

Life Cycle of a Texas Ex

From local volunteer to board member, lawyer Richard Leshin has seen every level of the Association — and is ready to make his mark as president

by *Tim Taliaferro*

FROM HIS OFFICE overlooking the U.S.S. Lexington in Corpus Christi Bay, attorney Richard Leshin, BBA '75, JD '78, Life Member, goes about the rote business of estate law: writing wills, setting up trusts, and trying to chart the tricky waters of inheritance. The drafting itself can be numbing, and the rising tide of file folders on Leshin's desk suggests he might put it off whenever he can. But every now and then cases come up that shatter the monotony like blasts from the Lex's deck guns.

There was the recent case of a client who wanted to divorce her husband for cheating on her. Out of spite, and even though he was living with the mistress, he wouldn't agree to a divorce. One day, while driving to work, he had a heart attack and died at age 39. Because he had dragged his feet in signing the divorce papers, his \$3 million fortune went not to his mistress, but to his estranged wife.

Then there was the case of a woman who sued a foundation Leshin represents, claiming she was the illegitimate child of the brother of its founder. She wanted the foundation's money and asked the courts to exhume a body buried since 1948 to prove her case. At stake was a vast fortune and more than 250,000 acres of land. After nine years of litigation, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the woman had no standing because the statute of



Photos courtesy of Richard Leshin

limitations had expired. The foundation, and the \$12 million it awards in grants each year, were safe.

"When you do estate planning and probate law, you get into more family issues," Leshin says. "That keeps it very interesting. Writing wills to avoid taxes is not as exciting."

Not all of Leshin's caseload is quite so salacious. In fact, the vast majority is unsexy. What has made Leshin a standout attorney and a staple on boards of directors throughout the state has not been his high-profile legal wins but his agreeable demeanor and steady competence. Everybody likes Richard Leshin, and everybody likes working with him. A pretty dang good combination for the incoming president of the Texas Exes.

There and back again

Leshin hails from Robstown, a map dot west of Corpus Christi. The son of UT grads, Richard grew up watching Longhorn sports whenever the local TV networks carried the games. There was never any question where he would go. "I knew from early on that I was going to UT," Leshin says.

At Texas, in 1971, Leshin took a road less traveled and enrolled in the accounting program, then a fraction of its current size. At the time, and during much of the early '70s, Liberal Arts was all the rage, with its fiery and opinionated dean John Silber leading the way. Yet, as would prove to be a pattern in his life, calm reasoning motivated Leshin's decision.

"Math was easy," Leshin says. "Plus, it was a sure way to earn a living."

Even before he enrolled in undergrad, though, Leshin had set his sights on law school. "I just decided I wanted to," Leshin remembers. He



was accepted into UT Law, where he had to work a lot harder, he says. The entire experience was more intense — harder material, longer hours, and yet, through it all, deeper friendships.

"You develop a camaraderie with people when you

— and he still has the same haircut."

During the summers, Leshin clerked for Kleberg & Weil, a well-respected Corpus Christi firm founded in the 1880s. After graduation, they hired him fulltime. Having earned his CPA following

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Texas Exes executive director and CEO Jim Boon

spend three years together day and night," Leshin says.

He and his law school buddies rarely got out. Every few Saturdays in the fall they would escape the law library to watch Earl Campbell run over people at Memorial Stadium. Then it was back to the stacks. They spent so much time there they could recognize when non-law students came in. "When we got bored," Leshin says, "we went to different libraries."

One of his pals was Darrell Windham, BBA '75, JD '78, Life Member and past president of the Texas Exes. "I always thought Richard was a smart, good guy, always smiling, always happy," Windham says. "He still is that way

business school, tax law was a natural choice. "I did it because that's what fit," Leshin says.

Within five years, the former clerk had made partner. He was a rising star in the firm and around the community. In 1982, the Nueces County Young Lawyers Association elected him president. Around the same time, Leshin got involved with the Texas Exes. Back in law school he had started running to relieve stress and stay fit. During his first few years in Corpus he volunteered for the Texas Exes chapter's Bevo 5K Run held every May. It proved to be the first step in a volunteering journey with the Texas Exes that has brought him to this

job as the Association's new president.

A volunteer's volunteer

Leshin's is a volunteer's ultimate success story. More than 30 years ago, he first dipped his toe into the Association by helping to organize a local event. He's risen from chapter president to the district council, the executive council, the board of directors, and now president.

"His experience and knowledge coupled with his love of the University make him an ideal person to lead us into our 126th year," says Texas Exes executive director and CEO Jim Boon.

Having participated at every level of the Texas Exes' volunteer staff, Leshin brings a unique perspective as the organization undertakes its most ambitious project ever — the creation of the 40 Acres Scholars Program. The goal is to raise \$150 million for 300 full-ride merit-based scholarships so that the University can compete financially to win the country's best students. The first eight 40 Acres scholarships will be awarded in the fall of 2011.

Making headway on the program tops Leshin's to-do list. As with any new effort, it takes time to build momentum, especially for something as enormous as the 40 Acres Scholars program. Once people can see how the program works and the caliber of students it brings in, Leshin says, the proverbial ball will roll. "We're not going to get it done this year," he says, "but we can make a giant step forward."

Helping the University achieve its legislative goals counts as his other major emphasis. Doing that, he says, will mean persuading legislators to set aside the regionalism that has plagued

recent sessions and to recognize what a robust University of Texas does for the entire state, especially during tough economic times.

“Some legislators forget that we need a flagship university in our state or we’ll have brain drain,” Leshin says. More than anything else, for the University to remain not just a flagship but also a national powerhouse, requires money — plain and simple. For UT, the biggest barrier to improved funding is the formula by which the Legislature awards money to state universities. That formula favors growth, which doesn’t bode well for a university like UT that’s at capacity.

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Leshin says that to convince legislators, UT must showcase its impact on the state. Many graduates who stay in Texas go on to serve other state universities in addition to their alma mater. Leshin points out that five of the 12 members of Texas A&M Corpus Christi Foundation’s board graduated from UT. “Alumni of the flagship go on to support the regionals in their area,” he says. “The flagship is there to make sure our best students are reaching their best potential.”

By nature, Leshin is not a party-liner. “I’ve got clients from all different political persuasions,” Leshin says. “I don’t want to alienate them.” That’s not to say he doesn’t advocate for issues. In fact, by virtue of his independence, he’s respected all the more when he chooses to support a cause.

“It gives him credibility,” says Windham. “People know he’s not in it because of any long-term political aspiration or to support any one candidate.”

He who loves the orange

The love affair with UT that started when Leshin was a boy continues to this day. Leshin often drives to Austin for Longhorn sporting events. His wife, Pam, BS ’75, Life Member, and both their children graduated from UT. His daughter Leigh, BS ’04, Life Member, studied law after earning a communications degree at UT and is now a commercial litigator. His son Chase, BBA ’08, Life Member, majored in marketing, was a Bevo handler for the Silver Spurs, and finagled a job on Mack Brown’s staff as a student equipment manager. Now he works for the Miami Dolphins.

“He and Ricky Williams talk UT football all the time,” Leshin says. “Ricky still bleeds burnt orange.”

On Saturday and Sunday mornings, it’s easy to spot Leshin cruising the streets of Corpus Christi at sun-up. Six years ago, Leshin traded in his running shoes for a Trek road bike, which he special-ordered in orange. “When I found out I could paint it any color, there was only one choice,” Leshin says.

Leshin’s term as president starts July 1, and his buddy Darrell Windham is predicting big things. “He’s one of those people who’s always thinking about how to do things better, how to advance the ball,” Windham says.

“When I started my term as president,” Windham continues, “I remember saying ‘Some people love the University of Texas better than me, but nobody loves it more.’ Richard is one of the few who loves UT as much as I do and loves it better.”

NEWS

FROM THE PAST YEAR

125th Anniversary Announced

As the 125th year since the founding of the Ex-Students’ Association, 2010 is a big one for the group now known simply as the Texas Exes. In January, the Association kicked off a year-long celebration with a press conference and a Texas-sized birthday cake. News reporters, board members, past presidents, and staff members came together for the media event. And the fabulous 2 1/2 by 4 1/2 foot cake with an image of the Tower was later shared around campus.



Extraordinary Exes List Revealed

Another way of honoring the Texas Exes' 125th anniversary has been by unveiling a list of 125 Extraordinary Exes. These actors, athletes, musicians, writers, researchers, tycoons, and other all-around trailblazers proved that what starts here truly does change the world. The initial list was celebrated with an ALCALDE cover story and a special website. Alumni are encouraged to submit the names of other Extraordinary Exes, and the entire list can be seen online at TexasExes.org/125.



Ramping Up for a Building Renovation

Already beautiful, the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center is about to become even more functional after an extensive renovation. The northeast corner of the building will be reconfigured to add office space, plus a new multi-purpose room and board room. In addition, the roof will be replaced. Chosen contractor DPR Construction will begin work in earnest after the A&M football game, and the project will be finished by the 2011 football season. The renovation is expected to cost at least \$4 million, money available through a significant donation from Jack Harbin and through the Roy Vaughan Legacy Fund designated for building maintenance.



New Chapters Chartered

The Texas Exes welcomed new local chapters as far away as New Orleans, Amarillo, and Philadelphia this year, and in the case of Longhorn Village, as close as Steiner Ranch. The Association also brought on new networks across the country — from California (Monterey Bay) to Maryland (Baltimore). All told, there are now 93 chartered chapters and 46 networks that gather around the globe.

Food for Thought

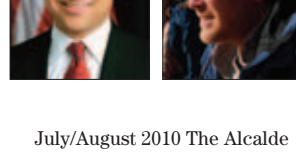
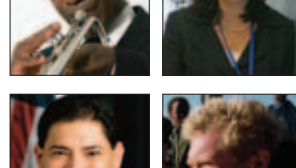
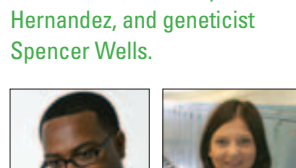
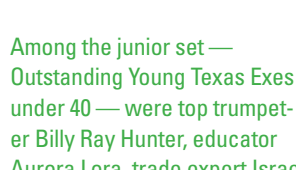
The Texas Exes Student Chapter revamped its “Dinner With 12 Strangers” program — which brought a mix of students and alumni together for an evening meal — into “Food For Thought.” The new program allows interested alumni to host students with similar interests for a meal. About 25 people — including Texas Exes president Rudy Garza — have participated since Food for Thought launched in September, and the Student Chapter’s goal is to hold one per month during the next school year.

Career Services Gives More Boosts

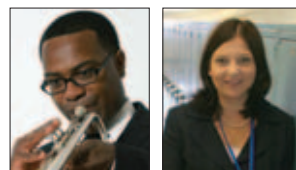
When the job market tightens up, smart workers loosen up by seeking career advice and broadening their skills. Texas Exes Career Services met the growing need this past year by opening up online registration for tele-classes and group job search sessions. More than 400 people were helped with career consultations and coaching throughout the year.

Exceptional Alums Honored

For decades, a favorite Texas Exes tradition has been honoring some of UT's most successful alumni, and another six achievers were recognized in October. The 2009 Distinguished Alumni were concert pianist James Dick, community revitalizer Darren Walker, federal judge Edward Prado, female Coast Guard pioneer Vivien Crea, legendary trial lawyer Lee Godfrey, and telecommunications mogul Jack Crosby.



Among the junior set — Outstanding Young Texas Exes under 40 — were top trumpeter Billy Ray Hunter, educator Aurora Lora, trade expert Israel Hernandez, and geneticist Spencer Wells.



NEWS

Alcalde Launches "Texas Excess" Blog

Under the leadership of new editor Tim Taliaferro, THE ALCALDE expanded the fledgling blog it had launched last fall into a news source posting near-daily on UT news, alumni events, and campus life.

Not to worry about the print magazine, though. The award-winning ALCALDE renewed its contract with Texas Monthly Custom Publishing, which will continue to aid the pre-production and publishing process through 2015.

Student Opportunity Endowment Built Up

Another of the Texas Exes' 125th anniversary undertakings has been an investment initiative, the Student Opportunity Endowment. The \$1.25 million fund is designed to improve the student experience. It will allow students to pursue opportunities they might not otherwise be able to afford — experiences like volunteering, studying abroad, presenting papers and research at conferences, working as unpaid interns, and participating in national competitions.



Longhorn Village Opens

The only retirement community developed in conjunction with the Texas Exes proudly opened its doors last summer. Of the 214 residences built on a scenic 56 acres of Steiner Ranch land, 148 units have been sold, and 144 people have moved into 98 units. With hundreds of activities offered every month — from exercise classes to museum trips to recitals by Butler School of Music students — residents swear Longhorn Village is like living in a resort or on a cruise ship.



BCS Tour Package Takes Fans to California

With high hopes for their football team, some 940 people traveled with the Texas Exes to Pasadena in January. And while the Longhorns lost in a heartbreaker, the travelers did enjoy themselves with chartered jets, Cali-style accommodations, a Getty Museum excursion, a private party at Pacific Park on Santa Monica Pier, game day transportation, and a tailgate at the Rose Bowl.

Although the delay-plagued tailgate did not live up to Texas Exes standards, the company that handled the event (as well as prior successful events at the 2006 BCS Championship and 2005 Rose Bowl) is making amends. In the spirit of our great past relationship, the company is making a \$125,000 donation to the Texas Exes scholarship fund.



Smart Car To Be Raffled for a Great Cause

Through the generosity of the Round Rock Auto Group, the Texas Exes were given an \$18,000 transportation treasure: a burnt-orange Smart Car. And while not everyone loves a compact gas-sipper in truck-loving Texas, it's still safer than a motorcycle. The one-of-a-kind little car has attracted plenty of attention at recent Texas Exes events and will be around all fall. Chances to win it at the last home game of the season are \$10 apiece and will be sold at the Alumni Center during football game days. Proceeds benefit the Student Opportunity Endowment.



40 Acres Scholars Program Picks Up Steam

The prestigious 40 Acres Scholars program — designed to attract some of the nation's best students to UT by offering them full-ride scholarships, enrichment experiences, and leadership training — is rolling down the track. Eight of these highly competitive awards will be given out for the first time in 2011, and top high school seniors will be able to apply for them beginning this August.

Fundraising continues toward the \$150 million that the program will require to support 75 new scholars annually. Some \$13 million is now in house, and another \$8 million has been pledged as part of the greatest Texas Exes undertaking ever.

Outside the U.S.

Foreign countries with the most members

- Mexico: 76**
- United Kingdom: 76**
- Canada: 58**
- South Korea: 53**
- Japan: 49**

740

How the Exes Stack Up:

44 full-time staff members, 3 part-time employees, and 9 student workers execute the vision of the board of directors.

For the fifth consecutive year, revenue from membership dues increased last year.

The Texas Exes awarded scholarships to 738 students for the 2009-10 school year.

Scholarships from 74 chapters went to 346 students.

Dedicated scholarships were awarded to 321 students from 226 endowments.

Texas Leader Scholarships, created by private donors to encourage a diverse student body, were awarded to 45 students.

And the Texas Exes Award for Scholarship and Leadership went to 26 recipients.

400 incoming freshmen attend Camp Texas each summer. 82 sophomores, juniors, and seniors introduce them to Longhorn fun and traditions as counselors and executive team members.

21,500 membership packages were mailed

Career Services opened up online registration for tele-classes and group job search sessions, and nearly 300 percent more people signed up in the first month alone. The Student Chapter boasts 2,192 members

More than 400 people were helped with career consultations and coaching throughout the year.

411 Texas Exes traveled around the globe on 35 Flying Longhorns trips last year.

Last year, the Texas Exes honored excellence in 10 alumni, 2 faculty members, 2 staff members, 7 students, 10 high school teachers, and 2 elementary school teachers.

The ALCALDE published 576 pages in six issues, with a total of 463,853 copies read by alumni, faculty and staff, students, visitors, and friends of the University.

103 commercial ads made it possible for us to bring readers stories of outstanding alumni, university news, the latest research, student trends, and more.

In the State of Texas

73,010

- Austin area: 23,523**
- Houston area: 14,927**
- Dallas-Fort Worth area: 12,087**
- San Antonio area: 4,063**
- Rest of Texas: 17,321**

MEMBERSHIP

In the U.S.

87,999

Five other states with most Texas Exes members

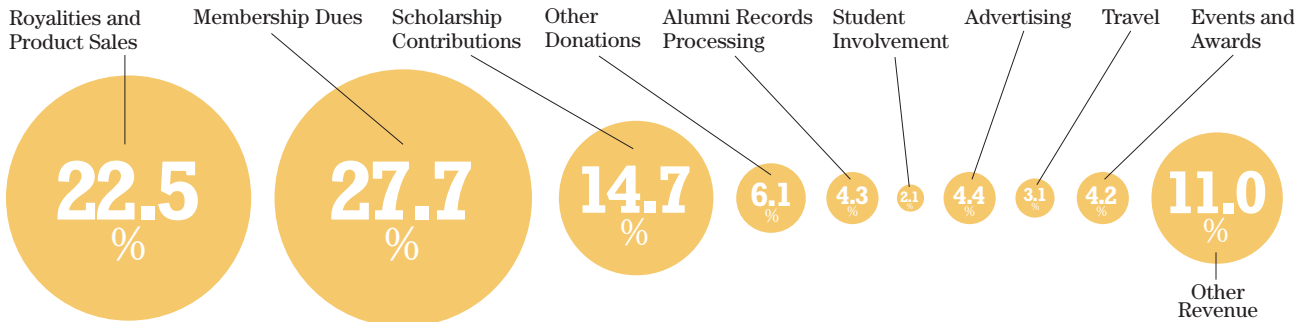
California: 2,452; New York: 936; Virginia: 906; Colorado: 856; Florida: 730

Total Membership

88,739

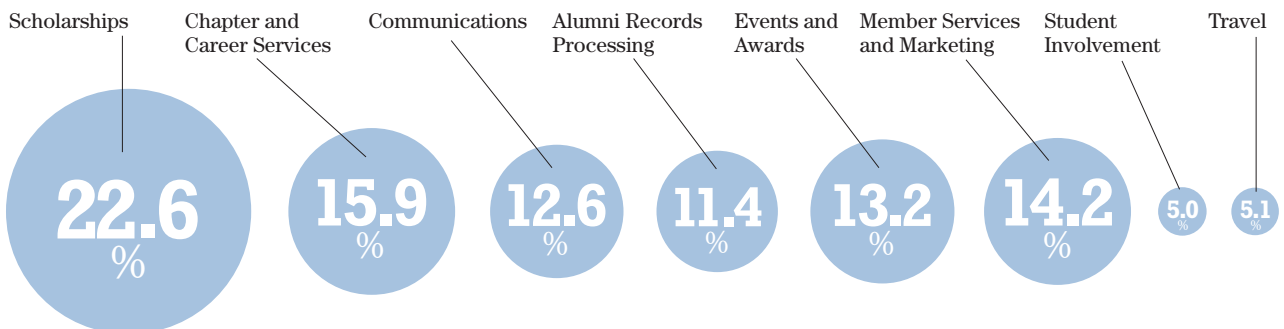
BY THE NUMBERS

Operating Revenues



\$8,969,581

Operating Expenses



\$8,479,868

Funding and Foundations

Operating Fund **15.6%**

Life Member Fund **33.5%**

Other Endowments **8.2%**

Legacy Fund **3.4%**

Texas Exes Scholarship Foundation **39.2%**

\$80,525,556

Board of Directors *as of 7/1/2010*

BOARD OFFICERS

Richard Leshin, BBA '75, JD '78, Corpus Christi President
Machree Gibson, BA '82, JD '91, Austin President-Elect
Rudy Garza, MBA '91, Austin Chair
Alisa Peppers, BA '90, Allen Secretary
Lynn Utter, BBA '84, East Greenville, PA Treasurer & Finance Chair
Executive Director

Jim Boon, BBA '69, MBA '72, Austin

BOARD MEMBERS

Mickie Alvarez, BS '80, JD '89, Laredo At-Large Member
Rick Archer, BAR '79, San Antonio At-Large Member
Steve Ballantyne, BA '72, MBA '74, San Antonio Internal Affairs Chair
John Beckworth, BA '80, JD '83, Houston At-Large Member
Mike Carrizales, BBA '00, Corpus Christi Chapter Advisory Chair
John Fainter, BA '62, LLB '63, Austin Past President
Charles Fraser, BA '80, Houston At-Large Member
Kevin Hegarty, BBA '77, MPA '79, Austin UT Executive Officer
Gilbert Herrera, BBA '78, Houston Investments Chair
Ricardo Hinojosa, BA '72, McAllen Past President
Aaron Kozmetsky, MBA '95, Dallas Development Board Member
Dennis McWilliams, BS '93, Austin At-Large Member
Valerie Nguyen, Austin Student Chapter President
Alba Ortiz, PhD '76, Austin UT Faculty Member
Lawrence Temple, BBA '88, JD '91, Austin At-Large Member
Mark Walker, BA '98, Houston International Representative
Eva Womack, BS '57, Austin Scholarship Chair

2010



Richard Leshin



Machree Gibson



Rudy Garza



Alisa Peppers



Lynn Utter



Jim Boon



Mickie Alvarez



Rick Archer



Steve Ballantyne



John Beckworth



Mike Carrizales



John Fainter



Charles Fraser



Kevin Hegarty



Gilbert Herrera



Ricardo Hinojosa



Aaron Kozmetsky



Dennis McWilliams



Valerie Nguyen



Alba Ortiz



Lawrence Temple



Mark Walker



Eva Womack

Texas Exes Council 2010-2011

AT-LARGE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Nominated by the Nominating Committee, elected by the Council for three-year staggered terms

Term Expires 2013

Keith Cole, BBA '88, Houston
 Elinor Donnell, BBA '58, Corpus Christi
 Linda Hicks, BA '71, JD '77, Midland
 Roger Key, BBA '73, Lubbock
 Brandi Kleinman, BBA '00, Cedar Hill
 Manny Ortiz, BA '75, San Antonio
 Karen Oswalt, BS '70, Austin
 Mike Pappert, BBA '79, Houston
 Chad Robertson, BA '03, Brooklyn, NY
 Dubravka Romano, BA '80, MBA '95, Austin

Term Expires 2012

Thomas Brayshaw, BA '68, MA '70, Fredericksburg
 Darrick Eugene, BA '86, MPAff '89, JD '04, Austin
 Tom Gentry, BS '67, MBA '71, Austin
 Bryan Jones, BS '00, MBA '05, JD '05, Austin
 Tiffany Morrison, BS '05, Austin
 Elizabeth Nash, BA '72, San Marcos
 Anne Robillard, BBA '77, Flower Mound
 Tیره Smith, El Paso
 Ronnye Stidvent, BA '96, Austin
 Jack Montgomery, BS '72, Tulsa

Term Expires 2011

Chris Cangelosi, BBA '91, Brenham
 Charles Davidson, BA '97, North Baldwin, NY
 Ben De Leon, BA '01, BS '01, JD '04, Austin
 Jennifer M. Goldman, BA '96, JD '00, Austin
 Steven R. Gragg, BBA '80, Phoenix, AZ
 Skip Heath, BS '84, Huntsville
 Stan McLelland, BA '69, JD '70, Austin
 Frank Montanaro, BS '79, Brownsville
 LaSalle Vaughn, BBA '96, San Antonio
 Teri Wenglein-Callender, BS '81, MEd '82, Galveston

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

(non-standing committees)
Appointed by the Association president for a one-year term

Black Alumni Steering

Alshare Hughes, BS '99, Flower Mound

Hispanic Alumni Steering

Ronnye Stidvent, BA '96, Austin

Marketing

Lucy Moran, MA '02, Round Rock

Public Affairs

JJ Baskin, MPAff '94, Austin

Public Relations

Dianne Powell, San Antonio

Texas Exes Ambassadors

K.C. McMordie, BS '82, Houston

Travel Forum

Bob Ernst, BBA '62, Huntsville
 Sunny Ernst, BA '66, Huntsville

UT Heritage Society

Bob Harris, BA '60, San Antonio

Young Alumni Committee Chair

Vanessa Soper, BA '05, Dallas

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Appointed by the Association president for a three-year term

Tyler Rudd, BA '95, JD '00, Austin

UNIVERSITY CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Appointed by the Association president for a one-year term

Parents' Association

Rosanna Blalock, BS '77, Houston
 Myron Blalock, BAR '78, Houston

Longhorn Foundation

Ann Cox Bomer, BA '60, Austin

Texas Union

Dorothy Blacklock, BS '68, Austin

Men's Athletic Council Representative

Darrell Windham, BBA '75, JD '78, Austin

Women's Athletic Council Representative

Martha Smiley, JD '72, Austin

SCHOOL & COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Appointed by the Association President for a one-year term

School of Architecture

Neal Corbett, Bar '86, Boston, MA

College of Communication

Dave Shaw, BS '92, Austin

College of Education

Porky Haberman, BA '61, Dripping Springs

College of Engineering

Ty Womble, BS '08, BA '08, Austin

School of Fine Arts

TBD

Jackson School of Geosciences

C. Douglas Brown, BS '84, Dallas

School of Information

Sharon Flournoy, MLS '74, Austin

School of Law

Nina Cortell, BA '73, JD '76, Dallas

College of Liberal Arts

Marilyn White, BA '59, Plano

LBJ School of Public Affairs

Steven Niemyer, MPAff '92, Austin

McCombs Business School

Barbara Guthery, Austin

College of Natural Sciences

Jim A. Prentice, BA '58, Austin

School of Nursing

Henry Guevara, MS '00, PhD '09, Georgetown

College of Pharmacy

J. Nile Barnes, BS '85, PharmD '05, Dripping Springs

School of Social Work

Susan Avery, MS '91, Fort Worth

PAST TEXAS EXES PRESIDENTS ON COUNCIL

John Adkins, BA '73, JD '77, Houston
 R Gordon Appleman, BA '59, Fort Worth
 Steve Ballantyne, BA '72, MBA '74, San Antonio
 John Barnhill, BJ '59, Brenham
 Jack Blanton, BA '47, LLB '50, Houston
 John Chase, MAR '52, Houston
 Mike Cook, JD '68, Austin
 Hector De Leon, BS '70, JD '73, Austin
 Frank Denius, LLB '49, Austin
 John Fainter, BA '62, LLB '63, Austin
 Rudy Garza, MBA '91, Austin
 Jack Harbin, BBA '39, Dallas
 Steve Head, BA '72, Dallas
 Ricardo Hinojosa, BA '72, McAllen
 Bob Inman, BA '50, Austin
 Dan Krausse, BS '47, Dallas
 Cyndi Krier, BJ '71, JD '75, San Antonio
 Wales Madden, BA '50, LLB '52, Amarillo
 Hum Mandell, BS '57, Austin
 Jane Monday, BS '63, Huntsville
 Jon Newton, BA '63, LLB '65, Austin
 Sonia Perez, BJ '78, Houston
 John Stuart, BBA '58, Dallas
 Larry Temple, BBA '57, LLB '59, Austin
 Pam Willeford, BA '72, Austin
 Darrell Windham, BBA '75, JD '78, Austin

Chapter presidents, all of whom are on the Council, will be posted on TexasExes.org