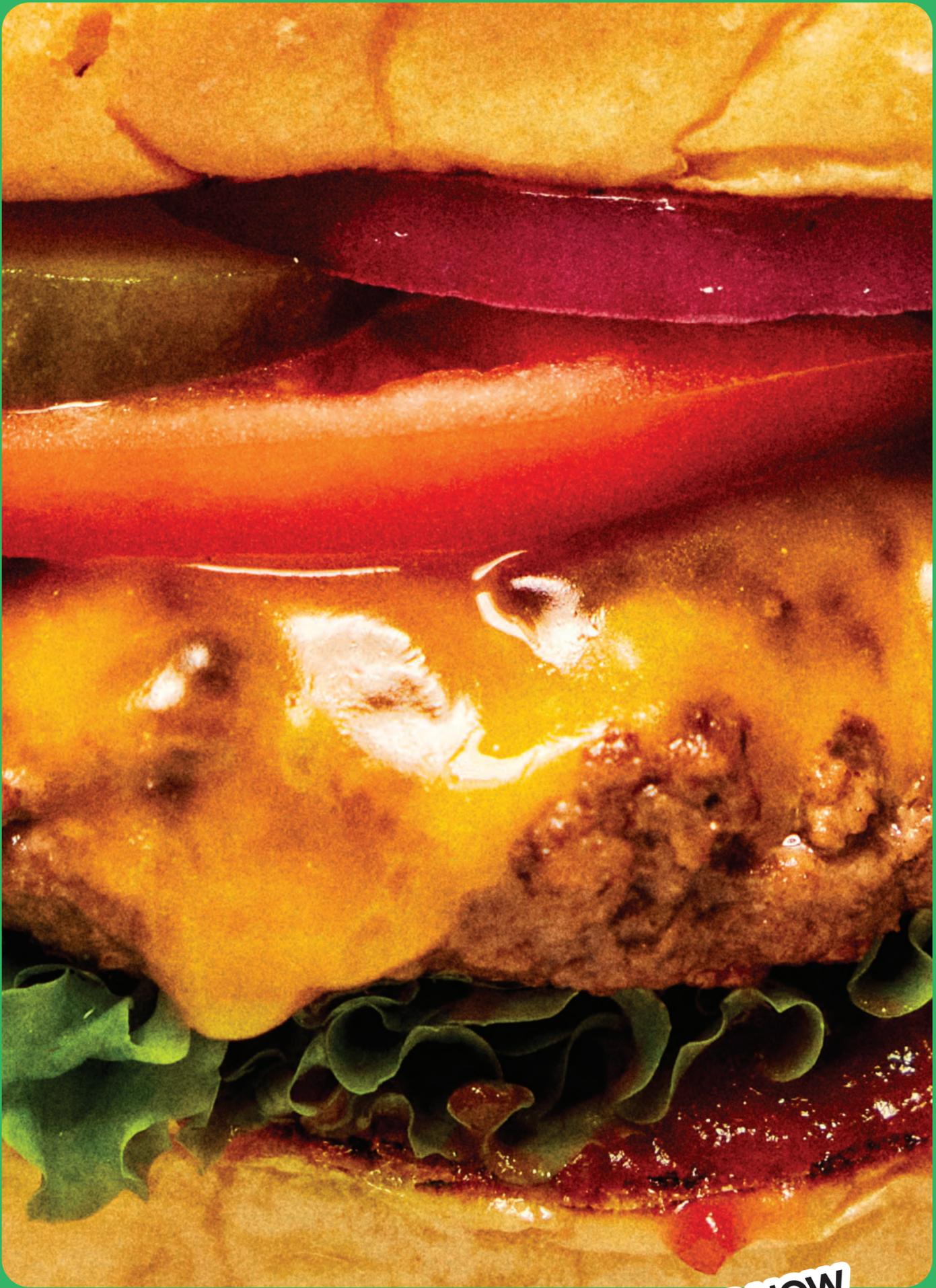
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