

## Distinguished Alumni 2008



by Lauren A. Lamb

Four alumni from four different decades were added to the lean ranks of our Distinguished Alumni at Homecoming in October. Here is a glimpse of why we thought their pictures deserved to be included on the wall of honorees in the LBJ Student Center.

### A banker at heart

In many ways, Texas State University is in Chip Carlisle's blood. "My grandparents lived in San Marcos. My parents and several other family members went to Texas State, as well," he said. Carlisle credits his university experience for his success, having graduated with a BBA in 1971.

"I was fortunate to get involved with banking right after graduation," said Carlisle, who began his career as assistant vice president of First City Bank in Houston. He eventually joined Wells Fargo in 1978 and has been the president of the Texas region since 1999.

Under his leadership, Wells Fargo was dubbed one of the "50 Best Companies to Work for in Texas," by *Texas Monthly*, the Texas Association of Businesses, and the Texas State Council of the Society of Human Resources Management in 2005 and 2006. The Better Business Bureau also honored Wells Fargo in 2007.

Carlisle is currently responsible for more than 500 banks in Texas and more than 8,000 employees.

"I also think it's important to work to better our communities," he said. Carlisle has been involved in more than 15 organizations throughout Texas, including the March of Dimes, United Way and the American Heart Association. He currently serves on the board of 11 organizations, including Baylor College of Medicine, the Center for Houston's Future, Greater Houston Partnership and Consumers Bankers Association.

"My best memory of Texas State is attending a dance hosted in the Student

Union my sophomore year," Carlisle said. "I met my wife there." He and wife Susan have been married 38 years and have three children and four grandchildren.

### Around the world with Dow

As a young man growing up in the Panhandle, Debs Cofer's life changed in an instant. "I had planned on attending Texas Tech," said Cofer, 1959 graduate with a BS in chemistry and mathematics. "But during the spring semester of my senior year in high school, a Texas State student met with our class."

The pictures of the campus impressed him, so Cofer sent a letter to the dean of students, who eventually offered him a scholarship to attend Texas State. "I came to registration, fully expecting to transfer back to Tech," he said. Instead, he spent five years at Texas State, also graduating with a master's in chemistry in 1960.

Cofer went on to work for Dow Chemical for 33 years, holding a variety of positions including vice president of the Pacific Division in Hong Kong and the Eastern Division in Cleveland. He retired in 1992 and started a management consulting firm in Lake Jackson.

He is involved in community work because, he said, "leadership is one of the most important things I have carried with me since Texas State." His leadership experience began early — he was a founder and charter member of one of the first fraternities at the university. That organization is now known as Kappa Sigma.

Cofer currently serves on the executive boards of three foundations: Brazosport Health Foundation, Brazoria County



Community Foundation and the Texas State University Development Foundation.

He and his wife Marsha '60 met at Texas State and have been married for 47 years. Together, they are active in their church and are enjoying life with their three children and eight grandchildren. "Even though I'd never heard of Texas State, I really fell in love with it, and I'm glad I never looked back."

### The business of energy

As the first person in his family to attend college, Douglas Foshee never intended to end up working in a business field. "I started out at the University of Houston because they had criminal justice, and I wanted to be in the FBI or the Secret Service," Foshee said.

He eventually transferred to Texas State and graduated with a degree in business administration in 1982.

It was a recommendation from a professor during a statistics class that brought Foshee to the field of finance. "During class he asked me what my major was and said I should go talk to some of the people in the finance department," said Foshee.

Foshee also has an MBA from Rice and is a graduate of the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist.

As the president and CEO of El Paso Corporation, Foshee oversees the largest integrated natural gas company in North America. Prior to joining El Paso in 2003, Foshee was the chief operating officer and executive vice president for Halliburton.

He has also worked for the Nuevo Energy Company as the president, chairman of the board and CEO. Foshee has also held several positions with Touch Energy Advisors and ARCO International Oil and Gas Company.

Foshee serves on the board of many organizations including the Small Steps Nurturing Center, Goodwill Industries of Houston, the Kipp Academy and the Texas Business Hall of Fame Foundation.

He was the recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2007. As one of the highest honors given in America, the award was presented to Foshee for his commitment to helping children succeed and his leadership in the business community.

Foshee and his wife Sarah, a physician, live in Houston. They have four children, Wilson, Sam, Kate and Maggie.

### Champion rodeo rider

Carolynn Seay Viotor is a cowgirl who wanted to compete in rodeo at the college level. "That's how I ended up at Texas State," said Viotor, 1968 graduate with a BA in home economics. "They had a rodeo team, and there's nothing like the world of college rodeo." She has been riding horses since she was 5.

During her years at Texas State, Viotor won two national intercollegiate regional titles and the Reserve World Champion Goat Tying Championship. Viotor was named Miss Rodeo Texas, as well as Miss College Rodeo in 1965 and Miss Rodeo America in 1966.

In addition to remaining involved in rodeo after college, Viotor worked for the Women, Infants and Children food program (WIC) as a nutrition educator and counselor in Philipsburg, Mont., for 21 years.

In 1985, she was elected to the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPRA) Northern Circuit Board of Directors and served for 11 years before being appointed president of WPRA. During her seven years in that office, Viotor was responsible for getting equal pay for women barrel racers and more respect for women competitors. She successfully negotiated sponsorships and television coverage, as well as \$1 million in assets for the organization.

Viotor was named the WPRA's Woman of the Year in 2000, Pioneer Woman of the Year and winner of the Heritage Award in 2003.

Although she retired from office in 2003, Viotor continues to compete successfully in barrel racing and has won several titles.

She and Bill have been married for more than 35 years and have two children. They continue to operate Rocking Chair Ranch, a commercial cattle ranch in Philipsburg, which has been owned by the Viotor family since the 1950s. "I have dedicated my life to promoting a healthy lifestyle and the western way of life," she said. "I hope to be able to do it for years to come." ★



Foshee



Viotor