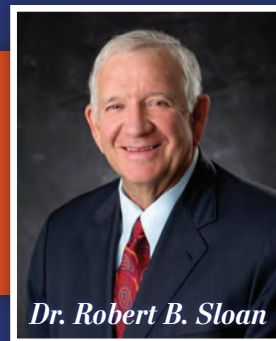


HOUSTON CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

THE PILLARS



PRESIDENT'S *message*



Dr. Robert B. Sloan

This issue of The Pillars reflects a great expansion in both the quality and size of our creative arts programs. A quick glance at the stories featured here relative to our programs in the narrative arts, graphic design, animation, digital media, video game design, creative writing, music, studio arts, and many others reveals the significant development of these academic areas at HCU in recent years.

These areas of study are important for all kinds of reasons, not the least of which is the theological basis for the arts at a Christian university. God is a creator God, and he has made us in his image and given us responsibility over the creation. The Lord has created from nothing all that is, and he has given us the responsibility of extending the frontiers of his kingship throughout all the creation and reflecting his wise power as his stewards and subcreators. Every work of art, whether it involves painting, writing, screenplays, sculpture or music, represents a creative act that reflects the orderly and beautiful work of God in the world.

And the arts also, as a reflection of God's creative work, are deeply embedded in all the marketplaces of life. It's exciting to see how many students are drawn toward these various academic programs and especially to realize the impact that they will have in the worlds of business, entertainment, education, law, ministry, medicine, and other careers open to those who are educated in the arts and have learned to think creatively.

We have outstanding faculty in all of these areas, and our students are winning competitions and gaining visibility as they get placed in dynamic opportunities for success throughout the workforce.

I know you will enjoy reading this issue of *The Pillars*.

Robert B. Sloan

  @DrRobertBSloan

**READY TO TAKE
THE NEXT STEP IN
YOUR ARTISTIC
JOURNEY?**

Explore our programs
and discover how we
can help you unlock
your full potential!



hcu.edu/school-of-fine-arts

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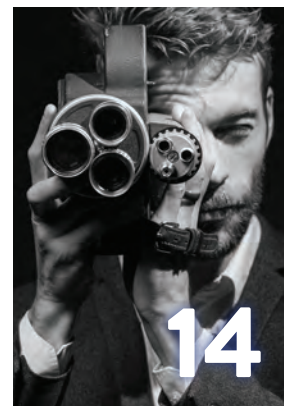
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A Unified Vision for

Narrative Arts

HCU's School of Fine Arts has launched a cohesive new curriculum focused on storytelling and professional excellence in cinematic arts, digital media and creative writing. "Narrative Arts at HCU serves as a vibrant hub for aspiring storytellers and media artists," explains Prof. Joshua Sikora, director of the new initiative. "We're fostering an environment where faith, culture and technology intersect, empowering students to enhance their creativity and skills."

The Department of Narrative Arts offers comprehensive Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Cinematic Arts, Animation, Video Game Design, Graphic Design and Creative Writing. Each program features intensive, hands-on curricula emphasizing artistic mastery and cutting-edge technical skills to prepare graduates for careers in creative industries.

Additionally, a shorter Bachelor of Arts in Narrative Arts with concentrations in Creative Writing, Cinema Production or Digital Media emphasizes foundational knowledge of narrative theory with streamlined applications relevant to the student's chosen concentration.

Finally, students can further refine their craft in four rigorous graduate programs. The low-residency Master of Fine Arts degrees in Creative Writing and Screenwriting have equipped students for professional success since their launch in 2020, and are now joined by two parallel Master of Arts in Creative Writing and Cinematic Arts, which can be completed 100% online.



Narrative Arts at HCU is a home for a new generation of aspiring storytellers and creative artists. With its blend of faith, creativity and professionalism, it prepares students to succeed in their fields and contribute meaningfully to the narrative landscape. HCU's uniquely unified approach to cinema, digital media and creative writing offers a rich, unbeatable learning experience.

CORE FOUNDATIONS

A defining aspect of Narrative Arts at HCU is a thoughtful integration of faith and creativity. Across the undergraduate programs, all students take a shared core of five classes that develop a rich understanding of story theory, bolstered by an exploration of scripture's narrative richness. These courses encourage students to reflect on their own personal convictions, while exploring art's transformative power, driven by our Creator's incarnational example.

In addition to these foundations, all majors also facilitate the development of professional skills. With an emphasis on collaboration and communication across creative disciplines, students work together to refine their craft, develop portfolios and network with industry veterans. Through both hands-on projects and real-world internships, students gain essential career experience and connections with accomplished professionals.

CREATIVE WRITING

As one of the three primary areas of focus in Narrative Arts, the Creative Writing program immerses students in poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction. Students develop writing skills and curate professional portfolios. Frequent guests include authors, editors and publishers. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary work include Creative Writing students collaborating on film scripts and comic books. Alumni from both the undergraduate and graduate programs have found professional success with award-winning publications, impressive academic achievements and marketable communication skills.

The MFA in Creative Writing is a terminal degree emphasizing a workshop-driven approach. The low-residency

program includes biannual writing retreats and can be completed in two-and-a-half years, while the shorter MA in Creative Writing can be completed 100% online.

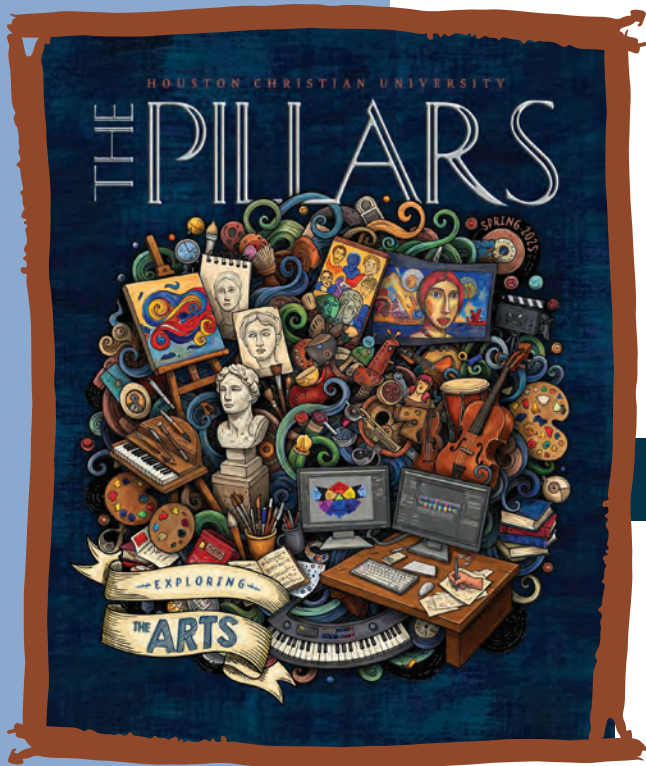
CINEMATIC ARTS

The Cinematic Arts program prepares students for careers in film and media production, emphasizing a comprehensive understanding of the production process, with students specializing in directing, screenwriting, cinematography, editing and visual effects. A hallmark of the Cinematic Arts program has been annual productions that pair experienced professional filmmakers with a student crew, leading to irreplaceable on-set experience and award-winning portfolio work.

The MFA in Screenwriting provides a terminal degree designed for script writers in film, television and digital media. Supported by biannual retreats with industry professionals, as well as trips to the South by Southwest Film Festival, the program places a strong emphasis on mentorship and critique. The new MA in Cinematic Arts provides a broader range of options, including opportunities to study directing, cinematography, producing and editing.

DIGITAL MEDIA

The BFAs in Animation, Video Game Design and Graphic Design build from shared technical foundations taught in our state-of-the-art Digital Media Lab. All students learn essential skills in 2D and 3D digital design, as well as timeless artistic foundations. From here, each student is able to lean into their chosen field of study, while extensive cross-discipline collaboration allows for animators to work



Where art meets innovation: The cover artwork for *The Pillars Spring 2025* blends AI-generated imagery with artistic manipulation, illustrating a futuristic fusion of technology, nature, and human creativity.

on video games and graphic designers to contribute creative visions and art direction to a range of media projects.

A COMMUNITY OF CREATORS

The department is a supportive, collaborative community where students work together to practice their craft and refine their voices. With access to high-end equipment, industry resources and accomplished professionals, students have everything they need to thrive in their creative careers. Graduates have entered a wide array of fields, including television production, independent filmmaking, graphic design, church media and publishing. The rapidly growing alumni network is already fostering valuable connections for mentorship and job opportunities.

Narrative Arts at HCU is a home for a new generation of aspiring storytellers and creative artists. With its blend of faith, creativity and professionalism, it prepares students to succeed in their fields and contribute meaningfully to the narrative landscape. HCU's uniquely unified approach to cinema, digital media and creative writing offers a rich, unbeatable learning experience. 🏛️



Leveling Up Creativity

THREE NEW DIGITAL MEDIA DEGREES

Houston Christian University has launched three dynamic new digital media majors: Video Game Design, Animation and Graphic Design. Each degree provides students with unparalleled opportunities to explore growing industries and pursue careers at the intersection of art, technology and storytelling. With these additions, HCU's Department of Narrative Arts continues to pioneer innovative education rooted in creativity and faith.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Video Game Design prepares students to work in an industry now larger in global revenue than music and film combined. Students are making use of industry-standard tools and software to create games and stories from the ground up. From AAA studios creating blockbuster video games to independent developers crafting experimental games, opportunities abound for HCU graduates.

The BFA in Animation leads to another versatile medium that spans industries—beyond just film and television, 3D animators now also work in advertising, games and web-based content. Students in the new major are incorporating recent advances in real-time rendering, motion capture technology and artificial intelligence in professional workflows, preparing them for a wide range of animation careers.

The BFA in Graphic Design introduces students to the backbone of visual communication and offers



an incredible range of career options. Whether working on branding, app development, web design or social media campaigns, graphic designers are integral to how businesses and organizations communicate with the world.

“Each one of these disciplines is exciting on its own,” says Sarah Robbins, Associate Director of Digital Media Programs. “But what makes them truly unique here at HCU is how they connect. Whether you’re animating characters, designing game environments or creating a marketing campaign, it all starts with mastering storytelling and visual language.”

“The world is hungry for skilled creators who can craft compelling stories and experiences,” says Joshua Sikora, Director of Narrative Arts Programs. “Our newest BFAs are designed to equip students to excel not only in these thriving

industries, but also in shaping how we see and interact with the world.”

One of the most compelling aspects of these programs is the way they are united by shared tools and foundational skills. Students across Game Design, Animation and Graphic Design use industry-standard software, including Unreal Engine, Maya and Adobe’s Creative Suite. These technologies not only foster technical expertise but also encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.

Students participate in multi-semester production courses where they work in small, cross-disciplinary teams to produce animated short films and video games. Animation students may develop character models that a Video Game Design student integrates into a playable world, while a Graphic Design

Each one of these disciplines is exciting on its own, but what makes them truly unique here at HCU is how they connect. Whether you’re animating characters, designing game environments or creating a marketing campaign, it all starts with mastering storytelling and visual language.

SARAH ROBBINS,
Associate Director of Digital Media Programs



student crafts promotional materials for the project. This collaboration mirrors real-world dynamics in these industries, preparing students for success beyond the classroom.

At the heart of all three programs is a commitment to storytelling. “It’s the core of everything we do,” says Sikora. “We teach students the power of stories—whether through a beautifully designed brand identity, a richly imagined game world or a comedic animated short film. And here at HCU, we’re also exploring how these stories can reflect deeper truths.”

The integration of faith and personal convictions into every facet of creativity is at the heart of HCU’s mission in the Fine Arts. Digital media, with its ability to create immersive worlds and interactive experiences, offers a powerful platform for exploring values and virtues.

“Games are particularly exciting in this respect,” Robbins explains. “They’re spaces where players make choices and see the effect of those choices play out. It’s a way we can engage with ideas like stewardship, compassion and courage, in a deeply personal and impactful way.”

The new BFAs in Digital Media are also deeply connected to HCU’s long-standing Cinematic Arts program and the rest of the Narrative Arts department, creating a vibrant ecosystem of creative collaboration. The department fosters a supportive community where students inspire and challenge one another to reach new heights. Faculty provide mentorship that goes beyond the classroom, helping students refine their skills and build confidence in their creative vision.

“It’s about far more than training students for jobs,” Sikora emphasizes. “We want our graduates to leave here with deep connections to each other and a model for how to build thriving creative communities wherever they go.”

With these programs in full swing, Houston Christian University is becoming a leader for digital media education, attracting students who are passionate about creativity, innovation and faith. Whether dreaming of designing the next big game, animating a blockbuster film or crafting a brand campaign that stands out, students in Video Game Design, Animation and Graphic Design are finding the tools, mentorship and professional network they need to succeed. 🏰







Pixels, Paint and Prompts

THE “AI” REVOLUTION IN THE ARTS

At Houston Christian University, our Narrative Arts programs are not shying away from the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution. We are embracing it with open eyes and thoughtful hearts. While some worry that AI will displace human creativity and jobs, HCU faculty are dutifully researching how it can be an instrumental tool in human-led creative workflows.

More than a century ago, it was feared that the camera would obliterate the art of painting, yet today painters in our Studio Art program create inspiring works alongside the photographic images produced by our Cinematic Arts students. New technology need not always be a threat to traditional processes; it also often empowers new careers and industries.

Professor Joshua Sikora is helping spearhead student experiments with generative AI to focus on humane applications. Instead of viewing AI simply as a shortcut, students are experimenting with how new tools can ease technical tasks, freeing up talent and time to focus on the core goals of creativity—crafting compelling narratives, building meaningful connections and exploring the human experience. Faculty are also helping students navigate the ethical complexities—from copyright to environmental impact.

Ultimately, the goal is to equip students with the wisdom to use AI responsibly and in ways that amplify—not diminish—their creative purpose, modeling ways to use it to reflect truth, foster empathy, alleviate burdens, reveal hidden beauty, spark imagination and ultimately glorify our Creator. 🏛️


Crafting Stories, Building Careers

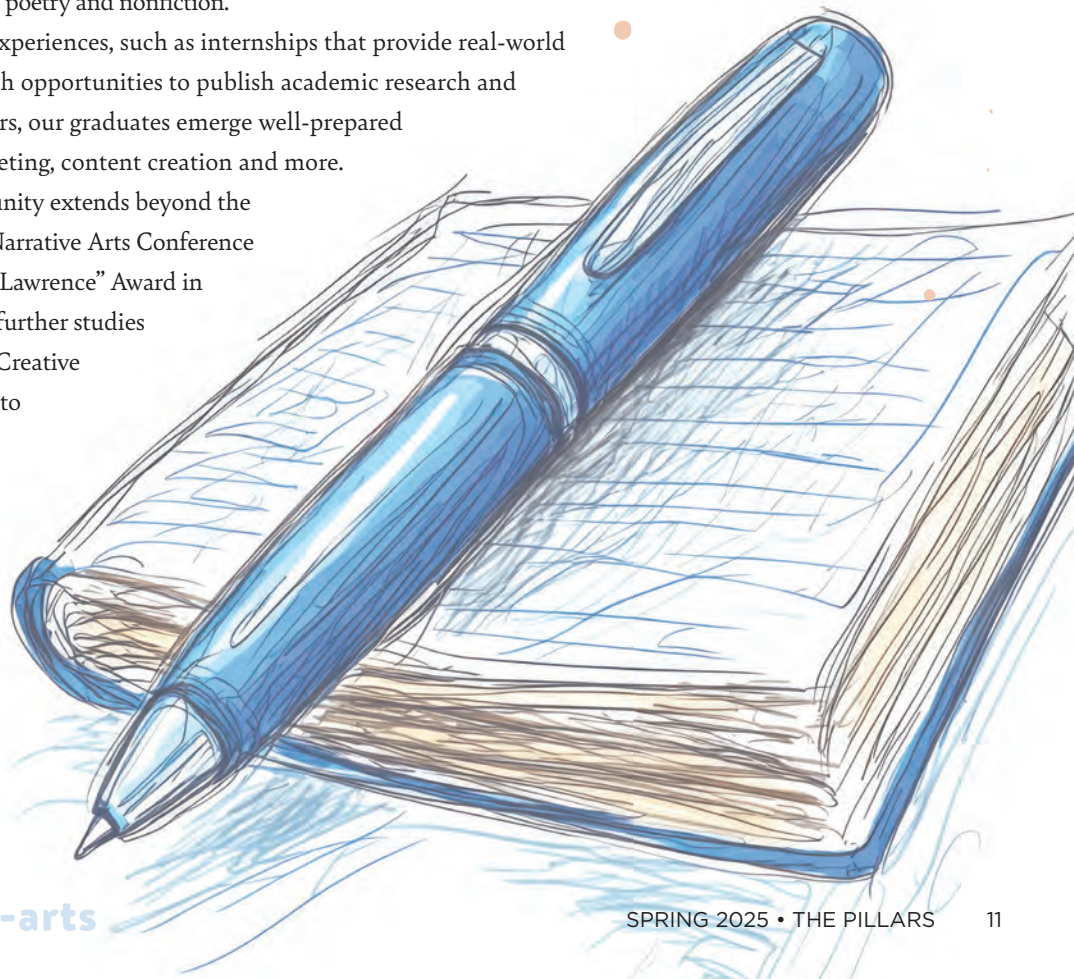
THE POWER OF HCU'S CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

Through the Creative Writing program, aspiring writers explore their potential. HCU offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Creative Writing, a Bachelor of Arts in Narrative Arts (BA) with an emphasis in Creative Writing and a Writing Minor. This immersive program blends traditional storytelling techniques with modern practices, equipping students for careers in writing and publishing.

Students delve into genres such as poetry, fiction and nonfiction within a collaborative environment that nurtures talent and fosters creativity. The curriculum integrates a variety of courses including Advanced Grammar and Writing, Professional and Technical Writing, and Creative Writing workshops in fiction, poetry and nonfiction.

Students benefit from hands-on experiences, such as internships that provide real-world exposure to writing and editing. With opportunities to publish academic research and mentorships from established authors, our graduates emerge well-prepared for diverse roles in journalism, marketing, content creation and more.

HCU's strong emphasis on community extends beyond the classroom, featuring events like the Narrative Arts Conference and contests such as the "Danny Lee Lawrence" Award in Creative Writing. Whether pursuing further studies or launching into the workforce, the Creative Writing program empowers students to craft compelling narratives and make an indelible mark on the literary landscape. 



Creativity in Action

On Saturday, January 18, HCU's Narrative Arts Department held its inaugural Narrative Arts Conference. While there had been precedent in the popular HCU Creative Writing Conference, this marked a new step for the realigned Narrative Arts program.

HCU professors Dr. Matthew Boyleston and Joshua Sikora sought to take the annual writers' conference and expand it into a full narrative arts conference, featuring presentations in all three of the department's main content areas: digital media, creative writing and cinematic arts. The theme was "Creativity and Community"—fitting for a department that has realigned to emphasize shared community across creative disciplines.

As Dr. Boyleston puts it: "we need community to sustain creativity; we are image-bearers of God—building things, being creative is part of our job."

The conference began with a keynote delivered by Andrew Peterson, recording artist and author of the popular "Wingfeather" series of fantasy novels, to over 270 attendees in the new Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty.

Peterson's keynote, bookended by two moving song performances, was a poignant reflection on the theme of time, and what artmaking says about the past, present and future. Peterson walked attendees through the various ways his own art has interacted with these three aspects of time.

Following this keynote, the conference comprised three breakout sessions. Each session offered attendees the chance to explore creative writing, cinematic arts

HCU'S NARRATIVE ARTS CONFERENCE INSPIRES WRITERS, FILMMAKERS AND DIGITAL ARTISTS



▲ Award-winning designer and creative strategist Brandi Sea Heft-Kniffin presents her session "Start with Words: Unlock Stories that Stick."



Keynote speaker, Andrew Peterson plays a few of his songs at the opening session of the Narrative Arts Conference.



We need community to sustain creativity; we are image-bearers of God—building things, being creative is part of our job.

DR. MATTHEW BOYLESTON

or digital media led by various experts, including featured speakers best-selling author Bret Lott, three-time Emmy-award winning actor, Tony Hale and Soma Games founder, Chris Skaggs.

Bret Lott explored detail and truth in writing and reminded attendees that, to speak truthfully, writers have to give more detail than they might think necessary. He likened writing to a cross-stitch: the image presented is clean and clear, but the back of the cloth shows a jumble of yarn. Lott charged aspiring writers to be courageous in their writing and to avoid complacency and cliché.

In the first afternoon block, Hale was joined by HCU professor Bearden Coleman for a wide-ranging conversation about faith, acting and filmmaking. Hale noted that in an unpredictable industry, his career is full of uncertainty, and that maintaining success depends on the community around you. He talked about his craft, how his faith informs his work and about finding satisfaction in something beyond career success.

Later in the afternoon, video game designer Chris Skaggs gave an inspiring call-to-arms for the Church to engage with the art of video games. Skaggs highlighted that we are at an inflection point for the industry, and the Church should not ignore the industry which itself is already bigger and more lucrative than Hollywood. According to Skaggs, video games are shaping culture in much the same way that Hollywood has. The Church has a prime opportunity to influence both the ethics of the industry and the stories it chooses to tell, and he commended HCU for being one of the Christian universities dedicated to training students to enter this industry.

The final session was a roundtable discussion with Peterson, Hale and Skaggs, moderated by Bret Lott. This was a wide-ranging conversation in which the speakers reflected on their earliest memories of creating art, their mindsets during the creative process and how their faith and communities help sustain them when they are in creative dry spells.

The inaugural HCU Narrative Arts Conference and its theme, “Creativity and Community,” can be encapsulated well by something Tony Hale said in his breakout session: “Invest in your community before you invest in your career.” 🙏

Filmmaking with Purpose

STUDENTS LEARN CRAFT, CHARACTER AND CREATIVITY

“The ethos of our Cinematic Arts program,” says Joshua Sikora, director of HCU’s Narrative Arts department, “has always been to provide real-world experiences for students at the highest level of professionalism and scale.”

The film industry is difficult to break into, so it is an important part of the Cinematic Arts program’s mission to provide students not only with theoretical knowledge and practical skills, but also the opportunity to display their skill sets in front of other industry professionals. Students learn best when they are “thrown into the fire,” as Professor Bearden Coleman, Associate Director of Cinematic Arts, puts it.

HCU Cinematic Arts students have been involved in productions both internal and external, the biggest of which for a time was “The Challenger Disaster,” a 2019 independent feature film production that involved a former HCU professor alongside several HCU Cinematic Arts students.

But since then, HCU Professor Chris Hartwell has been on a bit of a filmmaking tear, spearheading three productions of his own across six years, with increasing involvement by his HCU students: an award-winning short film, “The Way That I Take,” a 2020 feature-length film, “Do No Harm,” and a proof-of-concept for a television series, “Happiest Place,” that is currently in post-production.

Hartwell, inspired from a young age by epic films like “Star Wars” and “The Lord of the Rings,” has focused on smaller-



Chris Hartwell



Hartwell offers more than just an opportunity for students to get hands-on, professional experience. His faith and character inform how he runs his sets and mentors his students.



hc.edu/school-of-fine-arts

scale projects due to their lower costs and more manageable shooting schedules. This flexibility allows him to maintain a full course load and involve his students in his productions. “Do No Harm” served as a particularly involved internship for more than a dozen Cinematic Arts students, and in addition to the hands-on experience of a feature film production, those students were able to make invaluable connections with industry professionals—connections which have resulted in even more opportunities.

During the Spring 2024 semester, Hartwell led a pre-production class, where students learned about budgeting, production design, casting and the series of steps needed before entering active production on a film. However, this class was different from other pre-production courses. Students were not just learning about the theory of pre-production or engaging in hypothetical exercises; they were actively preparing a real television proof-of-concept: “The Happiest Place,” a show based on Hartwell’s own experiences working for a theme park.

The following semester, these students, under the direction of Hartwell and Sikora, filmed a proof-of-concept for “The Happiest Place,” on HCU’s campus. While Cinematic

Arts students had previously served in auxiliary roles on Hartwell’s productions, here, they took on primary roles, like first assistant director and production designer.

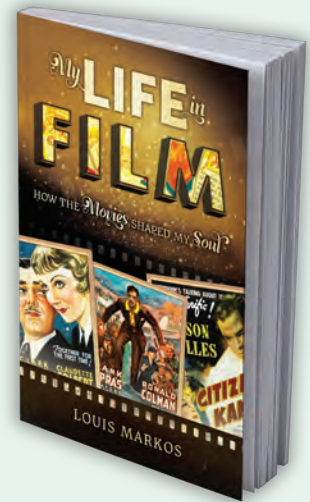
Both Coleman and Sikora point out that it is rare for a full-time film professor to also be an active filmmaker, given the high financial costs and lengthy production times of even the smallest films. But crucially, Hartwell offers more than just an opportunity for students to get hands-on, professional experience. His faith and character inform how he runs his sets and mentors his students. Having a “morally, ethically upright role model is a good thing for our students,” says Coleman. “It’s a very unique, special thing for students to experience.”

My Life in Film: How the Movies Shaped My Soul

DR. LOUIS MARKOS

If I had never seen “Casablanca” or “Citizen Kane,” “The Grapes of Wrath” or “Wuthering Heights,” “It’s a Wonderful Life” or “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,” “The Maltese Falcon” or “The Wizard of Oz,” I would be a different person. Films like these, the “kind they don’t make any more,” have formed much of my character, shaping my perceptions, dreams and desires in a thousand subtle ways. Join me as I unpack and explore these eight films and twelve others from the 1930s and 40s, the Golden Age of Hollywood. Learn about the great stars and studios, themes and genres of the Golden Age — along with lots of trivia and movie lists — as I assess what it is about these films that have made them so timeless and moving, even in a cynical, skeptical age.

Available by pre-order on [Amazon](#)



Wiggy Widget's Marvelous Machines: Book 1

JOEL STANULONIS

Dive into the series where an elephant shrew named Wiggy Widget solves his friends' problems by designing fantastic machines for them. Readers, ages 5 to 12 (and anyone who's old enough to imagine again) are invited to join Wiggy Widget on a wonderful adventure exploring the crazy machines he has designed for his animal friends.

HCU Professor Joel Stanulonis has enjoyed spending countless hours crafting this whimsical book to hopefully spark your child's imagination and give your family and friends quality memories together.

This hardcover book features original cutaway drawings of Joel Stanulonis and is available for preorder in Texas.

Available to purchase at doodlerjoel.com/store





STANULONIS' CHILDREN'S
BOOK IS AVAILABLE ON
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Art in Every Form

JOEL STANULONIS' CREATIVE JOURNEY
AS TEACHER, PAINTER AND AUTHOR

When it comes to doing what you love, Joel Stanulonis is living his best life.

By day, he serves as an Assistant Professor in HCU's Visual Arts department where he provides students with a strong foundation in artistic principles. In his spare time, he continues his work as a professional artist, balancing his academic role with his creative practice.

"I'm very fortunate to be teaching at the college level in the studio [arts] area and continue to pursue painting and drawing. I've had all kinds of wonderful adventures and privileges pursuing this as a career," shares Stanulonis.

A native of Alaska, his love for artistic expression was inspired by the beauty of creation and nature, and later by West Texas's sparse desert landscape with its dramatic thunderstorms and dust storms. These diverse environments ignited his lifelong pursuit of art.

An HCU alumnus, he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art in 2012 and a Master of Fine Arts from Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) in Philadelphia. He specializes in classical representational painting and teaches studio courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

His creative works have been exhibited internationally in Houston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Germany and Denmark. His artwork is part of the permanent collection at the PAFA Museum in Philadelphia. His talent has been recognized by New American Paintings, a prestigious juried exhibition in print, which featured his work on its cover. He was also twice a finalist for the Hunting Art Prize.

He also created a series of comic book illustrations depicting various scenes of campus life at HCU which were published in the Summer 2021 issue of The Pillars, the University's official news magazine.

His greatest aim is to inspire the next generation of artists to also do what they love in bringing art to life and using their gifts to encourage others through their art.

"I've had lots of wonderful students over the years, many talented students, some much more talented than I am, who've gone on to do great things," shared the proud HCU professor.

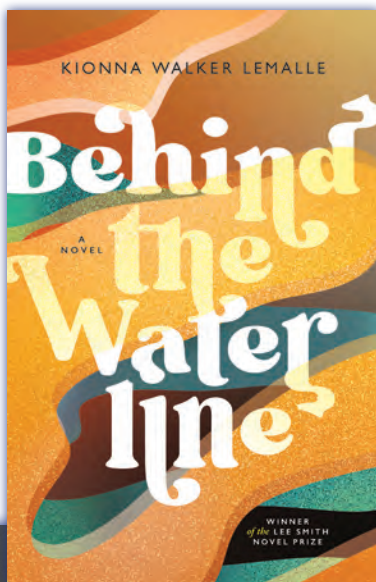
Recently, Stanulonis completed a two-year passion project—his debut children's book, "Wiggy Widget's Marvelous Machines, Book 1." The framed images of the whimsical characters from his book line the walls of his office. This delightful story follows an elephant shrew named Wiggy Widget who solves his friends' problems by designing fantastic machines. The 40-page book features vibrant illustrations and original cutaway drawings created by Stanulonis himself, appealing to young readers ages 5 to 12. 🐘

Secrets and Survival

HCU ALUMNA RELEASES
PRIZE-WINNING NOVEL

With a gift for writing stories and poetry set to the backdrop of historical events, Kionna Walker LeMalle celebrates the spring release of her debut novel, "Behind the Waterline," winner of the Lee Smith Novel Prize. The award recognizes and publishes literary novels by authors from the southern United States.





I knew while reading early drafts of the book that she had something special. Her feel for language, place and drama combined with the discipline she devotes to her craft make her truly unique.

BEARDEN COLEMAN,
HCU Professor

A graduate of HCU's Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program, LeMalle's novel is a unique blend of historical fiction and magical realism as she raises the curtain on the lives of a teenager and his eccentric grandmother who, on the eve of Hurricane Katrina, decide to ride out the approaching storm in his second-floor bedroom. In a dream, a hallucination or something else, Eric discovers a room beyond his closet wall, a place he has never seen. What he finds inside will send him on a path to discover secrets to survival, bitter progress, and, ultimately, the history of his own people - those he sorely misses and those he never knew.

Deesha Philyaw, a judge for the Lee Smith Novel Prize contest, calls LeMalle's book a "deeply moving, inventive and surprising page-turner" where natural, political and familial catastrophes collide.

HCU Associate Director of Cinematic Arts Bearden Coleman was not surprised at the novel's selection. He described LeMalle as the "most gifted writer" he has had the pleasure of teaching.

"I knew while reading early drafts of the book that she had something special. Her feel for language, place and drama combined with the discipline she devotes to her craft make her truly unique. She is only going to get better. I cannot wait to see where she goes creatively," said Coleman.

In contrast to Professor Coleman's response, LeMalle was in "absolute shock" when she learned of her novel's selection.

"I remember [the editor] repeating "hello" a few times, then, she laughed a little as I sat in silence for much longer than the comfortable wait time. The first word out of my mouth was a stammering "Wow," said LeMalle of the call announcing her win.

Inspired by Bret Lott's feedback during LeMalle's first residency in HCU's Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program, the novel began as a series of flash fiction stories about a grandmother's secrets and transformed into a novel of family intrigue set to the backdrop of Hurricane Katrina and told through the eyes of her teenage grandson.

LeMalle is excited about the release of her debut novel. The HCU alumna currently serves as the Director of Executive Communications at the UH-Downtown and is an adjunct professor in HCU's Department of Narrative Arts. She also runs WriterTeacherFriend.com, a virtual writing group that supports writers of all ages. 📖

**TO PURCHASE
"BEHIND THE
WATERLINE" OR
LEARN HOW
LEMALLE SUPPORTS
WRITERS OF ALL
AGES, VISIT HER SITE**



WriterTeacherFriend.com

Inspiration can come from many places. For HCU alumna Edmi Salazar, the passion for animation ignited when she discovered the role graphic design played in bringing animated films to life, as in her favorite movie, “Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse.” The acrobatic flips, perfectly timed landings and all of the “Spidey” action in between reflect the meticulous handiwork of a team of animators using computer programs to create high-level animations.

A native of El Paso, Salazar always had a keen eye for design and dreamed of becoming a fashion stylist until her interests changed to graphic design in high school. Her passion for animation was born when she learned how the dynamic visuals in animated films were created.

“My teacher explained how graphic design skills are integral to animation, which piqued my curiosity about the field. The more I learned about animation, the more inspired I became by its diversity and challenges. This curiosity eventually grew into a passion for animation,” said Salazar.

After graduating from Northbrook High School, Salazar did not have to look far to find a university where she could pursue her passion for animation.

“I chose HCU because it was the only university near my home that offered an animation program. When I joined, I wasn’t sure what to expect, but the supportive professors and unique classes have helped me grow as a person, an artist and in my faith,” said Salazar.

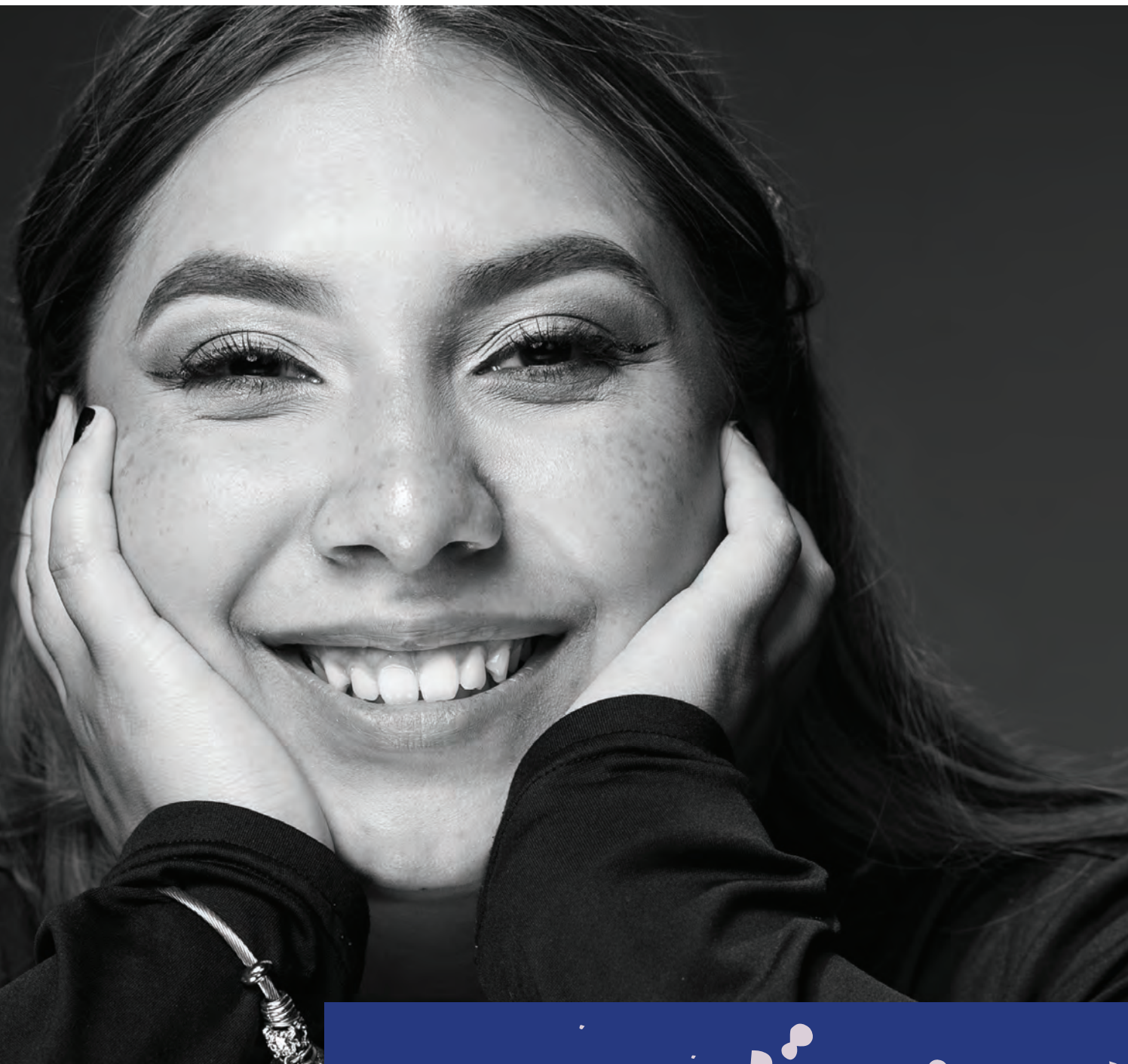
[The spiritual foundation received at HCU] has shaped me into a more mature person and artist and taught me to process my emotions thoughtfully and helped me see how my faith can connect with and inspire my art.

EDMI SALAZAR

From Passion to Profession

HCU Alumna Edmi Salazar’s Journey into Animation





The first in her family to graduate from college, she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Animation degree in 2024, strengthening her skills in storytelling, collaboration and design that enabled her to develop a portfolio of original work to present to potential employers.

The program helps students understand the principles of animation and cinematic theory, develop discipline-specific skills in a particular field of animation and prepare to work professionally in animation and media-related industries.

On one class project, Salazar produced an animated short, called “Tyler” that enabled her team to use animation to bring to life the story of two neighboring teens, one, an introverted writer and the other, an extrovert and owner of a massive pickup truck that takes up much of the street in their neighborhood and the life lessons they learn.

As lead visual artist, Salazar helped maintain a cohesive visual style for the project and combined the traditional techniques of sketching and storyboarding with modern



software, such as Unreal Engine and Substance Painter, to create the emotional expressions and environments for the characters. She also learned 3D modeling and the practical applications of 3D printing in the program.

“I believe my love for various art forms and my enjoyment of learning new computer software make animation a great fit for me. The field allows me to explore areas like art fundamentals, modeling, texturing, motion, and storytelling. Since I am a visual and artistic person, I particularly enjoy the modeling and texturing aspects of animation,” said Salazar.

The HCU Fine Arts graduate values the “stunning visual storytelling and meaningful narratives that leave lasting lessons,” like those in “Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse,” and other animated films, such as “Puss in Boots: The Last Wish” and “The Wild Robot.”






VIEW MORE OF EDMISALAZAR'S
ARTWORK BY VISITING
EDMISALAZAR.MYPORTFOLIO.COM



In addition to the skills that have prepared her for a future career in animation, Salazar is grateful for the spiritual foundation she received at HCU. "It has shaped me into a more mature person and artist and taught me to process my emotions thoughtfully and helped me see how my faith can connect with and inspire my art."

With her degree in hand, Salazar is on her way to living her passion with hopes of inspiring others to do the same.

As she looks back on her journey, she strongly believes that "when you chase your passions, you naturally attract the things you desire, so, do what you love, to get what you want."

"My dream job would be to work with a major studio to create an animated movie. However, I also hope to give back to my community one day by teaching younger generations about the opportunities available in artistic fields," said the HCU Fine Arts alumna. 



Neutral



Happy



annoyed



Surprise



Sad



angry



Faith, Film and Determination

HCU ALUMNI THRIVE IN SCREENWRITING

HCU's inaugural Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting program, launched in 2020, is already celebrating the success of two alumni who are forging diverse paths in the competitive entertainment industry. Guided by a shared passion for storytelling and a love for the creative arts, here are the stories of their unique journeys.

CHRISTIAN L. SCOTT

Working for Disney Channel's longest-running live-action series is a dream that became a reality for a graduate of HCU's Master of Fine Arts Screenwriting program.

A little over a year after earning her degree, HCU alumna Christian L. Scott was hired to bring characters to life on the show, "Bunk'd," a spin-off of the comedy series "Jessie" that follows the lives of three siblings who leave their parent's New York penthouse to spend their summers at a camp in Maine where their parents met as teenagers.

Josh Sikora, HCU Associate Professor of Cinema and New Media Arts, describes Scott's role as one of the writers on the show, a professional achievement that most writers do not accomplish until 5 or 10 years into their careers.

Scott, who joined the show in its seventh and final season, is grateful and credits a mentor for opening the door to the opportunity. "You will never make it in this business alone. I was blessed to meet a mentor who was willing to put their name on the line for me," said the California native.

Born in Oakland, California in a military family, she remembers other kids wanting to be ballerinas or firemen when they grew up, but she aspired to one day become president of the United States. Today she is focused on establishing herself as a writer in the television industry, but quips that her early childhood dream could still happen.

Developing a passion for acting and performing, Scott says people kept telling her that if she wanted to get a job, she was going to have to create one herself. Heeding that advice, Scott launched Faith Productions in 2013 to produce family-friendly content for diverse audiences while honing her acting skills and working as a voiceover artist.

She later enrolled in HCU's Master of Fine Arts Screenwriting program which allowed her to enhance her writing skills never imagining that in a little more than a year after earning her graduate degree she would land a job working with a team of talented writers and one of the industry's top showrunners.

"I had the greatest fortune of working with one of the best showrunners in the business, Erin Dunlap. I also was able to work with incredibly funny and talented writers. I learned something new every day. It was hard however, to shake that constant feeling of being behind. Everyone knew that show and those characters way better than I did. I always felt like I was two steps behind. I will never regret the opportunity," shared the HCU alum.



Photos by Brandon Tabiolo

Scott values the launching pad that HCU's screenwriting program provided and the professors who shared their knowledge and insights on the entertainment industry. "You will be hard pressed to meet a more caring set of people than the faculty at HCU. I still count on their advice and guidance even after graduation. This career is long and hard, and you will need great and talented people in your corner," said Scott.

Still in the early stages of building a promising career, she has worn hats as an actor, writer and now, emerging filmmaker, and describes working in the writer's room as "her first love." "I admire anyone who works in this industry. It's a hard long journey and can sometimes be lonely. Anyone who fights for this dream deserves to be applauded," said Scott.

Recognized as a Screencraft and two-time Women Write Now finalist for her creative work, Scott is not resting on her laurels but is currently working on two feature films – a holiday romcom and an action comedy. Her biggest goal is to one day make a film that is released in theaters nationwide.

The MFA grad recently returned to her alma mater to serve as a panelist at HCU's inaugural Narrative Arts Conference to share her experiences and insights with aspiring writers and creatives. Her advice to those seeking to embark on careers in the entertainment field is to develop your craft, become knowledgeable about the industry, and above all, believe in yourself.

"The key to progress is staying," says Scott. "Time and time again, the Bible reminds us that blessings often come to those who are simply still standing when the dust settles."

Scott is without question still standing, and her journey has just begun.

MICOLE WILLIAMS

What a difference a day makes. For Micole Williams, that day came after a life-threatening bout with COVID brought greater clarity to the phrase, “Time is of the essence.” Her years of preparation and training were activated at that moment when at one of the lowest points in her life, she heard God’s voice and obeyed his instruction to transition from a career in teaching, sell her home and move across the country to L.A. to pursue her creative dreams.

There were no lightning bolts, no audible voice but a clear sense that her next step would be one of faith and obedience to that inner voice.

From a young girl, she remembers bringing fictional characters to life on the page. So, it was no surprise when her passion for writing led her to Hightower Media Academy and later to Prairie View A&M University to pursue a degree in Mass Communications. She learned skills that would lead to the production of her first independent film that was screened at Houston’s iconic River Oaks Theater.

“Movies have always moved me, and books were my friends when I was an only-child for 15 years. No matter where I was,, I was immersed in the story,” shares Williams.

Hailing from a line of educators, Williams would honor her family’s legacy and enter the classroom to teach English Language Arts to high schoolers for more than a decade. But in 2019, a long-held desire to enhance her creative skills led her to enroll in the Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting (MFA) program at, then, Houston Baptist University.

“Many friends and family members who supported my media, books and film projects over the years wondered why I would pursue an MFA in any kind of writing, since they felt I had already gained years of experience. But I knew, if I was accepted, I would make it work for me. I felt it was a God thing — one that you couldn’t explain as much as be obedient to the call,” said Williams, owner of “Will-M-Power” and “Eclectically You Experience” media companies.

I believe that God speaks to us however we receive it, and I think the film is an example of that, one that may help others learn to hear God’s voice in their own lives.

MICOLE WILLIAMS

The HCU alumna credits the program for deepening her understanding of screenwriting and story structure. Her time in the program also served as a transformative period that enabled her to focus on her passion, develop networking skills and join a community of fellow creatives on their respective journeys.

Sometimes life’s most unexpected detours, when grounded in faith, can result in the most amazing journeys. For Williams, an unanticipated fork in the road became a defining moment that led her to the “City of Angels” where her creative dreams became a reality, opening doors for her writing gift and serving as the impetus for creation of “365 Days in L.A.” — a self-produced documentary on her first year in the city.

A personal project for Williams, the autobiographical documentary, allowed her to share the highs and lows that encompassed her journey of faith while enhancing her skills and inspiring other creatives to embark on their own journeys.

“I felt a need to document my cross-country move and the wins and losses along the way when going after my TV dreams in Los Angeles,” shared Williams.

The documentary has received acclaim in the independent film industry, garnering: “Best Web Series” by Beyond Hollywood International Film Festival, “Best Documentary” and “Best Director” by Ticyf Film Festival and a Cannes Film Festival Shorts honorable mention, among others. Williams also secured a distribution deal for the documentary on Aspire TV, a cable network owned by Earvin “Magic” Johnson.





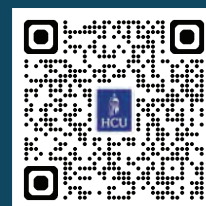
Photos by Brittany Dezel

Navigating the unpredictable entertainment industry in L.A., where there is no roadmap for success, required extensive networking that opened the door to behind-the-scenes roles for Williams on the reality TV show, “Big Brother” and “Unsung,” a documentary TV show highlighting unsung music artists from past decades.

She recently completed production on, “How Do You Hear God?” a feature film documentary, filmed in Houston, that explores the different ways individuals hear from God. Williams continues her commitment to storytelling as she explores faith through conversations with everyday people.


“Nothing is more precious and sacred than a conversation with God. I heard God so very clearly when I endured COVID, and when I moved to L.A. and, also, both projects that came after my MFA,” said Williams.

**FOR INFORMATION ON
WILLIAMS' UPCOMING
PROJECTS, VISIT
ECLECTICALLYYOU.COM**



The documentary, also written and directed by Williams, has enabled her to work with other believers in and out of the film industry, an opportunity she values as a woman of faith.

“I believe that God speaks to us however we receive it, and I think the film is an example of that, one that may help others learn to hear God’s voice in their own lives.”

As Williams has her eyes on the future, she is continuing to hone her craft and is working on several upcoming projects that showcase her passion and love for storytelling. 



Harmonizing Faith and Talent

AT CARNEGIE HALL

If the walls of the legendary Carnegie Hall concert venue could talk, they might hum melodies from Rudolf Nureyev's career-defining revival of the ballet, "Swan Lake," or roar with the excitement of thousands of fans singing along to "Till There Was You" at the Beatles' iconic concert in 1964.

For over 130 years, artists across every genre have viewed performing at the Carnegie Hall as a pinnacle of artistic achievement. Its stages continue to be a point of convergence where history's most celebrated musicians have inaugurated pieces of work that often transform culture on an international scale.

So, when HCU alumnus and professor Dr. Kevin Klotz and his choirs received a personal invitation from a best-selling songwriter to participate in a performance this fall, elation was an understatement.

A divinely orchestrated sequence of events opened the door to such an honor. As the Artistic Director of the Houston Choral Society (HCS) Choir, Dr. Klotz and the HCS Board of Directors commissioned Heather Sorenson to write a piece, "A Blessing for This Life," and Sorenson was in attendance for the premiere last year. Inspired by their collaborative dynamic, the choir sponsored a lecture at HCU called "Conversations with Composer: Heather Sorenson." At this lecture, HCU's Schola Cantorum performed several selections, which included newest and unreleased works, by Heather Sorenson.



▲ During “A Merry Magnificat” concert, Houston Choral Society and professional orchestra perform at The Foundry United Methodist Church under the direction of Dr. Kevin Klotz.

Dr. Kevin Klotz, director ►
Heather Sorenson, composer





Photo by Linda Unger

My faith guides all that I do. For Carnegie, we will be performing a sacred work, “Requiem” by Heather Sorenson. There are many opportunities to connect to our faith in these texts and to feel Christ’s love and mercy for us all.


DR. KEVIN KLOTZ,
HCU Director of Choral Activities

Sorenson has extended an invitation for Dr. Klotz (as the conductor) and his Schola Cantorum, University Singers, Houston Choral Society and choirs at St. Laurence Catholic Church to join her in a performance at Carnegie Hall on Nov. 17, 2025.

This event signals a new era where HCU’s music program transcends being one of the best in Houston, generating conversations about the department’s rise in prominence on a national stage. Dr. Klotz notes, “This is a wonderful opportunity for all, and I would love to continue taking our choirs on trips in the future. They’re incredible educational and memorable experiences for all.”

Unique to HCU, the music department and Dr. Klotz are also committed to creating learning experiences that are anchored in faith. Becoming a talented musician is one thing, but there is sustaining power in teaching Christian values to young musicians who will be presented with the temptation to compromise to get ahead. In an industry where it takes intentionality to not get lost in the singular pursuit of standing ovations, it’s imperative to model to students that their talent should be used to encourage audiences to reflect on God’s glory and not their own – particularly on stages as seismic as this.

“My faith guides all that I do. For Carnegie, we will be performing a sacred work, “Requiem” by Heather Sorenson. There are many opportunities to connect to our faith in these texts and to feel Christ’s love and mercy for us all.”

As Dr. Klotz continues to prepare for the performance one may ask how HCU’s music department has managed to balance this feat of establishing a voice that expresses both mastery in craft while embodying profound spiritual truths – and the answer of course is: practice, practice, practice. 

Hitting ^{the} High Notes

ANGEL ROMERO'S JOURNEY

The Christmas carols are still echoing in the digital ether when Angel Romero's face appears on my computer screen. He's just survived his "fifth Christmas" — a whirlwind of family celebrations. "We were bouncing from parents to grandparents to other grandparents to my parents," he says.

Meet Fidel Angel Romero — rising opera star and first-generation American.

His story begins in Stafford, Texas, where his parents landed after fleeing El Salvador's civil war. They were teenagers thrust into a world where everything from the language to the street signs might as well have been hieroglyphics. But they had something that no war could take away: a determination to give their children a better life.

"My parents were about affirmations," Romero reflects. "The gifts you've been given come from the Lord." It's a mantra that would shape not just his faith, but his entire approach to life.

The path to opera wasn't exactly straight. There was the saxophone first — band over choir. Then came the moment that would change everything: The Three Tenors on PBS's Great Performances. The trio performed "O Sole Mio," and you can almost see the teenage Angel, transfixed by Pavarotti, Domingo, and Carreras, their voices reaching through the television screen to grab hold of his soul.



Playing the character Monostatos, Romero sings "Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden" in "The Magic Flute," at Central City Opera in 2018.

Photo by Amanda Tipton Photography



“

My parents said, ‘Always put the Lord first.’ They were very happy that I went to a faith-based institution.

ANGEL ROMERO

”

But dreams, especially in the arts, don't come with instruction manuals. Romero found himself at Houston Baptist University (now HCU), not by careful planning but through what he calls "a happy accident." It was there he met his wife, found his voice, and learned that the best paths are the ones you never plan to take.

"When I decided to go to a school for music, I ended up at Houston Baptist University. Honestly," he admits with a smile, "that wasn't my first choice."

"I wanted to go to University of North Texas," Romero recalls. "UNT has the best music school. The best, the biggest. I didn't know anything about Juilliard, I didn't know anything about Boston Conservatory, I didn't know anything about all those other big music schools. I had no idea. I grew up in a very small circle. My brothers all went to UH, so I had no idea that there was anything else out there."

"We couldn't afford taking voice lessons. That wasn't an option for us. But my brother gave me 80 bucks to go take this

voice lesson with this teacher. It was at Rice University. She took me into a studio and I sang 'Ave Maria' and she's like, 'Wow... this is a beautiful gift. I think you could go all the way.'"

"I am trying to pay out and she's like, 'No, no, no... you keep the money.'"

"For me, that was my very first experience of someone being generous with their time and telling me that I should be singing," Romero remembers. "She said, 'I have this perfect friend, and she's a professor at Houston Baptist University. She will turn you into a gem.' So, that's what I did. I went to Houston Baptist University."

Romero's arrival at HBU was a happy accident. The University ticked all the boxes.

"I grew up in a conservative home," Romero remembers. "Conservative both politically, but also conservative faith-wise. My parents said, 'Always put the Lord first.' They were very happy that I went to a faith-based institution."



Romero plays Pirelli in the death scene of "Sweeney Todd" in 2023.

Photo by Erich Schlegel/Austin Opera





One, the proximity from the house - I think it was 15 minutes - and two, I was able to express my faith freely without feeling judged.”

He acknowledges that in spite of a few obstacles, he was meant to stay at HBU.

My voice teacher left the university when I was a freshman, and I was devastated. I said, ‘I’m going to leave HBU,’ and I got accepted into Rice University as an undergraduate.”

But, the Lord had other ideas. “Unfortunately, HBU didn’t send my transcripts in time for the transfer deadline, so I ended up having to stay at HBU another year, but it ended up perfectly because I met Dr. David Kirkwood (he’s now my department head) and David became my voice teacher and he showed me the potential I could have.”

“I met my wife at HBU, so if I would have left, I would have never married her. I have some of the best friends in the world that I still stay in touch with, so I was MEANT to stay at HBU. And the Lord just had a funny way of showing me how to do that.”

Talk about the Lord opening all the right doors.

“Everyone who knows me knows that I try to do everything the best that I can,” he says, echoing his parents’ philosophy. “It’s either you suck or you’re good at it. There’s no being mediocre.” Coming from anyone else, that might sound harsh. From Romero, it sounds like love.

Then came the leap - the kind that either makes or breaks an artist. Graduate school at Yale University beckoned, along with other prestigious music schools, but this wasn’t just about choosing a graduate program. It was about leaving home for the first time in 21 years, about being the baby

... dreams, especially in the arts, don’t come with instruction manuals. Romero found himself at Houston Baptist University (now HCU), not by careful planning but through what he calls “a happy accident.” It was there he met his wife, found his voice, and learned that the best paths are the ones you never plan to take.



brother who finally flew the nest. “I’d never left home before,” Romero remembers, his voice softening. “I was the baby brother and I was gone.”

New Haven became his proving ground, where talent met reality in a head-on collision. “My teachers never gave me one kind word... not one,” he says.

But they saw something in him — enough to line him up for his apprenticeship at Pittsburgh Opera. He lived in an attic, scraped by on almost nothing, somehow managed to get a dog during the pandemic, and through it all, kept his faith. “It was all the Lord, really,” he reflects. “He made something out of nothing.”

The grind of those years — developing his technique, finding his voice — would have broken many. But Romero had inherited his parents’ immigrant resilience. “My parents were 15 and 16 when they immigrated to this country,” he reminds me. “They had to raise a family in the midst of learning a language that they didn’t know, being in a community that was strange to them. They had to follow that recipe that it’s not good enough to just be good... you have to be better than good to be able to offer that opportunity to your children.”

The journey since then has been a masterclass in faith and persistence. Through it all, there were the constant questions that haunt every artist: How will I put food on the table? How will I pay the mortgage? “It’s a stress that I don’t want to show anybody,” he admits, “because it’s a constant battle.”

But then came Vienna State Opera. Operalia in Mumbai. The surprise recognition from OperaWire as

one of the top ten rising stars — news he received while sprawled on his couch preparing to watch a Christmas movie with his wife. “What a surprise for me,” he says, still sounding amazed. “It was years of sacrifice and hard work. It showed me that God has me, he’s got my back, he’s going to provide for me, he’s going to take care of me and my family and that my hard work is being noticed.”

Now, at 16 months old, his son Isaac Walker Romero toddles through their home, his name literally meaning “he who smiles” - a living reminder of joy in the midst of life’s complexities. “He is a light,” Angel beams. “He is exactly what the Bible says. Isaac does nothing but smile and bring joy.” When Angel’s not on stage, he’s teaching the next generation of singers at HCU, bringing both faith and hard reality to his lessons. “It’s a dog-eat-dog world,” he tells his students, “It’s no longer good enough to be good... you have to be the best.”

As our conversation winds down, Romero reveals his next big step: Beethoven’s Ninth with the Munich Philharmonic in 2025. His eyes light up as he shares this yet-to-be-announced news, and at that moment, I see what his parents saw all those years ago — a gift meant to be shared with the world.

In the end, Angel Romero’s story isn’t just about opera. It’s about faith — in God, in family, in the power of art to transform lives. It’s about a young man from Stafford, Texas, who took his parents’ dreams and turned them into arias. And most of all, it’s about hope — the kind that echoes long after the last note has faded away. 🎭

Angel Romero was named winner of the Second Prize and Zarzuela Prize at Operalia 2024 World Opera Competition.

Watch his final-round performance!



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ANGEL ROMERO, VISIT INTERMUSICA.COM/ARTIST/ANGEL-ROMERO





From “Starry Night” to Shining Career

**HCU'S TIFFANY BERGERON INSPIRES
THROUGH ART AND EDUCATION**

It all started with a “Starry Night” when, at the age of five, Houston Christian University’s Tiffany Bergeron was captivated by Van Gogh’s swirling masterpiece.

Fast forward a few decades, Bergeron’s artistic prowess is undeniable. Her work has graced prestigious galleries and museums, from the serene halls of the Museum of Biblical Art to the bustling art scene of Houston. Her paintings, prints and sculptural jewelry are like little bursts of magic, capturing the beauty of nature and the depths of human emotion.



Bergeron's talents aren't confined to the studio. She's a master of the classroom, inspiring young minds and nurturing their creative spirits. She's a dynamic blend of creativity, skill and passion, dedicated to both her art and her students. As the Chair of the Department of Visual Arts at HCU, she's a unique force, designing innovative online courses, creating interdisciplinary programs and mentoring countless students.

But it all began with Van Gogh. Bergeron recalls her first impression of "Starry Night." "The intensity of the colors and active use of line and texture mesmerized me," she recalls. "It was magical that someone could create something beautiful and visually powerful that others can experience and connect to with only paint and a brush. The desire to create something meaningful and beautiful grew in my heart, and in that one moment, I developed a love and passion for art."

In grade school, she always chose art as her elective. In junior high, she won a top award at the Youth Art Month State Competition sponsored by the Texas Art Education Association. This honor, coupled with the encouragement of her art teacher, solidified her passion for creating and studying art.

Bergeron graduated from HBU (now HCU) with a BA in Art and Marketing and continued her education at Sam Houston

State University, earning a BFA in Painting. She credits her teachers and professors for their encouragement and support, which inspired her to pursue a teaching certification.

She began her career in education in 2003, in a world far away from HCU, teaching Art and Computer Literacy to at-risk students at a Title I junior high school. There she learned the importance of building relationships with her pupils. "My young students had immense hardships and difficulties they had to overcome, and school was not their focus or, in some cases, a priority at all," she recalls.

Faced with hunger, lack of basic needs or minimal parental support, her students often struggled with distractions, anger, and the effects of drugs, abuse, pregnancy and gang issues. In her first year of teaching, she tragically lost a student to suicide.

Inspired to create a safe and peaceful environment, she realized that increasing student engagement and building trust would help them grow and reach their full potential. The impulse behind Bergeron's approach was a simple "time equals love."

Acting on this impulse, she attended student basketball games and extracurricular activities, and invested in their lives by sponsoring Student Council, Pep Squad, Culture Club, Book Club and Art Club. "The time we spent together built safe, trusting relationships that extended into the



The time we spent together built safe, trusting relationships that extended into the classroom, fostering a community where students felt valued and capable of success.

TIFFANY BERGERON

classroom, fostering a community where students felt valued and capable of success.”

“Encouraging words and dependent relationships empower students to pursue their dreams,” she says. “As their confidence grew, they developed the courage and resilience to tackle challenges both in art and in life.”

After several years of teaching at Washington Junior High, Bergeron pursued a Master of Liberal Arts from HCU with a focus on Art History. She then began working at HCU as an adjunct professor, teaching Art Appreciation, Art History and Art Education. While teaching, she earned her MFA in Studio Art at HCU and became a certified Clinical and Intern Supervisor for the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

“As a faculty member at Houston Christian University, I feel privileged to be a part of an amazing group of artists and professors, while being able to share my love of art and teaching with my students,” she says.

Over the past seven years, she has served as Interim Dean for the School of Fine Arts, developed the first interdepartmental program at HCU (Graphic Design), created an online Art History and Studio Art Certificate in all five studio art disciplines, and served as the Undergraduate and Graduate MFA Studio Art Program Coordinator for the Department of Visual Arts.

In addition, she has created and exhibited her work both nationally and internationally. Her art has been featured in numerous juried exhibitions, including “Rising Eyes of Texas” and the “Assistance League of Houston,” and she received the Merit Award for the “Photo 15 Exhibit” at The Berkeley Art Council.

“My mixed media paintings and printmaking are inspired by the patterns and shapes found in nature,” Tiffany explains.

“The Museum of Biblical Art in Dallas, Texas, selected my mixed media painting, *“The Barred Owl,”* for their permanent collection, recognizing its themes of nature and God’s creation. Another mixed media painting, *“The Nest,”* is part of the permanent collection of Ground Zero 360’s traveling 9/11 exhibition.”

Bergeron was honored to chair the committee that brought the “Ground Zero 360 Remembrance” exhibit to the HCU campus, filling the University Academic Center building and contemporary galleries with art and artifacts commemorating the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks to honor the victims and inspire hope.

As a passionate educator and talented artist, Bergeron has mentored countless students who have gone on to make significant contributions to the art world.

So, the next time you see a stunning piece of art or meet a talented young artist, remember that Tiffany Bergeron might have played a role in their journey. 🎨

**TO VIEW MORE OF
BERGERON’S WORK
AND LEARN MORE, VISIT
TIFFANYBERGERON.COM**



From Draft Day to **SUPER BOWL LIX**

JALYX HUNT'S

Storybook

ROOKIE SEASON

On April 26, 2024, surrounded by family, friends, teammates and coaches, Jalyx Hunt got a call that he had dreamed of since he was a kid. That call came from Philadelphia Eagles Executive Vice President and General Manager Howie Roseman, informing Hunt that he was about to be drafted by the team in the third round of the 2024 NFL Draft. Less than 10 months later, the former Husky standout was hoisting the Lombardi Trophy following the Eagles' dominating Super Bowl LIX victory over the Kansas City Chiefs.

Hunt's rise to becoming a third-round NFL draft pick was precipitous, to say the least. He arrived on the HCU campus ahead of the 2022 season after playing two seasons across three years as a safety at Cornell. During his time with the Big Red, he appeared in 17 games, with one start, and totaled 29 tackles. Hunt was recruited to HCU with the idea of switching to an edge rusher position, a far cry from the defensive back position he played for three years at Cornell and even further from wide receiver, which he played in high school.

Hunt bought in fully to the switch and began the process of adding weight and muscle to handle the rigors of playing along the line of scrimmage and going toe-to-toe with larger offensive linemen. In his first season

with the Huskies, his junior year, he flourished instantly. Hunt opened the season with nine tackles, including a sack, and returned a fumble 52 yards for a touchdown that put the game out of reach as the Huskies won at Northern Colorado, 46-34.

Over the course of his junior season, he totaled 87 tackles and had 11.5 tackles for loss to tie for the most by any player in the Southland Conference. His seven sacks tied for second-most in the league and he also forced three fumbles en route to second team all-conference honors. As the calendar flipped to 2023, Hunt's name started to pop up as a potential sleeper prospect for the draft.

As the fall of 2023 rolled around, buzz continued to grow and as the season progressed scouts from all 32 NFL teams made their way to Husky Stadium to observe practices and get an up-close look at the Huskies' pro prospect. Hunt made his name well-known throughout the Southland Conference and the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) that season, earning three separate all-America honors, the SLC Defensive Player of the Year award and invites to both the Reese's Senior Bowl and East-West Shrine Bowl.

After choosing to partake in the Reese's Senior Bowl, Hunt traveled to Mobile, Ala. where he impressed in workouts for scouts and again had a strong showing in the game. Hunt then received an opportunity to travel to Indianapolis, Ind. for the invitation-only

*Philadelphia Eagles linebacker Jalyx Hunt (58) reacts during the NFL Super Bowl LIX football game against the Kansas City Chiefs, Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, in New Orleans. The Eagles defeated the Chiefs, 40-22.
(Photo by Kara Durette via AP)*



NFL Combine. He again gave an impressive performance that led to a number of meetings and visits with NFL franchises who were giving thought to drafting the HCU standout.

As the draft neared, Hunt said “It’s a dream that turned into a goal. As a program, this is amazing. It’s an incredible opportunity for HCU. I’m so glad I’m able to bring some eyes to the school. We have great athletes here in every sport.”

Prior to the start of the draft, he was being projected by a number of prognosticators to be picked somewhere between the third and fifth rounds. When the Eagles decided to draft Hunt in the third round with the 94th pick in the draft they made him the first non-Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) player selected in 2024.

Considered by many to be a draft pick who needed time to develop before having an impact for the Eagles, Hunt acclimated well to life in the NFL. His role increased as his rookie season progressed, earning his first professional sack in a week-seven win over the New York Giants. Appearing in 16 games during the regular season, he finished with 21 tackles, 1.5 sacks, two forced fumbles and a pass defended.

With a 14-3 record in the regular season, Philadelphia earned the No. 2 seed in the NFC for the playoffs. Hunt registered a pair of tackles in a wild card round win over Green Bay and then came up with a sack in the team’s 28-22 divisional round win against the Los Angeles Rams. With one more win standing between Hunt and a Super Bowl appearance in his rookie season, the former Husky enjoyed a five-tackle game as the Eagles defeated Washington handily, 55-23, to punch their ticket to New Orleans, La. for the Big Game on Feb. 9.

Having reached the sport’s biggest stage in his rookie season, Hunt played a prominent role in an Eagles’ defensive unit that made two-time NFL MVP and three-time Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes look pedestrian. The former Husky finished the night with half a sack, a quarterback hurry and a pair of tackles as he caused the Chiefs’ offensive line problems throughout the game. Hunt played 41 percent of the team’s defensive snaps and was on the field for 45 percent of the special teams plays, totaling 36 snaps played. 🏈

HCU Men's Soccer Climbs to OVC Final

IN IMPRESSIVE SEASON TURNAROUND

Head Coach Ryan Pratt and the Houston Christian University (HCU) men's soccer team posted their best season since 2019, as the Huskies finished as the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) runner-up, losing in the tournament championship match.

HCU went 8-7-5 overall and 5-2-3 in conference play to earn a first-round bye in the postseason tournament. That regular season mark included a 1-0 defeat of SIU-Edwardsville (SIUE) handing the Cougars only loss in two seasons of OVC action. A 2-0 victory over Lindenwood in the tournament semifinals secured a spot in the championship match where the Huskies faced a rematch with defending champion SIUE. HCU fell in a double-overtime thriller where the Cougars scored in the 104th minute to claim a 3-2 victory and their second straight league title.

That loss couldn't tarnish a fantastic turnaround for the Huskies. HCU went from not qualifying for the 2023 OVC tournament to being league-runner up in 2024, finishing one goal away from qualifying for the NCAA national tournament. The Huskies wrapped up the season with an 8-7-5 overall record, with the eight wins overall and five in conference play representing the most in a single-season since 2019.

Seven different players captured conference accolades, including senior Sam Zeeman as Defensive Player of the Year. He was named to the

All-OVC first team along with league Freshman of the Year Morgan Worsfold-Gregg and sophomore forward Ryan Okerayi, who earned All-OVC honors for the second straight season.

Senior forward and captain Ethan Giwa-McNeil, junior goalkeeper Alex Aitken and junior midfielder D'Alessandro Herrera were each selected to the second team, with Herrera earning All-OVC honors for the second straight year as well. Worsfold-Gregg and Theo Butterworth were selected to the All-Newcomer team to round out the season honors.

What a fantastic season and great group of young men. They were really focused on turning things around from the year before, when we were such an extremely young squad. To reach where we did is a testament to their hard work and desire. To get so close was both heartbreaking but exciting at the same time. We know we can still get better, and are dedicated to doing that going into next season.

Already back to work, the Huskies' spring season features six matches from February 1 to March 6, including matches with three MLS II sides and an Alumni match on March 1 at Sorrells Field. 🏆



#6 MORGAN WORSFOLD-GREGG



HCU's men's and women's cross country teams recorded the best finishes at a Southland Conference Championship meet in program history and senior Arlette Concepción earned first team all-conference honors for the second consecutive year at Lake Oak Park in New Orleans, La. on Nov. 1.

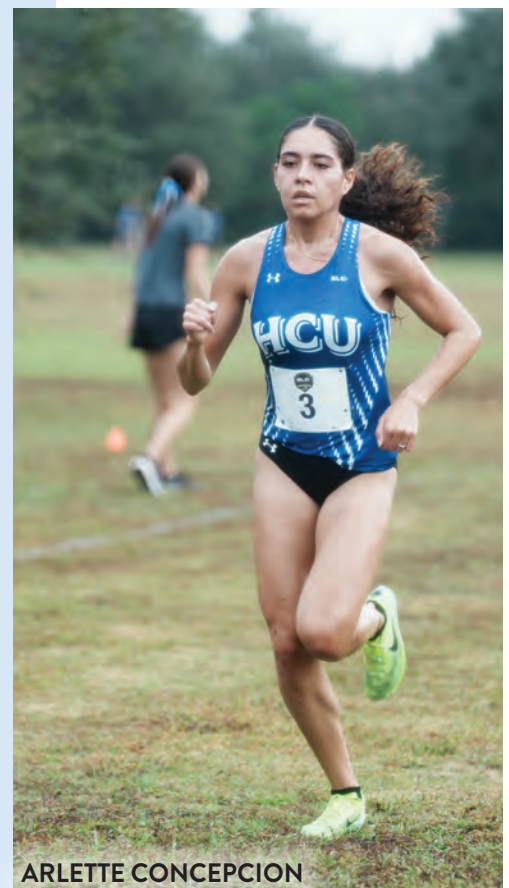
Record-Breaking RUN

Previously, fifth place was the best finish for either the men or women in 11 SLC Championship meets since joining the league in 2013. In 2023, both HCU squads matched their previous top performances with matching fifth place finishes.

The women ran the 6k first on a warm, humid New Orleans morning with the Huskies totaling 110 points as a team, three ahead of New Orleans in fourth. Concepción, a senior, crossed the finish line in 21:03.89 to place fifth overall and lead the HCU contingent. Her finish followed her second-place finish from 2023 and made her a repeat first team All-Conference honoree. Junior Eline Mast placed 11th, finishing in 21:51.01, to earn second team All-SLC recognition. Destiny Quintanilla came in five spots behind Mast, in 16th, with a time of 22:21.96. HCU's two other scoring runners were Katherine Rogers, who placed 35th with a time of 23:12.24, and Macie Hunter, who posted a time of 23:38.06 to come in 43rd.

In the men's 8k, HCU accumulated 116 team points to take third place with fourth place Texas A&M-Corpus Christi nine points behind. Senior Edouard Lecrivain was the Huskies' top finisher, placing 15th overall with a time of 25:49.32, with Colby Kurtz coming in four spots back, in 19th, with a time of 26:13.39. Alex Piquart crossed in 26:39.13, placing 29th, just ahead of Krzysztof Turski in 26:43.58, in 30th, and Raphael Aureau in 26:48.65, placing 32nd.

With Concepción and Mast each earning All-Conference recognition, the HCU men and women have now had ten All-Conference honorees in the last four years after having just two in the eight years prior. 🏆



ALUM-A-GRAMS

1960s

Milford Kuhn '67 is now retired in Florida. (Snow Bird - Kentucky to Florida).



David Appleby '69 is the Owner and Agent of Texas Cruise and Travel.

Carol Ann (Sylar) Parrish '69 is the Owner, Designer and Seamstress at Originals to Remember.

1980s

Beatrice Hudson '82 MEd '09 is the Director of Exceptional Student Education at Donna J. Beasley Technical Academy.

Danny Curran MS '83, after a 30-year military career (1971–2001), served as the Education, Employment and Training Director at Goodwill Industries for eight years before joining the California Department of Rehabilitation. There, he oversaw a re-entry program for recently paroled individuals and helped implement a new case management computer system. He retired after 10 years of service and is now living in Arizona with his wife. The couple enjoys active involvement in their church and community, helping others find new life in Christ.



Laura (Jenne) Richard '85 is celebrating her 10-year anniversary as the elected County Clerk of Fort Bend County.



Antoinette (Toni Gustin) Cotton BSN '86 is excited to be back at HCU where she earned her nursing degree. She served in several roles as a Nurse, Bedside Nurse, Nurse Manager, Director of Nursing and Hospital Chief Nursing Officer for the past 15 years. She has now decided it's time to leave the boardroom and enter the classroom. Jesus Christ is the center of her life and career, and Antoinette is so grateful He has brought her back to where it all started, giving her an opportunity to worship Him in her work with nursing students.

Bonnie (Partott) Helvie MBA '86 is President of the Bonnie Group and a Sr. International Mary Kay Director.

Christian Gomez '88 is a Program Consultant for the State of Kansas.

Mary-Ellen Hall '88, HCU's Head Softball Coach and Kaddie (Mahoney) Platt '94, former HCU Volleyball Coach, have been inducted into the Red River Athletic Conference Hall of Fame as part of an eight-member Class of 2024, as announced by the league office.



Randy Elum '89 is the Owner of Woodman's Investments.

1990s

Kayo Nakano '91 is working with the Department of Pulmonary Allergy and Critical Care Medicine at Stanford University.



Todd Harris '93 is the Director of Men's Ministry at CrossLife Church.

Sue Moraska '93 works at Houston Community College as the Director of the Academy for Vocational Advancement and Skill Training.

Dora (Tordella) Rios MAP '94 is a Licensed Professional Counselor at Houston Center for Christian Counseling.

Amy Jones Johnson '98 is a Teacher in Texas City ISD.

Vincent Pereira MBA '98 has been appointed as the Chairman of Atlantic LNG. Pereira is a known leader, with over 41 years of experience in senior positions in the energy sector, including President BHP, Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, he serves as Chairman of Republic Financial Holdings, Limited.

Dr. Shaundra Webb '98 started a new position as Director of Human Resources at Specialty1 Partners.

Tuan Phan '99 is a Professor at Texas Southern University.

Arnetta Yardbrough MLA '99 is getting ready to embrace 15 years as a Social Change Agent at her company, AY & Associates, LLC (AYA), a boutique coaching, wellness and consulting firm. The future Clinical Psychologist (2026) is ready to accept new coaching clients!



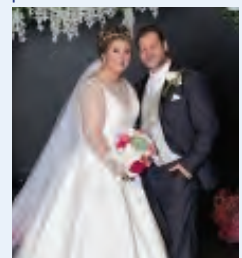
2000s

Terrance (TJ) Maldonado '01 works for Austin ISD as a STEM Instructional Coach.

Valerie (Williams) Sisk '03 is an Executive Director for Secondary Administration at Northside ISD.

Francisca Pizana '03 retired from Houston ISD in 2022.

Justin (Jacobson) Avery '04 married Ivan Avery at Houston's First Baptist Church on July 9, 2022, and resides in Houston. She works as an Independent Consultant.



JJ Worthen '06 was promoted to Director of Sales, U.S. Enterprise Commercial at Microsoft.



Tashonda Martin '06 is a Tax Administrator at Reimer McGuinness Hess.

Stephen Dinger '07 is a Senior Vice President for Arthur J. Gallagher and Owner of Tarry Title, a title company based in Tyler, Texas.

Mandi (Tubbs) Tieman '07 is a School Services Coordinator at Music & Arts.

Victoria (Neuman) Garcia '08 is an Intervention Teacher at El Campo ISD.

Dr. Kimm (Perez) Marie MAP '08 is the owner of Diverse Behavioral Health Group, PLLC.

Hannah (Garza) Morales '08 is a Teacher in Alvin ISD.

Mon'Sher Spencer '08 is the Worship Ministry Director for Houston's First Baptist - Sienna.

Chrystal Broussard MLA '09 is an Accountant Liaison of Community Engagement at Houston-Galveston Area Council.

2010s

Miracle (Simpson) Semien MSHRM '14 is celebrating five years as the COO at Veaux Professional, an HR consulting firm. VPS specializes in transforming workplace cultures by aligning leadership with behavior-driven strategies.

Ashley (Kiker) Shantharaj '13 MA '18 is a Clinical Therapist at a new comprehensive counseling center serving foster and adoptive families at Houston's First Baptist Church.

Jesus Davila '16 is an Asset Analyst for Siepe.

Donte Daniel '17 is the Management and Program Analyst for the Department of Treasury and is working to scale his customer acquisition business.

Bryan Brody '18 is the Chief of Staff at U.S. House of Representatives. He was honored by the HCU Alumni Association as the 2024 Emerging Leader during Homecoming.

Daniel Dimaculangan '19 is a Pilot for Hawaiian Airlines.

John Nguyen '19 is an Assistant to the Manager at Asian Auto Care.

Jonathan Rangel '19 is a Spanish Teacher at Waxahachie ISD and also coaches boy's soccer.

Sonia Ruiz '19 is a Licensed Professional Counselor at Spring Branch Community Health.

2020s

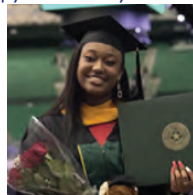
Jonathan Rangel '19 is a Spanish Teacher and Soccer Coach in Waxahachie ISD.

Howard Bundage '21 is a Realtor and Property Manager for At Home Properties.

Ian Newville MATS '21 has been married to Sara since 2018. In addition to his degree from HCU, he has a Master's in Divinity from the University of Northwestern, St. Paul. He has recently accepted a missionary job, working as a Campus Pastor at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Cherial Steptoe '12 MDiv '21 is an Analyst for U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Christal Dickson '20 MEd '21 graduated from Baylor University (fall 2024) with her second Master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. She started a new job as a Pediatric Speech Language Pathologist at Cole Pediatric Therapy in January.

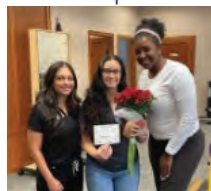


Jill Morales '20 is a Clinical Research Coordinator at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Angel Aguilera '22 is a Coach at Rise Soccer Club.

Alessandra Camarillo Morales '22 is a Project Specialist for Nino Properties.

Zaena Alzahawi '23 is a Physical Therapy Technician working with VibrantCare Rehabilitation. They have helped her gain the knowledge and experience she needed to successfully get into a Doctor of Physical Therapy Program that she will be starting in 2025! Recently Zaena received the "Golden Mouse" Award. This is a peer recognition program where nominations are received from team members for a job well done. These nominations usually go to someone who really went above and beyond the normal to help out the team or patients.



Nathaniel Culbreath '23 was recently named the Strength and Conditioning Coach for Men's Basketball at the University of San Francisco.



Stacey (Faterkowaski) Gaspard '23 is the Primary Therapist at Charlie Health.

Alexandria Taylor '23 graduated from the Cinematic Arts program. She then became a Teacher, and in 2025 she will be an English Teacher abroad in Thailand!

Christy Beckworth '24 is a Mortgage Operations Manager for First Service Credit Union.

Sulamita Carrillo '24 works for Memorial Hermann Health System as a Rehabilitation Technician.

Ebony Clark '24 works for Metro as a Recruiter.

Shelby O'Neal '24 is the Assistant Beach Volleyball Coach at UC Davis.

Gwenevere (Mackler) Matti MA '24 is a Therapist at Pinkerton Psychotherapy.



Sydney LeFlore Murphy MBA '24 is a Student Success Specialist at Houston Christian University.

Jalyx Hunt '24 made it to the Super Bowl in his first season with the Eagles!



Alumni Updates

MARRIAGE
CHILDREN
JOB CHANGES
RETIREMENTS
RECENTLY MOVED
NEW EMAIL



Please use the QR Code to update your info, so we can celebrate with you!

HUSKY PUPS

Alexis (Shelly) '12 and Jacob '17 Rawley welcomed their Husky pup, Connor, on Oct. 12, 2023.



IN MEMORIAM

John Henry Grauke '67 passed peacefully on the morning of Sunday, Nov. 17, 2024. He moved to Moscow in 1994 and joined Moscow Medical as a Family Doctor, delivering countless babies and touching many lives. He also founded the Gritman Medical Sleep Center, pioneering sleep medicine in the region. John was devoted to his work as a physician for over 50 years, but above all, he was dedicated to his faith and his family. John is survived by his beloved wife, Donna, three sons, and 10 grandchildren.



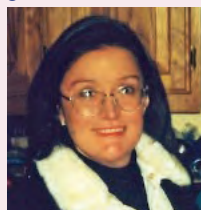
Myrna Kang Koh '72 passed away peacefully on Oct. 24, 2024, after battling a neurodegenerative disease. Myrna moved to Manila for studies at Far Eastern Bible Institute, where she met Alejandro (Alex) Koh. They married in 1963 and moved to Houston in 1967. She earned degrees in nursing and education and worked in various nursing roles, later focusing on medical research. Her legacy of love, faith and service will be cherished by her family.



John Charles Ely, Jr. '81 passed away on Jan. 16, 2025. He retired after working for 31 years as a National Bank Examiner for The Comptroller of the Currency.



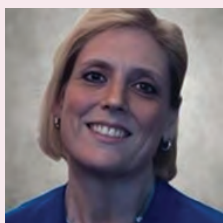
Amy Kelly '85 passed away on Oct. 15, 2024. She had been a Medical Assistant for many years and her legacy lives on through her extended family.



Laurie Lenamond '85, Founder and Managing Director of Laurie's Rarities, passed away peacefully in her Houston home on Nov. 15, 2024.



Sasan Elise Stewart Cook '87 passed away peacefully Dec. 14, 2024. Sasan dedicated her life to shaping young minds as a first-grade teacher in the Spring Branch Independent School District for 30 years, where her warmth, patience and kindness touched the lives of countless students and families.



William J. Moore MLA '90 died on Jan. 27, 2016.

Janet Carter MAP '92 passed away at her home in Galveston, Texas, on Dec. 5, 2024.

Discovering she had a knack for counseling and a love of learning, Janet earned a master's degree in psychology and LPC certification while continuing to run Edloe St. Cafe and Deli.

Halcie Wethington '12 passed away on Dec. 28, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer, fighting glioblastoma for three years. Halcie was a track athlete and Honors College scholar during her time at HCU. She married John Wethington '11 MATS '14 in Belin Chapel on campus, and they had three children together.



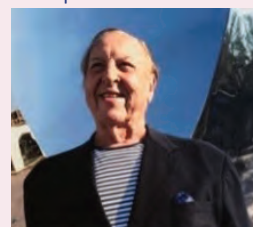
Robert Thomas Jarrard, former faculty in the Archie W. Dunham College of Business, passed away on Dec. 13, 2024, after a long illness. He was an adjunct professor of Business Law in the MBA program for more than 20 years.



Bob Rule, former HCU Trustee, passed away on Jan. 10, 2025. He is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Jan Rule, a former Guild and American Museum Society member.



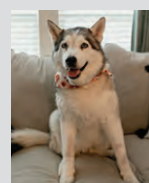
Arthur Turner, former faculty member in art, passed away on Oct. 18, 2024. He was one of the original artists to exhibit with Moody Gallery when it opened in 1975 and remained with them until the present.



Dr. John Yarrington, former professor of music, passed away on Oct. 21, 2024. He came to HCU in 1999 to serve as the Dean of the School of Music and Director of Schola Cantorum and University Singers. He also served the HCU Athletic Department as Faculty Athletic Representative and was an ardent supporter of HCU student-athletes, coaches and staff, most notably, the HCU men's basketball team.



Wakiza II the University's retired live mascot, passed away on Nov. 19, 2024. In 2010, HCU adopted Kiza II from Houston's Husky Haven, a non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing and helping Siberian huskies. After retirement in 2017, Kiza was welcomed into the family of Hunter Smith '15, her former Head Musher on the Sled Team. Wakiza II was loved dearly and will be missed.



Ceremony marks completion of final building in Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty complex

Houston Christian University (HCU) hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Founders Hall II on Tuesday, Feb. 18, marking completion of the final building in the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty complex.

The ceremony opened with welcoming remarks from Dr. Chris Hammons, Director of the Morris Center for Law & Liberty, followed by an invocation by Rev. Ramiro A. Peña, Chairman, HCU Board of Trustees.

HCU President Robert Sloan shared opening remarks and a dedicatory prayer, and expressed the University's appreciation to Lisa Simon and Stewart Morris, Jr., children of the late Dr. Morris Stewart, Sr., lead donor on the complex, The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, and other significant donors to the project.

"It's exciting to have Founders Hall II now done. By God's grace, we have been able to finish this building and it's going to be the new home for The Honors College," Dr. Sloan announced to guests in his remarks.

The recently completed 28,000-square-foot, three-story Founders Hall II will also provide expanded academic space for students across various disciplines, housing nine classrooms, seven offices, a workroom and conference room. While architecturally mirroring Founders Hall I, the new

building features faculty offices on the third floor in contrast to the student lounge found in the adjacent academic building.

Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating Officer Sandra Mooney expressed appreciation to the collaborative team responsible for bringing the project to fruition. She thanked Brookstone Construction for their exemplary work as general contractor, Churchworx for their meticulous project management services, and Jackson & Ryan Architects for their expert design features. She also commended the on-campus project team for their daily oversight of the project throughout the construction process.

"The construction of any new building requires the coordinated efforts of just so many people. A great group of talented professionals worked on this project," said Mooney.

Following a ceremonial ribbon-cutting, guests were photographed in front of a newly installed donor wall imprinted with the names of the significant donors to the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty, including University founder and lead donor, Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr., The Joella and Stewart Morris Foundation and the numerous foundations and individual donors.

Guest convened in The Presidential Gallery on the second floor of HCU's Independence Hall for a special reception to celebrate completion of the complex. 🏛️



Pictured, l-r, First Lady Sue Sloan, Lisa Simon '76, Dr. Robert Sloan, Grace Trevino, Stewart Morris III, Stewart Morris, Jr., Sharon Morris

HOMECOMING WEEKEND '25

SILVER CIRCLE CELEBRATION

Friday, November 7, 2025

Join us for this new Homecoming Weekend tradition as we induct the class of 2000 into the Silver Circle*, recognizing their 25th graduation anniversary.

*Anyone from a previous class year who has passed their 25th graduation anniversary may be part of the Silver Circle Celebration. Our focus for programming will include individuals from the class of 2000, but all are welcome.

SPIRIT OF HCU + GAME

Saturday, November 8, 2025

Join us for a pregame lunch and awards ceremony, honoring Alumni Awards and those being inducted in the HCU Athletic Hall of Fame.

[hc.edu/alumni/events/
homecoming](https://hc.edu/alumni/events/homecoming)

Details will be continually updated online.

Know an alumnus who merits
being recognized for one of
our Alumni Awards?

LET US KNOW!

hc.edu/alumni/alumni-awards



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Sherry & Jim Smith

Founders Medal

John S. Dunn Foundation

President's Award

John M. O'Quinn Foundation

Spirit of Excellence Award

*The Guild of
Houston Christian University*

Spirit of Excellence Award

Table Sponsorships are on sale now!
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hc.edu/spiritofexcellence



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