



# Advancing Excellence

Update From the Development & Alumni Office  
No. 17 | Spring 2019



The University of Texas at Austin  
Jackson School of Geosciences

# DEAR JACKSON SCHOOL FRIENDS,



As many of you have already heard, I will be stepping down as dean of the Jackson School of Geosciences effective Aug. 31, 2019, and returning to the faculty. It has been an honor to serve as dean of the school over the last 10 years, but it is time for me to turn to the next chapter of my life.

I look forward to ramping up my teaching and research and having the time to finish two NSF-sponsored national efforts that I have been leading to help prepare future generations of geoscientists. One focuses on revamping the undergraduate curriculum across the country and the other on identifying the skills and competencies needed by graduate students for career success.

Looking back over the last decade, it has been a tremendous privilege to work with the faculty, researchers and students at this school. I am humbled by all they have accomplished. Our journey from a new school to the No. 1 geology program in the nation has been an exciting ride full of peaks and valleys, and I wouldn't trade the experiences for anything.

None of it would have been possible without you and your support, which has

been the bedrock of making the Jackson School the special place it is. I want to thank each and every one of you for your support during my time as dean. I will carry the relationships and friendships I have forged with many of you for the rest of my life.

As you thumb through this issue of *Advancing Excellence*, I hope you take pride in what you have helped achieve. We've finished our new 10-year strategic plan. Finances are stable. Our reputation is strong. And our rankings (as illustrated by the No. 1 ranking in Geology in the country by the *U.S. News & World Report's* 2019 edition of "Best Graduate Schools") place us among the very best in the nation and the world.

I'm confident that, with your help, we will continue to achieve even greater things in the future.

Sharon Mosher, Dean



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## ON THE COVER

The 2018 GEO660 field camp on the western flank of the Big Horn Mountains, east of Lovell, Wyoming.



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## NEW ENDOWMENT DRAWS WORLD- CLASS TALENT

### First Bookout Geology Chair Explores Connections Between Mountains and Earth's Mantle

It's no surprise that Claudio Faccenna, the Jackson School's newest chair in structural geology is a self-described "mountain guy." His experience exploring the Italian Apennines while growing up in Italy led him to a career in geology, and an interest in uncovering the fundamental processes that build up and shape mountain belts around the world.

"In the field, you get ideas, you are inspired," said Faccenna, who joined the faculty in spring 2019 as the first John F. and Carolyn C. Bookout Endowed Chair in Structural Geology. "You then go back to the lab and test if they are physically meaningful."

The support of the Bookouts allowed the Jackson School to create the new position and conduct an international search to find a candidate that Dean Sharon Mosher said perfectly complements the school's wide-ranging, interdisciplinary research goals as outlined in the new 10-year strategic plan.

"Claudio's research spans boundaries, both in the academic sense and geological," said Mosher, who is also a structural geologist. "The entire Jackson School family should be thankful for the generosity of the Bookout family. Their gift will pay tremendous

benefits to the school by having an expert of Claudio's caliber and vision conducting research and teaching students."

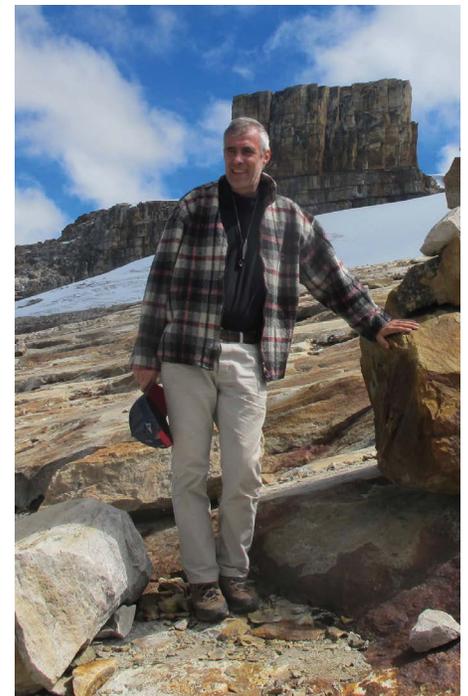
While structural geologists have traditionally focused on connecting structure to tectonics, Faccenna's research is distinct because it goes even deeper. His focus is on trying to capture the surface signals of mantle dynamics—for example how landscape and surface deformation are shaped by the deep mantle. The overall goal is to understand how plate tectonics works and, in particular, how deep dynamics may be connected to formation and evolution of mountain belts.

Among the long-term projects that Faccenna is looking forward to starting at the Jackson School is a large-scale laboratory model that is able to simulate linkages between deep tectonics and surface process and to reproduce mountain belts by incorporating a range of factors that work across timescales—from mountain growth over millions of years to landslides that happen in seconds. While such work requires time in the lab, he said that the inspiration and data will come directly from field sites in mountain belts across the world, including the Andes, the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, mountains in Ethiopia and other sites across the Mediterranean and Middle East. Faccenna said that he also hopes to launch new research in the Caribbean.

Faccenna is a fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the editor in chief of the journal *Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geosystems*, or G-cubed, which focuses on understanding the Earth at the systems scale. After spending most of his academic career at the University of Roma TRE (where he still holds a part time appointment as a professor),

Faccenna said that the opportunity to be part of a research environment that allows for such an integrative approach to studying the Earth inspired him to make the move to The University of Texas at Austin.

"There is a richness of expertise here," Faccenna said. "It was a big move for a big opportunity. I am grateful that John and Carolyn Bookout established the chair that made it possible."



ABOVE: CLAUDIO FACCIENNA CONDUCTING A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS AT THE FOOTHILLS OF THE HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAIN RANGE IN MOROCCO.

BELOW: CLAUDIO FACCIENNA IN FRONT OF THE SMALL GLACIER ON TOP OF THE SIERRA NEVADA COCUCU IN COLOMBIA.

PHOTOS: CLAUDIO FACCIENNA.



## PAYING IT FORWARD AND HONORING A MENTOR

### Endowment Named for Outgoing Dean Sharon Mosher Helps Students With Financial Need

When Ken Neavel heard that Dean Sharon Mosher had decided to step down as head of The University of Texas at Austin Jackson School of Geosciences next fall and rejoin the faculty, he had a simple reaction.

“I was happy — happy for Sharon,” Neavel said. “I know the degree to which she enjoys conducting science and working with students. Now she will have more time to do such. I am excited for her.”

Neavel should know. Forty years ago he was a student of Mosher’s. He has carried the positive impact of the experience with him all his life. Consequently, it inspired Neavel to establish an undergraduate scholarship in Mosher’s honor.

“We all can remember one or two teachers or mentors who impacted our lives,” he said. “The impact can be quite influential, more than we likely realized at the time.”

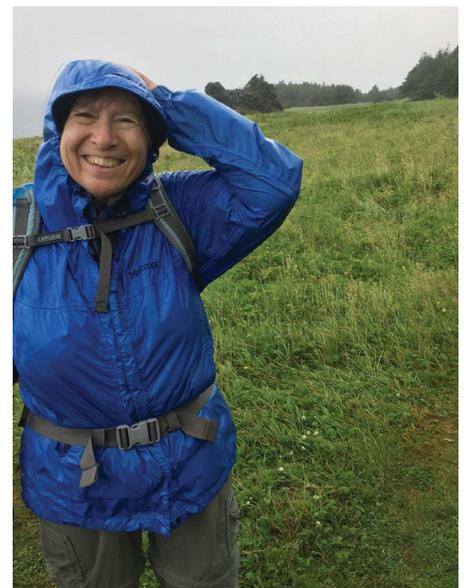
Mosher has led the Jackson School for 10 years, helping build the school into one of the preeminent geosciences institutions in the world. She announced in January that she is stepping down effective August 31, 2019. She plans to rejoin the faculty and finish two major National Science Foundation-sponsored initiatives she has been leading: one to rework undergraduate geosciences curriculum across the nation; the other to develop the skills and competencies doctoral and master’s students across the country need to be successful in the workforce of the future.

This kind of dedication to education and the geosciences is what Neavel thinks of when reflecting on his interactions with Mosher. Neavel was a freshman geology major at UT in 1978, the year Mosher joined the school as an assistant professor. He was introduced to Mosher while taking a class in structural geology his junior year and became her student assistant soon thereafter.

That relationship would lead Mosher to introduce Neavel to his future graduate mentor, Nicholas Rast at the University of Kentucky.

“Some people might think, that’s no big deal. It might seem insignificant, but in one’s life, these types of events can make a dramatic impact on one’s future and career,” he said.

The introduction would prompt Neavel to leave his native Texas for graduate school and then embark on a successful career in the oil and gas industry. He has now come full circle, settling back in Austin 10 years ago.



As we thank her for a decade of stellar leadership, we invite you to share your stories about Dean Sharon Mosher. Please email any thoughts and memories to [stories@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:stories@jsg.utexas.edu).

Education has always been important to Neavel and his family, particularly public education. He has spent years volunteering at public schools because he knows the impact it can have on young lives. Given Mosher's influence on him and the hundreds of students she has taught over the years, he said a scholarship honoring her made perfect sense. He similarly established scholarships to honor his mentors at his other two alma maters—Kentucky and Purdue University. The scholarships are designed to support freshman and sophomore level geosciences students with demonstrated financial needs, as well as those from underserved populations.

That's exactly what Albert Haertlein, a 1978 UT geology graduate, had in mind when he gave generously to the scholarship fund.

"That's what this is all about, the idea of opening up the pathway for everybody," he said.

They didn't overlap while Haertlein was earning his bachelor's degree from UT, but he's come to know Mosher well at alumni and school events in the years since. He said he has been impressed with how approachable she is and her tireless focus on improving the education at the Jackson School. He pointed to the reputation she has helped forge at the school, exemplified by the recent No. 1 national ranking in Geology by U.S. News & World Report. UT has always been viewed as a top geosciences school, Haertlein said, but the reputation it has built over the last decade increases the value of his degree and everyone else who majored in the geosciences at UT. That focus on education and Mosher's ability to tirelessly advocate for making the school even better made honoring her with a donation a natural fit.

"Dr. Mosher just really has this amazing ability to accomplish things," he said. "I think she's accomplished everything she's taken on."

To contribute to the Sharon Mosher Scholarship Fund or for more information about how to recognize a mentor or friend with a blended or estate gift, please contact Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations Belle German at 512-471-1993 or [bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu).

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**

**TOP:** JACKSON SCHOOL DEAN SHARON MOSHER EXPLAINING TEXAS HILL COUNTRY GEOLOGY TO INCOMING GRADUATE STUDENTS IN 2017.

**BOTTOM:** MOSHER DURING THE 2016 FIELD TRIP TO NEWFOUNDLAND

**BELOW, LEFT:** MOSHER DISCUSSES A STUDENT'S POSTER AT THE 2018 JACKSON SCHOOL STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM.

**BELOW, RIGHT:** MOSHER ON BLOUNT MOUNTAIN IN LLANO COUNTY, TEXAS, IN THE 1980S.

PHOTOS: JACKSON SCHOOL/SHARON MOSHER.



# RAPID RESPONSE

## HELP SUPPORT OUR NEXT RAPID RESPONSE MISSION

Scientist-Established Endowment  
Will Match Donations Dollar for Dollar

Natural disasters affect all of us. Rapid Response missions gather data that can help us recover. James A. Austin, Jr., a senior research scientist at the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics, knows the value of Rapid Response missions and established an endowment to support them. Austin will match gifts made to the

Rapid Response program dollar for dollar up to \$100,000. In the wake of natural disasters, Rapid Response missions gather priceless geologic data that can help in understanding long-term impacts of events, and help inform recovery and preparedness efforts. Your support makes future missions possible.

To make a gift online, go to [jsg.utexas.edu](http://jsg.utexas.edu). Click the "make a gift" link at the top of the page and note that it is for **Rapid Response**. You can also contact Belle German, Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations at [bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu) or 512-471-1993.



HOUSTON DURING HURRICANE HARVEY FLOODING. PHOTO: TOM FITZPATRICK/FUGRO.



## YOUR LEGACY ON THE FORTY ACRES

### The Texas Leadership Society

As the nation's top geology program, The University of Texas at Austin Jackson School of Geosciences has a worldwide impact. Your support of the Jackson School also extends far. When you include the Jackson School in your estate plan, your generosity provides superior educational opportunities that equip the next generation of Longhorn geoscientists to become innovative leaders in their professions and in their communities.

The individuals listed to the right comprise a special group of philanthropists. They have either expressed their intent to include the Jackson School in their estate plans or have already made estate gifts. Some support students' scholarships or endowed faculty chairs, others support field experiences or a variety of additional educational opportunities. All are vital to the success of the Jackson School. Thank you for making this the special place it is.

### Creative Ways to Give

There are a number of innovative ways to fund legacy gifts that will advance the teaching and research mission of the Jackson School. You can plan your gift in non-traditional ways while maximizing tax benefits. These are a few assets you can give to achieve your goals:

- Charitable Annuities and Trusts
- Stocks and Securities
- Mineral Interests
- Intellectual Property and Royalties
- Business Interests/Closely Held Stock
- Real Estate and Land

### Making a Planned Gift is Simple

If you are considering including the Jackson School of Geosciences in your will, here is some suggested language: ***I hereby direct \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_ percent of my residual estate) in cash, securities, or other property to the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System for the benefit of The University of Texas at Austin. This gift shall be for the further benefit of the Jackson School of Geosciences and shall be used to (purpose)\_\_\_\_\_.***

*With any decision involving your assets and/or estate, we urge you to seek the advice of your professional counsel when considering a gift to The University of Texas at Austin.*

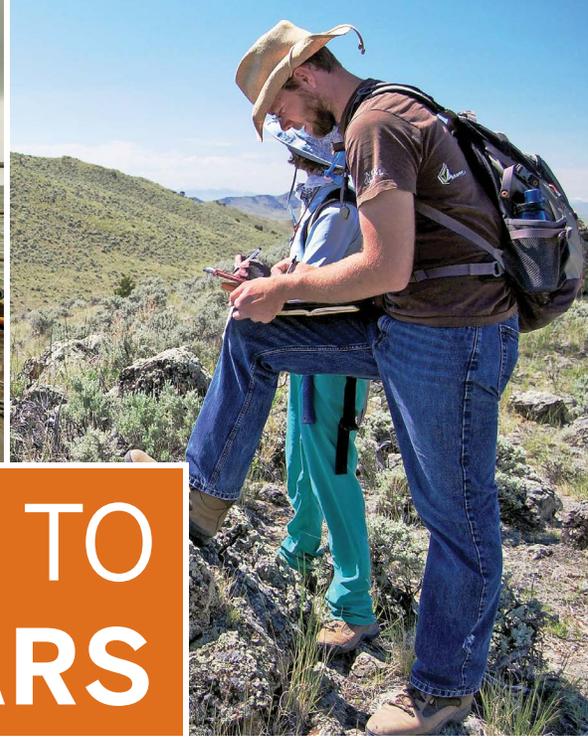
*If you are considering an estate gift, please contact Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations Belle German at [bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu) or call 512-471-1193 to schedule a confidential visit.*

**UT Austin Tax Identification Number: 74-6000203**

### TEXAS LEADERSHIP SOCIETY

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- Vada & Walt Boyle (B.S. '54, M.A. '55)
- Barbara & Philip Braithwaite (M.A. '58)
- Ina\* & Jesse\* Brundrett (B.S. '53, M.A. '55)
- Susan (B.A. '50) & Warren\* (B.S. '50) Cage
- Louise\* & Decker\* Dawson
- Karen & Ed Duncan (B.S. '79, M.A. '87)
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- Bill Gipson (B.A. '48, M.A. '49)
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- Katie\* & Jack\* Jackson (B.A. '40)
- William Klett, Jr.
- Marietta\* & Wann\* Langston
- Sandra Lindquist (M.A. '76)
- Kenneth Neavel (B.S. '82)
- Cheryl & Woody Pace (B.S. '85)
- Terry & Elliot Pew (M.A. '82)
- Rita & Jimmie Russell (B.A. '52, M.A. '54)
- Julia Trimble & Tim Diggs (M.A. '89)
- Kevin Tuerff
- Kathy (B.S. '83) & Steve (M.A. '81) Weiner
- Wendy Weiss & Robert Mace (Ph.D. '98)
- Raymond Woods\* (B.A. '31, M.A. '34)
- John Wright\* (M.A. '56)
- Edith & Bob Zinn (B.S. '52, M.A. '53)

*\*indicates realized estate gifts by individuals who passed on and left meaningful, generous gifts, for which we are most grateful.*



# LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT 100 YEARS



We've come a long way since we introduced our foundational field geology camp, GEO660, in 1917. With your help, we'll continue to grow and innovate to produce future leaders in the rapidly changing field of geosciences.



To help the next generation of geoscientists learn in the field, visit [jsg.utexas.edu](http://jsg.utexas.edu) and click **Make a Gift**.



BILL FISHER SHARES HIS THOUGHTS DURING HIS RETIREMENT PARTY.

## BILL FISHER: A CAREER OF DISTINCTION

### The Jackson School Honors Legend With Hall of Distinction Induction

When the Jackson School of Geosciences honored Bill Fisher last fall, there were some tough decisions to make.

Which details should speakers focus on from Fisher's remarkable career that spans nearly 60 years? His role in launching the school? His decades of leading and building the Bureau of Economic Geology? His foundational scientific discoveries? His international and national leadership?

One decision was easy when planning the retirement event. The school surprised Fisher with induction into the Hall of Distinction.

"I can think of no other person who is more deserving of this honor than Bill," Dean Sharon Mosher told the crowd at the retirement event. "For nearly six decades, Bill Fisher has been a driving force in geology in Texas and beyond, helping turn the Bureau of Economic Geology into a world-class research institution, launching the Jackson School of Geosciences, educating generations of geoscience leaders and shaping policy across the nation."

Fisher, now a professor emeritus, retired after an amazing run at The University of Texas at Austin. He played a pivotal role in building one of the top geosciences institution in the world. He led the Bureau of Economic Geology for 24 years. He was chairman of the Department of Geological Sciences from 1984 to 1990 and director of the Geology Foundation from 1984 to 2006. His only break from UT was when he served the Ford administration as deputy assistant secretary for energy and assistant secretary for energy and minerals.

Under Fisher's vision and leadership, the bureau expanded from a small, well-respected organization to a research powerhouse. He inherited a bureau with a budget of \$384,000. That grew to more than \$20 million by the end of his tenure.

"If forming the Jackson School was Bill's crowning achievement, most certainly the transformation of the Bureau of Economic Geology over a quarter century was his most important body of work," said bureau Director Scott Tinker.

During his time at the university, Fisher also developed a strong friendship with businessman and philanthropist Jack Jackson and played an instrumental role in building a level of trust with Jack that eventually led to the remarkable gift that founded the school. When university leadership needed a leader for the newly formed school, they turned to Fisher, who

was named the school's inaugural dean. Larry Faulkner, who served as university president at the time, said he didn't seriously consider anyone else.

Faulkner was among those who spoke at the special event honoring Fisher last fall along with Tinker and Mosher. The group also included Otaviano de Cruz Pessoa Neto, geology and petrophysics general manager at Petrobras, who spoke about Fisher's pivotal role in Brazil's oil industry.

Together the speakers tried to encapsulate a career that has been described as among the most influential in the history of Texas geology.

As a geoscientist, Fisher has won about every award possible, including the Powers Medal from the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Parker Medal from the American Institute of Professional Geologists, the Boyd Medal from the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies, the Twenhofel Medal from the Society for Sedimentary Geology, the Milling Medal and the Campbell Medal from American Geological Institute, and the Hedberg Medal from Institute for the Study of Earth and Man. In 1994, he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

Fisher is credited with foundational discoveries in the geosciences. In 1967, he and colleague Joe McGowen introduced the concept of depositional systems, a



fundamental part of modern stratigraphy and sedimentology. Fisher, along with colleague Frank Brown, introduced the concept of systems tracts, which linked contemporaneous depositional systems from source to sink. Fisher also led a 1987 assessment for the Department of Energy that turned around the then-prevalent view of natural gas scarcity.

Fisher is among the founders of the field of seismic stratigraphy—a technique that revolutionized how energy companies search for hydrocarbons. It was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s simultaneously by Exxon researchers and Fisher, who was working with colleagues at the Petrobras Brazilian oil corporation.

As an educator, Fisher was among the best, bringing his unsurpassed knowledge and unbridled energy to the classroom and field, and supervising 30 doctoral and 153 master's students.

Fisher also served as president for numerous professional organizations for geoscientists. During his career, he was president of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Association of American State Geologists, the American Institute of Professional Geologists, the American Geological Institute, the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies, and the Austin Geological Society.

"I can think of no one more appropriate to be in our hall," Mosher said.

## Celebrating Fisher

*A group of noted geoscientists and academics shared their memories of Bill Fisher and his career with friends and family at the symposium and dinner honoring Fisher on Nov. 16, 2018.*

### **The speakers were:**

Mark Cloos, Professor,  
Department of Geological Sciences

Larry Faulkner, Former President,  
The University of Texas at Austin

Charles Kerans, Chair,  
Department of Geological Sciences

Sharon Mosher, Dean,  
Jackson School of Geosciences

Otaviano de Cruz Pessoa Neto,  
General Manager of Geology & Petrophysics,  
Petrobras

Doug Ratcliff,  
Former Associate Director,  
Bureau of Economic Geology

Bridget Scanlon, Senior Research Scientist,  
Bureau of Economic Geology

Scott Tinker, Director,  
Bureau of Economic Geology

Paul Weimer, Professor and Director,  
Energy and Minerals Applied Research Center,  
University of Colorado

Lesli Wood, Professor,  
Colorado School of Mines



To make a gift in honor of Bill Fisher, please contact Executive Director for Development and Alumni Relations Belle German at 512-471-1993 or [bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:bgerman@jsg.utexas.edu).

### **CLOCKWISE:**

**TOP LEFT:** DEAN SHARON MOSHER PRESENTS FISHER WITH HIS HALL OF DISTINCTION PLAQUE TO BE DISPLAYED IN THE JACKSON GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES BUILDING; **TOP RIGHT:** BILL FISHER AT HIS RETIREMENT EVENT SURROUNDED BY FAMILY. **LEFT TO RIGHT:** LEAH FISHER NYFELER, DAUGHTER; JAMES NYFELER, SON IN LAW; MARILEE FISHER, WIFE; KARL B. FISHER, SON; BILL FISHER; CHEREEN FISHER, DAUGHTER IN LAW; PETER FISHER, SON; **BOTTOM LEFT:** MARILEE FISHER, BILL'S WIFE, LOOKS ON AS HE DELIVERS REMARKS TO HIS RETIREMENT PARTY GUESTS; **MIDDLE RIGHT:** FISHER (CENTER, IN BURNT ORANGE HAT) LEADING THE ANNUAL SEQUENCE STRATIGRAPHY TRIP TO THE GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS IN APRIL 2018; **BOTTOM RIGHT:** FORMER UT PRESIDENT LARRY FAULKNER AND BILL FISHER.

PHOTOS: JACKSON SCHOOL.

# Jackson School Friends & Alumni Network Board Members

Members of the FANs Board serve as your local connection to the Jackson School. Feel free to contact them for information or to learn more about ways to get involved.



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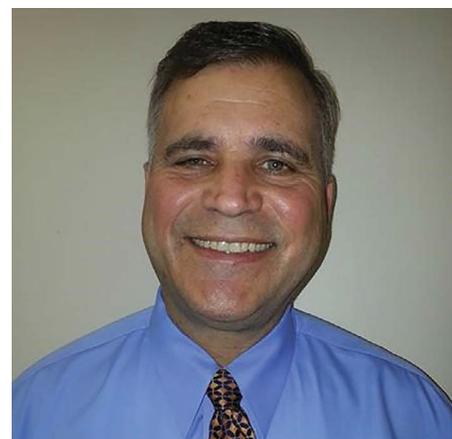
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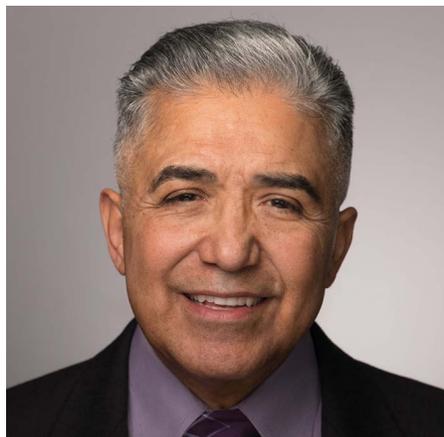
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# HALL OF DISTINCTION SPRING INDUCTEES

*The Jackson School of Geosciences Hall of Distinction is reserved for people who have achieved exceptional standing within the geosciences in industry, government or academia. Three new members were inducted at the Evening of Thanks on April 11, 2019.*

## MARTIN P. A. JACKSON

The late Martin P. A. Jackson was a world-renowned geoscientist and esteemed researcher at the Bureau of Economic Geology who was



recognized globally for his groundbreaking work in the field of salt tectonics, with over 100 papers and three books on the subject.

“He’s the number one person in the world by a goodly margin,” said colleague Michael Hudec. “You cannot work effectively in salt tectonics without reading Martin’s work.”

In recent years, Jackson had been exploring signs of salt-tectonic activity on other planetary bodies, including Mars and Neptune’s moon Triton.

Born in Rhodesia (today, Zimbabwe), Jackson initially studied old, hard Precambrian gneisses before moving to Texas and eventually becoming immersed in, as he called it, “a subsurface world of very young, soft rocks.” He came to the bureau in 1980 and in 1988 was instrumental in creating the bureau’s first industrial associates program, the Applied Geodynamics Laboratory (AGL). Jackson’s new consortium became a model for those that followed. The AGL now maintains over 30 participating companies and is widely considered the world’s preeminent salt-tectonics research laboratory.

Jackson’s numerous major career honors include the American Association of Petroleum Geologists’ Robert R. Berg Outstanding Research Award (2010) in recognition of outstanding innovation in petroleum geoscience research and the Geological Society of London’s William Smith Medal (2013) for outstanding research in applied geology. According to AAPG records, no one has won more AAPG technical awards, nor has anyone won in as many technical categories.

In addition to his preeminence as a research scientist, Jackson is equally regarded for his strength of character, gracious demeanor, and unflinching humor. His friends and peers recall his kindness, humility, insightfulness and remarkable equanimity.

## PAUL L. STOFFA

Paul L. Stoffa served as the director of The University of Texas Institute for Geophysics from 1994 to 2009 and Shell Distinguished Chair in



Geophysics in the Department of Geological Sciences from 1997 to 2009. He is currently Shell Chair Emeritus.

Paul’s expertise is in multichannel seismic acquisition, signal processing, acoustic and elastic wave propagation, modeling and inversion of geophysical data, along with parallel computers. His research focuses on developing new seismic data acquisition and processing methods that can be used to address complex geologic problems.

“Paul has a wonderful imagination and is able to create new methods to acquire and process geophysical data,” stated his SEG citation for honorary membership. “He has developed major acquisition and processing techniques in exploration geophysics that have made a huge contribution to our understanding of how to investigate the Earth’s interior.”

Stoffa received his B.S. in physics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1970 and his Ph.D. in geophysics from Columbia University’s Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory in 1974. He has published over 100 research articles in refereed journals and co-authored “Global Optimization Methods in Geophysical Inversion” as part of the Elsevier Advances in Exploration Geophysics book series.

Stoffa served as a member of the Board of Governors of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program Management International, Inc. and served as chairman from 2005-2007. He was also a member representative (alternate) for The University of Texas at Austin to the Consortium for Ocean Leadership and is a member of the Society of Exploration Geophysicists, the American Geophysical Union, and the European Association of Geoscientists and Engineers.

## LESLIE P. WHITE

Leslie P. White thumbed a ride from Waco to Austin more than six decades ago looking for an education that would afford him a good career.



He got it. But something else happened along the way.

White, who graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a degree in geology in 1956, fell in love with the science and the university that educated him.

The connections and relationships he made at UT are something he never forgot. They are what prompted Les and his wife, Dianne, to make a game-changing gift to the Jackson School of Geosciences in 2018. They donated the family’s 266-acre Hill Country ranch to act as a living classroom for future generations of geoscientists and the first in a series of long-term scientific observatories that the school plans to set up around the state of Texas.

“Field work is foundational for geosciences education at every level,” said Jackson School Dean Sharon Mosher.

“I can’t stress how important Les and Dianne’s donation is to the school and the opportunities it affords us to educate young geoscientists. Their foresight and generosity will pay dividends for Texas and beyond for generations to come.”

White, who spent a career with Humble Oil and Exxon, began buying the property that would make up the ranch in 1995 and enjoyed it with family and friends throughout the years. The property — roughly an hour’s ride southwest of campus outside Dripping Springs — will have a tremendous impact on the Jackson School, particularly for hydrogeology research and education.

“Geologists need to be outside,” White said. “They need to see geology where it lives. It thrills me to think about all the young people that will be out here.”



## GIVING SOCIETIES WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### The Generosity of the Jackson School's Alumni and Friends Fuels our World-Class Research and Education

As we celebrate the fact that we have surpassed more than a century of teaching students in our signature field camps, we continue to find more and more ways to get our students the hands-on field experiences that we all know are vital to training geoscientists. The strength of the Jackson School community was shown in the *U.S. News and World Report's* 2019 edition of "Best Graduate Schools," by being recognized as the No. 1 Geology program in the country. This is only possible through the generosity of our alumni and friends. We gather annually to recognize faithful contributors at the Evening of Thanks.

In 2019, five new members were welcomed into the Hill Society, honoring those who have contributed a total of \$10,000 or more over the years. Those new members are: Joyce and James Doyle, Julie and Clay Edwards, Colleen and Art Maxwell, Donna and Ben Patterson, and Vickie and Scott Reeve.

Annell Bay and Robert Suchecki joined the Barrow Founders Circle, distinguishing those who have given cumulative gifts of \$100,000. Two new couples joined the Flawn Circle of Excellence, recognizing those who have given cumulative gifts of \$1,000,000 or more—Marta Bianchi and John Boone, and Cathy and Chuck Williamson. Every gift matters and changes the lives of our students.

#### TOP TO BOTTOM:

ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR ANNELL BAY (M.S. '80) BEING WELCOMED INTO THE BARROW FOUNDERS CIRCLE BY DEAN SHARON MOSHER;

SCOTT (B.S. '70 AND M.A. '71) AND VICKIE REEVE, NEW MEMBERS OF THE HILL SOCIETY;

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER CHUCK WILLIAMSON (PH.D. '78) BEING INDUCTED INTO THE FLAWN CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE.

PHOTOS: JACKSON SCHOOL.

# PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

## Alumni and Corporate Sponsors Help Students With Their Transition From Classroom to Career

Jackson School of Geosciences alumni go on to have amazing careers in industry, working for companies that span all aspects of the geosciences. Many choose to give back to the school as company representatives, offering valuable opportunities for students to learn first-hand from professionals.

From externships and mentoring, to job shadowing and mock interviews, students say resources provided by the alumni and their associated companies are an essential part of their education and journey from student to professional geoscientist. This rewarding experience benefits the alumni just as much.

Julie Garvin, B.S. '82 and president of Roxanna Oil Company, has been involved with helping students gain professional experience for several years. She sees this as an investment and values the chance to get to know the students. Initially, she provided summer internships to undergraduate students so that they could gain real-world experience. Now she hosts 10 students for a day at Roxanna Oil as part of the Jackson School Career Center's Externship Program. During the full-day externship, Roxanna professionals walk the students through an entire project, from generating prospects to production.

"We give them exposure to a day in the life of a professional geologist," Garvin said. "It is so fun! I have a ball and get so excited about telling people what we do."

Jackson School senior Victor Garcia is a great example. He loved his externship experience with the Texas Water Development Board, even though it is a long way from what he plans on studying in graduate school at Penn State. Garcia, who was introduced to the geosciences through the Jackson School's GeoFORCE program while he was a high school student in Eagle Pass in southwest Texas, plans to study volcanology and work toward a career in geothermal and



mineral exploration. He would recommend externships for every student as a great way to explore career paths.

"It gave me an insight into an organization that I probably would have never learned anything about," he said. "Had I done this earlier, maybe I would have focused more on hydrogeology."

Externships are a great way for students to explore job possibilities after graduation. The next step is to ensure they are prepared to land the job of their dreams.

This past fall, four members of BHP's recruiting team came to campus to do mock interviews with students in an effort to help them get ready for the career fair and on campus recruiting.

"It is helpful for us as a company, but it is also rewarding for me personally," said Curtis Bixler, M.S. '12 and geologist at BHP. "When I was interviewing as a grad student, I don't think I did all that well on my first few interviews. They became a way for me to hone my skills and become a more attractive candidate. Providing an opportunity for students to practice interview skills in a realistic environment so that they can do well during a real interview is really important."

Sergio Leon, who is in his second semester with the Energy and Earth Resources graduate program, certainly agrees. After interviewing with Bixler, Sergio said he has deeper understanding of BHP and that he values the professional connections made by participating in the program.

"The BHP mock interviews provided me a chance to meet key professionals who helped me improve my resume and responses to interview questions," he said.

Leon had interviewed for jobs before and said that the opportunity to prepare

and enhance his skills in a low-pressure environment such as the mock interview was tremendously valuable. The chance to talk to a professional geologist who recruits for a major company has made Leon much more confident about his next real interview.

Interactions like these truly benefit the alumni, the company they work for and the student. Bixler said they saw a broad range of students during the mock interviews. He was especially interested in getting back to campus and learning about research areas outside of his daily focus.

"It is neat to see certain research groups at the Jackson School evolve," he said. "This provided an interesting lens into what's going on at the school."

Externships and mock interviews are only a couple of the many professional development opportunities that Jackson School alumni helped bring to students this year. Alumni and corporate sponsors also spoke to student organizations, offered advice on career panels, and served as judges during the annual student research symposium. In addition, they visited with students during lunch-and-learns, networking events, informational interviews and much more.

ABOVE: STUDENTS WORKING ON A PROJECT DURING AN EXTERNSHIP AT ROXANNA OIL COMPANY. PHOTO: JULIE GARVIN.

To learn more about ways to give back and support students, contact Associate Director of Alumni and Corporate Relations [ktucek@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:ktucek@jsg.utexas.edu) or Career Services Director Jennifer Jordan at [jjordan@jsg.utexas.edu](mailto:jjordan@jsg.utexas.edu).

# DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS CONTACTS

## Meet Your Development and Alumni Relations Team



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### BELLE GERMAN

*Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations*  
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Belle is the Chief Development Officer for the Jackson School of Geosciences and Associate Director of the Geology Foundation. She oversees the development and alumni relations program to deliver best practices in fundraising. She is a 10<sup>th</sup> generation Texan who holds a B.A. from The University of Texas at Austin and a M.P.A. from Angelo State University. Having worked and lived abroad, she brings a global perspective to the Jackson School.



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### KRISTEN TUCEK

*Associate Director of Alumni and Corporate Relations*  
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Kristen oversees alumni and corporate relations at the Jackson School of Geosciences. In this role, she fosters life-long relationships between alumni and the university through regional and national programming, personal visits and meaningful volunteer opportunities. She also advances the mission of the Jackson School by working strategically with industry partners to maximize their philanthropic impact and to increase collaborative opportunities. Kristen has a B.S. degree in nutritional sciences from Texas A&M University and over 15 years of experience in nonprofit volunteer management.



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### COURTNEY VLETAS

*Associate Director of Development*  
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Courtney is the Associate Director of Development for the Jackson School of Geosciences. She has more than 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector raising awareness and financial support for worthy causes. She provides leadership and direction in strengthening relationships and raising private resources for the Jackson School of Geosciences and the Environmental Science Institute. She holds a B.A. from the Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., and a Certificate in Nonprofit Management from The University of Texas at Austin.



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### GEORGIA SANDERS

*Development Specialist*  
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Georgia has over 20 years of experience in different aspects of development. She is responsible for overseeing the Donor Relations programs at the Jackson School of Geosciences—including planning the Evening of Thanks and the Scholars Luncheon, the annual events that recognize and thank donors. Georgia also manages the school's annual giving and crowd funding programs. She is a lifelong Longhorn and loves being on campus every day.



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### VANESSA VALDEZ

*Administrative & Development Assistant*  
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Vanessa is an administrative assistant who helps the Dean's Office and the development team with a number of tasks, including travel planning, events, research and scheduling. Vanessa has a B.A. degree in business management from Texas State University, where she also worked with the alumni relations team during her undergraduate years.



# New Job? New Adventure? Share Your News!

Your Jackson School family wants to hear from you. Visit [apps.jsg.utexas.edu/form/alumni-update](https://apps.jsg.utexas.edu/form/alumni-update) by August 15 to update your contact information and submit your class notes for the 2019 Newsletter.

GET CONNECTED. STAY HOOKED.

## EVENTS

### ALUMNI RECEPTION DURING AAPG ACE

May 20, 2019  
San Antonio, TX



### ALUMNI AND STUDENT INTERNS NETWORKING EVENT

June 13, 2019  
Houston, TX



### ALUMNI RECEPTION DURING SEG'S ANNUAL MEETING

September 17, 2019  
San Antonio, TX



### ALUMNI RECEPTION DURING GSA'S ANNUAL MEETING

September 23, 2019  
Phoenix, AZ



### ANNUAL JACKSON SCHOOL TAILGATE PARTY

October 19, 2019  
Austin, TX



### SCHOLAR'S LUNCHEON

November 8, 2019  
Austin, TX



### ALUMNI RECEPTION DURING AGU'S ANNUAL MEETING

December 11, 2019  
San Francisco, CA



### ALUMNI RECEPTION DURING WINTER NAPE

February 6, 2020  
Houston, TX

Visit [www.jsg.utexas.edu/alumni/events-calendar](https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/alumni/events-calendar) to learn about these events and to stay informed about other upcoming events and activities.

