

# SEASON *of* CHANGE



# MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Dear WT Family,

The Christmas Holiday season is upon us. Traditionally a time for generosity and gratitude, I am especially reflective this year because 2020 is our 30th anniversary as a member of The Texas A&M University System. The holiday season combined with a pending anniversary for WT makes for a special circumstance to invite thoughtfulness of our evolution as an institution and an occasion to commemorate our steadfastness to the principles on which West Texas A&M University was founded.

In 1989, West Texas State University began its 80th community-oriented, regionally-focused, and buffalo-represented year of existence. When, that same year, the invitation to join a prestigious university system was extended, loyal alumni and friends hesitated for fear of losing WT's identity. Warily, the University leaned into the new partnership under the condition to remain representative of the Texas Panhandle spirit and its people. The partnership achieved an ideal balance of autonomy and connection as WT found its place in a system of sister universities, and "Buff Nation" remained the thunderous spirit of the University community.

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The decades since WT's 1910 founding, time has witnessed five name changes, 11 presidential administrations, and more than 83,000 graduates. Most recently in 2019, WT continued to serve the people of the Texas Panhandle through new initiatives such as the WT Principal's Scholars program and the Family Scholarship program, opening of the Harrington Academic Hall WTAMU Amarillo Center and Jarrett Residence Hall, and breaking ground on the Veterinary Education, Research and Outreach (VERO) Center and Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL). WT also kicked off the inaugural season of football at the new Buffalo Stadium, bringing games back to campus for the first time in 60 years.

Throughout the University's history, the buffalo, maroon and white colors, and "WT" have remained identifiable symbols of both the school and the pioneer spirit of the Texas Panhandle. These symbols represent the foundation central to the University's generational plan, *WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World*, and remain apparent in every year of newness.

I am honored to share this moment in history with the WT family. As we usher in a new year, let us contemplate the triumph in remaining authentically a buffalo of the plains.

Mary and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season filled with love, hope, and happiness.

On, On Buffaloes!



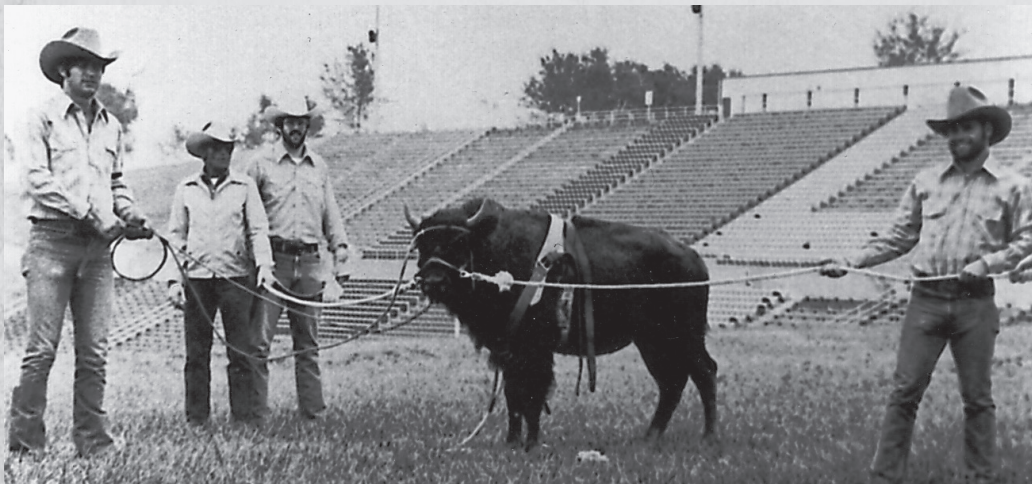
*Walter and Mary Waudler*

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The first live buffalo mascots (Charles and Mary) given by Charles Goodnight in 1921.



## Authentically a Buffalo

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Since its establishment in 1910, WT served to embody the Texas Panhandle's values of hard work and family while also providing an education to its rural citizens. The school for teachers instilled the importance of learning and training for future generations, and the surrounding community adopted its mission.

As unity strengthened, the student body of 1921 chose a buffalo as the University mascot that symbolized the steady determined strength of Texas Panhandlers. The WT buffalo, technically called an American bison, is the largest land animal in North America, ranging up to 2,000 pounds. The buffalo's shaggy brown mane, beard and long tail gives it a distinct look that has long been respected by the Native Americans and early pioneers of the Texas Panhandle.

The buffalo, known to stand with its herd in solidarity, symbolizes depths of inner power capable of facing challenges and overcoming adversity – much like the early settlers, who were resourceful, inventive and resilient in a region that did not offer much more than wind, dirt, endless skies and horizons that stretched miles. Throughout WT's many transitions, including the upcoming anniversary of joining a System, WT's unmistakable identity has persisted since 1910.

The following poems are written nearly 100 years apart by two of WT's students, former and current, that express similar admiration for the Texas Panhandle and its sentiments. Like WT's identity, the illustrations of our beautiful region remain consistent and enduring.

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# The Buffalo

by Mattie Swayne, '22

Untrammelled by a law of man,  
There roamed and ruled upon these plains,  
In ages past, a kingly beast  
Whose dauntless soul today still reigns.

His being knew no touch of fear,  
For broad horizons nourished him;  
A creature free from pettiness,  
Stalwart and stern in heart and limb.

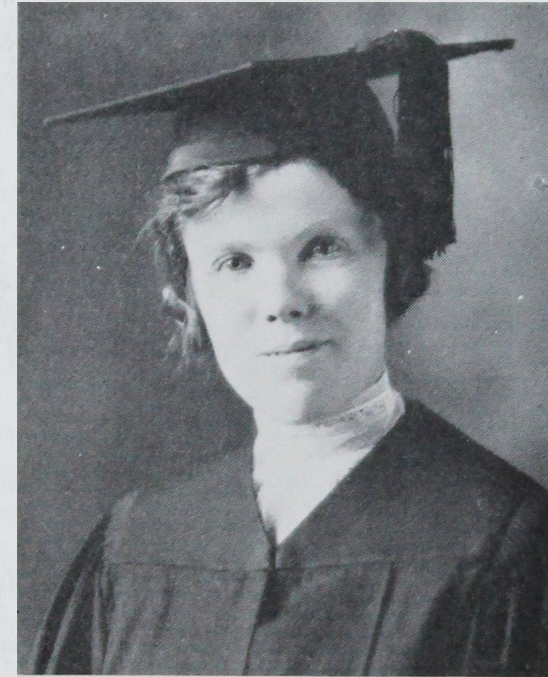
Our buffalo is a conquered king;  
His untamed spirit triumphs still  
In prairie life and strife today,  
Where all is subject to man's will.

A lofty spirit rears its head,  
Incarnate in our college walls;  
It fights the sin of ignorance  
And heeds from far and near the calls.

Of youth whose eyes have caught a view,  
Of boundless fields where many work,  
Seeks earnest men with loins girt  
To carry light where shadows lurk.

How can we fail to reach the goal  
When aims so worthy of success  
Are sponsored by a mascot king,  
Who in his life could do no less.

Than win or die in a noble fight?  
Then growth for us can ne'er be slow  
So long as to our tasks we take  
The spirit of the buffalo.



## About the Author

“The Buffalo” is a poem written by alumna Mattie Swayne, '22. After graduating from West Texas State Teacher's College, she received a master's degree from Columbia University and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas in 1938. She married recognized area artist A. W. Mack, and as Dr. Mattie Swayne Mack, taught English at WT until 1968.



# Barbed-Wire

by Jonathon Crump, senior English major

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Last summer I built a barbed-wire fence.  
And every morning the sun would sit like an egg  
on the cast-iron horizon  
watching me drive posts, stretch wire,  
and ruin a good pair of jeans.

No house, no person, no hill for acres.  
Some may call that country quiet  
because they're deaf to western instruments.  
For every day the train sang to me,  
a harmonica slid over the plain's dusty lips.  
The wind plucked the wire against its posts  
in a wild, unkempt string of notes.  
And cattle lowed lamenting their new fence.

Over that summer I found a simple perfection.  
A divine continuum  
of fine dirt, bright sun, and infinite sky.  
Most will miss the majesty in this monotony  
and say every glance is the same.  
I don't claim to have a better eye  
I've simply learned to love the plain.

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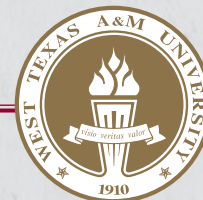
## About the Author

“Barbed-Wire” is a poem written by Canyon native Jonathon Crump, a senior English major. Upon graduation from West Texas A&M University in 2019, he plans to attend the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in fall of 2020. Jonathon is a member of WT’s English honor society, Sigma Tau Delta, and he is the editorial manager of WT’s creative writing journal, The Legacy.

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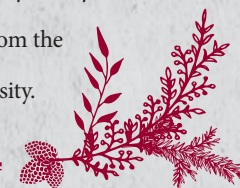




*“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

*—Isaiah 43: 18-19*

As a friend of the University, Walter and Mary wish you a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Happy Holidays from the students, faculty and staff of West Texas A&M University.





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West Texas A&M University<sup>™</sup>  
**FOUNDATION**

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