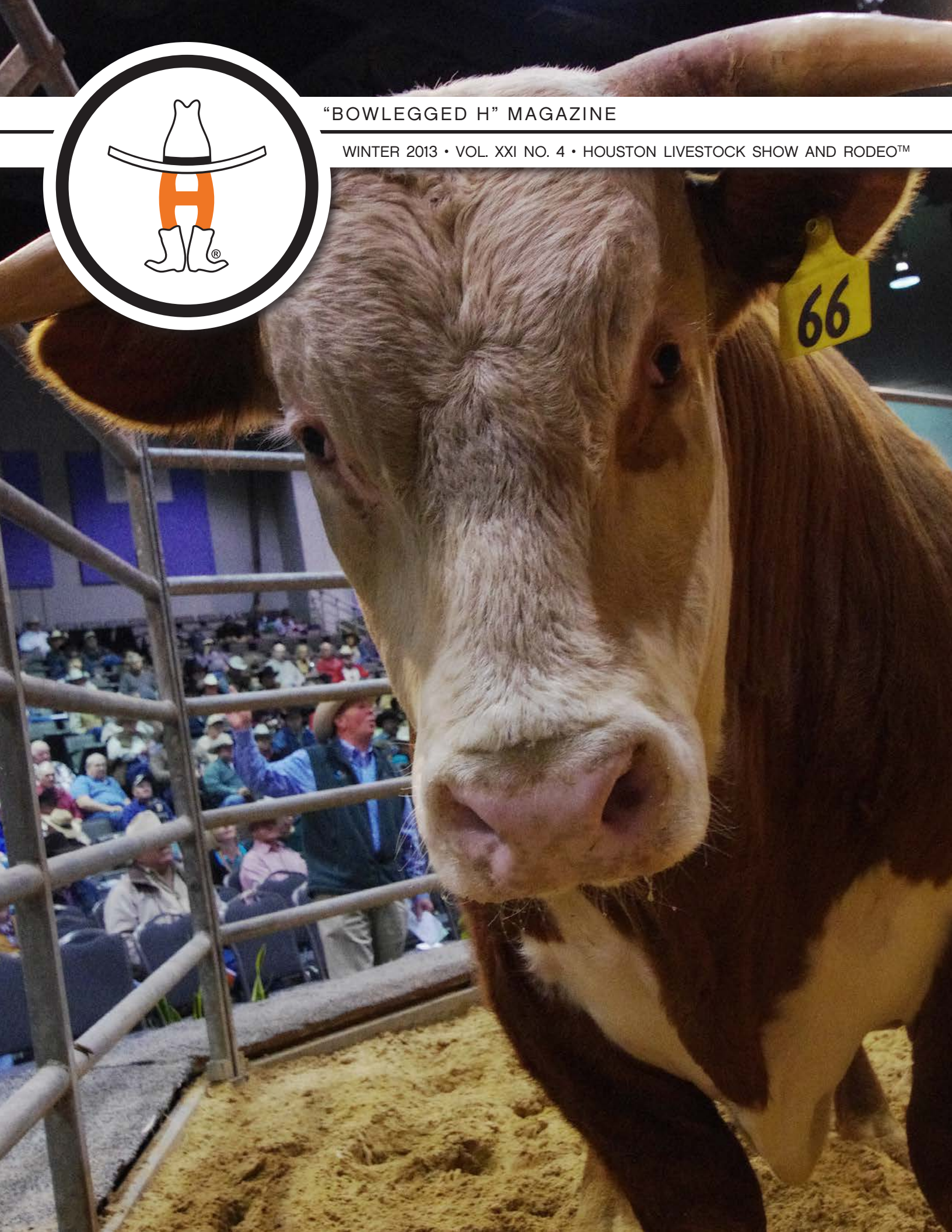




"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

WINTER 2013 • VOL. XXI NO. 4 • HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™



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WINTER 2013
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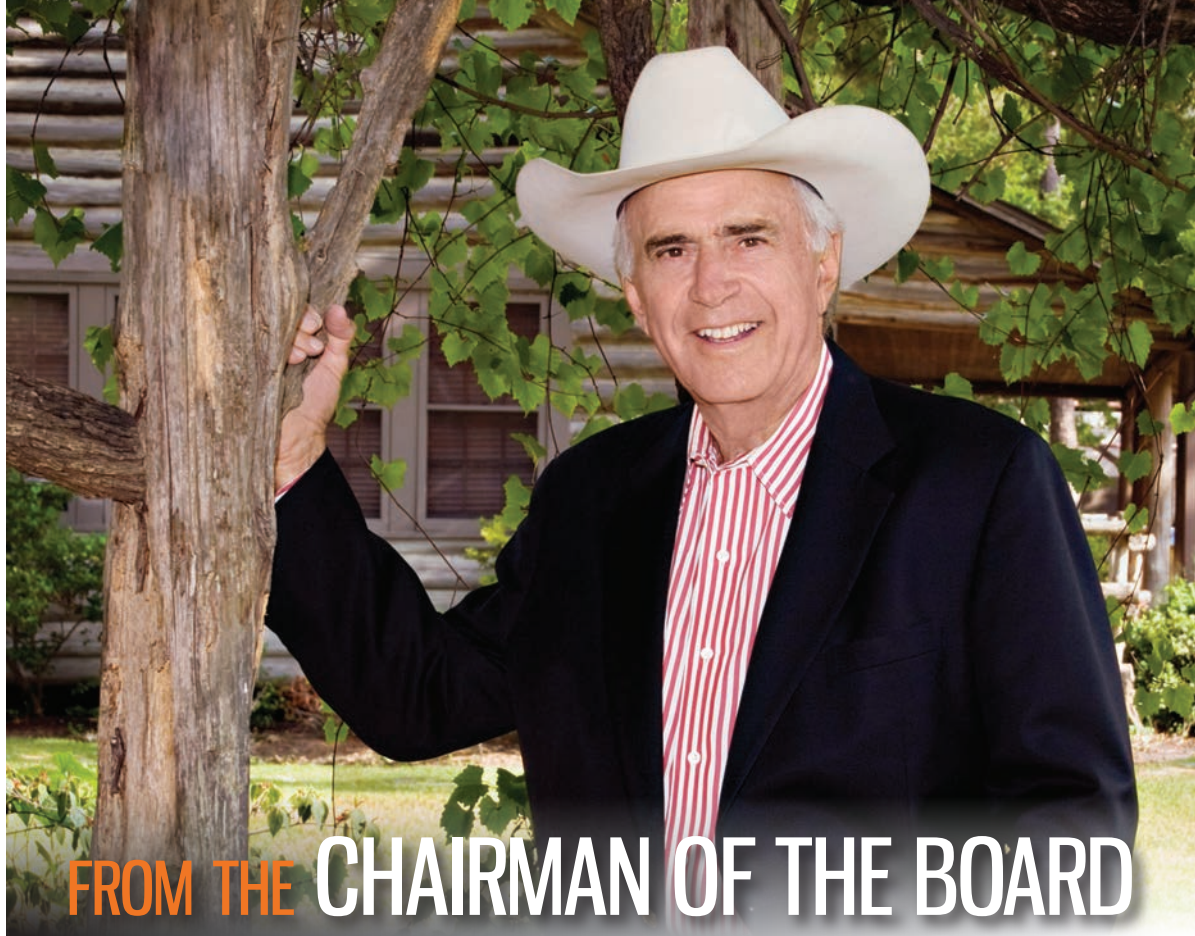
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I'm sure by this point in the year, we are all thinking the same thing: Where did 2013 go and how is it almost time for Rodeo again? Show buzz is picking up as cooler weather creeps into Houston, and each and every one of you have probably made a trip to Reliant Park for a committee meeting within the past few months. We're less than four months from our main event, and I, for one, am more excited than ever before. Although this will be my final Show as chairman of the board, I never tire of seeing how we are all able to come together and produce such a world-renowned event — it truly is magical.

As I look back on the past 11 months, one thing keeps coming to my mind: The talent this organization harbors is unlike anything else. Whether it is the talent of my fellow volunteers, who continue to amaze us every day with their grand ideas, elaborate plans, and passion; the talent of our more than 700 scholarship students who are finishing up their first year of college; or the rodeo athletes who prove at every performance that they're at the top of their game, we are all lucky to be among such an elite group of people, and for that I am grateful.

This issue of "Bowlegged H" Magazine is filled with examples of that talent. Did you know that hidden among our Rodeo

scholars was a juggling unicyclist? Or, that champion steer wrestling comes down to precise timing, execution and strength? Be sure to read through these great articles and to let us know what else you'd like to see in the magazine by sending a message to magazine@rodeohouston.com.

Also within this issue, we help close the chapter on one of the Show's oldest running supporters. Port City Stockyards, which was founded by the Show's first president, J.W. Sartwelle, will hand over the all-breeds livestock sales to a new company in 2014. We look forward to seeing what Gulf Tex Marketing will do with these sales in the future, and thank you to Port City for its support throughout the past 45 years.

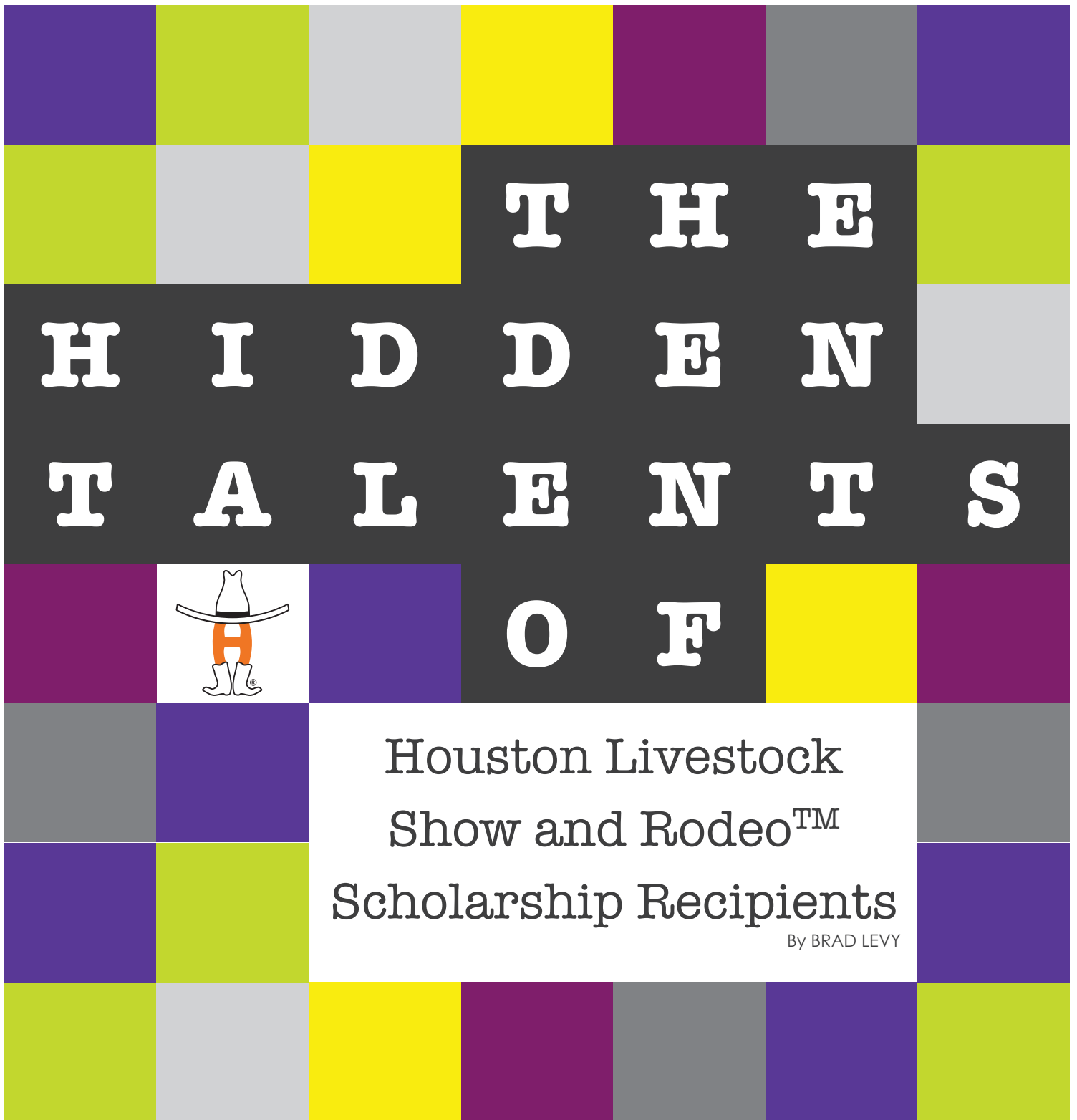
The talents of thousands of people are needed to make the Show what it is today, and I've just touched on a fraction of them here. Continue to share your passion and abilities with us as we all prepare for what is sure to be the best Show yet.

Happy holidays to you and yours and we'll see you in the new year!

Best,



Steve Stevens



Houston Livestock
Show and Rodeo™
Scholarship Recipients

By BRAD LEVY

The scholarships awarded by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo help encourage some of the best and brightest young minds in Texas. The Show commits more than \$12 million each year to graduating high school seniors who demonstrate academic potential, good citizenship and leadership in the community. But, these students not only excelled in their education, they also possess unique talents, some of which might surprise you!



Charles (left) and Carlton

Stafford High School
Metropolitan Scholarships

Hometown: Stafford, Texas

College: The University of
Texas at Austin

Major: Electrical
Engineering



CHARLES OKECHUKWU ANUMNU & CARLTON CHUKWUMA ANUMNU

Track and Field

“I was drawn to track and field by a personal goal to be good in at least one sport while in middle school. I wasn’t very good in football or basketball, so I made an extreme effort to work hard and excel in track and field.” - **Charles**

“Having my twin brother compete with me in competitions always made me push myself a little harder. Neither one of us wanted to get outshined by the other; this caused us to be very competitive.” - **Carlton**

DAI NGUYEN

Freelance Photographer

“Whenever my friends and I would have events and parties, I would be the photographer. I love taking photos and capturing moments. It’s crazy during prom season, juggling school with photography.”

George Bush High School
Metropolitan Scholarship

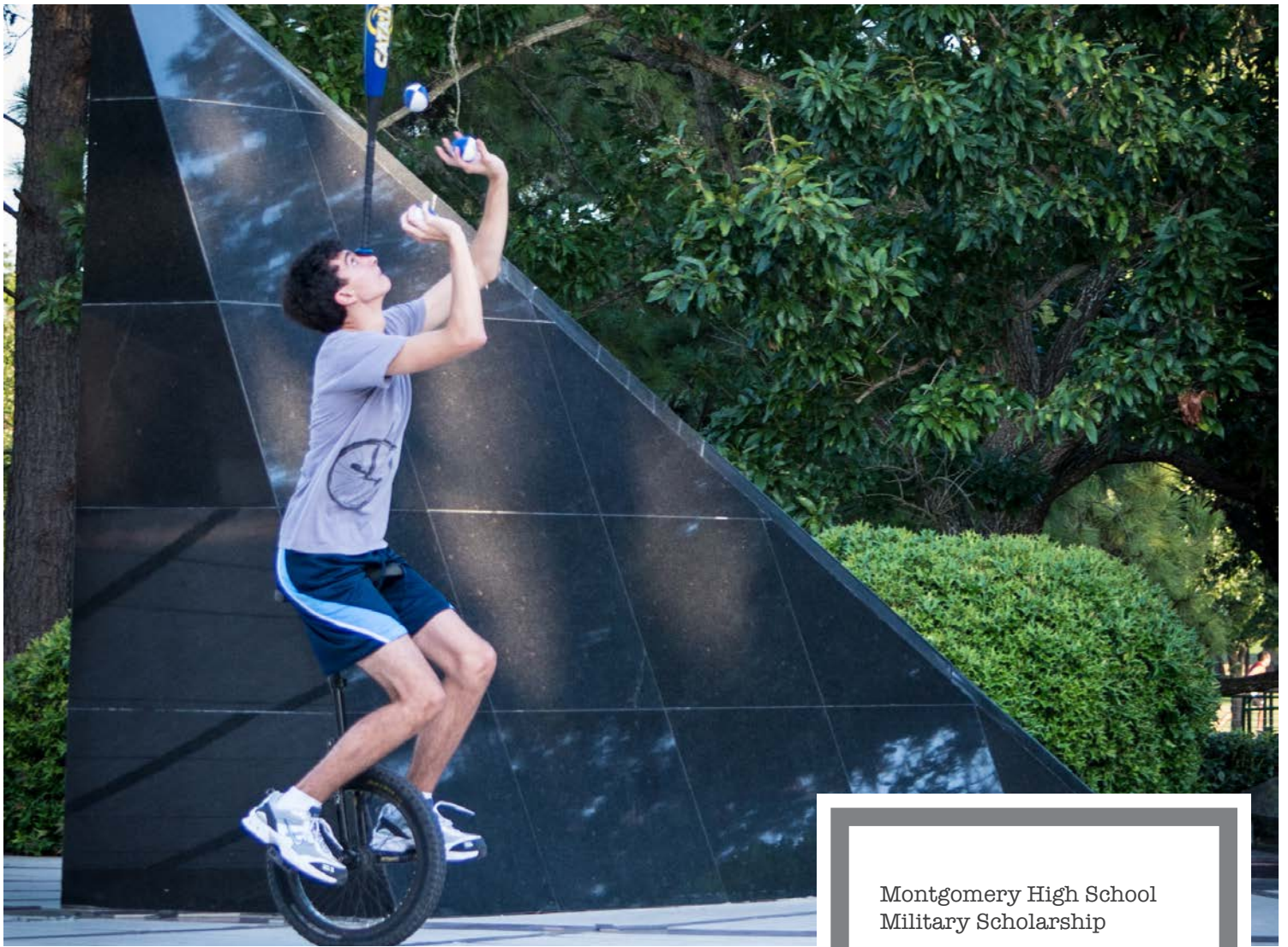
Hometown: Houston

College: University of
Houston

Major: Kinesiology



Lisa Norwood



Montgomery High School
Military Scholarship

Hometown: Dobbin, Texas

College: The University of
Texas at Austin

Major: Mechanical
Engineering



MARK METZGER

Unicycling and Juggling

“I started riding a unicycle after I learned to do wheelies on a bike; I thought, ‘Who needs the extra wheel?’ It was fun to challenge myself and do new tricks.”

HOW TO BE A RODEO COWBOY:

STEER WRESTLING

By DAVID SIMPSON

In the sport of rodeo, nothing brings the cowboys and livestock closer together than steer wrestling. Commonly referred to as bulldogging, this challenging, physical event requires a cowboy to use muscle, skill, precise timing and speed, as an average run is typically completed within four seconds.

Trevor Knowles, a champion steer wrestler from Mount Vernon, Ore., and longtime RODEOHOUSTON® contestant, is no stranger to the winners circle, and shares just what it takes to achieve the perfect run.

THE LOWDOWN

The steer wrestler starts in a “box” with the steer in a chute beside him. At the cowboy’s signal, the steer is released, and the chase begins. The steer wrestler’s horse leads him alongside the sprinting steer while a hazer is on the other side, keeping the steer on the same straight path. The steer wrestler then drops away from the horse and strategically places his hands and arms on the steer’s head and horns. The next move is for the steer wrestler to try and halt the motion of the steer — which can be traveling up to 25 miles per hour — by digging his feet into the dirt.

HISTORY OF BULLDOGGING



Jason Miller is Knowles’ hazer in this run and is galloping on a horse along the right side of the steer. “The hazer is important to my success,” Knowles said. “He keeps the steer running in a straight line or from veering in a different direction. In this run, Jason is yelling at my horse to change leads and move to the left.”

Estimating that this shot was approximately two seconds out of the box, Knowles is in the process of sliding down and off the right side of his galloping horse, Earl. He is being pulled off the horse’s back by the slowing steer. “Everything’s weightless until you grab the steer by the nose,” he said. The bulldogger’s strength, leverage and skill are used to slow down the steer, and ultimately, wrestle it to the ground.

Steer wrestling, unlike most other rodeo events, is not one that was originated by ranch hands working cattle, Knowles explained. Bill Pickett, a legendary African-American cowboy, is credited with creating “bulldogging” in the early 1900s. He watched bulldogs herd cattle, specifically as they moved cattle by running alongside them and



"I'm grasping the steer's right horn in the crook of my right elbow — not in my hand," Knowles said. "A bulldogger must catch the steer's head tight before leaving the stirrups." He then uses that grip, muscle and control to twist the steer's head.

"Your left hand must have a tight and controlled catch on the steer's left horn," Knowles explained.

His left leg has slid over the top of the horse, and now Earl, his gelding, is barely holding Knowles' weight as he continues to gallop forward. Knowles said this picture demonstrates the beginning of his hip rotation, which allows him to grip and twist the steer's head once his leg hits the ground.

Knowles' right leg is bent but remains in the stirrup until his upper body weight is transferred to the neck of the steer. "Your feet stay packed in the stirrups until the horse has carried you through," he said.

While galloping forward, Earl knows to align Knowles beside the steer while keeping the steer on a straight path. "Earl feels the release of my weight as I am pulled by the steer off his back. He naturally moves to the left as I leave the saddle," Knowles said. "Your horse has to have control and be quick. They must be patient before the start and then move like lightning from a standing position."

Steers weigh more than twice as much as a cowboy. "This steer weighed about 550 pounds, two-and-a-half times my weight," Knowles said.

bit the animals' lips to restrain them. Pickett duplicated these actions, including biting the steers' lips. "I've thought about biting their lips when I'm getting dragged through the mud," Knowles jokes.

ANY ADVICE?

Knowles had some advice for young cowboys hoping to become champion steer wrestlers. "Practice — if [steer wrestling] is a sport you love, surround yourself with good coaches and trainers, and practice until you are tired. You can never get too good."



J.D. "Bubba" Sartwelle Jr. (far right) worked to continue the family tradition of Port City Stockyards' involvement with the Show's All Breeds Livestock Sale. The company retired after more than 45 years at the end of the 2013 Show.



James W. Sartwelle (center) founded Port City Stockyards in 1931, just one year before the Houston Fat Stock Show began. He served as the Show's first president and his family still continues to be a part of the organization to this day.

"We are excited about the opportunity – It's not just a dream come true, it is a privilege and an honor to have the torch passed to us. We are honored to follow in that legacy." - Josh Lockhart, Gulf Tex



A New

It all began when James W. Sartwelle founded Port City Stockyards in 1931. He wanted to create a livestock market where local cattle raisers, like himself, could sell and merchandise their cattle and not have to ship them to the large stockyards in Fort Worth, Texas, and Kansas City, Mo. The next year, Sartwelle took the lead and helped form the Houston Fat Stock Show, and he became its first president. This new event allowed cattlemen from all across the Texas Gulf Coast to come together with their finest stock. From the stock show's beginning, Port City Stockyards helped with selling the livestock at prevailing market prices.

Fast forward to 1966, when the now-named Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ moved its annual event from the Sam Houston Coliseum in downtown Houston to the newly formed Astrodome, which provided more space for the growing event. In 1968, Port City Stockyards moved its headquarters to Sealy, Texas, and oversaw the management of the Show's newly instituted all-breed range bull and commercial female sales. This management continued through the 2013 Show with help from the All Breeds Livestock Sales Committee.

Continuing the tradition started by their grandfather more than 80 years ago, J. D. "Bubba" Sartwelle Jr., and his brother, Bill Sartwelle, have seen every change imaginable within Port City Stockyards and the Show, from the sheer size of the cattle sales



Chapter for All Breeds Livestock Sales

By LAURA SANDERS

to the implementation of computer programs. Bubba Sartwelle and his family have been faithful stewards of this prestigious cattle sale started long ago by their grandfather.

"We tried to institute something new every year that was cutting edge," Bubba Sartwelle said. "We've evolved into the way we do [the sale] now."

The 2013 Show marked the 46th sale managed by the Sartwelle family. After more than 45 years, Bubba and his wife, Sugie, and their family are ready to move into another stage in their lives, and although they will no longer officially manage the all breeds livestock sales, the family remains very active within the Show as volunteers.

"Many people have contributed to the success of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo since its inception, and none more so than the Sartwelle family," said Joel Cowley, Show president. "For Bubba, his family and his staff, the Show has truly been a labor of love."

As Port City Stockyards turns the final page of its book with the sale, Gulf Tex Livestock Marketing is just beginning its first chapter with the Show. Similar to Port City, Gulf Tex is a family-oriented company which promotes the cattle and livestock industries in the area. Although the company is newly formed, the four families involved are no strangers to the business: John Atkinson, Bernard Lee, Josh Lockhart and Billy Schwertner created Gulf Tex, bringing together more than 50 years of experience.

In 2012, the company marketed more than 193,000 head of cattle through its auctions in the Texas towns of Edna,

Anderson, Wharton and Lockhart. The four families formed Gulf Tex for the purpose of managing the Show's all breeds livestock sale, and they look forward to working together to ensure the sale's continued success.

"Port City's done a great job of building it up over the years," said Lockhart. "This sale is definitely one of the best in the country, and we intend to keep it that way."

"We are excited about the opportunity — It's not just a dream come true, it is a privilege and an honor to have the torch passed to us. We are honored to follow in that legacy."

For the 2014 Show, the Show's management is changing to a one-day sale, which Gulf Tex will oversee to ensure its success. The new challenge will be fitting both bulls and females into the sale at one time, and limiting consignments to the best cattle possible. Lockhart said the shorter format will save time for buyers and consignors, and make it easier for the All Breeds Livestock Sales Committee, while selling the same number of animals.

"Gulf Tex brings a great deal of experience and capability to the table," Cowley said. "When combined with the enthusiasm and dedication of the All Breeds Livestock Sales Committee, the willingness of the Sartwelle family to assist in the transition, and the enhanced educational program and greater convenience for our buyers with the shortened format, the all breeds sale has a formula for continued success." 🤠



Sunday

Monday

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If you want Rodeo tickets, dinner and an open bar for 26 to 188 guests, plan a party in one of the Show's Entertainment Suites. These suites are sold by the night, and with private lounge areas, these are perfect for entertaining clients or socializing with friends and family.

Watch the rodeo and concert from the suite or from your comfortable stadium seats. There are multiple flat-screen televisions so you don't miss any of the action. Some suites also include private restrooms.

Email entertainmentsuites@rodeohouston.com and we'll help you find the perfect suite!

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Want to get the suite experience without having a big group? Suite 348 is a shared suite, where you are not required to come as a group. All the same great amenities apply.

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Entertainment Suite ticket purchase includes:

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- open bar (includes top shelf liquor brands, beer, wine, soft drinks and water);
- attendant/bartender (gratuity not included); and
- admission to Reliant Park for the livestock and horse shows, carnival, shopping and food, and educational exhibits.

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r&b/pop

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country

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Search for the

ULTIMATE FAN

By WENDY McNATT

Finding the ultimate fan of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ is not as easy as it sounds. After talking to numerous enthusiastic attendees, only one thing is clear: there are as many reasons to love the Show as there are fans.

From the rodeo traditionalists to the pure entertainment seekers, the numbers of Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo loyalists continue to increase each year, with no signs of slowing down. More than 2.5 million visitors broke the total attendance record in 2013, and narrowing the field down to the ultimate fan is a Texas-sized challenge.

Show Ring STAR

For Alaina Lindsey, 46, and her daughter, Molly, 17, of Cypress, Texas, the anticipation of Rodeo season began 12 years ago when the family moved to the Houston area. Not only did the Show offer family-friendly entertainment, it also inspired Molly to pursue agriculture and veterinary sciences as an educational path.

"The very first time we came to the Show, Molly saw a lamb being born, and she was hooked," Alaina Lindsey said. "Of course she liked the rides and the food, but she was fascinated with the animals. I thought it was just a phase that she would outgrow, like dolls, but she never stopped!"

Molly, a member of Langham Creek FFA, showed a steer at the 2013 Houston Livestock Show™, and after graduation from high school in 2014, she plans to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. Not only did the Show introduce the Lindsey family to a great Houston event, it inspired Molly's educational aspirations. The Lindsey



family estimates that they have attended the Show more than 125 times.

"I am a fan of [the Show] because it showed me how important it is to take responsibility for animals; all of the people at the Rodeo really respect the animals, and they look forward to teaching students about opportunities in agriculture," Molly said. "I am not sure what I would have ended up doing if I [had] never gone to the Rodeo with my mom. It showed me a completely different world."

Life-Long **VENDOR**

Walking through the Show's commercial exhibits in Reliant Center, which attract national and local vendors, one can find eager shoppers from all walks of life. Show vendors may choose to exhibit across the country on any particular date, but when it comes to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the vendors are true fans.

Elvy and Monica Bleyer have brought their leather goods to the Show since 1976. For this mother-daughter team from Houston, the true spirit of the Show is the relationships built

with the loyal customers.

"We are true fans of the [Show]," Elvy Bleyer said. "We have customers who have been coming since we first started our booth in 1976. Our friends also have booths, and we are a close community. We value this Show because Houstonians are the best patrons and neighbors in the country. We feel like we are participating in something great year after year. We have seen our customers grow up, get married and start their own families. This Rodeo grows fans!"

Pint-Sized **PERSPECTIVE**

Perhaps the biggest little fan is 6-year-old newcomer Ava Matthews of Winnie, Texas, who was visiting the Show with family. Ava participated in her first mutton bustin' competition in 2013, and is determined to make it an annual event.

"This was my first time to ride a sheep," Ava said with excitement. "If I keep practicing at home, I could be really good at this."

Clearly, there is a lot to like about the Rodeo, and fan favorites can be found around every corner. Whether it's the carnival or the food or the staged shows; the School Art and quilt displays; the shopping or the livestock exhibitions; or the wild rodeo action and star entertainment every year, fans come out in droves to pursue their old favorites, and perhaps discover new ones. The choices are as many and varied as the crowds. 🤠

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Rodeo Fashion Through the Decades

By AMY TANNER

Western wear, as with all fashion, has evolved through history to provide glimpses into the attitudes, history, lifestyles and even political climate of our culture. By examining the ever-changing attire seen at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, we can trace the unique history of this style.

By the 1940s, the Houston Fat Stock Show and Livestock Exposition had grown exponentially since its beginning in 1932. In quick succession, the Show expanded by adding a parade, barbecue contest, horse show, rodeo and entertainment to the list of activities. It was about this time that the tradition of wearing big hats, boots and jeans also took hold.

Show us your best and worst rodeo fashions from the past. Send photos to socials@rodeohouston.com to be included in our "Rodeo Fashion Police" Facebook album.



1940s

During this historical time, ladies wore shoulder pads, high-waisted skirts or trousers — adopted after World War II as a practicality — and because the Show was in February, leather, suede or fur coats. As a nod to the quintessential red and white bandana, men and women tied "Let 'Er Buck" scarves or cowboy mufflers around their necks, which were secured with a bolo slide.



40

1950s

Thanks to the influence of 1950s silver-screen stars, such as Roy Rogers, Dale Evans and Rex Allen, both men and women wore brightly colored attire sparkling with rhinestones, flocked in fringe and covered in embroidery. Decorated cowboy boots with pointy toes, belt buckles and hats also were popular, and the more coordinated and colorful the ensemble, the better. No stereotypical cowboy detail was spared, including exaggerated Western yokes, arrow pockets, piping, pearl snaps and bib-front shirts.



50



1960s

It was not until the end of the 1950s that denim swept the nation, but by the mid-1960s, this unique, cotton fabric had gained such popularity that it permeated even die-hard Show-goers. Also, polyester trouser suits became popular for both sexes, and women paired theirs with chiffon blouses with frilled collars, false eyelashes, pale lipstick and, sometimes, the decade's famous go-go boots rather than the typical Western footwear.

60





00

2000s

Starting in the 2000s until today, we've see a melting pot of fashion from the last several decades. As in the 1950s, rhinestones adorn everything from ball caps to belt buckles and T-shirts. Bolo ties or kerchiefs are back, as is turquoise — in a major way. Ladies are wearing fur again, and leather and denim are worn equally by men and women. Girls of all ages are pairing retro cowboy boots with everything from jeans to shorts and sundresses. The only thing we haven't seen make a return are those double-knit polyester Western suits. (Whew!) 🤠



1990s

The 1990s brought in a simpler, more minimalist look both in and out of the rodeo arena. Men sported Western-labeled, boot-cut jeans with patterned and print-decorated button up, collared shirts, thanks to the influence of popular country and Western stars such as George Strait, Garth Brooks and Clint Black. Ladies wore similar ensembles with tight, high-waisted Western-labeled riding jeans. Lace-up, flat-heeled boots also were incredibly popular for both sexes. Silver conchos could be found on everything, while leather and turquoise also saw an uptick in sales.



80

1980s

The 1980s can be characterized as one of the most over-the-top decades of fashion on all spectrums, with oversized shoulder pads for women; huge, glitzy jewelry; and big, heavily styled hair. Men wore narrower lapels, neckties and button-down, collared shirts with bolo ties for business and pleasure. Acid-washed denim was all the rage among the Western wear of Rodeo fans — from high-waisted jeans and oversized jackets to skirts and button-up shirts — as well as puff-painted and “bedazzled” ladies’ clothing.



70

1970s

By today's rodeo fashion standards, we may struggle to understand the appeal, but just as double-knit polyester bell-bottoms and leisure suits rocked popular culture, they rocked the Show's fashion sense in the 1970s, too. Also, during this decade, some popular national brands were advertising checkered bell-bottomed jeans and his-and-her Western leisure suits. Men also wore matching three-piece suits with wide lapels, wide shirt collars, wide ties and wide-brimmed cowboy hats. Anybody sensing a pattern in the 1970s?

Where Are They Now ?

By LISA NORWOOD

nathan plagens

photos courtesy of Nathan Plagens



Plagens (middle)



then

now

Every day, small town kids visit Houston and are amazed by the mass of skyscrapers that can be seen from all parts of the city, wondering just what goes on in those buildings. Nathan Plagens, a 1981 recipient of a \$6,000 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ 4-H Scholarship, was one of those curious kids, and now he knows exactly what it is like in that bustling downtown metropolis.

“As a kid, I really had no idea what opportunities there would be inside those big buildings,” said Plagens, now an employee of NextEra Energy in downtown Houston.

Plagens is from the small town of Hamilton, Texas, just 60 miles northwest of Waco, and said he was prompted to apply for a Show scholarship due to having limited funding for his college education at Texas A&M University. “[The scholarship] was such a good thing,” he said. “I was happy for the acknowledgement of my efforts, having worked so hard during my 10 years as a 4-H member and leader.”

Knowing he wanted to attend Texas A&M since he was a young boy, Plagens said it never mattered to him what he would study, but once he began college, he chose to major in agricultural engineering. In addition to his Show scholarship funds, he was able to pay for his college education by working several different jobs, including a stint with the Agricultural Extension Service on various ranches, and by hauling hay.

The labor intensity of some of these jobs, and the hard work his dad did as a machinist and farmer, reinforced Plagens’ goal to enter a career that would be a bit easier on

the body, he said. Upon graduating from Texas A&M in 1986, he worked at an environmental consulting firm for 10 years.

Always passionate about land and water use, but wanting to stick to the business side of the issues, Plagens went on to get a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Houston and expanded his work in the area of power plant development, focusing on environmental issues and plant development. Eventually, this led him to NextEra Energy, where he is a director of U.S. gas assets.

It was in 2004, while enjoying success in his career in Houston, that Plagens became a member of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, joining the Corral Club Committee. He joined the Speakers Committee in 2008 to be more directly involved with the community and to share his positive experience with young people. He is a passionate volunteer to this day.

Plagens and his wife, Leann, have one son, Jacob, 23. He said that as a dad, he wants to guide his son in finding opportunities as his parents did for him, and to help Jacob discover how things work in those big-city skyscrapers. Plagens also is confident that like himself, Jacob will do well by working hard, being a man of his word, and learning from his mistakes.

Plagens is just one of many Show scholarship recipients who have returned to the Show as a volunteer, giving of his time and talent to ensure that the young people of Texas will have the same opportunities for a bright and successful future. 🤠

jake wilkinson



courtesy of Jake Wilkinson



Lisa Norwood

then

now

From showing swine in Blackwell, Texas, to a commercial real estate career in Houston, with a few stops in between, Jake Wilkinson made his way to success with much prayer and a \$12,000 financial boost from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ Texas FFA scholarship program.

Wilkinson was encouraged by his parents and FFA and FCCLA advisors to apply for the Show scholarship. “I was a national FCCLA officer, but my connection to the Show through showing livestock made me want to apply for a scholarship through the FFA,” Wilkinson said. He was excited about the opportunity of the scholarship, and upon hearing about his fate, he did what his Christian family taught him to do — he prayed about it. “I just felt so blessed to get the Show scholarship and knew that it was all a ‘God thing,’” he said.

After securing the scholarship in 2006, Wilkinson left his hometown of 300 — where he was recognized as valedictorian of a high school graduating class of just nine students — to attend college at nearby Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

While at Texas Tech, Wilkinson was involved in extra-curricular activities, and served as his fraternity’s president and the business college’s student vice president. Then, in 2009, he decided to transfer to Texas A&M University to focus exclusively on his education. Once there, Wilkinson, worked typical college jobs such as waiting tables and hauling hay to assist with tuition payments, and spent time working in an attorney’s office and decided to apply for law school. The feedback he received on his applications, however, was not entirely positive. “My grades were good

and LSAT [score] was OK, but responses from the law schools I wanted to attend were just not encouraging,” Wilkinson said. At that point, he began to focus his sights on an agricultural business degree and his future.

Although Wilkinson’s soon-to-be-wife, Sterling, also attended Texas A&M University, the two actually met at a church camp where they were both counselors one summer. As fate would have it, the very next semester, they had all the same classes together and began their relationship. They both graduated from Texas A&M University in 2011.

Now happily married and living in Houston with 1-year-old daughter, Miller, Wilkinson is finding success as a commercial real estate broker for NAI Houston, a full-service commercial real estate firm. “Commercial real estate is a hard business, especially starting out with full-commission jobs. It took much persistence, patience and prayer, but it is a great business for me,” he said.

As Show scholarship recipients are encouraged to do, Wilkinson returned to give back to the organization that helped fund his college education by volunteering on the Show’s former Junior Horse Show Committee. He also intends to instill charitable values in his daughter as she gets older. Knowing that the encouragement, prayer and support of his church community in Houston made him feel welcome in the metropolis he now calls home, Wilkinson said, “It took hanging on to my small-town morals and life lessons, and just because you are from a small town in the middle of nowhere doesn’t mean you can’t do what you want by working hard and remembering how you were raised.” 🙏

SMALL STEPS

NURTURING CENTER

By GIGI WARK

Community Involvement Series



photos courtesy of Small Steps Nurturing Center



Many children today are exposed to preschool learning to help develop their young minds in a stimulating and safe environment. Research has proved that the early years of a child's life are the most crucial to success later in life. Unfortunately, not all families in the Houston area have the resources to provide their children with an accredited preschool environment, certified daycare center, or even childcare that can inspire and stimulate a child. This is where Small Steps Nurturing Center, a Christian, not-for-profit program, helps.

Small Steps' mission is to provide an exemplary early childhood program to instill and foster the social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth of economically at-risk children and their families.

As a part of its annual educational commitment, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ supports Small Steps as one of its educational grant programs, sharing in its mission to educate and better the future of Houston. The Show's support goes toward the school's overall operational budget, as tuition for the school is different than most private preschools.

The only cost to a Small Steps family is an investment of the parents' time, all of whom are required to volunteer at the campus a minimum of 10 hours per school year. They must participate in parent-child events to help reinforce the positive interactions students are exposed to during school hours. Parents, teachers and other volunteers work together to provide a safe, healthy environment where these students can experience love, positive interaction with peers, and one-on-one attention from a teacher.

Small Steps began in 1995 as a grassroots effort in a community center serving only six children who were not able to attend a local vacation Bible school. In 1999, the first Small Steps campus opened in Houston's First Ward, with about 60 children enrolled. Seven years later, a second campus was founded in Houston's Fifth Ward, offering school five days a week, 10 months out of the year, to more than 115 children. Today, Small Steps provides services to nearly 160 children, and it has graduated more than 270

students since its inception.

Small Steps' staff consists of highly qualified and committed teachers; social, emotional, and speech therapists; and volunteers, including many teachers who have children in the program.

"The parents have already made the first step by getting their children into the program," said Ashley Weathers, director of advancement. "Once the parents entrust us with their child, our goal is to fill our children with tools that can help them succeed later in life; to teach them social, emotional and coping skills; and to fill their hearts with love, their stomachs with food, their environment with care, and their surroundings with people that can make them feel safe."

According to Weathers, follow-up cognitive tests of the children after a year at Small Steps show an IQ increase in a majority of the students. Small Steps also works closely with Texas Education Agency accredited elementary schools to help select and place their graduates into the public school system.

Ana Schick, executive director of Small Steps, related the story of Lucy Gonzalez, a young mother who wanted to attend college so that she could provide a better life for her child, Randy. The child was quiet and unsure of himself, and had a speech impediment. Randy thrived at Small Steps, and is now outgoing, loves to learn and interact with his friends, and seems to have made a lifelong best friend. Randy will be graduating from Small Steps this year.

"It's hard for him to leave because he loves it here, but he is ready," Gonzalez said. "He loves challenges, wants to learn, and is excited to see what else is ahead for him." Gonzalez is now in her second year at the University of Houston – Downtown, studying education. She volunteers when she can at Small Steps, and she hopes to return as a teacher one day.

Small Steps is filling the hearts and minds of children who otherwise may not have had the chance to have a head start on the road to a successful life as an adult. 📖

Reaching New Heights

Scholarships

\$4,284,000 **Metropolitan: 238 four-year, \$18,000**

\$2,052,000 **Opportunity: 114 four-year, \$18,000**

\$1,404,000 **Area Go Texan: 78 four-year, \$18,000**

\$1,260,000 **Texas 4-H: 70 four-year, \$18,000**

\$1,260,000 **Texas FFA: 70 four-year, \$18,000**

\$270,000 **School Art: 15 four-year, \$18,000**

\$180,000 **FCCLA: 10 four-year, \$18,000**

\$270,000 **Hildebrand Family: 15 four-year, \$18,000**

\$90,000 **Military: five four-year, \$18,000**

\$90,000 **Technical: 10 two-year, \$9,000**

\$1,200,000 **Achievement: 50 one-year, \$8,000; 50 two-year, \$16,000**

\$48,000 **Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine: six one-year, \$8,000**

\$10,000 **Texas Christian University Ranch Management Program: four one-year, \$2,500**

Educational Program Grants

Graduate Assistantships

Angelo State University
Sam Houston State University
Stephen F. Austin State University
Sul Ross State University
Tarleton State University
Texas A&M University
Texas A&M University – Commerce
Texas A&M University – Kingsville
Texas State University
Texas Tech University
West Texas A&M University

With the announcement of its 2014 educational commitment, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has soared to new heights by surpassing the \$350 million mark in overall funds to Texas students since 1932.

“For more than 80 years, the Show has provided financial support for the youth of Texas in a remarkable way,” said

Joel Cowley, president of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. “Reaching the more-than-\$350-million mark in educational commitments is a great testament to the passion of this organization’s dedicated volunteer corps, which stands 28,500-plus strong — it truly is The Show With a Heart.” 🤠

Aldine/Spring Elementary Reading Program • Alley Theatre • American Festival for the Arts • Baylor Research Advocates for Student Scientists • Brookwood Community • The Center for Hearing and Speech • Children’s Museum of Houston* • Comp-U-Dopt • Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston • Former Texas Rangers Foundation • Glassell School of Art • Greater Houston Partnership – Opportunity Houston 2.0* • Harris County Hospital District Foundation • The Health Museum • Holocaust Museum Houston • Houston Area Women’s Center • Houston Community College Foundation – Public Safety Institute • Houston Grand Opera • Houston Hispanic Forum • Houston Symphony • Medilife of Houston: Houston Fire Department Public Affairs and Educational Division Camp Houston Fire • Memorial Park Conservancy • NASA – Texas Aerospace Scholars • Neuhaus Education Center • Prairie View A&M University • Reasoning Mind • The Rise School of Houston • Schriener University – Western Art Academy Workshop • Shriners Hospitals for Children – Houston • Small Steps Nurturing Center • Teach for America – Houston • Texas 4-H • Texas A&M University: Beef Cattle Short Course • Bush School of Government & Public Service • Dr. Joe Townsend ‘67 Leadership Fellows Program • Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans • Equine Initiative • Texas FFA Association • Texas Southern University Foundation • Texas Wildlife Association Foundation • The University of Texas – UTeach • Theatre Under the Stars • United Way • UTHHealth School of Nursing* • YMCA of Greater Houston

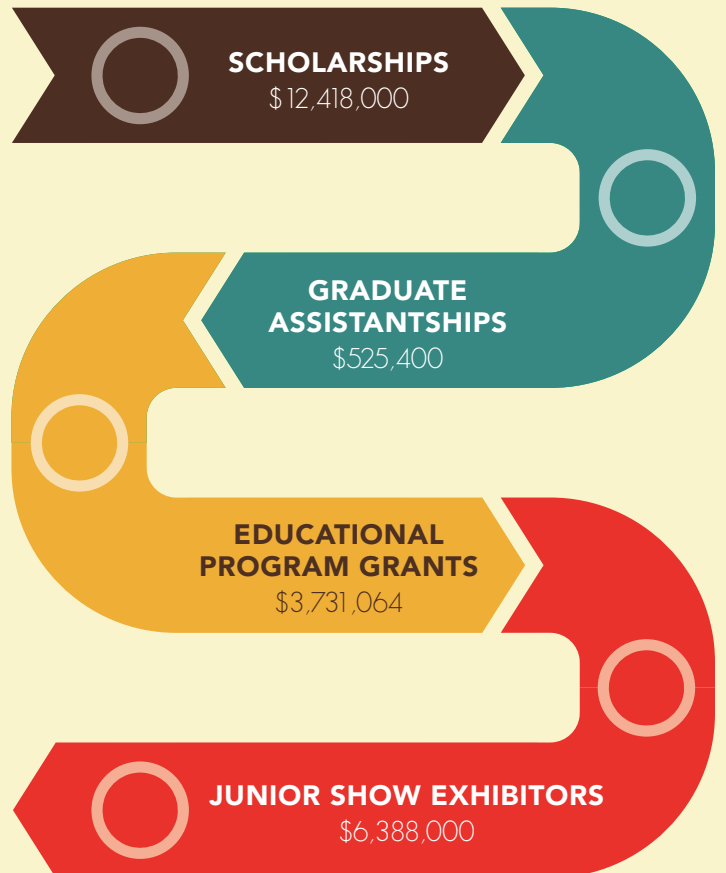
*Multi-year grant, funds allocated in 2013

\$ 23,062,464



2014

*Educational
Commitment*





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