

UHD magazine

Spring/Summer 2017



New In Blue

*Criminal Justice Students Standing Up
for Houstonians In Need*



UHD University of Houston-Downtown



A Splendid View of Blue

Aerial view of UHD—dressed in Gator blue—as night descends upon the Bayou City. ...“The sky grew darker, painted blue on blue, one stroke at a time, into deeper and deeper shades of night.”

— Haruki Murakami
Dance Dance Dance



From the President's Desk

Welcome to the latest issue of UHD Magazine, which explores the theme, "New In Blue."

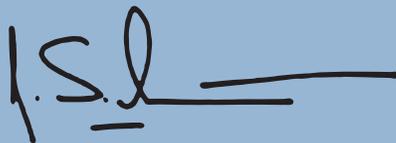
We invite you to discover stories describing creative initiatives led by our faculty, staff and students. These stories encompass the values and mission of our University and provide fresh insights on issues that significantly impact our city and state.

Featured in this issue are stories about research solutions addressing Houston's flooding and how one professor's study is helping local law enforcement better identify human trafficking victims. You also are invited to learn how our criminal justice students are lending a hand to former inmates who are reentering society. This issue also spotlights the historic \$10 million gift naming the Marilyn Davies College of Business. You'll also meet talented professors and lecturers who are recipients of the 2017 Faculty Awards; and the student-athletes who represent our institution through its Club Sports programs.

"New In Blue" is particularly relevant to me since joining UHD in April. I've met many inspirational faculty, staff and community leaders who balance their academic and professional obligations with a commitment to their community, which is also a common theme among our diverse campus of Gators.

Our faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters are dedicated to the success of UHD and to serving the Houston community. They are indeed "true blue" Gators, and I am honored to be part of such a unique institution that is dedicated to changing the lives of our students, their families and the future of Houston.

UHD has many great stories to share. These are just some of the few. I hope you enjoy discovering, and perhaps becoming a part of, what's "New In Blue" at the University of Houston-Downtown.



Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz
President, University of Houston-Downtown



In This Issue

11 **New Chapter**

Unwrapping UHD's Largest Gift.

5 **Gator Bites**

UHD News ... People, Places & Events.

14 **New Beginnings**

A Senior Seminar in Making a Difference.



18 **New Wisdom**

What are the ingredients of a great educator?

20 **New Perspectives**

Changing the Game on Crime & Flooding.



22 **Gators Connect**

Gator Wins Pulitzer.
Get Gator Engaged!

24 **Giving To Gators**

Changing the Millennial Conversation. Research Awards & Philanthropic Gifts.

28 **New Game**

Life Lessons & School Spirit Through Sports.



30 **UHD In Time**

"Secret" tunnel for commerce? History of One Main Building.



Former Interim UHD President Dr. Michael A. Olivias; The Honorable Bill Richardson; UHD President Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz.

UHD Bestows First Honorary Degree

By Sheryl E. Taylor

Spring Commencement featured The Honorable Bill Richardson—congressman, United States ambassador to the United Nations, secretary of Energy and former two-time governor of New Mexico. The recipient of numerous international and domestic leadership awards, he is a four-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

To commemorate his address, the University bestowed its first honorary degree to Richardson. With a distinguished career in the private, government and not-for-profit sectors, he has led The Richardson Center for Global Engagement—a foundation focusing on conflict resolution, prisoner release and environmental protection. And, with actor/director/conservationist Robert Redford, Richardson established the Foundation to Preserve New Mexico Wildlife.

Richardson successfully won the release of hostages and American servicemen in North Korea, Cuba, Iraq and Sudan when he previously served as a diplomat and special envoy to the Organization of American States. **UHD**



Texas Tribune CEO Evan Smith; Texas Representative Dan Huberty; & Texas Senator Larry Taylor.

Bringing Public Education Conversation to UHd

By Sheryl E. Taylor

UHd and The Texas Tribune, a non-profit digital news organization, partnered to lead a discussion on the issues facing public education in Texas during the 85th Texas Legislative Session.

More than 300 stakeholders—parents, educators, concerned citizens and legislators—participated in the two-day event at UHd that featured round-table talks with parents and educators, including University faculty from the College of Public Service’s Urban Education Department, and panel discussions on: Public Ed & The Legislature; School Choice in the 85th; Testing Standards & Accountability; and a Conversation with Former Education Commissioners.

For Evan Smith, Texas Tribune CEO and co-founder, choosing UHd just made sense. “The public education system serves the mass of the state,” said Smith. “The majority of enrolled public school students are in the big cities of Texas; and there’s no city in Texas bigger than Houston.

“If you want to understand the challenges and opportunities for public education, you go where they live every day. Having this event in Houston and specifically at the University of Houston-Downtown, which welcomes so many of these students...this is the place where the conversation had to be. I’m elated we had the chance to do it here.” **UHd**

Austin Turns Gator Blue

By Mike Emery

Two buses departed from the Bayou City to the Texas Capitol, where more than 120 University advocates—faculty, staff, students and alumni—were recognized on the floors of both the House of Representatives and Senate chambers for “UHD Day at The Capitol.”

The purpose of the Austin road trip was to visit with legislators to communicate the University’s significant role in our communities, city and state. “It’s so important for our University to advance UHD’s mission to our state legislators as well as communicate our challenges and opportunities, as they differ from other institutions due to our unique make-up,” said Liza Alonzo, director of UHD Alumni Relations. “This is also a great learning experience for our students to see firsthand how government works and how citizens participate in that process.”

Upon the close of the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature, UHD received a 3.3 percent increase in state general revenue funds to continue developing programs for retaining and graduating students—thanks to the University’s commitment to the success of its students. UHD was one of the few Texas universities that did not receive reductions in funding for the coming biennium (beginning September 1, 2017), due in part to the growth of graduate programs. **UHD**



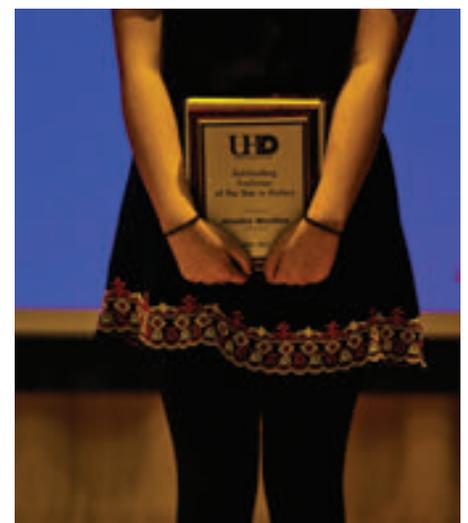
2017 UHD Day in Austin.

A Lesson in Student Success

By Sheryl E. Taylor

At the close of the 2016-2017 academic year, UHD hosted its annual Academic Awards to commemorate the effort, dedication, determination and success of high-performing students. University faculty came together to recognize students who have: achieved distinction through outstanding academic performances; excelled in academic courses; exhibited leadership in course-related and

extracurricular activities; and epitomized the outstanding student body of the University. More than 150 students representing each of the five colleges—Marilyn Davies College of Business, College of Public Service, University College, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, College of Sciences & Technology—were recognized at the May event. **UHD**



Connecting with Greater Houston Community Colleges

By Mike Emery

The road from Houston-area community colleges to UHD recently became a bit smoother thanks to collaborations between UHD, Houston Community College (HCC) and Lone Star College (LSC). UHD and HCC leaders formally pledged to offer strategic admission models, degree maps and a UHD advising team embedded at HCC campuses. Letters of intent were also signed to align their respective nursing, urban

education and business programs. This spring, LSC and UHD signed articulation agreements outlining provisions that included UHD advisers at LSC campuses, joint admissions and degree maps. Next year, UHD's Nursing Program will launch, offering courses at HCC's Coleman College in the Texas Medical Center. Presently, the University offers courses and degree programs at UHD Northwest, which is located at LSC-University Park

and selected courses at LSC campuses in Kingwood and CyFair. Creating seamless pathways between these institutions can help students avoid taking unexpected detours from their academic paths. According to higher education advocacy group, Complete College America, students on average take at least 21 credits more than they need. In addition to the time spent taking these excess hours, students accumulate more college debt. **UHD**



Standing (from left): Ken E. Lloyd, LSC Board of Trustees; Dr. Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, LSC Executive Vice Chancellor; Dr. David Holsey, LSC Board of Trustees; Dr. Ron Trowbridge, LSC Board of Trustees; UHS Regents Paula M. Mendoza and Welcome Wilson Jr.; UHD Provost Ed Hugetz; Dr. Alton Smith, Chair, LSC Board of Trustees; Seated (from left): Dr. Stephen C. Head, LSC Chancellor; Dr. Michael A. Olivas, Former UHD Interim President.



Rendering: Kirksey Architecture

Natural Sciences Expands Its Footprint

By Sheryl E. Taylor

In December, the University of Houston System Board of Regents unanimously approved the UHD Campus Master Plan. Since the Plan was originally presented to the Board, the University purchased a 17-acre parcel of land along the north bank of White Oak Bayou. A portion of this land will become the new site for the Sciences & Technology Building. The building will house research space to support chemistry and biological sciences; classrooms; the Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability; and feature space designed to encourage opportunities for collaboration and innovation. **UHD**



Photo: Blue Flower Arts

The Conscious Voice

By Mike Emery

Juan Felipe Herrera has long embodied the American spirit with a voice that has tapped into the consciousness of communities throughout the country. Appointed the 21st United States Poet Laureate in 2015, he is the first Mexican-American to hold the position.

In honor of National Poetry Month, Herrera visited UHD to share his insights on writing and poetry during a reading and discussion event. The author of more than 30 books, he is the recipient of the PEN/Beyond Margins Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. The son of migrant farmers, Herrera spent long hours working in California fields, which helped shape many of his works, as well as his social consciousness.

“Waking up is the biggest thing. I’m a political poet—let’s say a human poet that’s concerned with the plight of people who suffer,” Herrera said. “If words can be of assistance, then that’s what I’m going to use.”

As the Poet Laureate for California from 2012 to 2014, he launched the anti-bullying project, i-Promise Joanna Project, which was named for an elementary school student who was killed as a result of bullying. [UHD](#)

Preserving the Peace: Meet UHD's New Police Chief

By Toni Carter

UHD Police Department's (UHDPD) mission: "promote a safe and secure environment for those who learn and work on the UHD campus." Now leading the charge is law enforcement veteran Michael Benford. Before joining UHD, Benford served as the assistant chief of police for Houston Independent School District and in several other leadership roles, including lieutenant for the Operations Bureau, lieutenant for the Bureau of Professional Standards, patrol supervisor, internal affairs supervisor and field training supervisor. He also served as a lieutenant for the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District and an officer for the Port of Houston.

Q: What have been some challenges since joining UHD?

Chief: It's always a challenge to come after someone like Chief Richard Boyle (recently retired after 16 years at UHDPD), who had such a long and successful history. But, it also makes my job easier to come into a position where there is an established high-performing organization. My goal is to create a legacy rooted in best practices for law enforcement while still honoring UHD traditions. As a rule, if it works try and make it better, and if it's broken find a way to fix it. Gradual changes over time will be based on trends and needs of the University. We want to ensure that we are providing the best police services to our faculty, staff and students while instilling confidence in the safety of the University and the capability of our department.

Q: What efforts are under way to improve safety on campus?

Chief: Overall, we have a very safe University. We were recently named the third safest University in the nation (according to College Choice), which is something to be very proud of. The way we eliminate safety concerns is to stay vigilant, examine crime trends, and make adjustments based on statistical data to improve our effectiveness.

One thing we're doing is revamping our bike patrol unit. Based on the nature and size of our campus, bike patrol is a great way to increase visibility. We're also looking at our current manpower and finding ways to adjust shifts based on our needs, as well as making more officers available during peak times.

Q: How can the UHD community help with the department's efforts?

Chief: The UHD community is the eyes and ears of this University. My goal is to work closely with the Student Government Association, faculty and staff for feedback and new ideas on campus safety and communication to help us gauge how the UHD community feels about campus safety. [UHD](#)



UHDPD Chief Michael Benford

Unwrapping UHD's Largest Gift

By Mike Emery



It's the gift that keeps on giving.

Marilyn Davies' \$10 million gift to the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) will have a long-term transformative effect on the institution. Her gift—the largest in UHD's history—named the Marilyn Davies College of Business. The University now holds the distinction of hosting the state's first college of business named for a woman and the fourth in the nation to do so. And, it's also UHD's first named college.

"This gift is a reflection of Marilyn Davies' confidence in our College," said Dr. Michael Fields, dean of the Marilyn Davies College of Business. "It shows that we're doing something right, but also will ensure that we stay on this track."

Davies' gift didn't happen overnight. It was months in the making following meetings and discussions with Fields; Dr. Michael A. Olivas, former UHD Interim President; and Johanna Wolfe, UHD vice president for Advancement and University Relations.

The University of Houston System (UHS) Board of Regents approved the gift during its quarterly meeting in February.

Following the announcement, Tilman Fertitta, chairman of the UHS Board of Regents, gave Davies a hearty hug and thanked her for her gift.

"The happiest I have ever seen this man (Olivas) was when he told us about your gift," Fertitta told her at the meeting. "We can't thank the both of you enough."

"Dr. Olivas worked with me and pushed me, and look what happened," responded Davies with a laugh. "We have an opportunity to make this College bigger and better."

Davies' gift capped off a string of successes for the College. In 2016, it was recognized by the Houston Business Journal for having the largest Master of Business Administration Program in the city for the second consecutive year.

Also in 2016, the College hosted its Fall Commencement ceremony dedicated solely to 250 master's graduates—the largest class of graduate students in the College's history. The College's MBA program is bolstered by the guidance of more than 200 Corporate Fellows who combine their professional insights with the academic



Former UHD Interim President Dr. Michael A. Olivas; Marilyn Davies; UHS Chancellor & UH President Dr. Renu Khator; & UHD President Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz.

“
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expertise of its faculty. This instructional pairing provides students the theoretical and practical perspectives necessary to succeed in the classroom and the workplace. The Davies College of Business also offers a Master of Security Management Program, graduate certificate programs and a robust selection of undergraduate programs.

“Our business faculty and students are integral to the city’s economic landscape,” Olivas said. “Marilyn Davies recognizes this fact. Her generosity will have a lasting impact on this institution and the community. I commend her vision and confidence in our University. As much as I appreciate this major gift, I am equally grateful to have worked with her during my time at UHD. Getting to know her was a highlight of my time on campus. She is indeed a friend to me and to this marvelous University.” **UHD**



The Davies Family (Morgan, Marilyn, Taylor) with Davies College of Business Dean Dr. Mike Fields.

Meet Marilyn Davies



By Mike Emery

Higher education has always been important to Marilyn Davies. The lifelong Houstonian and entrepreneur is aware of the value of college degrees to the city's professional community.

She attributes her professional success to her passion for learning and exploring new disciplines. This passion will now support the achievements of many students at UHD thanks to her \$10 million gift naming the Marilyn Davies College of Business.

As the first female in Texas to have a college of business named for her, there's also a good chance she's the first woman with a black belt in Taekwondo to have her name on a college.

The self-defense designation might seem out of place next to Davies' professional accolades, but martial arts provided her with an opportunity to learn something new.

"My kids were taking Taekwondo classes, so I thought I might as well learn too," she said.

The daughter of William and Catherine Davies, she grew up near the Houston Astrodome with three brothers—Kelly ('89), Kenneth, Richard—and sister, Gayle. Marilyn Davies always had a penchant for math and excelled in the subject while attending public school in Houston, including her years at Bellaire High School.

"My father believed in higher education as did his father," Davies said.

Although Davies is not a UHD alumna, she did take a few courses in the One Main Building when it housed South Texas Junior College. Ultimately, Davies completed a bachelor's degree in theoretical mathematics at Texas Tech University (TTU).

"During my summer breaks, I worked Downtown with my dad at Texaco and took a bus to my government classes in what was then

the old Merchants and Manufacturers Building (now One Main)," she said.

After graduating from TTU, she returned to her hometown to launch a career and be near family. Davies' initial professional ventures focused on mainframe computing. She worked for companies, such as RCA, before the computing industry began to literally downsize its products. After 10 years in the tech industry, Davies switched gears and moved into the oil and gas industry.

The early 1980s oil bust resulted in a topsy-turvy time for Davies and countless other Houstonians. She held five different jobs in five years. During this time, Davies served as a professional advisor to the University of Houston. One of the companies Davies worked for filed for bankruptcy; and she purchased one of its assets. That was the beginning of her rise to success as the CEO of Bailey Banks Seismic L.P.—the proprietor of the Professional Geophysics Inc. Seismic Database. The database includes approximately 25,000 miles of data related to exploration areas and basins across the U.S.

Throughout her career, Davies remained a steadfast supporter of higher education. She passed on this love of learning to her children—daughter Morgan and son Taylor. Morgan Davies earned a bachelor's degree in habilitation of the deaf and hard of hearing from Texas Christian University in 2012 and received a master's degree from Columbia University. Taylor Davies earned a bachelor's degree in political science at UHD in 2010. After UHD, he earned an MBA degree from the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

"UHD was there for my son," she said. "The students here are serious and hardworking. They juggle many responsibilities and they value their education. There's a need for universities like UHD.

"My desire is that this gift encourages others to invest in the University of Houston-Downtown. I'm also hopeful that it will encourage UHD students to aspire to even greater heights." **TFD**

Criminal Justice Students Make a Difference in Houstonians' Lives

By Mike Emery

A helping hand and a friendly voice can go a long way.

Those recovering from addiction or returning to society following incarceration benefit from guidance, discipline, instruction and compassion.

Last spring, 27 University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) students worked with recently released prison inmates (or returning citizens) and individuals recovering from substance abuse through a Criminal Justice Senior Seminar led by Assistant Professor Dr. Judith Harris.

Their efforts were supported by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning, and Service Employment Redevelopment Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast.

For the Senior Seminar, 10 students received state-certified Peer Recovery Coach (PRC) training led by Amelia Murphy, director of Recovery Support Services for Houston's Santa Maria Hostel. This lengthy and intensive training provided students with insight on how to effectively counsel individuals with criminal backgrounds who are recovering from addiction or in desperate need of direction.

Among the students who completed this training is CJ major Shaun Sanchez, who has lost friends to drugs and also watched his mother lose her battle with addiction to painkillers. As a paramedic and aspiring police officer, Sanchez was motivated to participate in the PRC training to help those who may be struggling with substance abuse. Likewise, he hopes his assistance will alleviate the pain of family members who are affected by a loved one's addictions.

"People don't realize that addiction is a disease," Sanchez said. "Our job is to be



CJ Student Shaun Sanchez



From Left: UHD student Luscarime Riascos; Sister Maureen O'Connell; Angela House residents Natasha & Yolanda; & UHD student Karla Shannon.

there for them. As a recovery coach, it's about being there for the addict and laying the foundation to rebuild his or her future."

Sanchez and fellow CJ student Bianca Serna were among the students assigned to work at Unlimited Visions Aftercare, Inc., an adult substance abuse treatment program in Houston. Serna is confident that the PRC training will provide her with the skills and tools for a career in law enforcement.

"It provided a new understanding of how to work with individuals," Serna said. "The training taught us to adapt to different personalities. Some of these people have been closed off for years. It's important to be a motivator, an enthusiast or someone who can get them to open up."

The students who did not undergo PRC training also contributed to local agencies and organizations aimed at helping those in need. Among those institutions benefiting from students' talents was Angela House, which transitions women back into society following incarceration. The facility offers residential facilities and programs aimed at developing goals, preparing them for jobs and life outside of prison.

“
It's been a good partnership. I was aware of UHD's Criminal Justice Program and was pleased to finally make a connection. The students who worked with us were a great help.
”

UHD Senior Ashley Rudolph and fellow students worked weekly at Angela House. Inspired by her grandfather, a former Houston Police Department officer, she hopes to eventually join the FBI. The experience at Angela House, she said, offered perspective on those who are readjusting to life without bars.

"I've learned that going to prison actually may have saved some of these women's lives," Rudolph said. "The residents are incredibly open and offered insight about life on the inside."

Classmate Karla Shannon also spent a semester at Angela House. Shannon's father served time in prison, which sparked her interest in criminal justice and for the Senior Seminar. During her first days at the facility, she wasn't sure whether the returning citizens living there could relate to her and the other students. She soon discovered that regardless of previous incarceration, they were simply women just like her.

"We realized that we actually did have common ground," Shannon said. "They

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It's a blessing to help others. Knowing that you can provide an answer or help someone move to a new chapter in his or her life is very rewarding.

”

weren't unlike some of the women I know personally. Once you begin talking to them, you realize they're just like anyone else.”

According to Angela House founder and executive director Sister Maureen O'Connell, between 62 and 70 percent of female former inmates return to prison within three years. The support from her organization, as well as UHD students, can help lower this number, she noted.

“It's been a good partnership,” O'Connell said. “I was aware of UHD's Criminal Justice Program and was pleased to finally make a connection. The students who worked with us were a great help.”

UHD's partnerships, such as those with Unlimited Visions, Angela House and Workfaith Connections (helping

Houstonians in need develop job-seeking skills), will no doubt have a lasting affect on those needing a fresh start back into society. They also are particularly meaningful to the students, who gain both professional experience and the opportunity to serve their communities.

Just ask Karla Caballo, who was assigned to Workfaith Connections. Just as the University has given her the knowledge to succeed after graduation, she enjoys giving back to others. That, she said, has been one of her biggest takeaways from both the Senior Seminar and UHD.

“I knew it would be a great experience to participate in the class,” Caballo said. “It's a blessing to help others. Knowing that you can provide an answer or help someone move to a new chapter in his or her life is very rewarding.” **UHD**



Sister Maureen O'Connell.



CJ Student Bianca Serna



From Left: Angela House residents (Lauren, Yolanda, Natasha); Sister Maureen O'Connell; UHD students (Lucasrime Riacos, Ashley Rudolph); Angela House resident Holly & UHD student Karla Shannon learn about resident rules.

Ingredients for a Great Educator

By Sheryl E. Taylor

Faculty (/fakəltē/) is defined as “an inherent mental or physical power” or “the teaching staff of a university or college, or of one of its departments or divisions, viewed as a body.”

Many would agree that UHD faculty members possess an inherent mental or physical power or prowess to engage, encourage and educate our students for success. Each year, University faculty are recognized for: Excellence in Service; Teaching; Scholarly/Creative Activity; Outstanding Adjunct; and Outstanding Lecturer. Meet this year’s 2017 Faculty Award recipients who were asked: What are the ingredients for a great educator? [UHD](#)

Outstanding Lecturer

Bridget Mueller, Lecturer, Communication Studies

“UHD students have fought to be here, and I consider it part of my job responsibility to fight to keep them here.”



Outstanding Adjunct

Terry Pelz, Adjunct Lecturer, Criminal Justice

“Decency and respect in establishing a learning environment where every question is important while inspiring and guiding students to take control of their own education.”

Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activity

Floyd Newsum, Professor of Art

“Patience, sincerity and the willingness to give your time to motivate, educate and expose to professional opportunities.”



Excellence in Service

*Dr. Ryan Pepper, Professor of Mathematics
Chair of Mathematics & Statistics*

“Passion, practice, patience, honesty, hope, knowledge. A hopeful and optimistic attitude can be quite infectious to students when combined with passion and honesty.”



Excellence in Teaching

Dr. Hank Roubicek, Professor of Communication Studies

“An enormous amount of patience and optimism. A sense of inquiry and a creative spirit...and a really good sense of humor.”

Keeping Houstonians' Lives Above Water

By Mike Emery



Dr. Arash Rahmatian

It's a well-known fact that Houston is prone to flooding. Heavy rains can bring the city to a standstill, but a University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) assistant professor has been developing projects that might keep residential areas and city roads above water, and possibly save lives.

Dr. Arash Rahmatian, coordinator of UHD's College of Sciences & Technology Structural Analysis and Design Option in Engineering Technology Degree Program, has engaged students with projects researching solutions for the Bayou City's flooding issues. In past semesters, Rahmatian's students developed possible solutions using a unique mix of lightweight and high-performance concretes.

According to Rahmatian, regular concrete often becomes saturated, whereas lightweight concrete absorbs water and also will rise slightly when exposed to high volumes of water. The most prominent structure constructed of lightweight concrete is the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge that connects Seattle and Medina, Washington and covers nearly 8,000 feet across Lake Washington. Lightweight concrete also is used in the Benicia-Martinez Bridge in California, which extends nearly 9,000 feet over the Carquinez Strait.

"We hope to apply these technologies on our highways, driveways and safe zones in Houston," he said.

Students in his fall Senior Capstone course spend a semester in groups developing structures that can benefit Houstonians during floods. Rahmatian and students work on these projects on the external south side of the first floor of UHD's One Main Building. He also showcases his work to campus visitors and presents projects to representatives from the Harris County Flood Control District and Houston Parks Department.

Other recent projects have included floating pods that would, in theory, collect trash floating in flood waters; stairs (for external use on a home or garage) that could maintain above water; and a floating platform or "Safe Zone Area," which that can elevate roadways or driveways above flood zones.

The "Safe Zone Area" was presented to City of Houston officials. Per Rahmatian, it would be revolutionary if used for roads or freeways in a flood-prone metropolis like Houston. Likewise, working with lightweight concrete can be a game changer for students who will pursue careers as civil engineers or architects.

"The main thing I teach my students is how they can solve our city's problems," Rahmatian said. "I want them to develop ideas that will help the people of Houston by looking at the issues, providing solutions and fully exploring new ways of responding to the city's flood problems." 



Partners in Stopping Crime

By Mike Emery

Human trafficking impacts communities throughout the United States. It's a problem that continues to grow in spite of law enforcement's enhanced efforts to halt the transport of people for the purpose of forced labor.

Houston is among the top five cities in the U.S. for human trafficking, yet many victims may be under the radar of community members and even police officers. To assist local law enforcement professionals in identifying victims, University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) researcher Dr. Rebecca Pfeffer conducted a study on the indicators of human trafficking.

Pfeffer, assistant professor of criminal justice, worked with the Houston Police Department (HPD) on the study, "Hidden in Plain Sight: An Evaluation of Indicators of Human Trafficking in HPD's Prostitution Incident Reports." She compiled data from 1,474 HPD prostitution reports involving 1,678 individuals and screened these cases for indicators of human trafficking.

The final study was submitted to HPD and shared with Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's office as well as anti-human trafficking organizations.

Pfeffer, with assistance from criminal justice student Christopher Buys, identified 12 indicators (or predictors) of human trafficking, which may assist officers in effectively identifying victims during prostitution investigations.

"If officers are conducting an investigation and recognize the indicators from this study, they might dig further and determine that a prostitution case is actually a human trafficking case," Pfeffer said.

Her study also offers recommendations for HPD's Vice Unit, which includes alternatives to arresting victims as they are often reluctant to self-identify upon first contact with law enforcement.

"If it's a prostitution case, then the suspect should be arrested. If it's a human trafficking case, then the suspect may actually be a victim and may need services or support," she noted.

Pfeffer's study was funded through an Organized Research and Creative Activities Grant administered through the University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. In the near future, she will begin analyzing data from 2015 incident reports with support from UHD student Gabriel Estrada.

"It's important that HPD allowed me to conduct this analysis and offer recommendations," Pfeffer said. "It's a great partnership of law enforcement practitioners and academics that hopefully will help people in our city." **UHD**

Dr. Rebecca Pfeffer

Alumnus Receives Pulitzer

By Sheryl E. Taylor



Photo: Ali Rizvi

He describes himself as a “filmmaker first who brings his post-production and cinematography skills to today’s news landscape.” For UHD alumnus Ali Rizvi (’06), the goal is “always to listen first, but to also gently interrogate the valuable out of the mundane.”

The Pulitzer Prize Board obviously agreed.

Video journalist Rizvi received a 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Journalism, which was awarded to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists; McClatchy Washington Bureau; and the Miami Herald (a McClatchy newspaper) for the “Panama Papers”—a series of stories using a collaboration of more than 300 reporters on six continents to expose the hidden infrastructure and global scale of offshore tax havens that hid billions for dictators, politicians and tax cheats. Rizvi and senior motion graphics producer Sohail Al-Jamea, with McClatchy Video Lab, produced a motion graphic video, “The Secret Shell Game,” which illustrated the complex world of offshore banks and corporations.

When not winning a Pulitzer, the Emmy-nominated video journalist creates short character-facing documentaries with McClatchy. The native Houstonian, by way of Pakistan, received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in marketing at UHD that led him to earning a Master of Science degree in digital cinema from DePaul University in Chicago—all fueling his career beginnings from a social media and communications specialist with tech firms in Seattle to a successful freelance filmmaker and music video producer to a senior video editor with broadcasting giant ESPN to eventually landing at McClatchy in 2015.

To view the Pulitzer Prize-winning video, visit tinyurl.com/secretshellgame. 

Downtown, are you ready to ROCK?

By Mike Emery

It was another summer to remember thanks to UHD’s Thursday Night Concert Series at Discovery Green. The free concerts, May 11 through June 29, featured a variety of genres, including R&B, Latin rock, Americana, country, funk and rockabilly. UHD theme nights were Alumni Night on May 25 and MBA Night on June 15.

For Alumni Night, local legends Grady Gaines and the Texas Upsetters opened for the city’s storied ThunderSoul Orchestra. UHD President Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz, attended his first Thursday Night Concert and welcomed Gator alumni and concert goers.

“Our Thursday Night Concert Series is an excellent vehicle for connecting with the community,” said Muñoz. “This is an entertaining event, where Houstonians and UHD can come together and enjoy fantastic music. I was particularly impressed during Alumni Night. Meeting our alums and getting to know them on a beautiful evening in Downtown Houston is among many memorable experiences during my first few months at UHD.”

According to alumna Debora Evans (’06), the concert series offers more than an evening of music under the stars. “The concerts are fun, but Alumni Night is particularly special,” said Evans, UHD manager of Shipping, Receiving and Mailroom. “The UHD community can bring their families and meet other Gators.”

In addition to Gaines and ThunderSoul, concert artists included guitar slinger Ian Moore; rock royalty Jesse Dayton; and eclectic combo Chubby Knuckle Choir. Many of the artists agree that the concert series, venue and Houston are among the highlights of their performing schedules.

“Houston has been very good to us,” said Tres Womack, guitarist and singer for Chubby Knuckle Choir. “It’s like a second home to us.” 

Gator for Life

By Sheryl E. Taylor



Liza Alonzo

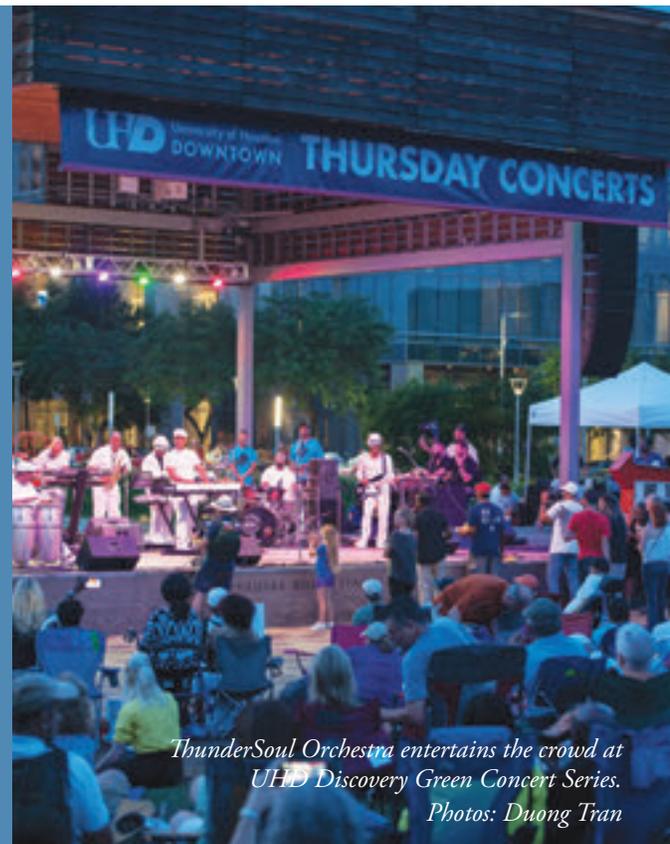
Liza Alonzo knows her alma mater from multiple perspectives—her mother, uncle and husband are all UH alumni. With more than 13 years of experience in higher education, Alonzo ('02), found her professional home at UH immediately after earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2002. Now, with a master's and doctorate of education under her belt, she's settled into her new role as director of Alumni Relations.

Alonzo has big plans for UH alumni—from building the membership of the recently formed Alumni Association to establishing an online directory of alumni-owned businesses to creating new opportunities for alumni engagement.

“Staying engaged and helping to build and shape the institution is both an alumni privilege and obligation,” she said. “As we continue to grow, our alumni community is vital to creating a strong Gator network that will help each future generation of alumni to Finish UH Strong.” **UH**



UH Alumni Night at Discovery Green (from left): Erik Ibarra ('07); UH President Dr. Juan Sánchez Muñoz; Juan Maldonado ('94); Albert Alonzo ('03).



ThunderSoul Orchestra entertains the crowd at UH Discovery Green Concert Series.

Photos: Duong Tran

UHD National Millennial Community Helps to Change the Conversation

By Sheryl E. Taylor

Millennials represent one quarter of our country's population—more than 80 million people.

With such prominence, however, there are significant amounts of negative criticism and stereotypes. It's not uncommon to hear that these Americans—born roughly between 1980 and 2000—are dispassionate, self-centered, obsessed with technology and an easy path to success.

But there's a new group of individuals dedicated to changing the conversation about the world's perception of Generation Y... one millennial community at a time.

It Began With a Visit

Bill Imada, chairman and chief connectivity officer of IW Group, visited UHD in 2015 as an executive guest speaker at the Marilyn Davies College of Business. His connection to the University is through UHD's membership in the Asian Chamber of Commerce.

A number of UHD students were impressed with Imada's speech, especially Gator MBA student Brooke Kahlich, who asked him to speak to her business classes at Dr. Kirk Lewis Career & Technical High School in Pasadena. Imada readily agreed, initially thinking that he would be visiting a school near his home in Southern California, rather than a smaller city in Southeast Harris County that shares the same name. But, a few thousand miles didn't deter Imada. A few weeks later, he returned to Houston to speak to more than 50 of Kahlich's high school students.

Kahlich's goal for opening her classroom to this nationally prominent executive was to start changing the conversations about millennials while inspiring her students.

"Staying inquisitive about the world around us and constantly learning new things and ideas is what I always strive to do," said Kahlich. "I want to instill in my students that gaining knowledge about different industries, policies and companies can help you understand what career you want and the importance of finding one that aligns with your values is essential for happiness and success."

The Invitation

After Imada's visits to Houston, Kahlich and other UHD students were invited to join the National Millennial Community (NMC), which Imada founded in 2015. NMC's vision is clear: "to create a dialogue that effectively changes the conversation about the millennial generation." The Community is comprised of individuals from different life stages, ethnicities, religions, political affiliations, economic statuses and overall perspectives. Members of NMC hail from 25-plus universities from around the country in six different time zones—spanning from Alaska to Florida to Massachusetts to Hawaii—who have met with more than 90 industry executives over the last 16 months.

"Some of our interns expressed frustration over the many misconceptions held by corporate, nonprofit and governmental leaders about their generation," said Imada. "I encouraged them to speak up and confront these widely held beliefs. NMC also allows executives and millennials to have conversations about their mutual interests, needs, ideas and aspirations."

“

The National Millennial Community is unique for universities, like UHD, that historically might not have had such opportunities. Such exposure creates an opportunity for conversations to begin about how and where to recruit talent more broadly.

”

For two days, NMC members met with a spectrum of Houston companies—BP, Ernst & Young LLP, Waste Management, the Houston Astros, and The Black Sheep Agency. At Houston Public Media, the students taped short-subject radio programs featuring topics, such as “Advice for GenZ;” “Advice for Professors;” and “The Role Millennials Play in Fueling Trends,” among others. One of the itinerary’s highlights included a conversation with Mayor Sylvester Turner and The First Daughter of Houston, Ashley Turner, who is an unofficial Millennial Affairs Advisor to her dad.

Just Two Years Later...

Fast forward to 2017. In partnership with NMC, the University recently hosted a visit to the Bayou City where more than 15 millennials from around the country, including five UHD students, gathered to change the conversation by intelligently communicating millennial thought.



*Deborah Byers, Managing Partner, Ernst & Young LLP;
Dr. Sarah Walker with NMC.
Photos: NMC*

“Being able to show my fellow members how great our city is was an honor,” said Kahlich. “Houston was the only city that had a mayor volunteer his time to speak with us! It’s mind-blowing to know that Sylvester Turner—the mayor of the nation’s fourth largest city—carved time out of his busy schedule to talk to a group of millennials.”

As an NMC faculty liaison for UHD, Dr. Sarah Walker, works with graduate and undergraduate students who are interested in engaging with executives to dispel some of the stereotypes that plague millennials.

“The visit to Houston created a chance to raise both the prominence of NMC with Houston-area businesses and UHD,” said Walker, associate professor of management in the Davies College of Business. “The National Millennial Community is unique for universities, like UHD, that historically might not have had such opportunities. Such exposure creates an opportunity for conversations to begin about how and where to recruit talent more broadly.”

The Houston visit featured a full agenda dedicated to raising the standard of millennial thought and challenging the misconceptions created by the generation gap through think-tank conversations with key influencers in media, government, businesses and communities.

“Houston was the only city that had a mayor volunteer his time to speak with us! It’s mind-blowing to know that Sylvester Turner—the mayor of the nation’s fourth largest city—carved time out of his busy schedule to talk to a group of millennials.”

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For Michael Huynh (’15), who also is pursuing an MBA at UHD, being an NMC member has opened so many doors of opportunity to have those meaningful conversations—from traveling around the country to meeting new people. “It’s a privilege to represent the University. I value the experiences and relationships I have fostered through this program,” Huynh said. “Programs, like NMC, add value to the University and shows UHD’s leadership and commitment to academics, business and the community.” **UFD**

Empowering Faculty & Students for Greatness

By Sheryl E. Taylor

Student success and faculty scholarship are supported through contributions and partnerships with alumni, individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government agencies. Grants and gifts empower our students to fulfill their dreams and support UHD faculty engaged in a wide range of research projects, often with students working alongside them.

Each year, UHD is the recipient of significant contributions and grants to support its mission to provide students with meaningful experiences in and out of the classroom and ensure they graduate with the skills needed for success today and well into the future. And, this year is no different. The following are some of the awards and gifts received since January, 2017.

Funding Awards for Research & Sponsored Programs

Kettering Foundation supported faculty across UHD to link their subject areas with public dialogue, deliberation and public action.
Dr. Windy Lawrence, College of Humanities & Social Sciences *

North Slope Borough funded research to monitor genetic diversity using SNP and Mitochondrial DNA Sequences for Bowhead Whales in collaboration with the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee.
Dr. Amy Baird, College of Sciences & Technology *

Nuclear Regulatory Commission supported research to provide students with high-impact research opportunities for work in the nuclear industry.
Dr. Kleio Avrithi, College of Sciences & Technology *

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board established an academic map for minority male, pre-business majors with peer mentoring, faculty development, embedded tutoring and social/community engagement.
Dr. Vida Robertson, College of Humanities & Social Sciences *

U.S. Department of Defense funded the emerging science of electroencephalogram in human-robot collaboration and combat teaming—significant to national defense.
Dr. Yuchou Chang, College of Sciences & Technology *

National Science Foundation disseminated Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions best practices—in collaboration with UT-El Paso and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi—to encourage Hispanics in computing and other STEM fields.
Dr. Dvijesh Shastri, College of Sciences & Technology *

U.S. Department of Education focused on sustainability and green energy research—in partnership with Texas State University for UHD's Chemistry, Computer Science & Engineering Technology, and the Urban Agriculture Center.
Dr. Mary Jo Parker, College of Sciences & Technology *

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) supported the creation of a partnership between UHD, Lone Star College-University Park, and University of Houston-Clear Lake to build democratic engagement skills via dialogue, deliberation and innovative public action.
Dr. Windy Lawrence, College of Humanities & Social Sciences *

* Principal Investigator

Gifts & Commitments

The Marilyn Davies College of Business was named for an endowed gift to support faculty and programs in the College. (To learn more about this transformational gift, see page 11.)

Enrique B. Garcia Scholarship Endowment, established by Frank J. Garcia ('07) in honor of his father, supported scholarships for students in the Marilyn Davies College of Business.

Texas Retailers Education Foundation, a charitable foundation supported by the Texas Retailers Association that represents the companies and retail professionals who lead the state's retail sector, supported Houston's workforce by funding scholarships and educational opportunities through the UHD Retail Management Program.

The 100 Club provided full scholarships for qualified criminal justice professionals pursuing a master's or bachelor's degree in the field.

CITGO Petroleum Corporation, Schlumberger, and The Powell Foundation provided support for Houston Pre-Freshman Enrichment Program (PREP)—a summer program supporting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills for middle and high school students hosted by UHD's College of Sciences & Technology.

M. Elizabeth Steen Endowed Scholarship, created by retired Hewlett-Packard executive Tami Mallett in honor of her mother and a longtime math instructor at Lone Star College, supported transfer students who major in mathematics in the College of Sciences & Technology.



Join Our Cast! Support the Dr. Tom Lyttle Scholarship Endowment for Students of Theater

The Charles and Betti Saunders Fund provided seed funding to establish the Dr. Tom Lyttle Scholarship Endowment, in honor of the recently retired director of UHD's O'Kane Theatre (1976-2016). Lyttle's unwavering commitment to students, theater and enrichment beyond the classroom has encouraged and supported UHD students for more than 40 years. Alumni and friends are encouraged to make additional gifts to increase the impact of the endowment in his honor.

Visit uhd.edu/givenow

BASF Corporation USA and Unitronics donated equipment for UHD's program in Control and Instrumentation Engineering Technology.

Intercultural Development Research Association endowment, created in honor of UHD President Emeritus Dr. Max Castillo, supports scholarships for the Department of Urban Education in the College of Public Service.

Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation provided scholarships for transfer students.

George & Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation provided scholarships for the University's Honors Program.

Greater Texas Foundation (GTF) awarded UHD \$1.44 million dollars to be paid over eight years for administrative support and scholarships to support graduates of Texas Early College High Schools. **UFD**

Gators Learn Life Lessons, School Spirit Through Sports

By Mike Emery

Gator pride is on display in the classroom and around campus, but it's especially visible during UHD's Club Sports games.

The University is not an NCAA-sanctioned institution, but hosts 11 competitive club sports teams that showcase students' talents. Teams compete against club teams from local and regional colleges and universities. UHD Club Sports include:

- ◆ Men's and Women's Basketball
- ◆ Women's Volleyball
- ◆ Men's and Women's Soccer
- ◆ Baseball
- ◆ Powerlifting
- ◆ Wrestling
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Cheerleading
- ◆ Running (non-competitive)

Through participation in Club Sports, students hone their athletic abilities, but they also gain other skills too.

"These student-athletes develop leadership and social skills," said Richard Sebastiani, director of UHD Sports & Fitness. "Being part of a team offers life lessons that they can apply as players and ultimately as professionals. Club Sports are essentially another learning mechanism here at UHD and an excellent vehicle for building school spirit." 



Basketball: Bianca Serna & Kristopher McCrary



Volleyball: Raven Robertson & Hatziri Racano



Soccer: Alan Reyes & Fernando Zapata

The Secret Tunnel for Commerce

By Melissa Torres & Sheryl E. Taylor

On the heels of the Texas Revolution (Oct. 2, 1835 – April 21, 1836), two New York City real estate developers and brothers, John Kirby Allen and Augustus Chapman Allen, were seeking a location where they could begin building “a great center of government and commerce.”

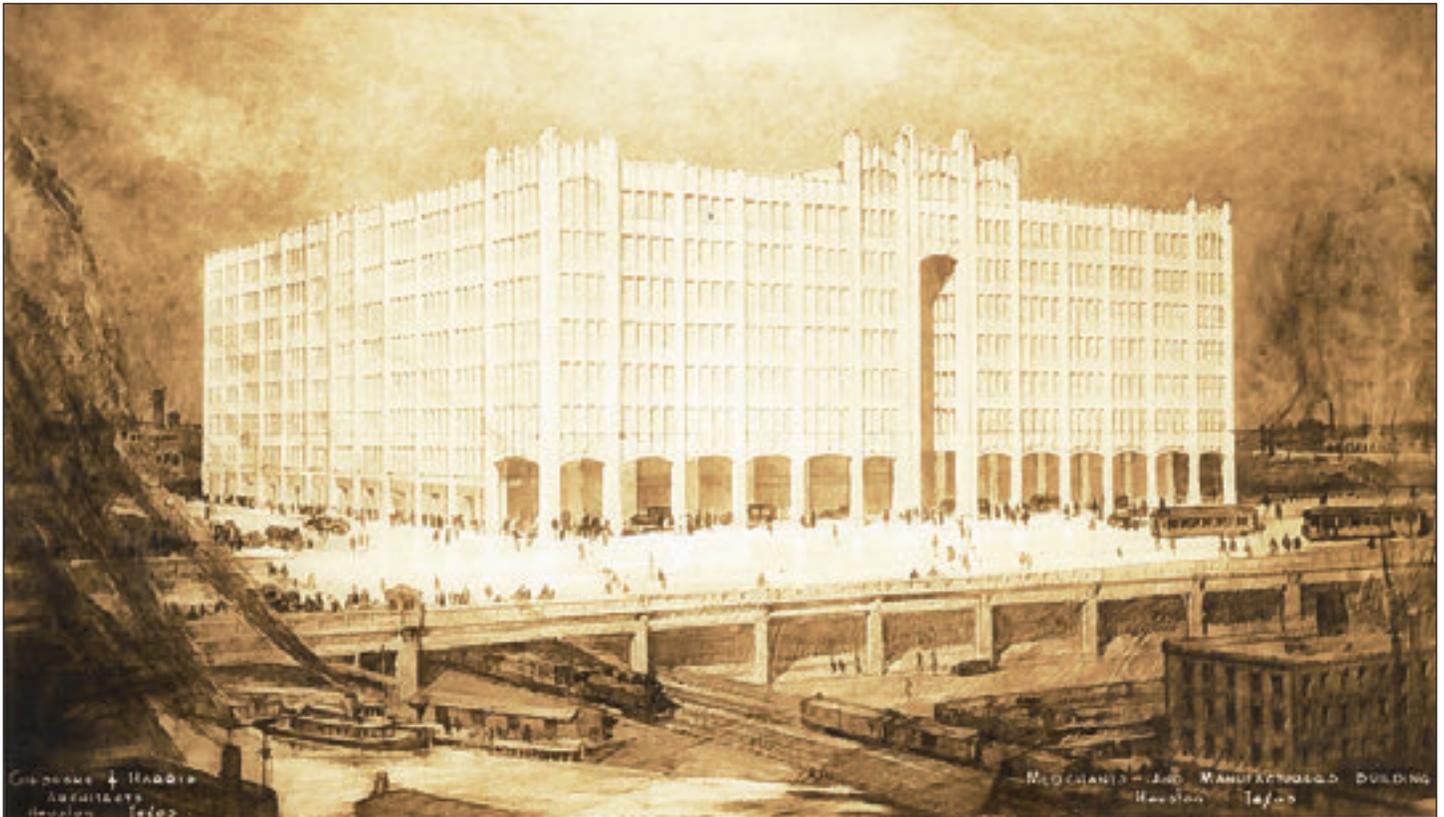
In August 1836, the brothers purchased 6,642 acres of land for \$9,428 and landed in Texas, where the confluence of White Oak Bayou and Buffalo Bayou served as a natural turning basin—now known as Allen’s Landing. The “city to be” was named after Sam Houston—the hero of San Jacinto—whom the Allen brothers admired and anticipated to be the first President of the Republic of Texas.

It’s obvious that the city of Houston didn’t begin as a metropolis; however between 1836 and 1861—when the Civil War began—the city’s population soared from 12 residents to more than 3,000 and developed itself as the inland port for shipping cotton and other goods to the Gulf of Mexico.

Cotton warehouses—one on the site of the present-day’s One Main Academic Building—owned by one of the Allen brothers stood for several years. The old dock pilings, still visible from the Main Street Viaduct when looking upstream, were conceivably constructed for Civil War-era warehouses. For a time in 1863, after the Battle of Galveston Bay, the warehouse became a detention facility for captured Union soldiers before they were sent to a permanent POW camp (possibly Camp Ford in Tyler, Texas). Urban legends



Photos & Image: UHD Archives



circulated over the decades among the student population about how this location was a “prison camp,” which stemmed from stories of the Union POWs and also from the existence of a “secret tunnel.” In the 1920s, after the original warehouses were torn down, an 11-story warehouse, office and retail complex—the Merchants and Manufacturers Building (M&M) was built, which is now UHD’s One Main Building.

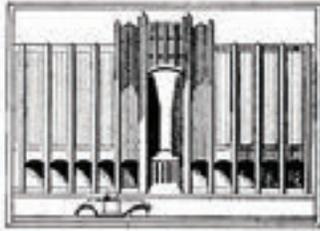
The builders assumed that freight would still be moved via water, as well as by rail and truck. So, they built a tunnel that led from Buffalo Bayou to the building’s lowest sub-basement, where a freight elevator waited to take any cargo up to the floors in the M&M Building. From there, freight could be loaded onto trucks through the Girard Street entrances, or onto trains via the Missouri Kansas Texas or Union Pacific rail lines that both met at the building.

The tunnel remained in use until South Texas Junior College took over the building in 1969. The entrance was sealed and forgotten, except for facilities management personnel occasionally accessing the spiral staircase for routine building maintenance.

Today, as the city of Houston and the Buffalo Bayou Partnership expands the hike and bike trails along the White Oak and Buffalo Bayous; the door to the secret tunnel is being re-discovered and is a significant reminder of One Main Building’s historic ties to industry and commerce between the waterways. **UHD**

Melissa Torres (torresme@uhd.edu) is the University Archivist for UHD’s W.I. Dykes Library. To learn more, share a historic story about UHD’s beginnings or take a virtual walking tour of campus, visit uhd.edu/archives.

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View From the Bayou

Bringing Superheroes to Life



What began with students bonding over their love of superheroes turned into a community engagement initiative that brings smiles to Houstonians.

Cosplay for Kids, founded in 2016 by UHD student Abigail and sister, Milimar Murillo ('16), along with fellow students and friends, decided to literally become superheroes to help children.

Defined by Merriam-Webster, cosplay is the “activity or practice of dressing up as a character from a work of fiction, such as a comic book, video game or television show.” It’s a trend popularized at comic conventions, such as Houston’s Comicpalooza.

Thanks to UHD’s Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning, the nine-member group has entertained children and adults at events, such as Walk with Me—a 5K and Family Fun Walk—at the Houston Zoo for Easter Seals awareness; Epilepsy Foundation’s Stroll for Epilepsy; The Mission of Yahweh, a homeless shelter for women and children; and Vita-Living, Inc., a home for adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Cosplay for Kids’ next caper? To spread its goodwill to senior facilities and hospitals across the Bayou City.

And, in case you’re wondering, Jocelyn Gutierrez is Spider-Woman; Milimar Murillo plays Wonder Woman; and Abigail Murillo is Supergirl. **UFD**

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