

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

THE HONORS COLLEGE

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The Magazine of The Honors College at the University of Houston

2016



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HOUSTON

THE HONORS COLLEGE

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Cover photo: Dr. Stuart Long, Honors Associate Dean and Professor in the UH Cullen Engineering College, has been honored by the University for his work in undergraduate research (page 4).

Dear Friends,

We are very proud of all that our Honors College students, alumni, and faculty have achieved over the past year. I'd like to give you a heads-up that there'll be a lot more of this Cougar Pride on display during 2017 and 2018.

Beginning early in 2017, we have some important anniversaries coming up. On Saturday February 25, we'll host the 25th Great Conversation, our much-imitated gala fundraising event. 2017 is also the 40th anniversary of the arrival at the University of Houston of Dr. Ted Estess, our founding dean, and the 40th anniversary of the institution Ted has done so much to develop and steward — the Human Situation, still our signature course. Then in 2018, we'll celebrate the 25th birthday of the Honors College itself (We were the *University Honors Program* until 1993.)



To prepare for these silver and ruby anniversaries, we have been diligently perusing our archives. For example, we have found what we think is the first reference in UH publications to the precursor of the Human Situation course in the Honors newsletter of November 1976 (a stapled photocopy of several typed pages). In it, Program Director Donald Lutz heralded the arrival of his successor, Ted Estess. He said that in the upcoming spring semester, "Estess will be teaching the course that made him famous in Syracuse." Dr. Lutz describes it as "one of those courses which inevitably leads to a deeper examination of the self. In short, if a college education is supposed to be, at least in part, a process of self-discovery, this course will be extremely useful toward that end."

Forty years later, we are still dedicated to making a transformative impact on our students' lives by introducing them to great books and grand challenges, to the best that the library carrel and the seminar room have to offer, and co-curricular challenges beyond the hedgerows. What unites the Honors project in 1977, 1993, 2016, and beyond, is a commitment to student success that lasts a lifetime.

We hope to see you at some of our anniversary celebrations! Stay tuned for details.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

William Monroe,
Dean, The Honors College

SAVE THE DATES

Take time to connect

OCT
6-7-8

Alumni Events

6
NYC

7
Washington,
DC

8
Alumni Tailgate UH vs. Navy
Annapolis, MD

OCT
13

Undergraduate
Research Day

Rockwell
Pavilion

OCT
15

Alumni Watch
Party
UH vs. Tulsa

Seattle, WA

Make plans to join us!

For more information,
contact Hannah Barker,
Manager of Donor Relations:
hmbarker@central.uh.edu

713.743.3220

or visit

thehonorscollege.com/alumni-events

with classmates you know and meet new ones.

**OCT
22**

Alumni Watch
Party
UH vs. SMU

Houston

**NOV
11-12**

UH
Homecoming
Weekend

**JAN
27**

Ross M. Lence
Dinner

Honors
Commons

**FEB
25**

25th Annual
Great
Conversation

Houston
Country Club

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Award-Winning Professor, a Pioneer of Undergraduate Research, Honored by the University

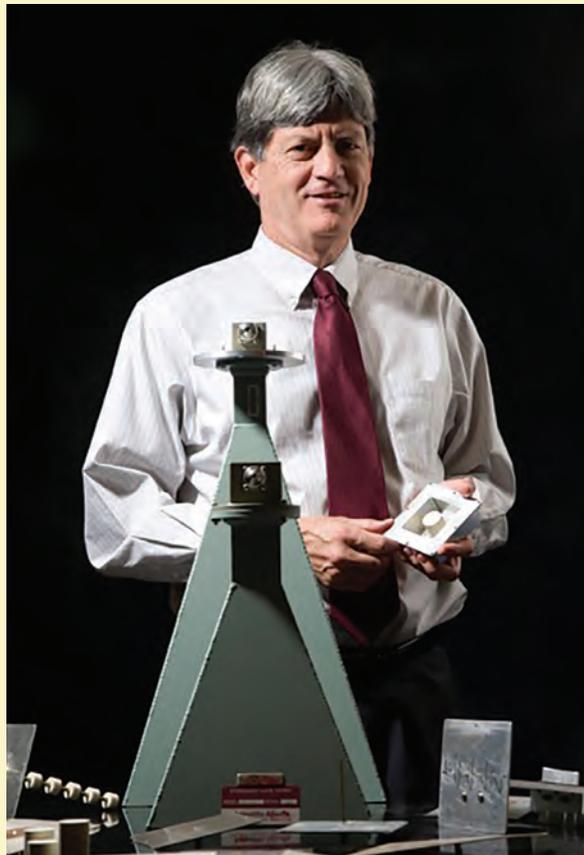
By Robert Cremins

In our University of Houston world, Dr. Stuart Long is one of the leading “dual citizens,” having made immense contributions to both the Honors College and the Cullen College of Engineering. In a career spanning more than 40 years, he has received numerous accolades, including the Esther Farfel Award, the University’s highest faculty honor, and was the inaugural recipient of the University Career Teaching Excellence Award. The UH community values him as an outstanding colleague, administrator, and teacher. Moreover, he has become synonymous with the vital enterprise that is undergraduate research. For this reason, his two “home” colleges, Engineering and Honors, have come together to launch the Professor Stuart Long Undergraduate Research Fund, a fund that will help support innovative undergraduate research projects, such as the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) and Houston’s Early Research Experience (HERE), for many years to come.

Undergraduate research requires faculty mentorship, and Dr. Long was blessed with mentors early in his own academic career. After growing up in the small West Texas town of Snyder, he came to Houston to attend Rice University. His freshman English instructor was none other than the novelist Larry McMurtry; Long still has the papers on which McMurtry wrote extensive comments. In his own field, electrical engineering, he found a mentor in a young British assistant professor named Lionel Davis. The two kept in contact and many years later were able to renew their relationship, this time as peers, when Long hosted Dr. Davis as a visiting professor here at UH in the Cullen College of Engineering. His research advisor for his Ph.D. at Harvard University was Professor Ronold W. P. King, internationally one of the most prolific faculty members in the field of applied electromagnetics, and who was an active researcher

at Harvard for 70 years. When asked about his own retirement, Dr. Long suggests that he would like to try to at least equal Professor King’s longevity record.

When Dr. Long arrived at UH in 1974, there wasn’t much going on in the way of undergraduate research. He became one of the pioneers, creating what became known as the “Electromagnetic Undergraduates” (EMUGs) Program. This



involved identifying outstanding undergraduates and giving them access to a space where they could interact with graduate students, assist Long with his own research, co-author papers, and travel to conferences; also (no small consideration back then), they had at their disposal computers and a phone! Essentially, Dr. Long built a model of “undergraduate engagement,” a key concept for the Honors College.

Dr. Long, along with Professor Fritz Claydon, was also instrumental in securing National Science Foundation funds to make UH a REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) site. This program brought talented students from all over the country to campus for the summer and, in some ways, became the template for our

own UH SURF program. Here at the Honors College, in his capacity as Associate Dean, Dr. Long works with Karen Weber, the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, to advance SURF, as well as a whole range of other enriching programs and opportunities, including PURS (the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Scholarship), the Senior Honors Thesis, and Undergraduate Research Day (one of the highlights of the Honors calendar). On the University level, Dr. Long has also served as Interim Dean of the Honors College as well as Interim Vice President of Research.

OVERVIEW: OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Unsurprisingly, given this vast amount of experience, Dr. Long has a very clear sense of the benefits that accrue to students who get involved in undergraduate research. He said, “This experience gives them a look behind the scenes of a major research university, whereas before they experienced just the classroom, or knowledge dissemination, side of the enterprise; now, they see the intensity of the knowledge acquisition half of the University. This visualization of what research is all about not only helps students bond with their major but also provides them with an excellent preview of graduate school.”

In other words, undergraduate research is not just a great experience; it's also student success that lasts a lifetime. It's the gift that keeps on giving — in the Long run.

PROFESSOR STUART LONG UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FUND

The Honors College is proud to honor our esteemed colleague, Dr. Stuart Long, for his dedication and service to the University. Please join us by contributing to the Professor Stuart Long Undergraduate Research Fund. Your gift will help support undergraduate research and the many students, some of whom you will meet on the following pages, who benefit from these outstanding programs.

For more information and to make a gift, please contact Hannah Barker at hmbarker@central.uh.edu or 713.743.3220. We appreciate your support!

The Office of Undergraduate Research has supported University of Houston students in faculty-mentored research projects for more than 12 years. Its programs continue to grow in size and scope each year. The office serves ALL undergraduates at the University — those who are members of the Honors College and those outside of the College as well. More than 200 students each year receive scholarships and course credit to conduct research with faculty members, and hundreds more are served through the Office's events, informational sessions, and online resources.

What is Undergraduate Research?

Undergraduate research includes high-impact engagement activities that take place outside the classroom and enhance student learning. Students have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a professor on a research topic, taking ownership of their education. Research activities range from a student working in a lab, to conducting archival research in a library, to participating in a field experience benefiting the community.

Benefits to Learning

This type of inquiry-based learning gives students confidence in their ability to make a contribution to their field and enables them to build strong working relationships with faculty. Engagement within their discipline has a real impact. By way of example, of the students who participate in programs offered through the Office of Undergraduate Research, 94% of these students graduate within six years (The national graduation average is about 60%).

Benefits Outside the Classroom

Research also opens doors for students by allowing them to present their results at regional, national, and even international conferences. In addition, some students even contribute to top tier journals within their discipline.

Benefits for Graduates

Faculty-mentored research activities provide students with opportunities to bring ideas to fruition, problem solve, work collaboratively, and communicate effectively both orally and in writing. As a result, these activities pave the way for students to enroll in top tier graduate programs and receive positions from competitive companies after graduation.



OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH



Madeline Styskal

Madeline Styskal is a junior majoring in music composition, with a minor in World Cultures and Literatures (with a focus in Russian studies). This summer, she attended Moscow State University for a Russian language immersion program. While in Moscow, Madeline pursued music projects alongside her language classes. At the Moscow Conservatory, she studied piano performance under Dr. Mikhail Dubov, refining her Prokofiev repertoire. At the core of her Russian language and music studies was her choir project: rehearsing and performing with the church choir at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, for which she is currently composing. At the Moores School of Music, Madeline is organizing a collaborative recital for November 20, featuring works by composers from UH and MSU. Her choral composition, the fruit of her long-term research project, will premiere as part of Honors Professor David Rainbow's Russian Revolution Centennial commemoration in spring 2017.



Phoebe Dantoin

Phoebe Dantoin's project investigated whether routine physical exercise is effective in inducing resilience against PTSD-like behaviors in rodent models of trauma. Phoebe observed that trauma experiencing or witnessing rats that had gone through exercise protocols showed significantly less anxiety — and depression-like behaviors than unexercised traumatized rats, suggesting that routine exercise likely plays a role in rescuing behavioral deficits caused by direct as well as vicarious trauma. She is a mathematics major who wants to pursue law to fight for victims of traumatic events. It was this interest of hers that led her to examine trauma neurobiology in the College of Pharmacy. Phoebe conducted a thesis on this topic titled "The Role of Treadmill Exercise in Inducing Resilience in Traumatized Rats."

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH



Catherine Godfrey

Catherine Godfrey, a mathematics major, is using mathematical theory to develop improved methods of ranking movies on Internet sites such as Netflix, Rotten Tomatoes, and the Internet Movie Database (IMDb). These sites collect vast amounts of data from user ratings of movies. Catherine analyzed this data and developed an algorithm to rank movies based on a user's ratings and how they compare to the ratings of similar users. One method she investigated involved the PageRank technique used by Google's search engine; another mimicked the ranking of sports teams that play multiple games over a season. Drawing on graph theory, linear algebra, and probability, she wrote a computer code to implement the algorithms she created and tested the results against existing recommendation systems. This algorithm will ultimately allow the movie sites to provide more accurate recommendations and enhance movie watchers' viewing experience.



Daniel Scott

Daniel Scott is a dual mathematics and physics major with a passion for learning Chinese. Daniel successfully balances his STEM and Chinese courses while simultaneously conducting research under the mentorship of Dr. Wei-Kan Chu at the Texas Center for Superconductivity Ion Beam Laboratory. Currently, Daniel is working to synthesize metallic nanoparticle alloys using the process of ion implantation. He is also studying the optical properties of these nanoparticle alloys for application use. His Houston Scholars project was titled "Summer Language Study at Beijing Youth Politics College." Daniel traveled to Beijing Youth Politics College to advance his Chinese language skills. Ultimately, he would like to complete his graduate studies in physics at one of China's elite C9 universities.

Success that lasts a lifetime.

STUDY ABROAD | EUROPE

Alumni Welcome Students “Across the Pond”

By Martha S. Hayes

“Many Honors College alumni benefited from very generous scholarships that funded their education at UH. Quite a significant number of them have gone on to very successful careers too, in no small part, due to their Honors education,” said Honors alum Aristotle Economon ('89).

“There is nothing better than giving back to the institution that gave you your start,” he added.

Economon was an economics major at UH, when he met journalism major and competitive diver Hanneke Faber ('90, M.B.A. '92). The pair had traveled and lived abroad before

attributes part of their success to Honors and the “amazing quality” of professors, several of whom remain friends of theirs. The Economons believe that travel and exposure to other cultures is an important component of a well-rounded education. Following the attacks of 9/11, which created uneasiness for Americans traveling abroad, the Economons felt compelled to offer an opportunity for new generations of students to discover the world “across the pond.”

They also wanted a way to remain directly involved in the Honors College. With the assistance of Dr. Ted Estess and Dean Bill Monroe, they established the Faber-Economon European Travel (F.E.E.T.) Scholarship, which was first

awarded in 2005. Each year, two applicants are chosen to receive a three-week trip to Europe including airfare, a Eurail Pass, and a \$1,000 stipend. Recipients spend their first week with the Economons at their home in Amsterdam and the remaining two weeks exploring various European cities on their own. This summer, Lauren Hauser (a senior in 2016) and Brinda Penmetsa (a junior in 2016) visited Amsterdam and cities in Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Italy.

The Economons say that getting to know the recipients of the F.E.E.T. scholarship and seeing the change that the European travel experience makes in their lives is very valuable to them.



Back: Aristotle Economon, Hanneke Faber, and Aris Economon
Front: Anna & Athina Economon, Lauren Hauser, and Brinda Penmetsa

attending UH. Economon is of Greek descent from Sacramento, CA and earned his M.B.A. from UCLA in 1991. Faber is from The Hague, Netherlands, where she was a highly recruited NCAA diving champion.

Their partnership in marriage and in business grew as the couple lived and worked in four different countries after graduation — The Netherlands, Greece, Switzerland, and the United States. They currently live with their three children (Anna, Aris, and Athina) in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Aristotle is a real estate investor and developer, and Hanneke, a former vice president at Proctor & Gamble, is the Chief E-Commerce and Innovation Officer for Ahold Delhaize, the 10th largest supermarket chain in the world.

However, time and miles have not erased the impact and appreciation for their Honors College experience. Aristotle

Aristotle shares his thoughts about the benefits of the Honors College.

“Nowhere will you find a team as committed to your education as the faculty and staff in the Honors College. As we described it to our children, it’s like being Diamond Elite on Delta Airlines. 1) You get to register first, which is a huge benefit in a large university. 2) You get special facilities, in the form of the College itself. And, 3) you get the best “seats on the plane” in the form of having the best professors teaching you in small classes. The people in charge will know your name; you will have access to special programs and activities that will truly enrich your college experience; and, most importantly, you will graduate fully prepared for continued success, at either graduate school or a career.”



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

By Brinda Penmetsa

Experiencing Europe for the first time was the highlight of my summer. On May 13, after completing my final exams and moving out of my dorm, I joined Lauren Hauser and boarded a plane headed to Amsterdam. Upon arrival, I was welcomed with smiles and hugs from the sponsors of our trip, the Economons. Over the next three weeks, I immersed myself in the cultures of the cities we visited and was overwhelmed by the beauty of everything surrounding me.

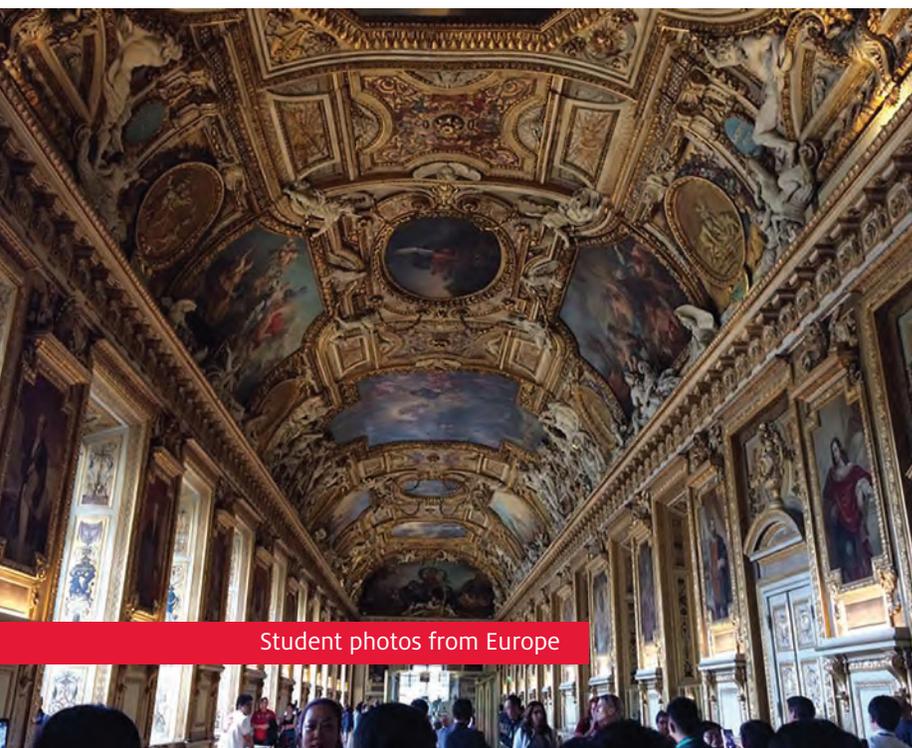
I had the opportunity to visit several museums and also try different foods. I saw the diaries Anne Frank wrote in and explored a 14th century Castle on Castle Day in the Netherlands. I climbed hundreds of steps to see a panoramic view of Paris after hearing the most amazing sounds of a choir echo through the historic halls of the Notre Dame. I am very grateful to have been a recipient of the F.E.E.T. scholarship and highly encourage other Honors students to apply for this and similar opportunities in the future.

By Lauren Hauser

When I applied for the F.E.E.T. scholarship, my desire was to learn from the personal narratives of others. Human Situation professors taught me that we all share common stories, but a story is largely influenced by its context. Prior to our adventure, it was difficult for me to imagine a world different from my own. The F.E.E.T. trip allowed me to glimpse into the lives of those who live outside the boundaries of the southern United States.

Brinda and I ate in an old windmill with the Economon family, explored the streets of Paris with a local, and befriended a young woman working in a pizzeria in Naples. Enjoying time with these beautiful individuals reinforced the idea that humans share hopes, fears, and the desire to be understood.

But I found that our differences were the most influential, for through them I could see the world through unique perspectives — perspectives that my personal experiences had not afforded me.



Student photos from Europe

STUDY ABROAD | GALÁPAGOS

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

By Neelesh Mutyala

The trip to the Galápagos Islands was an unforgettable one. When my flight landed, I wondered what lay ahead. Galápagos, natural selection, Charles Darwin, evolution — perhaps I made a mistake and chose a trip meant only for biology majors? Thankfully, I couldn't have been more wrong. In the brief three weeks we stayed, nature unraveled itself, mesmerizing us with its pristineness. Finches flew everywhere, while marine iguanas basked on volcanic rock. The night sky was lit with a plethora of constellations normally unseen with light pollution. Our numerous snorkeling and scuba excursions let us swim with sharks, turtles, and seemingly endless schools of fish. All the while, we studied sea lions, turtles, and urchins in the field with researchers actively working on conservation efforts.

Each of us was assigned a host family with whom we bonded deeply. From the first day until the last, we were immersed in Ecuadorian culture and ate Ecuadorian food. I was embraced with unending hospitality and expanded my definition of family before I left.

Geographically, the Galápagos Islands are a major crossroad between ocean currents — crossroads of preservation and civilization, of adventure and education, and of nature and culture. I realized the Galápagos were only one jewel among the vast treasures of Earth. I yearn now to go out and explore, to meet new people, and to learn new ideas.



Student photos from the Galapagos Islands



STUDY ABROAD | GREECE

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

By Megan Prather

This summer I had the amazing opportunity to go on a study abroad trip to Greece with the University of Houston Honors College and the University of Houston-Clear Lake. During the spring semester prior to the trip, I took a course called Myth and Greek Performance with one of our trip leaders, Dr. Casey Due Hackney.

We spent the semester reading Greek tragedies and talking about why they were important in Greek culture. Traveling to Greece, where the plays were written and performed, was the best possible supplement to what we had already been taught. We went to places such as the Parthenon, the Theater of Epidaurus, Delphi, and the Cave of the Apocalypse.

In addition to learning about these ancient sites, we also had the privilege of speaking to a Greek non-governmental organization (NGO) called METAdrasi. METAdrasi is an organization that helps children who have been separated from their parents during the refugee crisis by giving them a place to stay and helping them reunite with their parents. Studying abroad in Greece is an experience I will never forget.



Student photos from Greece

STUDY ABROAD | CENTRAL AMERICA

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

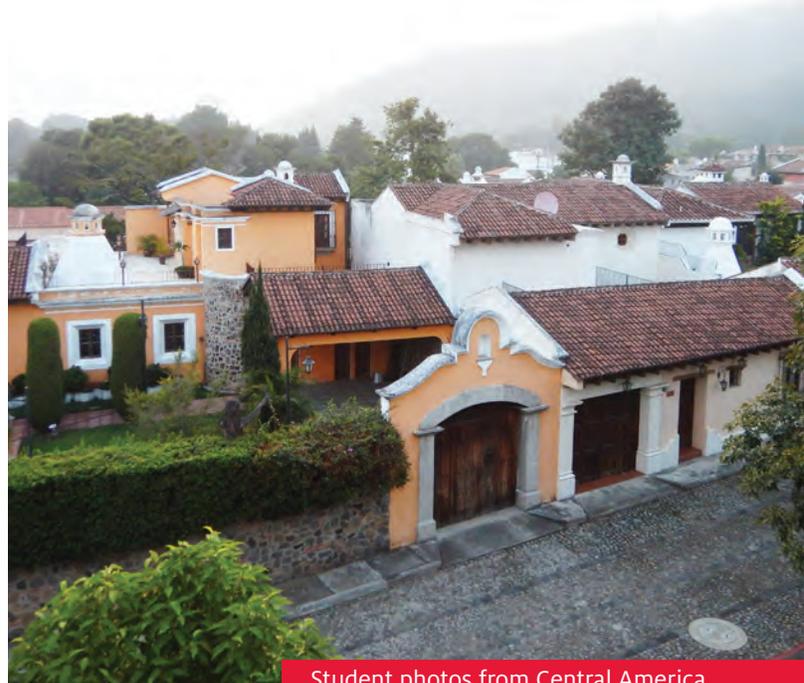
By Fatema Sabir

This was my first study abroad trip and I couldn't have been more simultaneously nervous and excited about heading off on a two-week adventure in Central America. We arrived and worked in the clinic, schools, and community of Santa Ana, El Salvador for one week, and then went to Guatemala for a few days of sightseeing.

While change, especially in a country like El Salvador, which is so disparate from our own, is expected to be slow and deliberate, I feel that our group really made a firm, lasting impact on the small community that welcomed us. We taught community members about fumigation; we collectively painted a school; we saw almost 300 patients at the clinic; and we went out in the community to pick up trash, teaching kids about the connection between trash, standing water, and Zika. I can't imagine a better or more fulfilling first study abroad trip.

I think the zip line was a good metaphor for what I got out of the trip: while we will face many challenges on the path to becoming nurses, doctors, and other health professionals, if we can overcome our fears, the reward is outstanding. Those views on the zip line are ones you can only get by taking the jump, and the same concept applies to medicine ... without people willing to be courageous, it won't move forward.

Read the blog at <https://uhhonorsabroad.wordpress.com>



Student photos from Central America

STUDY ABROAD | ISRAEL & ROME

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



By Jacob Little

The Israel/Italy experience was like no other I think I'll ever have. I got into the trip so that I could have some travel experiences outside the United States and maybe pick up a few stories to tell my friends back home. I did, but to say that's all I took from it wouldn't do it justice. Between Steve Langfur's excellent guidesmanship, a little too much Roman gelato, and so many sweeping panoramas of the beautiful Israeli countryside that I almost got tired of them, I changed.

Not fundamentally, and not even necessarily in a way that I can describe in much detail, but changed nonetheless. Seeing things that have survived for thousands of years and hearing the radical origins of ideas we take for granted instilled a real sense of awe in me. The ability to look at the world and society and grasp how extraordinary they are will always be the thing I keep with me about the trip. I can't thank enough the amazing group I was with or the people that pushed me to go for this newfound wonder.

Student photos from Israel and Rome

FACULTY | SPOTLIGHT

Erica Fletcher

2015

Interviewed on
Houston Pacifica Radio about her
community-based art project
"Environ/Mental Spaces in the
Southwest"

Irene Guenther

2015

Co-curator of "Postcards
from the Trenches: Germans &
Americans Visualize the Great War"
a centennial exhibition, travelled
to DC, Houston, NYC, and Germany
and won the
German Government's
Cultural Exchange
Award

Jonathan Zecher

2015

UH Teaching Excellence Award

Published

*The Role of Death in the Ladder
of Divine Ascent and the
Greek Ascetic Tradition*

Colleen Davies

2014

Bauer College Staff Excellence
Award

2016

Best UH Academic Advisor
Award

Tamler Sommers

2016

2nd edition published
*A Very Bad Wizard:
Morality Behind the Curtain*

Karen Weber

2015

UH Staff Excellence Award
and the
Rodger Peters Staff Scholarship

Fritz Claydon

2014

UH Group Teaching Award

2015

Patent Award: Nanocomposite
polymercarbon based nanomaterial
filters for the simultaneous removal
of bacteria and heavy metals

2016

UH Undergraduate Research
Mentor Award

Marc H. Hanke

2015

Published article
"Oyster Utilization and
Host Variation of the
Oyster Pea Crab (*Zaops ostreum*)"
in *Journal of Shellfish Research*

Gabriela Maya

2016

Published article
"Let Us Go Forth
into the Wide World"
in Press 53's
"Everywhere Stories" collection

Debbie Z. Harwell

2015

Wednesdays in Mississippi
received the
Julia Cherry Spruill Award
from SAWH for the best book
in southern women's history

Dustin Gish

2016

Wrote "Resisting the Dissolution
of the Body Politic: An Apologia for
Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*,"
a chapter in *The Quest for Excellence:
Liberal Arts and Core Texts*
edited by Dr. Gish

Kimberly Meyer

2015

Published

The Book of Wanderings
finalist for the PEN Southwest
Book Award

2016

Awarded the American Society
of Journalists and Authors
Book Award in Memoir

Stuart Long

2014

University Group Teaching
Excellence Award

IEEE Antennas and
Propagation Society
John Kraus Award

Dustin Gish

2016

Wrote "Socratic Rhetoric and
Political Philosophy: Leo Strauss on
Xenophon's Symposium," a chapter
in Brill's Companion
to Leo Strauss' Writings
on Classical Political Thoughts

Ted Estess

2014

Published

Fishing Spirit Lake

Hayan Charara

2016

Published

The Three Lucys and Something Sinister
Something Sinister nominated
for awards including:
National Book Award, Pulitzer Prize,
and PEN Open Book Award

Established the Etel Adnan
Poetry Series with the
University of Arkansas
Press

Ricardo Ernesto Nuila

2015

Inaugural New England
Review Award for
Emerging Writers

2016

Ignatian Award for the
Strake Jesuit Alumnus
of the Year

Cynthia Freeland

2016

Lectured on environmental
aesthetics, fashion and art history,
and multi-sensory film perception
at Nanjing University, China;
London College of Fashion;
Seoul National University, Korea

Richard Armstrong

2016

Multiple KUHf radio episodes
of "Engines of Our Ingenuity"

Helen Valier

2016

Published

*A History of Prostate Cancer:
Cancer, Men and Medicine*

Jeffrey Church

2015

Published

*Nietzsche's Culture of Humanity:
Beyond Aristocracy and
Democracy in the Early Period*

Brandon Lamson

2016

Summer Poet In Residence at the
University of Mississippi

"Meeting Violence with Kindness"
article
in *Tricycle* magazine

Irene Guenther

2016

Wrote "Fashioning Women
in the Third Reich," a chapter
in *Life and Times
in Nazi Germany*

David Mikics

2016

Published
*Bellow's People:
How Saul Bellow
Made Life into Art*

FACULTY | SPOTLIGHT

'Debate in Upswing'

Friday, December 11, 1964



Team's A Winner

One of the debate teams, part of the '64 winning debate squad, is composed of Susan Skinner, John Boheme, Joanne Johnson, Beverly Ward, George Yates and RuNell Stitt.

By Ron Bankston ('74, J.D. '77)

In the 1960s and 1970s, UH was a national powerhouse in intercollegiate competitions, both in athletics and academics. Most remember the Cougar basketball and football programs that put the University on the map under the leadership of Hall of Fame Coaches Guy Lewis (basketball) and Bill Yeoman (football).

At that time, though less well known to the general public and even to the University community, the UH debate team was no less a national powerhouse. Intercollegiate policy debate was (and remains) the premier academic competition between universities.

Led by its own legendary Hall of Fame debate coach, Dr. William B. English, the Cougar debate team dominated college debate, winning dozens of state, regional, and national level debate tournaments year after year and competing successfully with debaters from colleges and universities across the nation, including Harvard, MIT, Dartmouth, Northwestern, Georgetown, UCLA, and USC.

From 1967, shortly after he arrived at UH, until he left in 1978, English's teams qualified for the National Debate Tournament

an astonishing 12 consecutive years. Cougar debaters were regularly recognized as the top speakers at major tournaments, including the back-to-back 1969 and 1970 National Debate Tournament Top Speakers, David Seikel and Michael Miller. English was recognized by his college debate coach peers across the U.S. as the 1970 National Debate Coach of the Year.

English is a native Texan and was a successful college debater at Texas Christian University, where he graduated with a bachelor's in communications. English earned his master's and doctorate from the University of Oklahoma, after which, in his words, he crossed the Red River in July 1964, fell to his knees and kissed the ground on the south side of the river and has been in Texas ever since.

He arrived at UH in 1964 and became the director of debate and debate coach. Besides leading the debate team, English was an active and engaged member of the faculty of the UH Communications Department, teaching courses in public communication, argumentation, rhetoric, persuasion, and criticism of public speech. In 1974, he was a finalist for the University of Houston Outstanding Professor of the Year. That same year, he founded the Texas Forensic Association (TFA), the state's preeminent high school speech and debate organization.

English is currently a professor and former chair of the Department of Communications at Baylor University.

In 2012, under the leadership of Honors College Dean William Monroe, UH re-established the Policy Debate Program and made the Honors College the official University home of the debate team. Honors College faculty member Sarah Spring was named director of the speech and debate program, and Josh Gonzalez was named assistant director.

With the goal of restoring UH to national debate prominence, Dean Monroe, along with faculty Sarah Spring, Richard Garner, and Joshua Gonzalez, want students, faculty, and alumni to make the connection between the present team and the University's storied debate tradition. In particular, they want the University, current students, and alumni to

recognize that nearly all of the University's historical debate successes and excellence trace back to English and his years leading UH Debate. This pursuit was the basis for an event honoring English, hosted by the Honors College.

Distinguished guests and UH debate alums included State Representative and then Houston mayoral candidate Sylvester Turner (J.D. '80), U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Marvin Isgur (J.D. '74), National Association for Urban Debate Leagues Executive Director Linda Listrom ('74), USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism Professor Dr. Tom Goodnight ('71), and 2006 U.S. Senate and 2010 Texas Attorney General nominee Barbara Radnofsky ('76).

During the event, attendees recounted the program's accomplished history and renewed their commitment to the UH debate renaissance inspired by Dr. English and his teams' remarkable successes.

Dr. English would be proud to know that the UH debate team is still in upswing!



UH debaters prepare for competition in 1966.



Dr. English reviews notes with the UH debate team in this undated photo.

ALUMNI | FOCUS

Honors College alumni Ron Bankston and M.H. "Butch" Cersonsky were members of the UH Debate team during Dr. English's tenure. Successful attorneys, each has continued their involvement with the University and the College by serving on the Honors College Advisory Board.



Ron Bankston ('74, J.D. '77) was named one of the Top 25 Lawyers of 2015 by *Houstonia* magazine. He is the founder of the Houston law firm Bankston & Associates, specializing in mediation.



M.H. "Butch" Cersonsky ('76, J.D. '79), is the senior partner of the Cersonsky, Rosen and Garcia law firm, which received the J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.'s 2015 Joan Guggenheimer Outside Counsel Diversity Champion Award. He has also served as an adjunct professor at the UH Law Center.

Do it! It works.

With Martha S. Hayes

Honors College alum, Joshua Ellis, is beginning his emergency medicine residency at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN. Ellis, a native of San Antonio, received his bachelor's degree in history at UH, with a minor in Medicine & Society in 2012, and his doctorate of medicine from Howard University, Washington, D.C. in 2016.

Do you have specific plans after your residency at the Mayo Clinic?

After residency I would potentially do a fellowship or immediately start working as an attending physician.

What would be your dream job?

My dream job would be an academic emergency care position, basically, a teaching doctor. I love to teach, so something along the lines of a program director or medical student clerkship director at a major academic hospital would be amazing!

Do you have a favorite memory from your time in the Honors College?

Aahhh so much to choose from! At the Honors retreat, I emceed the follies my senior year. It was just such a great and funny experience! So many people helped, and it was pretty much four years of humor, personality, and relationships all put on display in our last hoorah.

How did the Honors College experience prepare you for your future?

It gave me a great, well-rounded education. My writing skills were better; my communication skills were better; and most importantly, my interest in education was better. I learned to enjoy and appreciate research papers. Looking back, there was just so much that I learned that couldn't have been taught in your basic science class at a major university.

What would you say to someone considering applying to the Honors College?

Do it! It works. The Honors College drastically enhances your college experience. It is an invaluable experience and also a very unique one. If you're premed, then it's almost a no brainer, thanks to the Medicine & Society program.

You surround yourself with like-minded, motivated students with similar goals and faculty and staff with the resources to help you reach them.



Learn more about him in his own words:

What changed your career focus from history to medicine?

I began school as a premed student and biology major with the intent to go to medical school. Medicine attracted me primarily for its image as a noble and humanitarian profession. It was actually many of the Honors College classes that attracted me to being a history major.

After all, the study of medicine is the study of the history of medicine, at least on an undergraduate level, that is. I think the Medicine & Society program definitely made it possible for me to accomplish both the premed and history major, and I loved it. It gave me an excellent, well-rounded application and a pretty unique knowledge base for my career as a doctor.

Two Coasts, One Table

By Robert Cremins

Honors College alumni often sponsor or co-sponsor a table at The Great Conversation, our signature fundraising gala event. What's less common is for very recent graduates to buy a table, but that's exactly what Madison West ('15) and Anjay Ajodha ('15) did this past spring. What makes their collaboration even more remarkable is that Madison and Anjay, who became close friends in the course of their Honors experience, now live and work a sea-to-shining-sea distance apart. Madison is based in New York and Anjay in Seattle. The Great Conversation became an opportunity for a joint homecoming.

In their chosen cities, these exceptional young alums are pursuing the kind of "grand challenges" for which their Honors education has prepared them. The College's "encouragement to think critically," Madison said, allowed her to reevaluate her career trajectory, which began in traditional publishing. "I now work at an advertising technology startup and could not be happier with my decision to take this big leap," she said. "My job is demanding and totally out of my wheelhouse, and I love every second of it. I craft proposals for advertisers, run media campaigns, and report out on the analytics of those campaigns. At my company, the answer to a good idea is never no, and that's an ideal work environment for me."

Meanwhile, out on the west coast, Anjay is also on the technological cutting-edge, though the company he works for is hardly a startup. "My job at Microsoft is challenging," he said, "but I love it. I can see the impact of my efforts directly in the product that I'm building. In a day, I'm able to meet with customers, help design product features, and show interns around Seattle."

He credits Honors with helping to develop this flexibility: "The liberal arts education I received from my Honors College classes complemented my computer science education, exposing me to different philosophies and giving me the tools to create my own personal philosophy. My experiences through the Leadership Studies minor helped me learn how to connect with both customers and colleagues."



Anjay Ajodha & Madison West take a selfie at The Great Conversation.

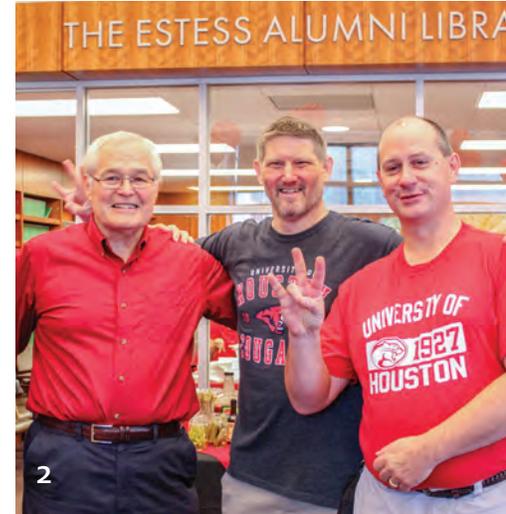
Both Madison and Anjay received scholarships in the course of their Honors education, and this became an important motivation in them wanting to give back so soon. Madison said, "I asked Anjay if he wanted to spilt a Great Conversation table, and he agreed immediately."

The evening was a wonderful success, helped undoubtedly by a fascinating topic, "Is Smart Tech Making Us Dumb?" and an excellent conversationalist, Honors professor and political scientist Dr. Jeffrey Church. "The conversation was quite fervent," Anjay said, "with many recollections of times we didn't have access to modern technology and survived."

Co-sponsoring a table was both a new and very familiar experience. Madison said, "Anjay and I invited some of our former classmates, and again we were steeped in that trademark Honors environment of honest, forthright, and thoughtful examination."

Alumni like Anjay and Madison have brought that mode of critical and creative thinking with them to places like Seattle and New York. From coast to coast, they are never far from Houston.

HONORS | IN ACTION



This page:

(1) Dr. Estess reads from his collection of short stories in *Fishing Spirit Lake* to an audience of students, faculty, and staff. (2) Founding Dean Ted Estess, Ben Talley, and Scott Fitzhugh at an alumni tailgate in the Honors Commons. (3) Colleen Seitz, Shasta, and friends at the Honors homecoming tailgate. (4) Brinda Penmetsa and Nick Fox represent UH at the Model Arab League conference. (5) President Renu Khator celebrates UH being awarded a chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa honors society.

Facing page:

(6) Sarah Bhojani, Helen Valier, Bill Monroe, Brenda Rhoden, and Rita Sirrieh at the PBK induction ceremony. (7) Jane Cizik and Glenn Cordua, director of the Wine and Spirits Institute at UH, at the 2016 Great Conversation. (8) Truman and Becky Arnold enjoy themselves at the 2016 Great Conversation. (9) Doug and Sarah Foshee, Bill Monroe, and Reinnette and Stan Marek before dinner at the 2016 Great Conversation. (10) Dean Rick Short, Provost Paula Myrick Short, and Fatema Lodgher admire a table decoration at the 2016 Great Conversation. (11) Mischa Penton, accompanied by bass and dancers, performs a siren's song at this year's Dionysia.

HONORS | IN ACTION



M.D. Anderson Library
4333 University Dr, Room 212
Houston, TX 77204-2001

The Honors College has been rated among the top 10 in the nation by *Public University Press*.

HONORS | IN ACTION



(12) Outstanding graduating seniors receive recognition at the spring 2016 Graduation Banquet. (13) Celestina Billington performs a curandera ritual inspired by her experiences on the Artists and Their Regions study away trip to New Mexico. (14) Cougar paws from the study abroad trip to Greece. (15) Dean Monroe portrays Teddy Roosevelt at the Houston Shakespeare Festival's performance of "Much Ado About Nothing."

