

# LEGACY

Abilene Christian University • Spring 2018

*Let it Grow!*

ENDOWMENTS CREATE  
EVERGREEN LEGACY  
AT ABILENE CHRISTIAN



## A MESSAGE FROM THE ACU FOUNDATION PRESIDENT



I am excited for you to read this issue of *Legacy* – every story on every page centers around one of my favorite topics: The endowment.

I love the endowment because it is both concrete and theoretical.

On the practical side, the endowment is invested for growth and annually distributes crucial funds for student scholarships and campus operations. ACU could not function without these funds. The endowment provides real dollars, each and every year – real dollars that make the dream of Christian higher education possible.

And on the idealistic side, the endowment is a chorus of support. It is past and current generations investing in a common belief – that ACU has a special calling and a unique mission. It's a belief that future students will still be coming to this campus to learn and to grow as young men and women. And it's the belief that a world-class education in a Christ-centered environment is possible, and will still be possible, in the future.

In this issue of *Legacy*, you will meet **Tim ('85) Yandell** and find out about the new endowed scholarship in his name. You also will be introduced to three of our incredible students who would not be at ACU without your scholarship support, and you'll learn about how special targeted endowments could be constructed to transform this campus.

And finally, on the back cover, you will hear a historic word from ACU's seventh president, **Dr. Don H. Morris ('24)**. Morris believed that for ACU to thrive, it would need a vibrant, thriving endowment – built through current and estate gifts.

Morris was right in 1960, and he is still right today.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Legacy*. If you would like to join in the chorus of support that invests and champions this university, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you.

In His Grip,

Dan T. Garrett ('73)

## ENDOWMENT SPOTLIGHT

### Tim Yandell Frater Sodalis Endowed Scholarship



Tim Yandell (right) waves as he rides the Frater Sodalis float in the 2017 Homecoming parade.

**Tim Yandell ('85)** is many things, but speechless is rarely one of them.

But on the Saturday of Homecoming 2017, the typically energetic and talkative sponsor of the men's social club Frater Sodalis was stunned into silence – surprised, overwhelmed, grateful.

With tears in his eyes, the only words Yandell could muster to his friends, once he learned they'd funded the Tim Yandell Frater Sodalis Endowed Scholarship in his honor, were a soft "Thank you."

This awestruck moment was months in the making.

"Tim has been and continues to be a great friend and mentor to so many," said **Tyler Sparks ('96)**, one of the original conspirators behind the endowed scholarship, which will provide assistance to a member of the social club based on character, academic ability and financial need. "Tim loves Frater Sodalis and we wanted to try, in a small way, to show how much he has meant to us. An endowed scholarship in his honor was a natural fit."

Once the idea of an endowed scholarship was hatched, Tyler, along with his brother **Terry Sparks ('92)**, **Ken Smalling ('86)**, **Steve Reynolds ('98)** and others coordinated with the ACU Alumni Relations office to do a targeted, secret outreach campaign to Frater Sodalis alumni. As the idea spread, more and more Frats and their families joined the opportunity to honor and surprise Tim.

The big reveal came Oct. 21, 2017, at the Frater Sodalis Homecoming breakfast. As the event wended down, Smalling took the stage to remark about Tim and what he has meant to the club. Soon, a full tribute bloomed, and before they knew it, Tim and **Traci (Merkel '83) Yandell** were presented with a framed certificate announcing the Tim Yandell Frater Sodalis Endowed Scholarship.

"I seriously had no idea. I love ACU, and I love these guys. I was so shocked. I didn't have any words to express how honored I felt," Tim said. "But this scholarship is not about me, it is about the students it can help going forward. We have a great start, and I am committed to keeping this fund growing for years to come by encouraging more people to donate."

"Also, Traci and I had recently included ACU in our estate plans," Tim said, "so now it will be nice to know our last gift will be going to this scholarship to help even more students in the future."

If you'd like to make a gift to student scholarships, create an estate gift or establish a fund to celebrate someone in your life, please contact The ACU Foundation at 800-979-1906 or [theacufoundation@acu.edu](mailto:theacufoundation@acu.edu). We'd love to assist you in honoring those you love and blessing students for generations to come.

## SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHTS

### Monica Valencia

*Freshman art major from Brownwood, Texas*  
Don Bowen Endowed Scholarship

“I would not be here if it were not for your generosity. Because of you, I get to attend my dream school and work towards my goals. I am so grateful for the seed you have planted in my life, and I just want to say “Thank You!” I promise to do everything I can during my four years here to show you that your donation was worth it!”

### Clarissa Lavaki

*Sophomore nursing major from Wylie, Texas*  
Women for ACU Endowed Scholarship

“Coming from the remote country of Papua New Guinea, I never imagined attending a great school like ACU and having the chance to pursue my dreams of becoming a missionary nurse. But by the grace of God and his love shown through the selfless donors from Women for ACU and many others like them, I have the financial, physical and spiritual security I need to become who God has called me to be. I am thankful and humbled by their gifts and love.”

### Aaron Bunting

*Junior business major from Honolulu, Hawaii*  
Unrestricted scholarship

“ACU has been such an incredible experience, and when I found out my scholarships were provided by a collection of people who wanted to support a student trying to make it at ACU, I was floored. I am evidence that your gifts, no matter how big, make a real impact on students like me. Thank you!”



# Let it Grow!

## ENDOWMENTS CREATE EVERGREEN LEGACY AT ABILENE CHRISTIAN

Overseeing ACU's facilities and land is a high-pressure job for **Corey Ruff**, but at least he hasn't had to resort to dynamite to get the West Texas terrain to cooperate.

Yes, dynamite. That's what it took for **J.S. "Sheriff" Burgess**, hired in 1934 as campus caretaker, to be able to plant pecan trees on the dry ranch land that was home to Abilene Christian College's new campus on the outskirts of town. His student employees could only dig so deep into the hard, rock-filled ground.

Many of Burgess' pecan trees still dot the lawns in front of the Hardin Administration Building, but the campus Ruff helps care for as associate vice president of operations is an oasis compared to its early days. The campus has been so transformed in recent decades, the Arbor Day Foundation has recognized ACU as an official "Tree Campus USA" for the past five years.

"Without a doubt, one of the most common remarks I hear from alumni coming back to campus after several years is 'Wow, the campus looks amazing! How did you get this place so green?'" said **Craig Fisher ('92)**, assistant vice president for alumni and university relations. "And they're right. The campus looks better every year. Our facilities are framed and surrounded by beautiful trees and green spaces specifically designed for our students to enjoy."

The transformation didn't happen overnight or even over the course of a few years (or with



explosives). Land that once was nearly untamable now flourishes thanks to sustainable planting practices, reclaimed rainwater and a generous donation of trees. It took time and investment to turn ACU's campus into what it is today.

"The West Texas landscape presents challenges from time to time, but we are proud of the way the campus continues to evolve," Ruff said. "Our goal has been to make the campus as beautiful as possible for our students, faculty, staff and alumni – while simultaneously reducing waste and costs through the use of native plants and forward-thinking conservation techniques. It's important to have a good plan, to plant adaptive plant material, and then to pray to God for growth."

The growth on campus is a helpful illustration for the growth of ACU's endowment, said **Dan T. Garrett ('73)**, president of The ACU Foundation. "There's a reason The ACU Foundation embraces the metaphor of the tree, from its small beginnings to its deep roots," he said.

"We enjoy the shade of trees we did not plant and we drink from wells we did not dig. The trees we plant today will be enjoyed by future generations," Garrett said. "Growing the endowment is vital to ensure future generations will receive the world-class, spiritual education that only Abilene Christian can offer. Just like a tree, what we plant today will bless our children tomorrow."

Think of the endowment as a collection of seeds, Garrett said. Each seed is planted by a donor through a one-time gift, a multi-year pledge, or even an estate or planned gift. Each of these individual funds is pooled and invested together for long-term growth.

Since 1975, the endowment has grown from around \$10 million to more than \$400 million. During that same time period, it has distributed more than \$285 million back to ACU to support students and programs. Throughout the years, families have established unrestricted endowments to support the general purposes of the university, as well as created endowed student scholarships and operational funds.

Coming full circle, even caring for campus can be a focus of an endowment, Ruff said. His team is exploring opportunities to establish a Green Revolving Fund to provide financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy and other sustainability projects that generate cost savings.

"These savings are tracked and used to replenish the fund for the next round of green investments, which creates a sustainable funding cycle that reduces operating expenses and reduces environmental impact," Ruff said.

He also has seen endowments at other universities that fund specific campus needs, such as a Texas Christian University alumnus who established an endowment that annually purchases flowers for campus.

"Endowments like that one are so tangible to a donor and they help to underwrite a real cost for the university," he said. "And just imagine that donor walking across campus knowing she provided all those beautiful flowers – it would be incredible to have something like that here at ACU."

"Endowment opportunities and options at ACU are as varied as the trees and flowers on our campus," Garrett said, "and similar stewardship principles apply: Plan the endowment with a family to accomplish a specific goal, plant the endowment in a fertile place with a sound investment strategy, and then pray that God will continue to grow that fund to provide for future generations of ACU students."

*Families or individuals interested in contributing to the endowment can work with the university to establish a fund specifically tailored to achieve their goals. If you are interested in setting up a new scholarship or operational endowment, funding a faculty chair in one of the colleges, or anything else, contact The ACU Foundation at [theacufoundation@acu.edu](mailto:theacufoundation@acu.edu) or 800-979-1906.*



# CAMPUS NEWS

## HOMECOMING 2018

Come home this Oct. 11-14 for **Homecoming 2018: Better Together**. Your favorite events are in store, from the carnival to the parade to the musical, as well as newer traditions such as Homecoming Candlelight Devotional, and the fireworks show and dessert reception. Something new for reunion attendees: Reunion class events will now take place earlier in the day Saturday for lunch as part of Wildcat Country tailgating in the Campus Mall. If your preferred class year is 1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008 or 2013, come hang out with your peers at your reunion tailgate ahead of the football game against Nicholls State University at Wildcat Stadium.

Learn more and register for your class reunion beginning May 30 at [acu.edu/homecoming](http://acu.edu/homecoming).



## SHOWTIME ON THE 50-YARD LINE!

**Movies on the Hill** moves to Wildcat Stadium this summer with free showings of *Coco* on June 5 and *Peter Rabbit* on July 19. Come back in the fall for a special Movies on the Hill on Sept. 7 with *Avengers: Infinity War*. Learn more at [acu.edu/moth](http://acu.edu/moth).



## SUPPORT STUDENTS MAY 15

ACU's second annual **Day of Giving** is Tuesday, May 15, and members of the ACU community have three giving options, all of which directly support students.

Gifts can be made to the Exceptional Fund, which supports ACU's greatest areas of need; the Katie Kirby Student Care Fund, which provides critical, immediate resources to students in need who have been recommended to the Student Opportunities, Advocacy and Resources (SOAR) Program; and current student scholarships.

"Our first Day of Giving last year was a huge success, and the way our community came together to bless our students was inspiring," said **Craig Fisher ('92)**, assistant vice president for alumni and university relations. "I hope alumni, parents, friends, faculty and staff continue to show ACU students how much they believe in them and support them."

Even better: Gifts made today through May 15 count toward the Day of Giving goal. Visit [acu.edu/acugives](http://acu.edu/acugives) to learn more and make a gift today.





## VISION IN ACTION WRAPPING UP

The completed Robert R. and Kay Onstead Science Center will be dedicated Aug. 24. Finalizing Onstead marks the completion of **Vision in Action**, a \$95-million initiative that transformed ACU's campus with three science facilities – Onstead, the Halbert-Walling Research Center, and the Engineering and Physics Laboratories at Bennett Gymnasium – and the new Elmer Gray Stadium for track and field and women's soccer, and Wildcat Stadium for football.

Students in the sciences, along with student-athletes, helped ACU celebrate the success of the Vision in Action initiative at the President's Circle Dinner on Feb. 17 (pictured above). Attendees had the opportunity to talk with the students and see examples of their work as well as hear what the new facilities and equipment have meant to them.

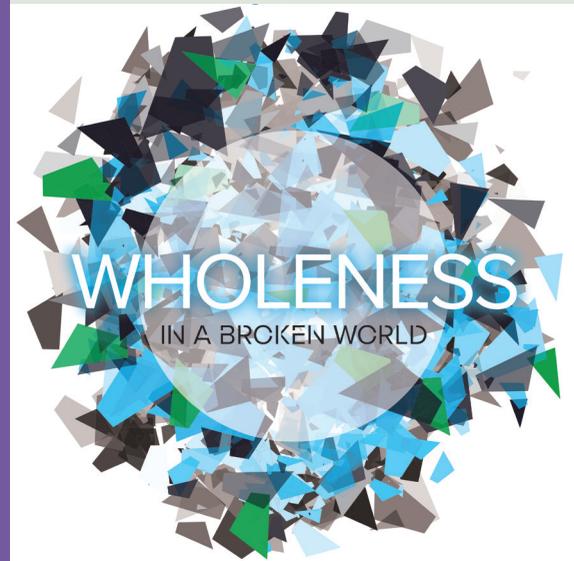
Learn more about the historic initiative at [acu.edu/via](http://acu.edu/via).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Members of the Class of 2018 will graduate during **May Commencement** on May 12, when **U.S. Rep. Ted Poe ('70)** will be the guest speaker.
- The **Abilene Shakespeare Festival** produced by ACU Theatre will feature *The Merry Wives of Windsor* on June 21-22 and 28, and *The Merchant of Venice* on June 23, 29 and 30. Learn more at [acu.edu/theatre](http://acu.edu/theatre).



- **ACU Night at the Ballpark** returns this summer: Join us in Houston on June 25 to cheer for the Houston Astros and in Arlington on June 26 for the Texas Rangers. Learn more at [acu.edu/baseball](http://acu.edu/baseball).
- The Fall 2018 semester begins with **Wildcat Week** on Aug. 21-25.
- **Wildcat football** kicks off its season at Baylor on Sept. 1. The first home game at Wildcat Stadium is Sept. 8 against Angelo State. Learn more about purchasing tickets at [acusports.com/tickets](http://acusports.com/tickets).
- Freshmen take the stage in the annual talent showcase **Freshman Follies** during Family Weekend, Sept. 7-8.



## A NEW LOOK FOR SUMMIT

ACU's 112th annual **Summit** returns Sept. 16-19 with "Wholeness in a Broken World – Together Through the Power of the Spirit: Insights From Ephesians."

This year, Summit is offering 12 "pathways" for attendees to take in place of independent classes. Each pathway, or series of classes, will focus on a different aspect of life in which people seek wholeness, such as at church, at work and through technology.

"The individualized approach allows us to connect with others who are interested in the same fields so that we can all seek wholeness together," said Leah Andrews, assistant director of the Siburt Institute for Church Ministry. Learn more at [acu.edu/summit](http://acu.edu/summit).

## WILDCATS COME TOGETHER TO SERVE

Hundreds of ACU alumni and friends turned out in cities across Texas and in Nashville, Tennessee, on April 7 for **Wildcats Serving**. Dozens in each city showed up to work in venues such as food banks, community gardens and clothing distribution centers. Members of the Houston community focused many of their efforts on aiding those affected by Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Volunteers in Houston worked at the Bread of Life Distribution Center organizing household items and clothes for the homeless or displaced

and at Impact Houston Church of Christ, where they gathered afterward for a celebration lunch with special guests United Voice Worship.

"It was such a joy to watch fellow ACU alumni, student family members and friends unite under the singular purpose of service," said **Carri (Teague '88) Hill**, university relations manager for Houston. "This event echoes so well ACU's mission of educating students for service and leadership for today's world. It's real, and it made a real difference."



## LEGACY GIFTS STILL UNIVERSITY'S GREATEST HOPE

*Circa 1960*



*2018*



In 1960, ACU's seventh president **Dr. Don H. Morris ('24)** announced a new resource designed to encourage estate and deferred gifts to the college's endowment. Today, this program is lived out through the work of The ACU Foundation.

"Increasing faculty salaries, adding buildings and equipment, and building sufficient endowment at Abilene Christian College are all related to our fundraising abilities," Morris said in 1960. "While periodic public campaigns for immediate and specific needs will continue, the Board of Trustees has established a new

Bequests and Gifts Committee designed to secure building and endowment fund requirements through wills, bequests, trusts, and other forms of deferred giving and estate planning. ... This type of program is our greatest hope. It offers the most realistic and optimistic prospect for securing the financial support essential to the continued development of Abilene Christian College."

The campus has changed a lot in the nearly six decades since Morris made this statement, but his words of caution and vision remain true. A vibrant

endowment built through current, deferred and estate gifts remain our greatest hope to ensure a quality Christian education for future generations of young men and women.

ACU has thrived because good people answered the call and committed to the future of the university. If your family is interested in joining this commitment to the future, please contact The ACU Foundation at [theacufoundation@acu.edu](mailto:theacufoundation@acu.edu) or 800-979-1906.