

Alacritous Alumni



It is a rare luxury to be having one of our best return and serve our students. **Melody Mott** recently won a second place, State-of-Texas Caldwell Award in the graduate division for her essay on a Texas underground railroad in the 1850s. She is also our Honors/PTK coordinator at NTCC. She is studying at UT Tyler. She did much to enable our recent film.



He had a memory like a steel trap. **Ja-lyn English** was the producer of our Caldwell-Award winning 2019 film starring Maritza Quinones (right) on Adina de Zavala, he was a two-time presenter at the NCHC, and an Eckman-Award winner. He graduated recently from the University of Texas at Dallas with a bachelors in Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communications. He currently works at Fidelity Charitable. He continues to pursue game development. For this he has a portfolio, and a trial game, beetleball.

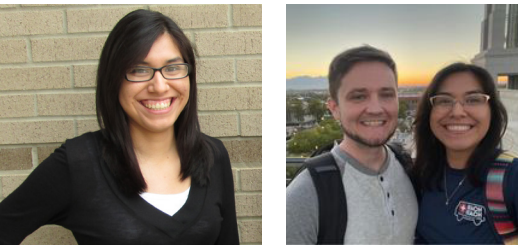
Maritza Quinones served as a nurse assistant on the COVID ward during the worst period of the local onslaught in the summer of 2020. She presented at the NCHC, won a Leader of Promise nationally, and became our 6th student leader of the GPHC. She obtained her bachelor's in Kinesiology from UT Tyler & is currently an Exercise Specialist at a non-profit program called Kourage Health. She is applying to the entry-level Masters of Occupational Therapy program at UT Tyler.



Shelby (Parker) Rockett was a first-year sensation with us, winning the 2009 NE Texas Poetry Contest, and a Boe Award for her article on Bonnie Parker, the outlaw. She graduated in 2013, got married and taught for 6 years before obtaining a master's at UT Tyler in special education. As she teaches, and raises 2 children, her husband, Ryan works as the SWAT team commander in Longview.

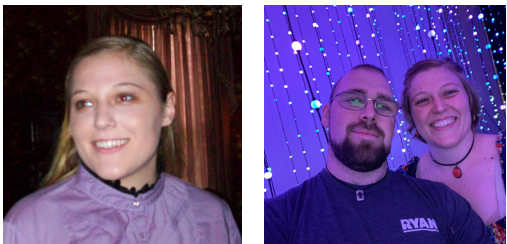


Kelli (Knepp) Barker recalled her childhood well enough to win first-place in our 2014 Poetry Contest, she published in *Touchstone*, and won a Leaders of Promise Award. In what



became our first Caldwell-Award winning film, she worked tenaciously, largely behind the scenes. She received her degree in teaching from UT Tyler and now teaches at Bullard High School, west of Nacogdoches. In 2022 she married Morgan who works at Tyler Junior College.

Alisha (Richardson) Ligon like Kelli, and Shelby above had that rare gift with words. She was our 2013 poetry winner, and a key enabler of our first feature-length film on Morris Sheppard. She graduated with a 4.0 in Honors at Oral Roberts in Pure Mathematics, and married Nate Ligon.



The couple lives in Austin, and Ali-sha directs operations and facilities at the church, Grace and Peace. She also is a talented artist, and an experienced teacher.

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ALACRITY



Sixteenth Straight: NTCC Scholars again Present at Nationals

(Above: Calderon, Perez, Lewis, and Gutierrez)

Lone Star, San Jacinto, Broward, Miami-Dade. There are some huge community colleges. Their student count ranks with top, real-place universities. All of the major, more rooted colleges have enjoyed a golden age of sorts with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) in the last 20 years. The honors director at San Jacinto even made it to president of the NCHC last year. But none of them, thanks mostly to bureaucratic shakedowns has upheld such a constant scholarly presence at the NCHC as NTCC. A few California schools might have gone this far, but their state legislature prohibited travel to "homophobic" states. The Dallas-Fort Worth area had some promising schools, but they have been re-amalgamated, and in the course of that transformation have gone back to square one in student research.

We are amazed and humbled by this tradition. In Chicago this past November we were again represented by students who maintained their

own original arguments as judges, professors, and a host of other students, mainly university students passed by to listen and respond.

Neida Perez presented her Caldwell-Award winning story of Texas' unsatisfactory long-term rumble with microbes. She also addressed a plenary meeting of the Great Plains Honors Council, as is its student representative, having defeated a junior from Midwestern University for that post in October. Michelle Calderon, scholar of NTCC's Caldwell-Award winning film presented her work on the Texas Suffragette, M.F. Cunningham. Haley Lewis, and Adri Gutierrez each also derived national significance from a Texas-themed work. Gutierrez showed the costs of child abuse, detailing stories about how Texas Mayhem Makers, Lee H. Oswald, Charles Whitman, and David Koresh, all endured mistreatment as children. Lewis placed the story of Governor Dolph Briscoe into the larger context of Southern Governors like J. Carter and R. Askew during the 1970s.

Regional Banks Provide Vital Help



"Texas Heritage National Bank has awarded its eighth NTCC Presidential Scholarship. Shown above, VP Brenda Howard honors this year's recipient, Perla Guzman. This is the most prestigious and most remunerative scholarship Honors Northeast has to offer. Guzman was the 2023 salutatorian of Mount Pleasant High School. We have been inspired greatly as well by Cypress Bank, based in Pittsburg. Since 2008 this institution with five locations has selected one of our students to utilize a state-of-the-art laptop. Below VP Josh Cato presents Amy Vasquez, who graduated ninth in her 2023 Mount Pleasant class, with an instrument that will enhance her college experience.



Alacrity: Newsletter of Honors Northeast

College Leaders

President: Dr. Ron Clinton
VP Instruction: Dr. Kevin Rose
Associate VP: Dr. Anna Ingram

Honors Committee: Michelle Calderon, Dr. Drew Murphy, Heidi Wooten, and Dr. Andrew Yox.

Honors Professors: Dr. Andrew Daniel, Dr. Melissa Fulgham, Dr. Mary Hearron, Dr. Chris McAllister, Dr. Karyn Skaar, Dr. Andrew Yox.

Assistant Honors Director: Melody Mott
Secretary: Delbra Anthony

Like to Help?

View our Honors Northeast website, and you may find the largest collection of prize-winning essays, films and poems about a single region--in this case, Northeast Texas--in the world. Our benefactors have enabled this "above-and-beyond" culture of scholarship. If you would like to contribute, contact VP Dr. Jonathan McCullough, 903-434-8229, Nita May, 434-8113, nmay@ntcc.edu, or Dr. Yox at ayox@ntcc.edu.



Want more information?

903-434-8229 • ayox@ntcc.edu
www.ntcc.edu/honors

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In this
Edition:

Regional
Vanguard

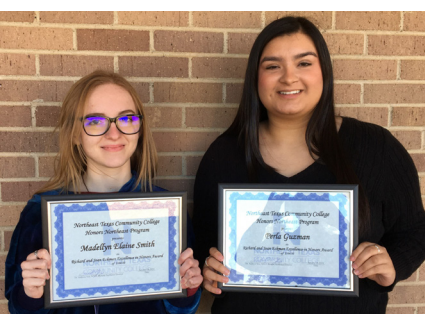
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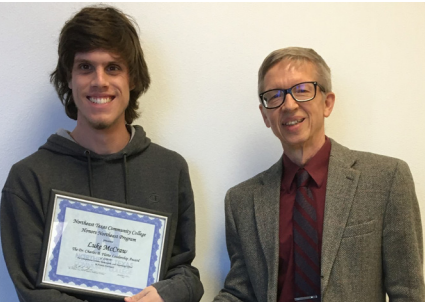
Beneficent Benefactors



Two scholarships that have obtained great centrality over time are the Russell Mowery Scholarship for contributions to local culture, and the James and Elizabeth Whatley Scholarship for overall contributions to the college. This year, Michelle Caldeon is our RM Scholar, and Neida Perez our W. Scholar.



An anonymous donor has funded 26 \$100 Eckman Awards for students who have the highest academic scores in honors seminars. This past spring, Maddy Smith won the 2nd-year award for best overall Seminar performance in HuMusic, and Perla Guzman won for excellence in the BioTex Seminar.



Luke McCraw won the 2023 Dr. C. Florio Award for scholarly leadership. “No one in the history of honors,” according to Dr. Yox, “has matched Luke in his weekly output of exercises relating to research. In 15 weeks last fall, McCraw submitted the equivalent of a semester long history project every week.

Our Film on the Traveling Preachers of Early Texas



Our 2023 film on the traveling preachers was marked by the most extensive student and donor commitment in our history. Led by aspiring filmmaker Allen Herald, originally of Camp County and a NTCC alumnus, the students logged in fifteen official engagements in addition to the cram-packed film week. It was also our most expensive film, and one that rested most squarely on a fund that our generous donors built up over time. Besides Herald, we profited from many ‘energizers’ who made this special production possible. Our wonderful film donors, the Mowerys were behind it from the beginning, and took off at least one day to scout film sites. The pioneer researcher, Rev. Dan Hoke of Franklin County attended several student pre-film functions, and had an encouraging word for everyone. SMU even provided encouragement after our research there, giving us \$1,000 worth of books on Texas to keep. The



students responded by coming out on Saturdays, and Sundays, even after the fall semester had started. Our film scholar, Luke McCraw, booked over 7 speaking engagements relative to the film.

Regional Vanguard



Neida Janet Perez (left) became our 8th student leader of the Great Plains Honors Council since Matthew Jordan won in 2013. In councils dominated by university students, she was the only community college leader on this level in the nation. Michelle Caldeon won the top PTK award of Texas, the Dr. Mary Hood Scholarship. Aubrey Watkins, bottom left, also won a PTK STAR scholarship. Maddy Smith became our 21st Leader of Promise. Honors students led by Professor McAllister documented the existence of tardigrades in NE Texas. Students in Houston at the Fall Webb meeting.



Fall Happenings



Fall semester always seems full of surprises, but amidst the adjustments, Luke McCraw and Alison Majors below-top-left kept their focus and finished at a level with the best of our scholars. Hence, they became top-tier Presidential Scholars. Our second Dr. and Mrs. Bradley Witt Scholar, Haley Lewis attracted many onlookers at the NCHC. She was the first to see Briscoe in the context of other southern governors of the 1970s, and Briscoe’s grandson, now a professor is interested in this work. Maddy Smith, bottom left, is our 2023-2024 Gladys Winkle Scholar, as our top student in the humanities. Finally, below, right, we see our Dr. Jerry Wesson Scholar, Monse Rivero with Dr. Wesson and wife, Barbara.

Winners of the 16th-Annual Northeast Texas Poetry Contest



Michelle Calderon, 1st, Maddy Smith, 2nd, Morgan Thrapp 3rd, and Odalys Adame 4th.



Deo Gratias! “Rocketship Pedagogy” By Dr. Andrew Yox, Honors Director

We are hardwired to assumptions that hover close to naïveté: 1. We can help professionalize students as fast as anyone; 2. Our students will become scholars; 3. Teenagers can make cultural contributions; 4. Our students can leverage their own scholarship as a public service.

There are times when the naïveté becomes so obvious, that I fear for myself, at least. I must seem stupid at times. But the wonder of this time and place, NTCC and NE Texas in the 2020s—is that I do not feel stupid that often. We thank God for a formidable team, and for students and parents willing to dare the costs of what can become a high-stakes scholarly game. We have had our share of flame-outs, but our students do publish, present, win scholarly awards, triumph in regional elections, and give the best students of some of the biggest colleges of the country, a run for their money.

Our above-and-beyond donors, inside and outside the college, augment what is already an excellent institutional arrangement for honors. The initial structure remains very vital as the travel/ scholarship budget of honors basically persuades a student to skyrocket from a great classroom performer to an intervarsity competitor. This was one reason why it was so apt of us to visit with Dr. Charles Florio now in Fort Worth, (right) last September. Presidents need “faculty buy-in” perhaps to make things work, but they are also capable of making truly big institutional adjustments to allow a

workable honors program to exist. Dr. Florio did this, and Rocketship Pedagogy would have a real problem reaching an “escape velocity” without such an exceptional foundation.

But Rocketship Pedagogy also exists today because of our many friends inside and outside the college. Our internal award and honors system with poetry, poster, and other academic prizes exists because people like Beverly Kelley of Mount Vernon has given such consistent, generous help. Another example is our “time-donor” Dr. Karyn Skaar, (shown below) our honors professor in psychology. Her after-hours mentoring with honors students has become legendary, and her time spent with student projects has given her special insights. For Neida Perez’s Jack Kent Cooke folder this past January, for example, Skaar contributed 3,500 words, the equivalent of a published essay! Deo Gratias, wow!

