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GRAYSON COLLEGE

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May graduates share family ties

- Talina Carter, Student

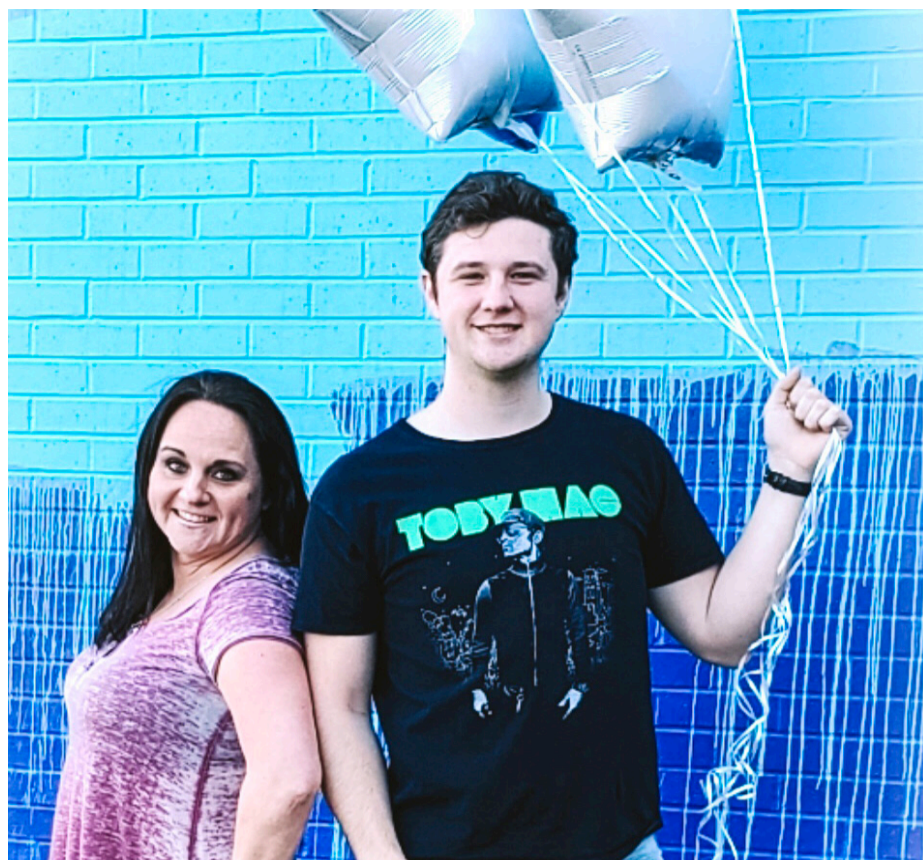
May 7, 2021, will be a memorable day for this mother-and-son duo, as they spread their wings and search for new life adventures. Talina and Nicholas Carver will graduate from Grayson College, Nicholas with his Associate degree and Talina with her Bachelor's degree in Nursing.

Born and raised in Denison, both mother and son graduated from Denison High School, and Talina earned her Associate degree in Nursing at Grayson in 1997.

The Carvers come from a long line of Grayson College graduates.

Talina's father, T.O. Fulce, graduated from the very first Paramedicine class that Grayson College offered back in the 1980s. The T.O. Fulce Memorial Scholarship in Paramedicine is still an active scholarship at Grayson College today. One of Talina's nieces will also graduate this May from Grayson College with her Associate degree in Nursing.

Mother and son want to thank Grayson College for the knowledge, the experience, and the opportunity.



Above: Talina Carver (left) and Nicholas Carver (right). (Photo provided by author)

Grayson College hosts 17th annual forensic conference

-Steve Cherry, Denison High School Criminal Justice Instructor

On Thursday, April 29th, the 17th Annual Law Enforcement Forensic Conference will be held in the Cruce Stark Auditorium. This conference is sponsored by the Texoma Regional Police Academy (TRPA), the Grayson College Criminal Justice Department, and the Career and Technology Education department at Denison High School. This free event has 100 available tickets for law enforcement. Credit for TCOLE and CEU is available for attendees.

The conference will begin at 8am with a welcome from Joseph D. Brown, Former US Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas and Former Grayson County District Attorney. TRPA Director Bill Dixon will also speak of upcoming training and new program updates at the academy.

At 9am, retired Rowlett police Lt. Dave Nabors will give the presentation *Bloodstain*

Pattern Analysis.

At 10:30am, University of Texas at Dallas Doctoral student Vikram Dhamu will present *Cannabisen C: Rapid, On-Road, Saliva Platform for Detecting THC.*

Attendees will have lunch on their own and return at 1pm for Tyler Police Detective Jeff Roberts presentation *Electronic Intrusion - Pain at the Pump.* In his presentation, Robert covers gas pump skimmer investigations and applicable Penal Code statutes to assist in production.

At 3pm, Amanda Gibson, M.S. and Deion Christophe, M.S. of the Plano PD Firearms Examination Unit will present *Will it NIBIN? Let's talk about that!*

To register, email trpa@grayson.edu. You must include the officer's name, department, and a contact phone number.

GC EMS students serve community

-Jordan Utley, Dean of Health Sciences



Above: A Grayson College paramedic student administers a vaccination at the Fannin County Multipurpose Complex. (Photo provided by author)

Did you know that you are on-campus with student-heroes? As of March 17, Paramedic students in the EMS program at Grayson have assisted with the administration of approximately 2,000 Covid-19 vaccinations at the Fannin County Multipurpose Complex in coordination with Bonham Fire Department and Texoma Medical Center Bonham. "It's a valuable clinical experience for the students. How often do we

get the opportunity to serve in a pandemic?," Curtis Groseclose commented.

The Program Director, Curtis Groseclose, accompanies the students to the site every Wednesday and provides supervision of the vaccine administration. Groseclose added, "The students get to serve the community and represent Grayson College, it's a really good thing."

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GC Phi Theta Kappa chapter named Number 1 in Texas

- Viking Staff

The Texas Regional Convention brings hundreds of Phi Theta Kappa honors society students together. The annual three-day event celebrates the hard work, leadership, and academic excellence these students put forth during the academic year. This March, Grayson College's Omicron Psi chapter virtually gathered together for the event. In total, our Grayson chapter won 23 awards throughout the weekend.

Highlights include eight Grayson students receiving awards for their leadership and service to the chapter. Chapter President Storm Anderson and Secretary Callie Kesse were inducted into the Texas Hall of Honor for Chapter Officers based on nominations submitted by their fellow officers. The Omicron Psi officer team; Anderson, Keese, Courtney Langfels, Amanda Favors, and Crystal Wilcoxon, were recognized as a Distinguished Officer Team. Additionally, Keese, Langfels, Favors, Wilcoxon, Roy Grimes, Kristinna Lee, and Timothy Ferguson, were inducted into the District II Hall of Honor. Hall



Above: GC Phi Theta Kappans shocked to hear their announcement as Most Distinguished Chapter. (Photo provided by Mary Linder)

of Honor inductees are nominated by their advisor for service to their chapter.

Chapter advisors government professor Mary Linder and Dean of Student Affairs Molly Harris were honored with the Continued Excellence Award for Advisors. Dr. Harris was also awarded the Pinnacle Award, the highest honor given to an advisor at the state level. They were nominated by the chapter officer team for their ongoing support to the student body. Assistant to the Dean

of Student Affairs Deann Pool was named Friend of Texas. Friend of Texas is awarded to a nonmember who significantly contributes to the success of a chapter.

The two largest projects a chapter completes every year are Honors in Action(HIA) and College Project. The combined score total of HIA and College Project are used to calculate the chapter's ranking. For College Project, Omicron Psi hosted a virtual resource fair last Fall with college administration. Their entry was

awarded an Award of Merit. HIA tasks students to research a problem in their communities, find a way to address it, and submit a research report. The chapter's project, *Creating New Truths to Combat a Legacy of Sexism*, received the Honors in Action Award of Distinction, given to the highest scoring project in the state.

These successes culminated in Omicron Psi's final award of the night, Most Distinguished Chapter. As the Most Distinguished Chapter in the region, Grayson College's Omicron Psi is listed as the number 1 chapter in Texas out of all 92 in the state!

The chapter hopes to keep these successes going when they attend their international conference, Catalyst, this April. The chapter is already in discussion for this year's College Project and HIA research.

The chapter invites any student interested to attend their chapter meetings at 12:30pm every Wednesday on Zoom. Links can be found via the chapter's Facebook and Instagram @ptkomincronpsi.

Homeless Homer part one

-Laura J. Haworth, Library Catalog-er

He came into the woods with his black and brown dog running ahead of him. The two were a familiar sight around town, but it wasn't commonly known that they ventured into our woods as well. Jason knew and hadn't shared this knowledge with us.

But on this particular Sunday, in late April of 1968, we all three were there in the woods when they entered. Jason and I were sitting in the hollow of the famous Rainbow Tree (a silver oak that arched all the way to the ground in a permanent, grand bow to the woods itself). The arch and hollow were caused by a lightning strike one memorable and stormy night, carving out a hollow large enough for us to sit in it comfortably, and directly below the bend of the tree was Sherry, Jason's sister, who was raking the leaves with her hands into a pile that would be our soft landing when we jumped down.

Jason saw them enter first and hissed out "Duck!" before pushing my head down with his hands while he ducked his own head. I shook my head free of Jason's hands and complained loudly.

"Stop it, Jason! You are not the boss of me!" I said.

When Sherry asked what was wrong, he put his finger to his mouth and gave out a loud "Sssshhh!"

"But why?" Sherry asked.

Jason shook his head with disgust.

"Would you guys hush!" he said in a loud whisper. "Homeless Homer is in the woods, and he's got his mean dog with him!" The name Homeless Homer was a nickname Jason's dad had given the man since he appeared homeless, but no one knew that for sure. I strained to see this man that I'd heard about more than I'd seen of him.

"Don't let him see you!" Jason cried out, and again he attempted to push my head down but I swatted away his hands defiantly.

"Jason, you do that to me again and I swear..."

He slapped his hand over my mouth.

"Shhhh!" he said again, putting his finger up to his mouth again. I yanked his hand away from my mouth and put my fist in front of his face. It made no difference to me that he was two years older than I. He had no right to put his hands on me.

"Dang it Charla!" he hissed. "You don't want him hearing you!" His face was mere

inches from mine as he pointed in the direction of the duo as they headed toward the large field of cedar trees that we called Cedar Forest. We knew these woods like the back of our hands. This was our domain, our playground, and we came here nearly every day after school.

"Why do I care?" I asked. "What's he going to do?"

"He's dangerous! And that dog, Heinz, he has fangs like a bear!"

Upon hearing her brother mention the dog, Sherry climbed up the tree and burrowed her way in between us, making the hollow crowded, but we stayed that way, watching the man and his beast make their way through the high grass as they disappeared into Cedar Forest. The trees were as thick as thieves for a good half a block square, and there were times when all we could make of them was the spot of brown cloth from the man's shirt, or the black and brown coat of the dog, until finally, they came out of the trees and into another clearing of nothing but high weeds. Neither appeared sinister to me, and of the the two of them, the dog was the healthiest. His master was rod thin, with deep shadows under his cheekbones and a scraggly mustache and beard. He wore a thin belt wrapped tight around his baggy pants, and his shirt sleeves appeared worn and shabby.

"How do you know they're like that, Jason?" I asked.

"Yeah," Sherry chimed in, "They don't look scary to me."

"Don't you remember what Dad said, Sherry? He told us to never go near him. And Heinz...I seen him hunt down a bunny. You'd think different if you'd seen what I seen."

"You seen them in here before?" I asked. He nodded but didn't elaborate. We continued to watch their progress as they headed farther south, where the woods grew more dense and the land sloped upwards toward a line of trees, silhouetted against a light blue sky. The dog ran a good ways ahead of his master, checking out the terrain until he was called back with the man's loud pitched whistle. When the dog quickly returned, the man bent down and placed his long, gangly arms around the dog's neck. Then off they went again, trudging up the steepest slope in the woods.

"The dog looks kinda friendly to me," Sherry insisted.

"You didn't see Heinz chomp down on that bunny and take its dead body back to Homeless Homer...who just laughed about it, then hung it on his belt by its back feet."

Sherry shook her head and looked away.

"Dogs are supposed to chase rabbits, Jason," I said, thinking of my dog Buck who chased animals all the time while hunting with my dad.

"Hey, you don't think Homeless Homer would sic his dog on you?" he asked me. "I bet he could, with just the snap of his fingers!"

"I bet not. He probably trained that dog to hunt like my dad trained Buck. Probably cooked that rabbit the way my mom cooks the deer my dad brings home."

"Does your dad kill Bambis?" Sherry asked. I was about to tell her that my dad would never kill a young deer, but Jason interrupted.

"Shut up, Sherry! You don't know nothing! That dog and Homeless Homer are dangerous! Dad said the man's not right in the head. He's a security guard, so he should know."

I rolled my eyes at him, tired of his know-it-all attitude.

"Maybe the man is and maybe he's not, but that dog is probably as gentle as my Buck when he's not hunting. And just how is it that you know his name is Heinz?"

Jason shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't really, but Dad says he's a Heinz 57, so I call him Heinz for short."

"What's Heinz 57 mean anyway?"

"I think it means the dog ain't worth much. I don't know for sure though."

I smiled, glad to hear him not sure about something.

"Hey, let's get back to riding this elephant of ours," I said, patting the tree. Before we were interrupted with their entrance, we were immersed in make-believe. The tree was our elephant, and the woods, the jungle, and we were searching for Tarzan's treehouse.

Jason nudged his sister on the shoulder.

"Get back down there and finish with that pile of leaves."

She reluctantly climbed down the tree, muttering to herself, and just like that, we were back to the business of pretending. Jason called out "yaw, yaw!" while waving his hand around as if he held a whip. "Come on Lila," he said, referring to our elephant, "Let's find Tarzan!"

(Find part two in our May issue)

Grayson County Veterans Deserve More Veteran Service Officers

-Samantha Thompson, Student

Approximately 12,000 veterans reside in Grayson County, but only one Veteran Service Officers (VSO) is available to help our United States veterans who have sacrificed their mental and physical health in the military, according to Jerrie Whiteley of the Herald-Democrat. Since there is only one VSO, veterans are often unable to access their maximum level of resources they may be entitled to.

In Grayson County, James Petty is the current VSO. He served in the United States Army for six years in the 1970's and, with his military service, Petty wants to continue to serve by helping veterans. But currently, the VSO for Grayson County is short-staffed. Supplying Grayson County with more Veteran Service Officers could result in more veterans receiving the help and resources they need.

Job responsibilities of a VSO

The primary job of Veterans Service Officers is to work as a liaison between the veteran and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs for veterans who are attempting to file a disability claim, note Anne Douds and Eileen Ahlin in Federal Probation. The VSO can also help with identifying any funds the veteran is entitled to such as education. These free services are there as a resource for veterans to use when they need help claiming any disabilities that are service-connected related and, according to Naomi Rodda of Bifocal, "Service-Connected Disability Compensation is available to veterans who have sustained injuries or developed illnesses that can be linked directly to military service."

Every day, VSO Petty sees veterans who are struggling with both physical and mental health issues, and housing insecurity. But Petty is only one man in one office and interviews roughly 10 to 50 veterans per week. In one given month, Petty files around

300 claims.

Vets with PTSD need ready help

Of the many health issues veterans suffer from, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is one of the more common cases. While in the military, some service members will experience combat and go on missions where they will experience life-threatening situations.

According to an article from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, PTSD ranges depending on the era in which the veteran served. For those who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in one given year, 11-20 out of 100 veterans have PTSD.

When veterans are suffering from such health issues like PTSD, the veteran may seek the VSO here in Grayson County for Service-Connected Compensation and Resources to help aid in their situation. But if Petty is not available in his office or cannot be reached via phone or email, the veteran may now lose the opportunity or the motivation to seek this help because they may not get another day off of work. As a veteran myself who served in the United States Navy, I visited Petty's office to seek help twice because he was not in his office before I was finally able to see him.

Inadequacy of Transition Assistance Program

According to the National League of Cities, "Serious mental health challenges connected to military service such as depression, PTSD and anxiety have direct ties to substance abuse and homelessness, in addition to taking a toll on the individuals and their families." Veterans already often have trouble adapting to the civilian life after they get honorably discharged. Before service members are discharged, they are required to attend a week-long class referred to as a

Transition Assistance Program (TAPS). This program is for service members and their spouses who are transitioning to civilian life and gives them the tools and training to make the transition as smooth as possible.

I went through this program before I was discharged but found that for most service members, the experience was just a "check in the box" that shows they completed the class. The program does not adequately supply the tools and training for transition, leaving many veterans unaware of their available benefits.

Many Americans may benefit from different points of view rather than just one point of view. With only one VSO in Grayson County, veterans may be left unaware of some benefits they are entitled to. Petty's range of knowledge is of great value, but it can be limited in certain cases.

Homeless vets need VSO access

When service members are honorably discharged, they take on a financial burden. When veterans become a civilian, their monthly income is significantly reduced or even diminished. As a result of a diminished income, this can leave veterans and possibly their family homeless. When a county has homeless veterans or homeless people sleeping on the side of the road, it reflects on the county and how they care for their people. If the veteran suffers from PTSD and is dealing with the financial burden and stress, the veteran may want to seek the VSO.

Suicidal vets need immediate VSO access

Between 2013 and 2019, suicide rates increased more than ever, even with a \$1 billion investment in prevention, according to the National League of Cities.

Veterans are 1.5 times more likely to commit

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Nursing program lends pandemic response a helping hand

- Jordan Utley, Dean of Health Sciences

Crisis brings us together as a community, and it also allows the stars to shine. Grayson Nursing is performing a constellation of support efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts include assisting with vaccination preparation, administration, and patient education. Faculty and students from across the Nursing programs at Grayson have volunteered their time and expertise at the following locations: TMC Bonham, Carrus Specialty Hospital, and Grayson County Health Department. Faculty and students volunteered in rain or sunshine (or snow), driving miles to various locations across the region to assist, and collaborating alongside other healthcare professions to bring vaccines to friends and families in our surrounding communities.

Lori Hoover is the Coordinator of the Associate degree Nursing (ADN) program and Nursing Program Immunization Coordinator for the COVID-19 pandemic. "Benefits to the students include attaining great experience in the acquisition of skills, the opportunity to communicate with and educate the public, and most importantly, blooming their confidence as a nurse," explains Hoover. Since the vaccinations became available earlier this year, the Nursing program has supported the administration of nearly 5000 shots into the arms



Above: Nursing student Michael Bakia assists with pandemic response measures. Left: Immunization Clinical Coordinator and ADN Program Coordinator Lori Hoover. (Photo by author)



of North Texas community members.

Nursing at Grayson includes certificate and degree programs from entry to the profession to an advanced degree option. Students can enter the Nursing profession through a 12-month certificate program via the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) role, or by becoming a Registered Nurse (RN) by way of an Associate's degree in Nursing (ADN). Recently, Grayson Nursing added a post-graduate degree for nurses looking to continue their professional growth beyond the RN credential--the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). The BSN is a hybrid program with 85% of the content delivered online.

If you are interested in making an impact in your community and think that Nursing is your path, contact Nursing@grayson.edu for more information.

(Continued from "GC EMS" pg 1)

Are you interested in learning more about Grayson Emergency Medical Service Programs? Grayson offers educational training to achieve the Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) credential and an Associate degree (AS) in Paramedicine, preparing students to sit for the State of Texas Paramedic License. You can enter the field as an EMT, try out the profession, then move on to get your AS in Paramedicine. Paramedics and EMTs are essential members of the interprofessional healthcare team. They respond to emergencies, evaluate injuries and acute illness, and transport patients to the hospital if they need emergency care.

The main difference between Paramedics and EMTs is their level of education and the types of procedures they are licensed to perform. While it varies by state, EMTs are generally able to administer glucose and oxygen, and perform CPR. In comparison, Paramedics can start IV lines, administer 30-40 different kinds of medications in route to the hospital, and intubate patients or perform a tracheotomy (making an incision in the trachea) to secure an airway. Paramedics can also interpret heart rhythms and perform defibrillation to save lives.

Are you interested in saving lives? Contact the EMS Director, Curtis Groseclose: GrosecloseC@grayson.edu today!



Above: EMS Director Curtis Groseclose. (Photo by author)

(Continued from "Veterans" pg 2)

Veterans are 1.5 times more likely to commit suicide due to health issues than nonveterans are. With the current pandemic, experts are already seeing an increase in mental distress and self harm among the veteran community, reports Leo Shane in Military Times. He notes the suicide report that "shows the rate of suicide among veterans at 17.6 a day in 2018." Again, if there is only one VSO for Grayson County, then these rates may increase.

Veterans deserve our best resources

With Grayson County, Texas, supplying more Veteran Service Officers, the United States veterans who reside in Grayson County will have twice the amount of resources made readily available, helping twice the amount of veterans than before. Veterans sacrificed enough for this country. It is the least our county can do to give back as an appreciation for their service.

Increasing the number of Veteran Service Officers will increase claims filed each month. Adding just one VSO to serve Grayson County would double the filed claims to 600 claims per month. Veterans could feel some closure, knowing their claim is in the process of getting finalized.

Additional VSO adds more knowledge of resources

With another individual to

represent Grayson County, their range of knowledge may better assist a veteran in a special case during their claim.

United States Marine veteran Turner*, during his service in the Marines, drank water at Camp Lejeune that was later determined to be contaminated. Turner spoke with Petty on behalf of filing a Service-Connected Disability claim but has yet to hear a result for his claim. Petty's range of knowledge never covered this type of situation, nor had he heard of someone claiming this prior. This would be considered a special claim. With another VSO, the range of knowledge would be broader.

Maintaining service with additional officer

Supplying Grayson County with more Veteran Service Officers will also increase their availability. The range of availability for one VSO is much more narrow, considering they are still human and have to take care of their personal daily needs, as well. With an additional officer, as one VSO steps out of the office, the other VSO can remain in the office and maintain a consistent work flow for veterans who need assistance. They will be able to interview and assist in the filing process of veterans who want to file a claim for any service-connected health issues. They can answer phone calls, reply to emails and leave fewer veterans

behind.

This simple resolution could lead to an increase in the number of veterans gaining mental-health confidence, as well as more finances to help the family. As a result, it could reduce the amount of homeless veterans sleeping on the roadside. Referring back to my visit at the VSO here in Grayson County, this addition would have been very helpful. My visit would not have resulted in my returning to the Veteran Service Office twice to finally see the VSO.

Help for older vets

Smith*, who served for seven years in the United States Air Force, stated, "During my last few months in the United States Air Force in the 1970's, the Air Force did not offer a TAPS program like they do now. They handed me my discharge paperwork and said, 'Be on your merry way.'" Older veterans who served during the Vietnam War or before were never given the resources, and considering their age now, they are often not technologically inclined to research the resources. This leaves them unaware of benefits and what they could be entitled to.

Another veteran, Branch*, who served in the United States Air Force for 21 years and is retired and files for both retirement and disability, stated, "I was required to take the TAPS program, even after serving for 21 years. They

did not offer resources, and I do not even know the name of the VSO for the county I live in to reach out to."

Smith went on to state that "when I filed for my Service-Connected Disability claim, I missed out on almost 30 years of disability compensation, and I'm still unclear on how to use my Veteran Home loan. There needs to be more VSO's to propose the information."

Help is available with sufficient staffing

According to VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci, "The VA requires a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education a year to maintain a service officer's accreditation, but we provide up to 80 hours of training every year." In 2017, the VA reported this program successfully helped over 500,000 wounded veterans, both ill and injured, with \$7.7 billion in compensation and with nearly 158,000 new claims.

Veteran Service Officers help veterans in many ways. Petty is quoted as saying, "the paperwork is completely uncomplicated...It's the volume of the paperwork that makes the job tense."

Another VSO representative in Grayson County would lighten this workload and improve the quality of life for veterans across Grayson County.