Meet the West Texas A&M University Alumni Association Board of Directors

Cody Myers ’79, ’87

Cody Myers attended West Texas State University on a trumpet scholarship and graduated with bachelor’s degree in 1979 and a master’s in education in 1987. For the past 15 years Myers has served as the director of fine arts for the Amarillo Independent School District. He is recognized as a leader in music education and shares his expertise as a director, administrator, mentor, educator, contest judge, clinician and motivator locally and across the state and region. He often credits WT for his success and is devoted to his alma mater. He helps recruit students, attends concerts and recitals and often serves as a guest lecturer in the School of Music. The Texas Bandmasters Association presented Myers with its 2012 Lifetime Administrator Achievement Award of Outstanding Commitment to Music Education and he will be honored as a 2013 West Texas A&M University Distinguished Alumnus. Cody’s wife, Starrla, is also a WT grad.

John Osborne ’94, ’95

John Osborne is the President and CEO of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance and Market Lubbock, two private, non-profit organizations. John has held economic development positions in communities of various sizes in three states, including San Antonio. Over a ten-year period, John recruited more than eighty companies, which invested more than $960 million in capital improvements and created approximately 15,000 new jobs. A native of Dallas, Texas, John received a B.S. in Agriculture Business and an M.B.A. from West Texas A&M University. He is a Certified Main Street Director from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has conducted numerous state and local workshops on business development and downtown revitalization, and graduated from the University of Oklahoma’s Economic Development Institute in 2004. John, his wife, Sunni, and their three sons, have called Lubbock their home since mid-2010. Osborne said, “During my tenure as a student, WT provided me with many great memories and experiences for which I am truly grateful. Serving on the Alumni Association Board gives me the opportunity to help reconnect the school’s past students with our University.”

J'Lynn Newman Wheeler '80

J'Lynn Wheeler has worked with several non-profits in Midland including Court Appointed Special Advocates, Midland Rape Crisis and Children’s Advocacy Center, Community Partners of Midland and Midland Need to Read while raising two daughters, Laura and Melissa with her husband of 32 years, Mark. In fact, J’Lynn and Mark met at WTSU and married three months after graduating. In the last six years, J’Lynn has had the opportunity to continue her education by earning her Masters in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University New Orleans. J’Lynn and Mark enjoy traveling and stay on the road as much as possible - especially if the destination involves fly-fishing.

“The next best thing to being a student at WT is becoming involved as an alumnus.”
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David Willis '79
District 4 Dallas, Fort Worth and east

As Managing Partner of Renaissance Capital Group, LLC; David has consulted or developed over $350 million in new real estate construction. RCG specializes in Mixed-Use Developments, Condominiums, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing and Senior Housing. Mr. Willis has over 8 years of experience with HUD loan programs in the capacity as a consultant to developers in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. He has worked extensively in the HUD 221-d-4 loan program for Multifamily and the HUD 232 Loan Program for Assisted Living. David grew up in West Texas, where he attended West Texas State University and was hired as the youngest Head Men/Women Track Coach in Division I at age 26. He was a teacher in the Physical Education Department; received a Bachelor of Science Degree from WT and was a Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Zenobia Harris '03
District 5 Houston, Beaumont and east

Zenobia Harris attended West Texas A&M University, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2003. She went on to receive a Master's degree from the University of Alabama and a law degree from Northwestern University School of Law. Harris is an Associate with Susman Godfrey L.L.P in Houston, Texas, focusing on commercial litigation, including intellectual property litigation, business and commercial disputes and federal securities litigation. Harris is an award-winning public speaker. She is a national champion and five-time national finalist of the American Forensics Association's National Speech Tournament. She is a former high school and college speech and debate coach. Zenobia is an Alumni Association White Buffalo Society member.

David Sims '65
District 6 San Antonio, Austin, Waco and south

David S. Sims retired after 29 years with oilfield services giant, Schlumberger. During his career, he rose from Field Engineer in Hobbs, New Mexico to Region Manager - Middle East based in Dubai, U.A.E. David held operations, marketing, and management positions in Venezuela, Angola, Trinidad, France, Iran, Argentina, U.A.E., U.K., Indonesia and the U.S.A. In his early career, he was a geologist with Texaco Inc. in Midland, Texas. David received his B.S. in Geology from West Texas A&M University in 1965. He is a member and Past Chairman of the Southwest Section of the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE). He has been a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Advisory Council for the Center for International Business Studies at Texas A&M University. David is a proud member of the WT Sun Bowl team and an avid supporter of athletics and all things WT. David and his wife Suzy are natives of San Antonio and have two daughters.
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Ron Watts ’71

Ron Watts graduated from West Texas State University in 1971. He is owner/partner of Officewise Office Supply and Furniture, a multi-operational business established in 1978 in Amarillo and expanded to Lubbock, Midland, and the south plains of Texas, most recently El Paso. Watts served as Past President of the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum Society and is a member of the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum Goodnight Circle and the WT Old Main Society. He is an avid community volunteer and serves on the boards for several organizations. Watts is a United States Army Vietnam Veteran and was named a WT Distinguished Alumni in 2011. Ron has been married for 46 years to Sandra, also a WT graduate.

Natalie Jackson ’05

Natalie Jackson graduated from WTAMU in spring of 2005 with a BA in political science. While at WT, Natalie was in the marching band and concert/symphonic bands, was active in the Tau Beta Sigma chapter, worked as a supplemental instructor and various other academic jobs, and worked as a dispatcher for the University Police. She completed the PhD in political science from OU in 2011, and spent a year working as a postdoctoral associate at Duke University before getting her current job at Marist College working for the Marist Institute for Public Opinion (Marist Poll) as a Senior Analyst. Natalie’s husband, Jim Biffle, is also a graduate of WT. In addition to meeting her husband here, her family history with WT is a long one; her mother, father, aunt, uncle, great-aunt, and 3 grandparents all have degrees from WT, and her great-grandmother was an employee of the school from the 1940s-1970s. “My home is now in New York, but part of my heart will always be in Canyon on that campus. I would love to be able to participate in alumni activities and help bring alumni together that have scattered away from Texas.”

Brigadier General Jesse Cross, retired ’79

Jesse Cross came to West Texas State University in 1975 on a football scholarship, and graduated in 1979 with a bachelor’s degree in marketing. The talented running back was an all-time letterman at WT, but also had a passion for the Army Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC). In 1979 he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant, Quartermaster Corps through ROTC. His list of military accomplishments and decorations is impressive, and includes service as 50th Quartermaster General of the Army’s Quartermaster Center and School, two Defense Superior Service Medals, two Legion of Merits, the Distinguished Order of Saint Martin, a Bronze Star, six Meritorious Service Medals and the Parachutist Badge. In 2006 he was inducted as a Distinguished Member of the Quartermaster Regiment and in 2012 was named a West Texas A&M University Distinguished Alumni. Jesse and his wife, Cheryl, live in Lawton, Oklahoma, where he has started the consulting and partnership company, Red River Science & Technology.