

SAN JACINTO EDITION

*L. D. Hawkins*

# THE MEGAPHONE.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR BY THE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.

Volume 2.

GEORGETOWN, TEXAS, FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1909.

Number 26.

## LAST WEDNESDAY

BAYLOR vs. S. U.

OLD-TIMERS DAY

GREATEST DAY IN SOUTHWESTERN'S HISTORY.  
EVERYTHING FAVORABLE FOR A  
GREAT DAY.

HUNDREDS OF OLD STUDENTS COME "HOME."

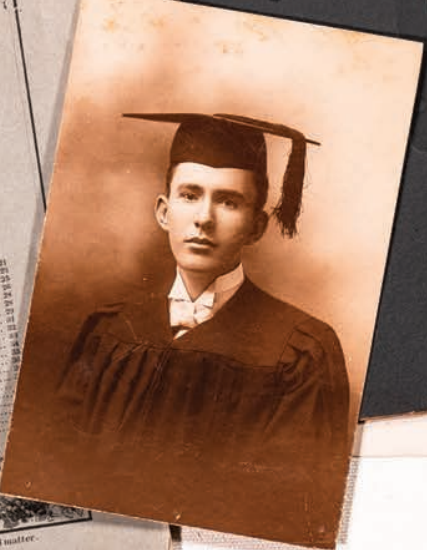
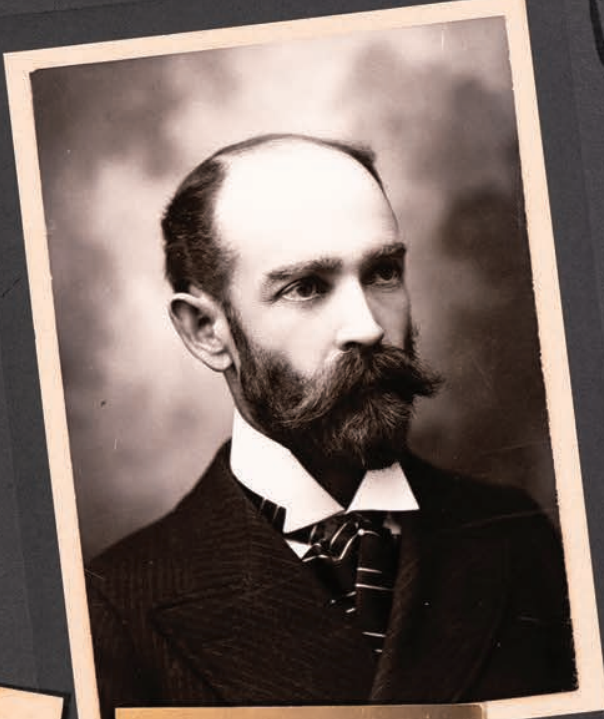


King Bob  
is Calling

Southwestern  
University  
Home Coming  
April 21, '09.

My Name is

Address



The Alamo and San Jacinto Monthly.

DEVOTED TO ENGLISH COMPOSITION  
DECEMBER 1882.

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Fall and Leaf, by W. D. Coulter.  
I love to think of Heaven, by A. B. C.  
In Memoriam, by A. B. C.  
Our Former Students,  
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Local Items.

Subscription Rates—One Copy, Ten Cents; Five Months, \$1.00; One Year, \$2.00. Single Copies, Five Cents.  
Advertising Rates—One inch, first insertion, 50 cents; each subsequent insertion, 25 cents; one month, \$1.00; one year, \$10.00.  
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Entered at the Postoffice at Georgetown, Texas as second class mail matter.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Megaphone (Georgetown, Tex.), vol. 2, no. 26, ed. 1, Friday, April 23, 1909; Robert Stewart Hyer, SU president 1898-1911; Albert Sanders, Rhodes Scholar 1907; McDougal McLean, Rhodes Scholar 1910; the Alamo and San Jacinto Monthly, December 1882; alumni homecoming invitation, 1909; homecoming nametag, 1909. Originals located in Southwestern University Special Collections & Archives.

# A HISTORY OF FIRSTS

***From academics to experiences, Southwestern leads the way.***

BY DEBBIE RITENOUR

AT THE BEGINNING OF 1840, the Republic of Texas had many of the earmarks of a sovereign state. It had its independence. It had its own congress and president. It had its own constitution. One thing the young republic did not have, however, was an institution of higher learning.

That changed on February 5, 1840, when the charter of Rutgersville College was signed by President Mirabeau B. Lamar. Named after Martin Ruter, a Methodist missionary who wrote the original charter for the school in response to Colonel William B. Travis's call for a Methodist presence in Texas, Rutgersville College opened in Rutgersville, just east of La Grange, with 63 students. In 1873, almost 30 years after Texas joined the United States, Rutgersville College joined Southwestern's other three root colleges—Wesleyan College in San Augustine, McKenzie College in Clarksville, and Soule University in Chappell Hill—to establish a new university called Texas University in Georgetown. Two years later, after the Texas Legislature objected to the use of *Texas* in the name of the university due to a proposed state university to be built in Austin, the school was renamed South Western University.

As the first institution of higher learning in Texas, Southwestern has been a leader in education in the state for more than a century. But that's not where the University's history making stops. Southwestern can claim a number of other significant firsts in the course of its long and storied past, and with recent record-breaking class sizes and the implementation of new, innovative approaches to teaching and learning, Southwestern is sure to carry on its rich tradition of firsts.

## ***Academic and intellectual firsts***

Since its founding, Southwestern has been dedicated to academic excellence. Faculty members and students have spent countless hours performing groundbreaking research and engaging in important intellectual pursuits. Robert S. Hyer, fourth president of Southwestern and professor of physics, was an early pioneer in the field of wireless transmission, building a device in 1894 that could send messages from his laboratory

on campus to the Georgetown jail over a mile away. Hyer also built his own X-ray machine and used it to help local physicians detect fractures and examine the insides of patients' bodies for just \$1 per image.

The University's motto—*Non quis sed quid*, or "Not who but what"—signifies Southwestern's commitment to its core purpose of fostering a liberal-arts community whose values and actions encourage contributions toward the well-being of humanity. The success of this commitment was demonstrated early, with three of the first five Rhodes Scholars in Texas graduating from Southwestern. Established in 1902, the Rhodes Scholarship recognizes "young leaders of outstanding intellect and character who are motivated to engage with global challenges, committed to the service of others, and show promise of becoming value-driven, principled leaders for the world's future." Competition for the Rhodes Scholarship is fierce: Only 32 students are selected from the U.S. each year out of the thousands who apply, resulting in a current acceptance rate of just 0.7%. Albert G. Sanders, class of 1904, received the honor in 1907; Thomas J. Mosley, class of 1907, in 1908; and McDougal (sometimes spelled *McDugald*) K. McLean, class of 1908, in 1910.

But Southwestern's academic firsts don't end there. One of the University's four root colleges, Soule University, established the state's first medical school in 1865. Southwestern created the first student literary journal in the state, the *Alamo and San Jacinto Monthly*, in 1881. And in 1922, the University established the nation's first chapter of the honor society Alpha Chi, growing out of an existing scholarship society. "Alpha Chi puts students in touch with other high-achieving students at Southwestern," says faculty advisor to Alpha Chi and Assistant Professor of Computer Science Jacob Schrum '06. "Alpha Chi students can vie for national scholarships and fellowships; Southwestern students have been awarded prestigious Sledge/Benedict Fellowships in each of the last two years. Members can also submit to Alpha Chi's peer-reviewed student journal *Aletheia*, and some Southwestern students have recently been published there."



## ***The first homecoming***

Colleges across the nation celebrate homecoming each fall to welcome alumni back to campus, strengthen the university community, and recognize recent achievements. Whether these schools are cheering on their football team or hosting elaborate parades, they all can thank Southwestern for starting this tradition on April 21, 1909.

The brainchild of Southwestern employee Allen K. Ragsdale, the first celebration brought together former students and Georgetown residents for a day of special events, including a barbecue picnic, a mock debate, an orchestra concert, and a baseball game between the current Southwestern team and alumni. Artesian Manufacturing and Bottling Company in Waco donated 1,200 bottles of Dr Pepper for the occasion. The celebration—which was originally spelled as two words, *home coming*, to emphasize the fact that alumni were returning home—was a resounding success.

“It was beyond any doubt the greatest day known in the history of any educational institution in the state,” proclaimed the *Megaphone*, the newspaper published by the Students’ Association of Southwestern University. “It grew out of the love borne for it by students of the last 35 years who wished once more to visit their alma mater and grasp the hands of those beloved professors who labored for their interests and to greet other students, roommates, classmates, and chums of the bygone days of youth.”

Like most homecomings, the day featured an opportunity to cheer for the home team—in this case, the Southwestern track and field team.

“We competed against Baylor University,” says Associate Vice President for Alumni and Parent Relations Megan Frisque, who serves as the campus lead for homecoming. “The next November, Baylor held its first homecoming.”

First homecoming picnic, 1909. Original located in Southwestern University Special Collections & Archives.



Homecoming at Southwestern has evolved over the years from a one-day event for alumni to a weekend-long celebration for the entire University community. In the last 15 years, over 23,000 people have flocked to campus to experience the tradition and excitement of homecoming.

"Homecoming looks different every year. There's always something new and fresh to experience and to draw people back," Frisque says.

**"It was beyond any doubt the greatest day known in the history of any educational institution in the state."**





## ***Future firsts***

More recently, Southwestern's tradition of firsts has continued as the University has established a new educational experience designed to produce a 21st-century thinker. The University's unique interdisciplinary approach to learning challenges students to think, create, and connect in ways they never thought possible, ultimately preparing them for today's ever-evolving workplace.

"Southwestern focuses on making connections within disciplines, across disciplines, and across experiences. This type of thinking teaches our students to approach real-world problems such as climate change from multiple perspectives," says Alisa Gaunder, dean of the faculty and professor of political science.

This includes a commitment to inquiry-based learning. By minimizing lectures and maximizing hands-on engagement, this approach enables students to take ownership of their own learning while improving their retention of knowledge and skills.

Southwestern's approach to learning will continue to evolve as the needs of students and society change. But no matter what the future may hold, the University's core purpose will remain constant—as it has for 180 years.

"We were created for a purpose that we are still upholding today. At Southwestern, it's not about your family name or birthright but your actions and contributions to society," Frisque says. "I believe the founders of Southwestern would be proud of who we still are today." 🏛️



# 1840

## A YEAR OF FIRSTS AROUND THE WORLD

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The founding of Southwestern University in 1840 wasn't the only significant event of the year. A number of other interesting firsts occurred both in the United States and abroad.

- John William Draper took the first successful photograph of the moon.
- Charles Wilkes was the first to identify Antarctica as a new continent while circumnavigating the globe.
- The Baltimore College of Dental Surgery—the world's first dental college—was chartered by the Maryland General Assembly.
- Great Britain issued the world's first adhesive postage stamp, known as the Penny Black.
- Alexander S. Wolcott and John Johnson opened the world's first commercial photography portrait studio in New York City.
- Samuel Morse patented the telegraph.

