

TEXAS

Fall 2001
Volume 2 Number 1



Reactions



to September 11th



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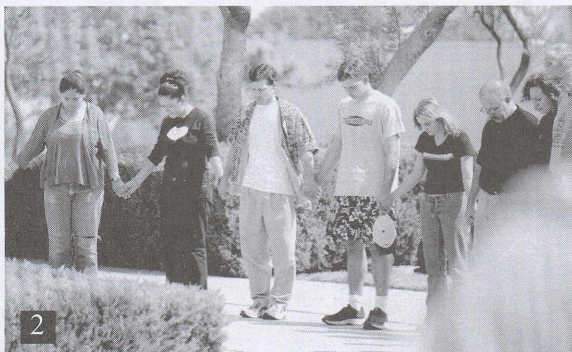


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TEXAN

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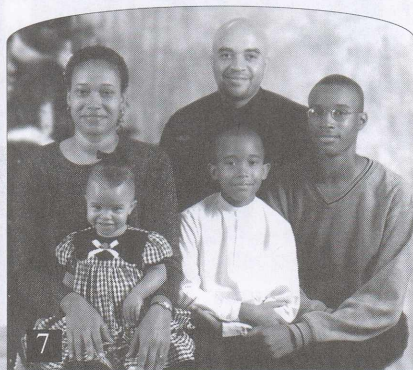
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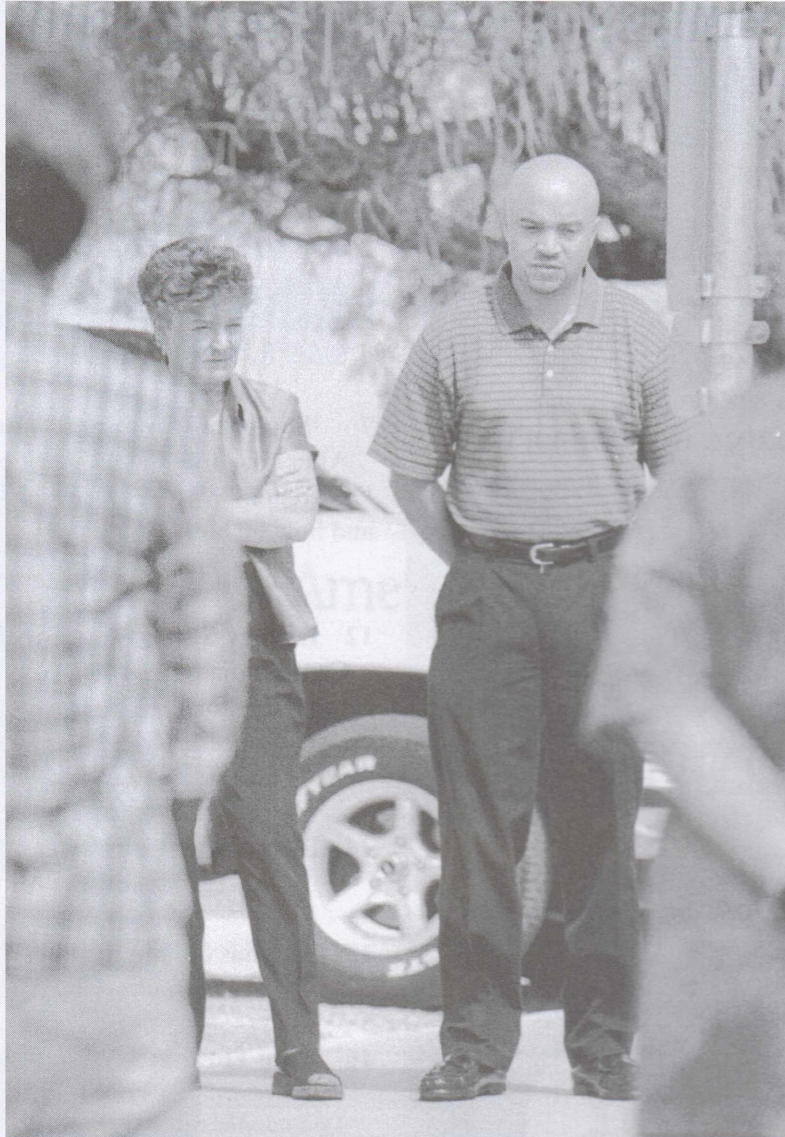
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Dr. Gregory Williams and Vice President Bettie McQueen

Sept 11
'Date of Infamy'



WTC students link hands as part of the nationwide prayer at noon Friday, Sept. 14

By Sandra Hall

As Americans, when we read or hear “December 7, 1941” our minds automatically go back to the historical words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt then spoke: “a date which will live in infamy.”

To a new generation, there is a new “date”—September 11, 2001, when terrorists hijacked four jetliners and successfully crashed three of these into the heart of America--our nation’s capitol and our largest city.

The greatest tragedy was the collapse of the World Trade Center in New York and the related deaths of more than 4,000 innocent victims. There is an irony here: the World Trade Center or, in its abbreviated form, WTC.

On our campus, the day was a normal Tuesday in late summer. Classes began at 8 a.m., the fourth week of the fall semester. The first jet crashed into the WTC shortly after 8 a.m. and two hours later the twin towers were in rubble.

That morning, as the media inundated us with images of the

terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C., faculty, staff, and students filed into the Student Center, the LRC, and any other area on campus with a television to watch in stunned silence. The initial conflicting reports left many wondering about the scope and magnitude of the unprecedented events. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 was a tragic wake-up call, but it was, nevertheless, a military attack on a military target. This was something far removed. It was an attack on a culture, a way of life, a blatant attack on the American ideal. And the victims were innocent civilians who were targeted not because of their individual convictions or alliances, but simply because they happened to be housed in structures that stood as icons of that way of life.

While the WTC we know is far removed, geographically, from that

On our campus, the day was a normal Tuesday in late summer. Classes began at 8 a.m., the fourth week of the fall semester.

other WTC, the attacks impacted our campus just as they did virtually every aspect of American life. English professor Ed Barkowsky’s daughter, Lesa, was home in her New York apartment with her husband, Greg, and their two young children when the attacks occurred. That apartment was less than five blocks away from the World Trade Center. She and her family were being evacuated out of the building by New York police and fire officials when the WTC towers fell. They eventually walked 32 floors down to ground level. By that time, no motor vehicle traffic was allowed except emergency vehicles. Lesa’s family was lucky since, because of the children, they were driven by police to nearby ferries for transportation to New Jersey. There they spent the night with friends and eventually found their way to Greg’s parents home. At the end of October, they still had not relocated to their apartment and are now making plans to move to the suburbs of New York.

Michael Hembree of Colorado City was also tragically affected--his aunt was a passenger on the first plane that struck the WTC. Other stories from



WTC students (above and right) pledge their allegiance and sign a proclamation of support for the U.S. effort

that day involve individuals known by our friends or family. Financial Aid Director Kathy Hall's son forwarded her an e-mail from a friend whose sister called him from her cell phone about 10 blocks away from the towers and was still on the line as she watched in horror as the second jet hit.

Immediately following the event, Americans felt the obvious need to communicate with friends and family. Here is an edited collection of campus e-mails sent from various individuals in response to the attacks. Most are dated September 11, 2001.

Immediately after the attack WTC instructor Lee Burke e-mailed his daughter, Debra, in Dallas:

"I see this 'thing' as one of the 'greatest' things that could happen to this old world and especially the USA. These people do not realize what they have done by attacking this country. A worldwide effort will result in a positive approach to each other, and terrorism is on the way out, my dear. It will not be tolerated. The ignorance of these 'things' that did this is unfathomable. Of all places to strike—

Immediately following the event, Americans felt the obvious need to communicate with friends and family.

the WORLD Trade Center—WORLD, I repeat, and the Pentagon - the most dynamic defense house in the world with nothing but a bunch of professionals waiting on the leash to be released on this type of activity. Boy, how dumb can you be? This does not diminish the awful result of yesterday, but the long term will be positive for the world and the US. DO NOT PANIC. If we do, then 'they' win."

In one of several e-mails sent back to her father, Debra Burke, a graduate of WTC, replied:

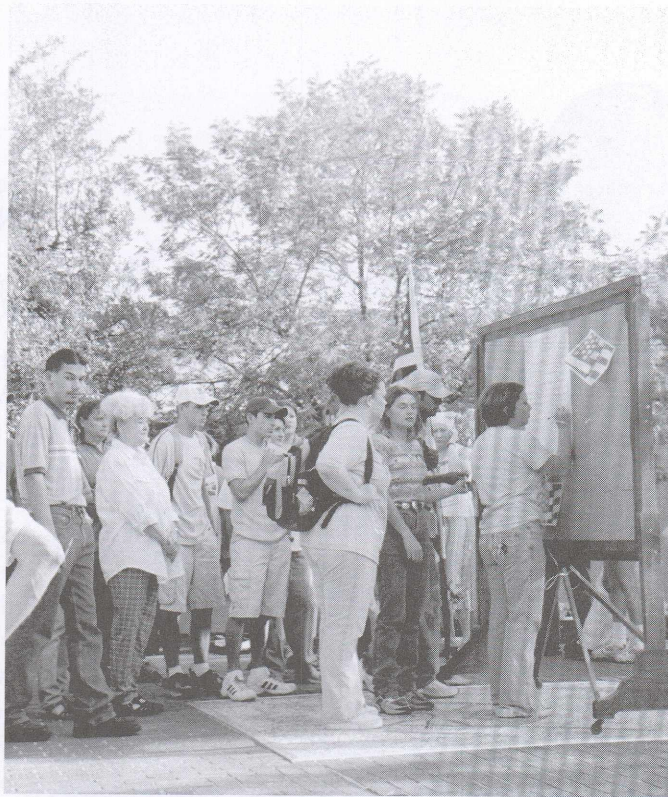
"I am heading up a task force at work for ribbon making. We are making honorary ribbons for all employees here at Corporate. I left work this morning to head to Michael's to purchase all the red, white and blue ribbon they had. While in the store

looking at ribbon, I see this guy walking past me with big bolts of ribbon. He sees me eyeing him, smiles real big and says 'Ya wanna know where I got this? follow me!!' So I did. Turns out he's mechanic for Delta Airlines. Told me that since none of them are doing anything right now that they were all going to sit around making ribbons. Mental image . . . bunch of burly men, sitting around a table, cutting ribbon and putting them together with straight pins. Pretty damn cool!"

Nancy Harris, a former WTC student and a local writer, sent this e-mail to members of a local ladies prayer group. It read in part:

"I spent most of the day in front of the television where I watched, from the safety of my home, the atrocities delivered to our nation by a world gone mad. How can one hate so much? Heaven and hell were busy today."

Both Burke and Scurry County Museum Director Charlene Akers received e-mail from individuals in other countries in response to the attacks. Here is a sampling of that e-



mail.

—From Costa Rica: “Hello, Mr. Burke. Here everybody are praying for USA, We are with you and all the people. Was terrible! Have many bad people in the world, but have good people too. Your Friend, Maria.”

—From Chisinau, Moldova: “Dear Charlene. I am really sorry what happened yesterday. It is a big tragedy for the American people. I suppose yesterday was a very tragic day for you. I would like to say that we are with you. Sincerely, Sergiu Pana, International Museum Partnership.”

—From Russia: “Dear friends! It is difficult to find necessary words to explain our feelings of what’s happen today. It is terrible and our hearts have a deep pain, and we cry looking news. We pray that God take this situation on His control. We pray that God give his consolation to everybody. Let God care you in His powerful hands. With cry heart. Vitaly and Irina.”

—From Denmark: “Dear family. I just thought you might like to know that this is circulating around here in Denmark. We will be lighting candles

—From Denmark: “Dear family. I just thought you might like to know that this is circulating around here in Denmark. We will (light) candles tonite . . .

tonite . . . In English, for our friends in foreign countries! Light candles in the windows tonight to show that we feel with America and the tragedy that has hit them. Light it for all the people who have lost their lives and for their family that now are left behind, especially for all the children who will not see their parents again. Let them see that we stand together! Kim.”

—From Russia: “Know that we (know) what America is going through right now. They have experienced this on a regular basis since Chetznyan terrorists bombed a number of high rise Apartment buildings in Moscow a couple of years ago. Our news media has not put a lot of attention on this or on the fact that the whole Chetznyan

terrorist and guerrillas in Chetznia are funded by Ben-Laden. So, most Russians are very sensitive to our situation and can relate very well to it and they are mourning with us. Tens of thousands of Moscow residents brought flower bouquets and laid them on the steps of the American Embassy here in Moscow. You should see the tremendous amount of flowers. You are all in our prayers. David and Kerry, Sasha and Katya”

—From America, a Marine stationed in Washington during the attacks sent this e-mail to a “friend of a friend.” It read in part: “To Everyone: As most of you know, I was in the Pentagon at the time of the airline impact. Although it was completely overwhelming to watch the building burn after a major plane flies directly into the south side, it has not diminished my resolve to go back to work and do what I can to put my life, and America’s, back on its God-given track. I have some suggestions.

1.) Try and donate blood.

2.) SPEND MONEY. My friends, this is not a time to be stingy with your money. Our economy is teetering on the brink of recession, and this attack could very well push it over the edge. With major markets closed today, tomorrow, and possibly Friday, we need to keep the dollar strong on the world scene.

3.) Write your Senators AND Congressmen. They need to know they have your full support in their efforts.

4.) Hang an American flag. Enough said.

5.) DO NOT BE AFRAID TO LIVE YOUR LIFE.

The worst is over.

On a final note, the Marine Corps has a saying that we need to all



Administrators, faculty, staff and students join hands Sept. 14

remember: Freedom Is Not Free.”

Finally, Lee Burke, a veteran of the Vietnam War, received this e-mail from an old Army buddy. Its “subject line” was entitled “Our Flag.”

“Stoney, Shame it took so many to die for people to be proud of their flag! I wonder if you remember this. We were getting hit regularly during Tet. We just came out of our holes after a particularly wicked rocket and mortar attack. As I got to my feet the Post was covered in gun smoke and haze. Someone started playing the Star Spangled Banner over the loud speaker system. I remember looking to see if our flag was still there. What a moment. Take care. Roger C. Perry.”

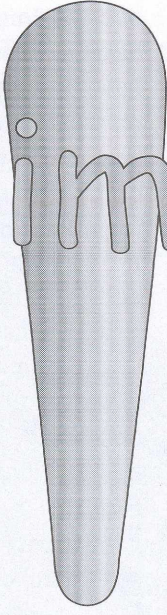
President Sees Final Victory

After the now-historic events of September 11, WTC President Gregory Williams (shown above at the Sept. 14 campus prayer service) had this to say about the attack:

“I believe in the American way, which is not perfect, but it’s the best I’ve seen. In our system, we all have a chance to communicate and talk and we can do it with words as opposed to hurting others and trying to kill and maim and victimize innocent people.

I think it’s sad and that their argument in this case and their approach to it is not logical. History shows us that being a terrorist or blatantly attacking or hurting people is not the way to get things done and to gain the approval of the greater society. If you’re doing what’s right, generally you’ll be OK in the long run. I mean, sometimes it appears that those who are doing the wrong things are winning, but eventually right will win out.”

Sometimes You Just Want to Give It @ Try



By Sandra Hall

After roughly four months on the job, Dr. Gregory Williams is beginning to settle into his new position as the fourth president of Western Texas College.

Several factors influenced Dr. Williams' decision to come to a community like Snyder and a college like WTC. "I like Snyder and the location in West Texas. I was born in East Texas but grew up in West Texas and I like the climate, though some would say I'm crazy for that. So, I've had Western Texas College on my mind for probably 5 or 6 years as an option, knowing that if it ever opened up, I would be interested in being president. I wanted to see if my ideas for how an operation should work, particularly my ideas of treating people well and taking care of people and taking care of students would work, and I think that it will, but sometimes you just want to give it a try. So, this was a challenge I wanted to take on. I

had the training and the education in place, and Western Texas is the only place I've ever applied, so that worked out really well."

Prior to accepting the position at WTC, he served as the vice president of student services at Midland College, where he also taught classes as an adjunct psychology professor.

In comparison to a larger town, like Midland, Dr. Williams says he can see the benefits from both sides. "Midland is great; I miss some of the amenities that go with it, but I've been surprised at how well my family and I have made the transition to Snyder. I

I wanted to see if my ideas for how an operation should work, particularly my ideas of treating people well and taking care of people and taking care of students would work . . .

mean, the people side is great, but I was thinking in terms of stuff, in places to go and spend money. But the thing is, it's easy to go Abilene, Lubbock or Midland, and it's not that big of a deal. So actually, I have more options than I did in Midland if I am willing to open my mind and just act as if I live in a really large city with a lot of space between some of the buildings. Then I can be content and have the benefits of all.

"There are people who live in New York, or say that they live in New York, but it takes them over an hour to get into town. And that's about what you need to get to a lot of the places around here, about an hour. So it all depends on what your mind's telling you. I'm a student of psychology, so I guess I'm psyching myself out, but I also think it's good too, because you can save money. Actually, I think my checkbook will be better off in the long run. So, we're really blessed and fortunate. I can't complain."

With the transition to a smaller town, Dr. Williams also made a move

to a smaller college, and notes several advantages that a community college has over a 4-year school, like convenience, cost, and especially teaching faculty. "I think it's important to have people who are focused on teaching and that's what they do; that's what they're paid to do; that's what they're rewarded for doing. It's all about teaching and relating to the students, and I think that when you get that, and if you can find what you want, with smaller classes, it's just a much better deal. You can save your money, then you can go wherever you want. You can go to Harvard if that's what you want to do, but you can save that money initially."

As a former community college student himself, Dr. Williams was a dedicated student who never dropped a class and worked diligently to achieve his goals. "It was important. It was like a business to me. I mean, I treated it in a very businesslike manner. Of course, I did have fun and was not always totally focused on the goal, but I believe in setting goals. I believe in deciding what you want, and I believe in going for it with all of your focus, and that's what school was about for me. I didn't have a lot of resources at the time, but I had a good background from high school, and I was prepared. I just needed a vehicle, and the community college was the perfect vehicle for me right after high school.

"So, I took advantage of the cost; I took advantage of the convenience; I took advantage of all of the things that a community college has to offer, and I think that's good. I think that's what our students need to do, especially in this area. I mean, if you can go to Texas Tech, that's fine. If you can afford to do that and live in the residence halls there, great. If you want that. But then, there are certain students who can afford all of that, but they're not ready for it. They're not ready for the

overwhelming number of people you have to deal with and the hoops you have to jump through. It just depends on what you're prepared for and what you really want, and the community college, in my opinion, fills the gaps, regardless of what those gaps may be for each individual. The community college is there to help you and to get you over that point in life and to a place where you can be successful. That's what it is about for me, and I took advantage of it, like I said, in a businesslike way. I didn't have much time for extra-curricular activities when I was in the middle of my work, so I attacked it or approached it that

(A community college) is the best place in the world to work because you are working with all kinds of people with goals and experiences - people who want to be there.

way."

Like most college students, Dr. Williams spent some time deciding exactly what career he would pursue and learned to focus on his interests. "My education began with wanting to be a teacher, so I started there, and I enjoyed that, and then I went back to pick up my first master's degree to prepare to become a principal. Then later, I went back to school to get my master's degree in psychology because my bachelor's was in that area, and that's the area I love. I don't really know why, but that was important to me. So, after picking that up, I realized I could go to work at a community college and teach psychology. Teaching is something that is important to me and is fun, and I enjoy it. I enjoy communicating with students and trying to take the message of

psychology and put it into the context of current events where it becomes more relevant to the student. I enjoy trying to piece together those puzzles.

"So, I picked up that master's degree and began teaching at a community college. That's when I realized that this is the best place in the world to work because you are working with all kinds of people with goals and experiences - people who want to be there. In the K-12 public education, you still have that custodial function with some people who really don't want an education, and some who are there because they are forced to be there, but once you get to the college level, these are people who want to be here and they tend to take education a little more seriously. That's not to say that public education is not important. It's probably more important than what we do here in terms of a foundation and all of those things. In fact, kindergarten is probably the most important grade. But I wanted to be in a situation where people wanted an education and were fighting to get in and wanting to improve their lives or their situation or to get to that next level of training. That's what the community college is all about, and I wanted to be in that environment, so I felt at home."

As an extension of that personal teaching experience, Dr. Williams notes that one of the major assets at WTC is that the faculty and staff are here by choice. "One great thing about WTC is that the people I've met are good at what they do and they seem to enjoy what they do. And people here realize the importance of their jobs. If you're a faculty member, your job is to go in and teach those students, and that's what you do. I guess you promote the college as much as you can in your way, and that's what I'm asking people to do - to keep doing what they've done and a little bit more. As the leader of this organization, I don't



Dr. Gregory Williams and family, wife Karen and children, from left, Kara, Gregory and Kiaran

want to be the cap on the jar. I want to say, 'Let's try it. Let's give it a shot.' Now, I'm not going to give away the farm, and I'm not going to put the college in danger, but we can try some things. Let's be innovative. Let's be the best, most creative, little, West Texas community college in the world. The atmosphere is good. We want to

attract good people, treat people well, try to pay them as well as we can. And I'm going to do my part to make this a really, really good place to be. That's my goal."

Dr. Williams' background in the area of student services as well as in the teaching field has been beneficial to him in his new position. "I think

it's good that I have a background in both the instructional side and the student services side to keep me balanced and give me perspective. I know what both sides deal with. I know that we're all in this together. And I understand that the students come here to get an education, but I also know that the services are what

make a college really special and that people look at the extra things - the dances from time to time, the student interaction, the televisions in certain places, the type of community that we have on campus. Still, instruction is the key and that's what it's all about, but the amenities and the extras that you can get are very important, too, and I support those wholeheartedly. I want our students to have every opportunity in those areas, so my student services background gives me that perspective and I have an appreciation for student services."

With WTC serving students with liberal arts, vocational, and continuing education needs, Dr. Williams says he feels that diversity is the key for community colleges. "I think all areas are all important - it depends on what you want. I believe that's the way life is. You can have people in one camp or another, but I think we should have all areas working really well. I believe that's what a good community college does, and I think you decide which area you want to take advantage of.

"It's like going to WalMart or the mall. You go to the section you want. Some will argue that liberal arts is the key to life, and I think it's important and that everyone should have that, but I also know that sometimes, on the other side of the coin in the world of work, you can come in and get some training and add some value to yourself and add \$5 to \$10 per hour to what you're making pretty quickly, and that's important also. So they're all important. It all depends on where you are in life and what your choice is, but I think we need to let people have that choice and have quality programs on all sides, and that's the great thing about a community college because we can do all of those things really well and allow the students to have those choices."

Another area where Dr. Williams

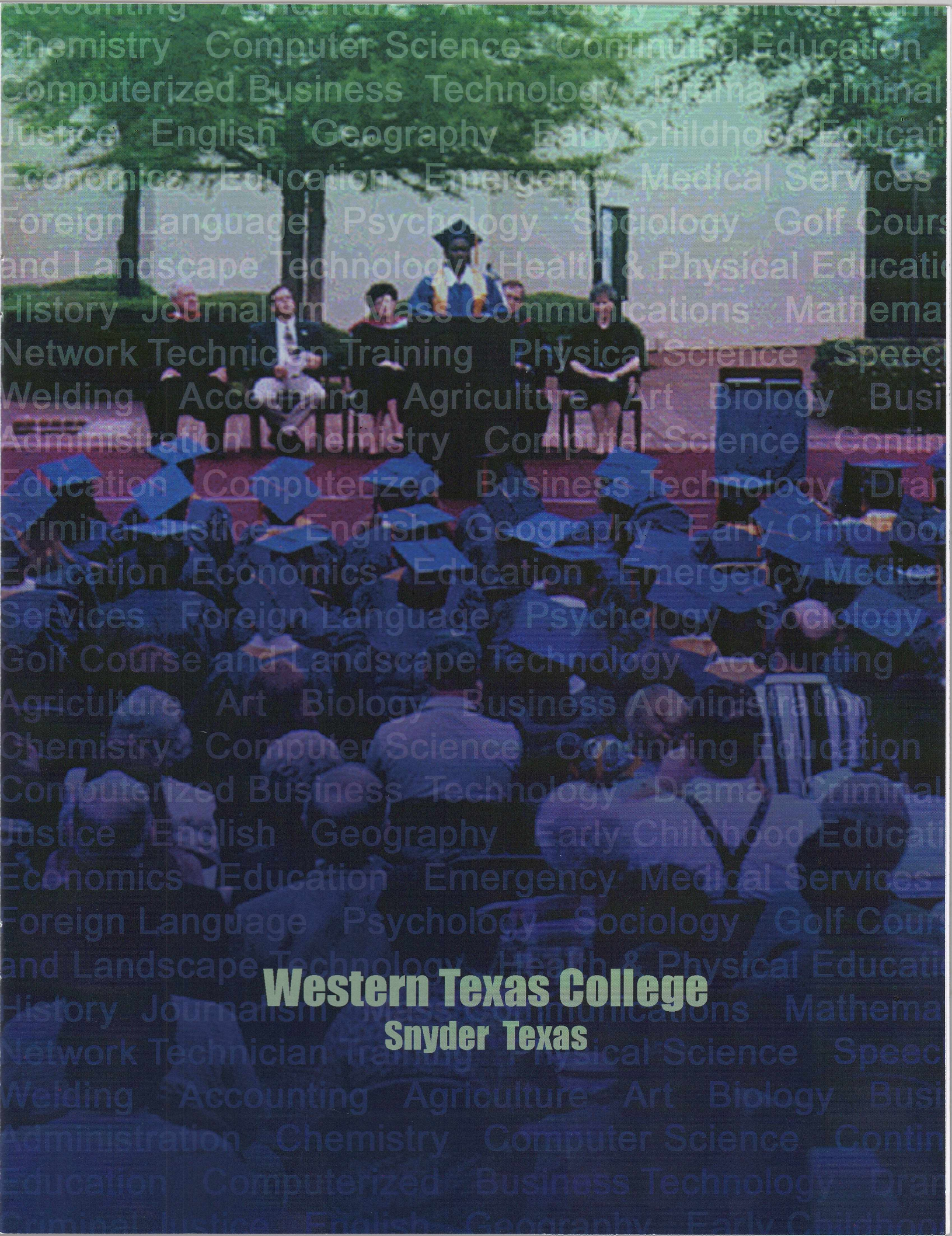
wants the college to do well is in growth through increased enrollment. One way he envisions realizing that growth is through athletic programs on campus, beginning with baseball and softball programs to be implemented next year. "We have just opened up the positions of baseball and softball coaches, so we'll start our search there. We are choosing our practice facilities. We will probably break ground on those after Christmas here on campus. By having them practice here instead of sending them somewhere off-campus, we can save in a number of ways. We are working on our agreements with the county in regards to Moffett and Cates fields, where we'll play our games and share those fields with the school districts. All of these things are going on behind the scenes, but it's coming along, and we should have coaches in place by the beginning of the spring, and they'll begin their planning, with the teams to begin competing in the fall."

As for other athletic programs down the road, Dr. Williams says that nothing in that area is really planned at this point, but that he definitely wants to see the college continue to expand in these areas. "We need to get these two done right and well, and then these two will take care of the next two in terms of opening the door for athletics being done right here, and that's what we want to do. But keep in mind that we want to have more growth in the athletic programs, which will help the college significantly. We have 277 full-time students on campus this semester. Softball and baseball, generously, could add 80-100 students, taking around 15 hours each, just with these two sports. That's going to make a tremendous difference in terms of the infrastructure on this campus and the classes being taught. I mean, we're going to have a space problem, but it's a problem that I want us to have. So,

that's going to be a nice infusion of full-time people. And you're probably looking at a 10-15 percent increase overall in contact hours due to the number of students on campus, so that's going to help all of our classes."

While highlighting the benefits that the new programs will offer to the campus, Dr. Williams says he also realizes the importance of the community response to athletics, which he views with optimism. "I feel that it has all been positive so far. And I know that there are going to be some negatives, but most people realize what the goal is and what the plan is, and if you look at it behind the scenes, you realize that it's a win-win situation both for the sports enthusiasts and for those who support academics because these students aren't simply going to come here and play sports. We know they're going to be in classes as well, and that's the bottom line."

Another area of positive change on campus involves the plans underway for the construction of new dormitories, which Dr. Williams says he hopes will be in place by next spring with the new facilities ready to go. Then, there is the question of what will become of the existing dorms. "Ideally, we'll have to hold on to those for awhile," he said, "because the first phase of the new dorms will include about 100-120 beds. Later, we'll probably take that up to 180 to 200. We have 196 now. Then, depending on what happens once those buildings are freed up, I'd like to convert them into offices because we're going to need more people, and we'll need space for athlete training, etc. The new dorms will have suites and very convenient showers and facilities, so while the current dorms are not as convenient anymore for living, they will still have a sound structure that we can convert and use for a number of office-type situations."



Western Texas College
Snyder Texas

Academic Majors

Western Texas College offers the same basic courses as the state's four-year schools, and the transfer of these credits to other schools is guaranteed.

Agriculture

Art

Biology

Business Administration

Chemistry

Computer Science

Drama

Economics

English

Geography

Government

History

Mass Communications

Mathematics

Physical Education

Physical Science

Psychology

Sociology

Spanish

Speech



Vocational Training

If your interest is more jobs-skill related, Western Texas College offers one-year and two-year vocational certificates

Early Childhood Education

Criminal Justice

Golf & Landscape Technology

Welding

Computerized Business Technology

Emergency Medical Services

Vocational Nursing

Network Technician

Continuing Education

WTC's Continuing Education classes and programs are designed to provide adult education for individuals wanting to upgrade their present skills or to learn new skills, thus enabling them to explore new occupational fields. Training may be for academic credit or non-credit

Workforce Education

Prison Education

Allied Health

GED/ESL

Community Services

Correctional Officer Training

The Difference

There's a difference in the classroom instruction at WTC. Because our class sizes are small, you can expect personal attention from your instructor, who will know your name. Classes are guided by full-time professors with classroom hours above a Master's and many with doctorate degrees.

If you think you'll need help in such areas as English and math, WTC has established a recognized educational development program to help you gain the classroom skills needed to pass college-level work.



Student Life

An important part of the college experience is meeting new people and getting involved on campus. WTC offers you several opportunities to do just that with campus clubs, organizations, and activities.

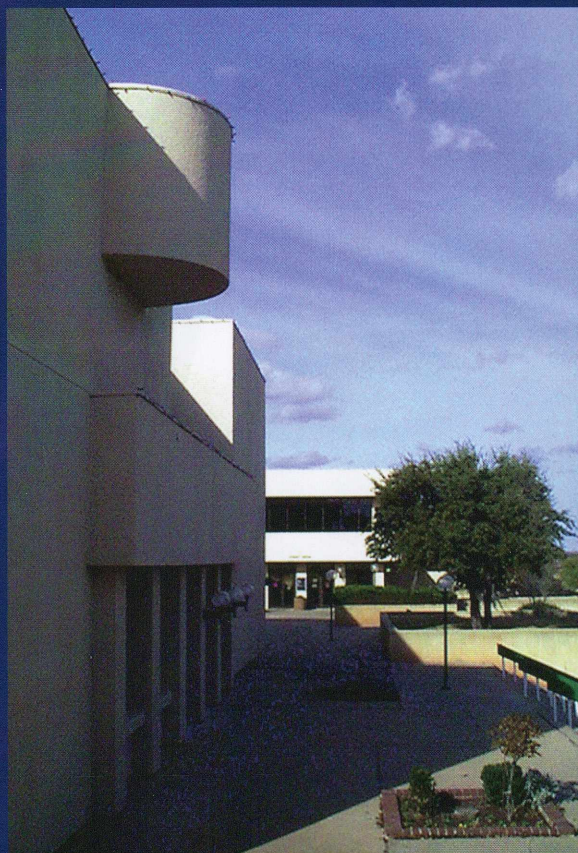
Student Government Association
International Student Organization
Phi Theta Kappa Chapter
Intramurals
Student Activities

Men's and Women's Rodeo Teams
Men's and Women's Meats Teams
Weekly News Broadcast
Texan News Magazine
Aquifer Literary Magazine

Cost

Cost is a big factor in choosing the right college. Compare the annual cost for attending WTC to the cost of a public or private four-year college. (Texas Resident - two semesters - 15 hours)

Commuter, in-district	\$1,370	Public Four-Year College	8,306
Commuter, out-of-district	1,520	Private Four-Year College	13,476
On Campus, in-district	3,970		
On Campus, out-of-district	4,120		



For more information or to arrange a campus tour
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or 915-573-8511
<http://wtc.cc.tx.us>

The new dorms may also help to alleviate the inconvenience to WTC's international students, many of whom remain on campus during the summer months and holiday breaks and must move to the apartments while the dorms and food service facilities are closed. "Depending on how we deal with the new residence halls, we may want to start putting those students in the apartments ahead of time so that they do not have to move back and forth," he said, "If we realize they will be staying on campus over the breaks, that's something we need to better coordinate and look at."

Although WTC now has more than three decades of history behind it, Dr. Williams maintains a progressive vision for the campus, and notes the changes he'd like to see in the next five years. "I see us growing. I'd like to see us with 2000 students. We have 1300 this fall. I'd like to serve people in every way that we can - technologically, through distance education, Internet services, residence facilities that are state-of-the-art so that those students who want to live in residence can do that, a great food service, and great programs. I want WTC to be a really really good small college and really effective, well-endowed, and I think we can work on and take advantage of all of those things. We have to look at all of the avenues and continue to hold onto our key faculty members and quality people. We need to pay them well and be competitive in all of those areas. A lot of it comes down to having the right attitude, and I think we have that already. We have the right people in place. We treat people well and they treat each other well, and that's great at WTC. We need more money, we need more resources, and the state's not going to give it to us, so we've got to go out and raise it as much as we can, so you'll see more efforts in that

direction - trying to raise capital so that we can do more things. And that way, we'll keep maximizing our student numbers."

One way that the college is currently working toward that end involves the application process for grant funding. "We are currently undertaking the largest individual grant effort that WTC has ever had with the Talent Search grant, Dr. Williams noted, "and that's only the first one. There are 3 or 4 more that we are going to work on. We will try to get an Upward Bound program and we are working on the Trio grant. This is a key part of the development plan and the increase in the resources on campus."

While efforts to increase funding are taking place behind the scenes, Dr.

The reality is that someone will be sitting in this chair after me, and I want them to be able to say, 'He did his job while he was here, and WTC is a better place for having had him in a leadership role.

Williams also stresses the importance of more visible improvements. "I want us to be new. I want us to be clean. I want us to have green grass. I want us to have facilities that are not run down. Those are some things we need to work on. We will have to put some money into those things, but that's important. Like I said, I want us to be the best college we can be. We're going to be small because we are in West Texas. We're not on I-35, but we've got a lot of good people who want to learn and we're going to maximize our efforts for them."

In answer to the classic question 'If you had the opportunity to spend

one hour speaking to any person, dead or live, who would it be, and why?' Dr. Williams sat in deep thought for several moments, then said, "The name that first comes forward in my mind and keeps coming up is Martin Luther King Jr. because of what he did and the struggles that he went through and the sacrifices that he made. If those who are responsible for the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C. had adhered to the philosophies of men like King and Ghandi, the outcome would have been drastically different.

Thanks to his own personal leadership philosophy and optimism, Dr. Williams sees a promising future for WTC. "A good leader never takes credit," he says, "Instead, he or she gives all of the credit to those who are working alongside while realizing that the credit will naturally flow upward when things are going right. The reality is that someone will be sitting in this chair after me, and I want them to be able to say, 'He did his job while he was here, and WTC is a better place for having had him in a leadership role.'"

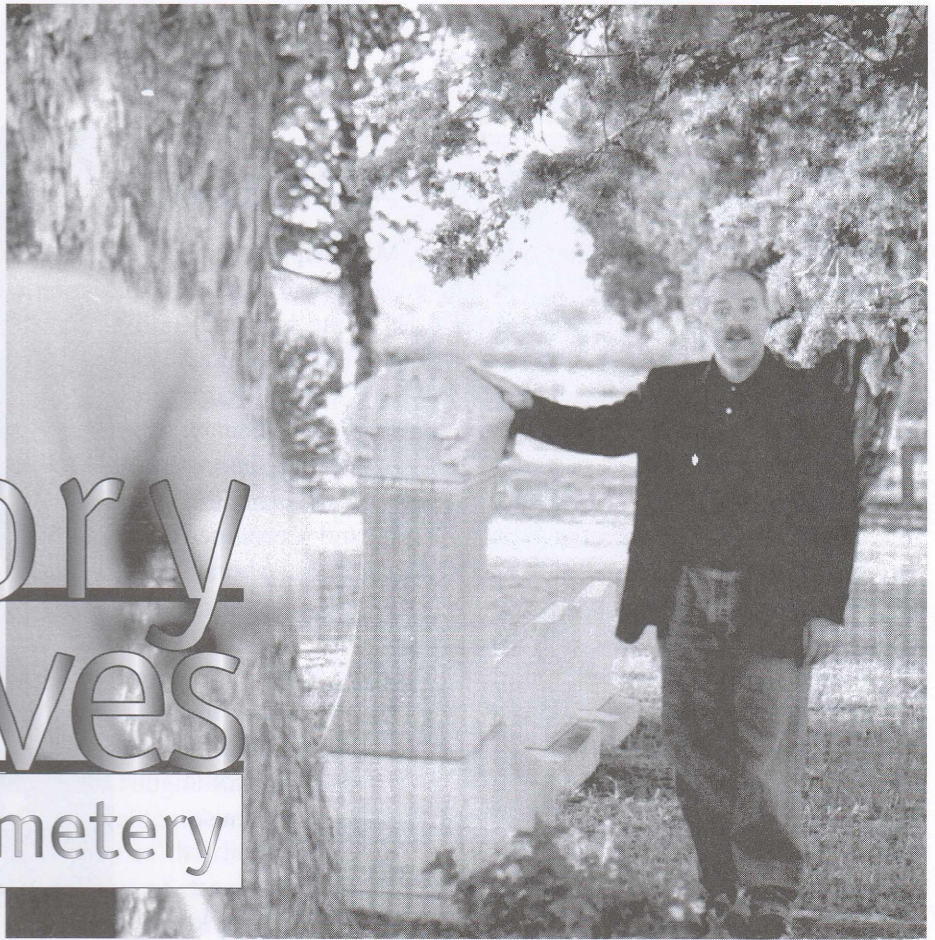
Dr. Williams was named to the position in a unanimous vote of the college board of trustees in May of this year and officially began his duties in early July. A native of East Texas, Dr. Williams earned his doctorate in higher education administration from Baylor University in 1996. He received his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Texas Permian Basin with a certification to teach learning disabled students, and his master's degree in education mid-management and an additional master's degree in psychology from UTPB.

Dr. Williams and his wife, Karen, have two sons and one daughter. His oldest son, Kiaran, is a freshman at WTC. His son, Gregory, 10, is a fifth grader at Northeast Elementary, and daughter, Kara, is 21/2.



Camera operator Corey Knipe coordinates the scene as Chris Hensley looks on

History Survives at Snyder Cemetery



Narrator Ray Newton explains the untimely death of Cullen Higgins

By Donny Brown

Ray Newton's voice drifts over the flat, evening landscape of Snyder Cemetery. The only other sounds are of wind and the distant truck traffic passing along U.S. Hwy. 84.

"Scurry County's first sheriff soon found out there were parts of the job he just didn't like."

There is a pause, and he asks, "How was that?"

WTC sophomore Corey Knipe, his hands mashing down the set of earphones clasped to his head, says, "A little fast. Let me adjust the focus and we'll try again."

And so it goes. Take after take by the student video crew on this warm late summer evening. They have brought camera, tripod, audio cable

and microphone to capture the "on-camera" presence of Ray Newton, who will also provide the off-camera narration for a 15-minute video about Scurry County's historical past.

The crew fans out among the lengthening shadows of Snyder Cemetery, the last resting site for more than 8,000 individuals—7,000 "identified" and 1,000 "not"—who once were a part of this region's past.

Newton, a recent addition to both Scurry County and the faculty at Western Texas College, has volunteered his time. He joined the college faculty this fall as new head of the college's drama department.

The crew members are a combination of his students and WTC mass communications students under my direction.

As we progress through the taped

introductions, the students mix and match their production chores. They are a mix and match themselves. Marie Noelle Bailly is an international student, relocating to the U.S. from Belgium. Seth Sterling, who shares the boom mike operation with Marie, is from Ira. Corey, our senior camera operator and the most experienced of the bunch, is a Snyder High graduate and a sophomore at WTC.

Lucinda Mendez, holding up white cards to color balance the camera, is from the Slaton area, graduating from Southland High School last spring. Chris Hensley, a freshman drama student under Ray's tutelage, has accompanied the group. He hails from Lubbock's Monterey High School, where Newton was his drama instructor last year.

All share the equal burden of trying

Billy Nelson

First Sheriff of Scurry County

W.W. (Billy) Nelson, born in Vicksburg, Mississippi during the civil war. He went on his own at the age of 15 and worked for big cattle companies on trail drives. He came to Scurry County in 1878, working as a buffalo skinner and cowboy, and in 1882 married Nancy Johnson. Their daughter Ida Mae, born in 1884, was said to be the first white child born in Scurry County.

“On the round-up and in camp, my dad was the singing cowboy,” Ida Mae, remembered. “He was said to have a hat full of songs.” Billy helped organize Scurry County and was named its first sheriff. Tradition says he resigned as sheriff after a bunch of rowdy cowboys refused his order to go to jail and instead bound him and put him in jail.

Ida Mae said he just didn’t enjoy arresting his friends.

Billy ranched near camp springs for 20 years before moving into Snyder. About 1923 he lost his sight. His personal popularity enabled him to be elected county treasurer in 1930 and a collie named Trixie guided him from his home to the courthouse. During his two terms in office. Hundreds of friends attended his funeral services when he died on January 30, 1935. At his request, Trixie was buried at his feet in Snyder cemetery. —**Aline Parks**



to accomplish 10 scenes between the hours of 7 p.m. and nightfall this early September evening.

“Let’s go,” I say, “we’re losing the light.” Corey Knipe, who spent his summer working as a crew member for the locally shot Hollywood movie “Grand Champion,” picks up the camera and tripod and quickly walks east. “That definitely sounds like something I’ve heard before,” he says over his shoulder.

All of us are here at the behest of the Scurry County Historical Commission. Longtime member Aline Parks contacted me in August with an idea. “Would the college be interested in helping with a video project?” she asked.

The State of Texas offers historical groups such as the local commission the opportunity to receive a Distinguished Service Award each year. The county group has been a frequent honoree and Aline said they would like to repeat in 2002.

Receiving the honor has several guidelines, but one involves

**Who was here in 1876?
Mainly buffalo hunters and
the indigenous people who
roamed more or less at will
through the region.**

developing an educational video or slide show of from 15 to 30 minutes in length. The topic must cover “some aspect of local history.”

Several ideas were initially discussed, but the one which seemed to have the most visual possibilities involved stories associated with the local cemetery, established just after Scurry County officially organized by electing a slate of county officials in 1884.

The county was “created” in 1876—part of state legislation which simultaneously initiated 54 counties from the territories of Young and Bexar. It was named in honor of Confederate Brigadier General William Read Scurry.

Thomas J. Faught

Sheriff Who Never Wore a Gun

T.J. Faught, born in Missouri, came to Texas early in life and lived in Burnet County until 1883 when he settled in Scurry County to engage in stock farming. After Scurry County's first sheriff, Billy Nelson, resigned that position Faught became sheriff and served three full terms. Soon after taking office, Faught gained the respect and attention of the county when he went to the west side saloon on the courthouse square and cleaned out a rowdy, fun-loving gang of cowboys with a pool cue. He always allowed the men to have fun to a point, but never past that point. He never wore a gun.

Faught was also a vice president of the first national bank. He was a charter member of Snyder's Masonic Lodge and the Faught Building on the northeast corner of the courthouse square was built as a hall for the lodge. When Faught died in August, 1912, funeral services were conducted in the Faught home by the Masonic brotherhood. The Snyder signal noted: Faught was a warm hearted humanitarian, interested in all honorable efforts of worthy young men. He enjoyed the open free life of the ranch man. He will be greatly missed in Snyder by a host of personal friends.—**Aline Parks**



Who was here in 1876? Mainly buffalo hunters and the indigenous people who roamed more or less at will through the region.

There were also cattlemen beginning to arrive, soon followed by settlers. In 1880 and 1881, the Texas and Pacific Railway came to nearby Mitchell County and its county seat, Colorado City, began to boom. About this time came the creation of Snyder Cemetery, although the exact date is apparently lost to history.

The earliest gravestone date is 1885, according to Opal Stout, the facility's "sexton." Her title is worth noting. It refers to an individual—traditionally a church official—in charge of maintaining church property,

in particular the church graveyard. In the early days, graveyards were associated with churches rather than private entities or municipalities.

Mrs. Stout is also an invaluable person to have around if you want to find a particular headstone among the more or less 8,000 graves.

The markers stretch over approximately 30 acres of land and the dates engraved on the stones span almost 120 years.

The cemetery itself lies just north of U.S. Hwy. 84. From the city, the simplest way to reach it is to travel due north on Ave. E, passing through east Snyder and over the overpass which looks down on the busy highway and its passing cars.

The Snyder Cemetery Association is a non-profit entity governed by a local volunteer board of seven members. The cemetery's operation is financed by the selling of plots and annual donations received by members and friends of the association.

The only paid staff are two grounds crew workers and Mrs. Stout, who has worked numerous times with the historical group and its research.

"If you have someone buried here

Kate Thrane

A Woman Known for 'Firsts'

Kate Thrane was born February 6, 1876 while her parents, John and Katherine Webb, were in the process of moving to Scurry County. The county would be officially created and named by the Texas legislature six months later. The Webb family is said to have brought the first cattle to Scurry County. They built the first frame home in Snyder in 1878 on or near the present site of the Scurry County courthouse.

Kate became Snyder's postmistress in 1896 when she was 20 and served for 17 years. She was one of Snyder's first businesswomen, operating a dry goods store and a variety store at times. She also taught at the Dermott school. In 1917 she married O.P. Thrane, a vice president at Snyder National Bank. He became associated with McMurry College in Abilene in 1936 and they moved to Abilene while still maintaining a



home in Snyder. Kate enjoyed being involved with college activities and the McMurry band declared her an "honorary chief" when, at the age of 94, she accompanied them on a trip to Mexico. Mr. Thrane died in 1951. Kate died in October, 1971, at her Snyder residence at 1913 30th street. Funeral services for Kate were held at Snyder's First Methodist Church where she was a long-time member. Both Mr. And Mrs. Thrane are buried in Snyder cemetery. —Aline Parks



we invite you to become a member," said Mrs. Stout. The recommended "donation" is \$50 per year.

"Some folks send it and some don't," she said. "We care for the graves regardless."

In early September, I drove to the cemetery in search of five headstones. Amid the late-summer drone of cicadas and the two-stroke engine roar of the cemetery's grounds crew, I wandered for more than an hour. In the end I luckily found Opal.

"I saw you walking and figured you might need some help," she said. She has

been there before.

To the layman, the sheer number of graves at Snyder Cemetery and the amount of territory they encompass doesn't at first sink in. The markers stretch over approximately 30 acres of

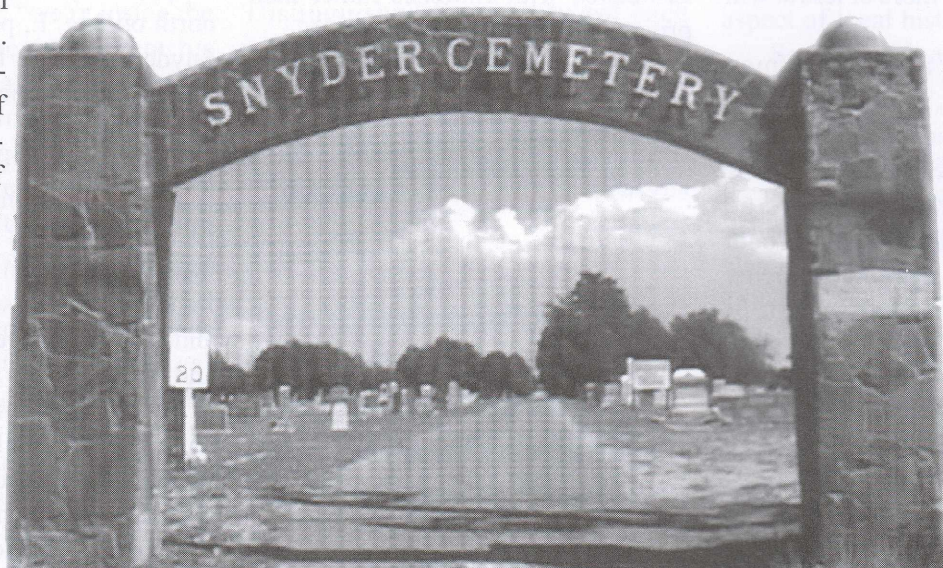
land and the dates engraved on the stones span almost 120 years.

It is a humbling experience . . . so many lives, so many stories.

"I'm just a little man with big ideas," Ray Newton intones. He is

referring to historical figure Charley Lockhart. The evening sun is at horizon level, but Mr. Lockhart—a man who grew to only 45 inches tall but managed to become the state treasurer of Texas—is the last stop of the day.

There have been five stops



Charley Lockhart

A Little Man with Big Ideas

"The largest state has the smallest treasurer," according to "Ripley's Believe It or Not" cartoon in March of 1931. That treasurer was Charley Lockhart, who stood just 45 inches tall.

Lockhart, born in Dallas County, came to Scurry County in 1898 and was elected county treasurer in 1900. The courthouse was on the northeast corner of the square, Lockhart said, and he roomed in his office there. He left the county office in 1916 and in 1919 went to Austin to become sergeant-of-arms in the house of representatives. He soon accepted a job as depository manager in the state treasury department. He was elected state treasurer in 1930.

As Lockhart began the race for the state office, the Houston Post carried an interview with him.

"I want you to make it perfectly clear that I am fighting this battle on manhood alone," he said. "I don't want the votes that are given me through a feeling that life has not handed me a square deal. Life has been good to me. I have filled public office, earned the confidence and friendship of my fellows and educated my children. I'm simply a little man with big ideas and sufficient experience and ability to carry my ideas out."

Lockhart died in 1954 and is buried in Snyder cemetery. —Aline Parks



Cullen Higgins

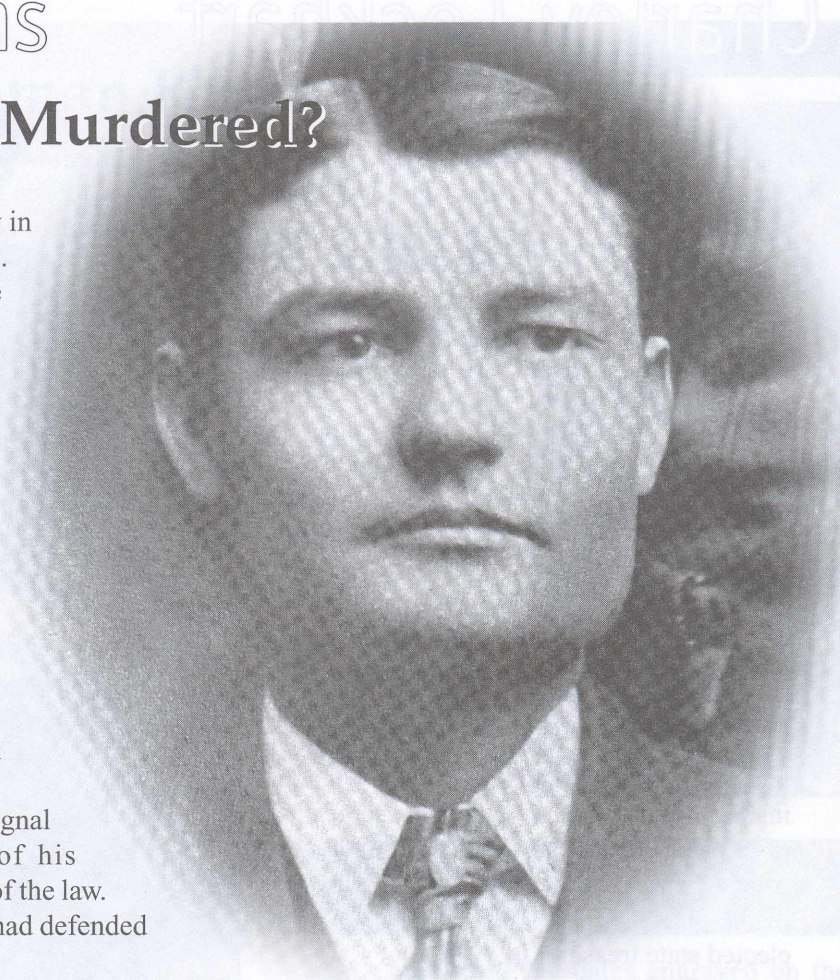
Why was He Murdered?

Cullen Higgins, born in Lampasas County in 1876, came to Snyder to practice law in 1899. His father, Pink Higgins, sometimes called “the reluctant gunfighter,” often visited in Snyder. Cullen was only 30 when he began a 4-year term as district judge in 1907. He had served the previous 4 years as district attorney. After leaving office, he established an extensive private law practice.

In March of 1918 Cullen had gone to Clairemont to attend a trial. On Sunday night he attended church services in Clairemont. When he returned to the hotel he was shot through a window and died in a Spur hospital. It was estimated that between 1,500 and 2,000 mourners attended his funeral services in Snyder’s Methodist Church.

“Why was he murdered?” The Snyder Signal asked. “We don’t know. In the course of his professional life he had defended the majesty of the law. He had prosecuted men accused of crime. He had defended others. Perhaps he was in somebody’s way.”

“In the death of Judge Higgins, Scurry and adjacent counties have sustained a loss that will be felt,” the Signal concluded. —**Aline Parks**



in all, a list winnowed down from nine potential figures initially submitted by Aline Parks.

She is an experienced hand when it comes to the county’s history. Her association with the commission dates to the mid-1970s and she has worked with it through various projects, including the publication of area ranching histories and the historical marker tour of both the downtown Snyder area and the city’s “historical homes.”

She found the time to publish her

own book, “Snyder Scrapbook: Hidetown to Boomtown” in 1998. Aline wrote all of the initial scripts for the video history, basing them on the longer pieces in her book.

That publication expands greatly on the brief histories offered in the video, completed in mid-October. Followers of local history can check out both the book and a copy of our 15-minute videotape at the Scurry County Library.

The people profiled are different, yet each share one specific trait. Each

arrived in Scurry County prior to 1900. That places them among the earliest men and women who have shaped this county and this area.

The final cut of individual’s profiled includes the county’s first sheriff, Uncle Billy Nelson, who doubled as a singing cowboy and, in his final years, a county office holder; the man who followed him as sheriff, C.W. Faught, who history says needed only a pool cue to tame rowdy cowboys; the county’s first woman postmaster, Kate Thrane, who

remained a stylish and active presence in Snyder up until age 94; the aforementioned Charley Lockhart, whose life was profiled in "Ripley's Believe It or Not;" and finally the attorney Cullen Higgins, a former district judge who was shot down by an assassin or assassins in the prime of his life.

Our brief video histories include period photographs of both the five individuals profiled and other county sites. These examples of "old-time" media are mixed with such modern day technologies as digital video, non-linear editing and 3-D animation software.



Marie Noelle Bailly with microphone

During the post-production work, it occurred to me how the format of videotape can significantly dramatize history with its ability to add the emotional elements of music and motion. It can dramatize history, but it really isn't very good history because the format itself is too limited for much significant information.

The hopeful intent is that the tape will make our local history "attainable" to a new generation. And if you really want the facts, go to books like Aline's "Hidetown to Boom Town."

There are a lot of stories which can be told.



WTC students Seth Sterling, Chris Hensley and Lucinda Mendez wait for the next shot

PERSPECTIVE

By Deanie Francis Mills

One cool night in April of this year, my 23-year old nephew, Troy, suffered a horrific nightmare in which the building he was in exploded into a ball of flames, and everyone died. He awoke in a shaking sweat, sick to his stomach. The dream was so terrible, so vivid, so god awful *real*, that Troy couldn't get over it, couldn't shake it from his mind. Over the next few weeks, he started to have panic attacks. His heart would pound so hard he couldn't breathe and he thought he was having a heart attack.

Lest you think my nephew is some kinda big wuss or something, let me tell you a little about him: He is a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, assigned to the prestigious detail of soldiers that guards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C., the son of a colonel in the U.S. Army Special Forces.

Five months after my nephew's nightmare, a Boeing 757 smashed into the Pentagon, ripping through 75 feet of Army and Air Force offices, and exploded into a massive fireball, killing all passengers, crew, and most anybody trapped at their desk or standing at the coffee machine.

In the ensuing days since, my nephew Troy has been one of many young soldiers pulling hundreds of scorched bodies and stinking body parts out of the blackened hell-hole that even his worst nightmare couldn't conjure up.

On the other side of the globe, my daughter Jessica, a college student from Stephen F. Austin State University studying in London on an exchange program, called home in tears. In the background, I could hear another American student, Peter, who shares a flat with Jessica along with three British students, screaming, "*Stop showing it! Stop showing it!*" as the unthinkable images from the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon were replayed on British TV over and over.

"We felt so alone," she said later. "This terrible thing was happening in our country, and we couldn't be there. Back home, on our college campus, we'd have been part of a large family who were all going through it at the same time. Here, we were strangers in a strange land."

Not long after that, I got a call from my son, Dustin, who is a senior in the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University. "I might sign a contract with the Marine Corps after all," he said, (which means, after college graduation, he would enter the Marines as a 2nd. Lieutenant.) "I don't like the idea of being someone who needs to be *protected*. I think I might want to be one of the *protectors*."

My nephew, daughter, and son are all the same age as the WTC students reading this, and their lives have been dramatically changed by history. It is the defining moment, not just for my generation—the policy-makers and war-planners—but yours as well. You will be the young people who go into harm's way, like Troy and possibly Dustin; you will be the young people who will represent our nation abroad, like Jessica and her friend Peter. You will be the young people who help our shattered country rebuild. And life will never be the same for you.

No wonder my nephew had panic attacks.

I've been thinking a lot lately about history transforming gen-

erations. For the parents of my generation, it was the attack on Pearl Harbor and World War II. That war changed the world and it changed them. The whole country lived in fear for a very long time—fear of the "Nazis" and the "Japs" and later, the Communists.

Our generation didn't have a single defining moment. We had a series of them. One after another, all our heroes were assassinated. And of course, overarching everything was the Vietnam war. We lost almost 60,000 of our generation in that hopeless jungle land, and that's not counting the thousands who returned to us but left little parts of their bodies or at least their souls back in that blood-soaked mud.

There was a whole lot more going on back then than just love beads, drugs, and Woodstock. We were scared, too, all the time. We were scared of the ravages of war and of the nuclear threat. Scared our dreams would be assassinated. And after Watergate, scared that there just weren't any heroes left and nothing more to believe in.

Yours was the first generation to grow up almost entirely in peace and prosperity, when the nation had so few real worries that it had to obsess about the sex life of the President. You've grown up taking for granted many rights for women and minorities that your grandparents never even imagined. So life has been relatively easy, generally speaking.

And then the heavens rained down fireballs and debris and dead bodies and a daily dose of horror such as the world has never seen. Right now, we're all feeling sort of like my nephew did after his nightmare—we're having little panic attacks about our uneasy future.

What are we going to do now? How will we handle our fear?

For one thing, as I wrote in a letter to Troy, we will rise up out of the ashes, a phoenix with scorched wings, sadder but stronger. We will use the fear, turn it into appreciation for every single precious day. We'll never let another day go by without telling our loved ones how much they mean to us.

We will use our fear to reach out to the world community in brotherhood. Jessica says she's been overwhelmed at the outpouring of support and encouragement she and all Americans overseas have received, not just from foreign friends, but from strangers as well. Once, she was speaking on the street to a friend, her Texas drawl unmistakable, and a big Cockney guy stopped her, put his hand on her arm, and said, "*God bless America!*"

What a splendid thing for all of us to see worldwide at this time. Like Jessica said, "Peter and I know we're not alone anymore."

We will also use our fear to teach us compassion and to direct us in a life path that will make us sensitive to suffering and will show us ways in which we can contribute. We can reach out in all sorts of ways, even something so simple as giving blood or helping to raise money for a cause we believe in.

Finally, we will use our fear to strengthen our resolve to triumph over evil wherever it may be.

We don't all have to recover bodies from a holocaust or travel to foreign lands or join the military to make this world a better place. All we have to do is struggle up out of the ashes, spread our wings, and fly.



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Longest-Lasting Trucks
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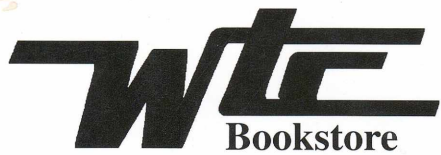
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