

Honors Graduate Velazco Named 'Teacher of the Year'

Ludivina "Alejandra" Velazco's mother brought her five young daughters to Houston more than 20 years ago from their home in Jalisco, Mexico, determined for them to have a better life than their native country offered. One of the main things Glenda Gutierrez wanted for her children was the education she never had.

"My mother could have been a lawyer, a psychologist – anything," Velazco said. "Because of the circumstances she found herself in, she couldn't pursue her own education, but she has it in her."

Instead, her mother, who had been widowed seven years earlier when Velazco was a toddler, worked to support her family and was a one-woman cheering squad for her daughters' education.

Despite the challenges of being a Spanish-speaker and moving to a country that spoke English, which Velazco learned on a fast track in bilingual classes at Braeburn Elementary, she worked her way into the Junior National Honor Society by seventh grade, and later gained a steady place in the National Honor Society at Bellaire High School. She graduated *summa cum laude* from the UST's School of Education in 2003 as a member of the International Honor Society in Education.

Who was proudest? Her mom. "Because of her, I have always been really focused on my studies and always dedicated to education," Velazco said. "I can remember every single milestone."



She recently earned her latest honor – that of Bilingual Teacher of the Year – at Bonner Elementary

School, where she teaches 22 first-graders. She teaches the core classes – math, language arts and Spanish – in Spanish, and social studies and science in English.

Now she competes among other teachers who earned that title at their respective schools within the Houston Independent School District.

And at the same time she excels at her strenuous job, the 31-year-old teacher is working toward her master's degree in the School of Education at UST under Sr. Marie Faubert, CSJ, a professor and director, Counselor Education Program.

"She is a wonderful person, and I am very happy that people have recognized her gift because her classroom is a joy to watch," Sr. Faubert said. "She's skilled way beyond her years of experience.

"She is in touch with her students' feelings and helps connect them to their behavior," she said. "She works with her little ones to change their behavior by inspiring them instead of punishing them because she has a deep respect for them."

Velazco hopes to use her master's degree to become a coun-

selor in education. She is the first member of her family to graduate from college.

All of this happened, she says, because of her mother.

"I am what I am, and I've gotten this far because of my mother," she says. "She's been such a blessing to me in her dedication to always putting us first."

Focolare Discussion on Campus

Campus Ministry and the Focolare Movement will present a panel discussion 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, April 17, and book launch 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, April 18, in Scanlan Room, Jerabek Center. Dr. Michel Vandeleene, editor of "Essential Writings" and professor of spiritual theology at the Teresianum University of Rome, will speak. The Focolare Movement, begun in 1943, is an international movement that is inspired by the gospel and works for unity in all spheres of life.

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St. Thomas Launches New Web site Monday, April 23

Finally the launch we've all been waiting for has arrived! UST's newly redesigned Web site will premiere on Monday, April 23.

The University's goal is to transform the Web site into a marketing-oriented site that features a new look and feel, one that is more visitor-friendly and easier to navigate.

Primary site navigation targets future and current students, parents, alumni, friends and donors, and faculty and staff.

Other sections explore our mission through success stories, answer the question Why UST and extend to our audience through Catholic Connections.

An online newsroom improves access for the media seeking information for stories about UST, as well as locating faculty experts. An expanded calendar of events gives up-to-date information and details on campus activities and programs.

Take a sneak peek and view a guide of the new site at <https://peter.stthom.edu/>.



Shiffick Lecture: Four Decades Under the Aegean

Hidden treasure is a topic that readily captures the imagination. Now magnify that thought several-fold, and imagine hauling up from the sea 20 tons of buried artifacts dating back to the age of King Tut. **Dr. George F. Bass**, founder of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, has experienced this thrill.

Bass will give the 19th Shiffick Distinguished Lecture

on Sunday, April 22, in Jones Hall. A reception will follow.

Between 1984 and 1994, archaeologists from INA at Texas A&M University conducted 22,500 dives between 145 and 200 feet deep to map and raise the artifacts.

INA now uses a two-person submersible craft especially designed for archaeological surveys. In one month in 2001, it

made possible the discovery of 14 ancient wrecks and 10 possible wrecks, while revisiting a dozen wrecks of which the INA was already aware. These submersible surveys continue, and this summer will be aided by a grant from the Friends of Archaeology.

Bass will be presented with the 2007 Hugh H. Goodrich Golden Trowel Award for his achievement and dedication to the discipline of nautical archaeology. For more information, contact Fr. Edward Bader at 713-525-2181.



UST Hires New Dean of Arts and Sciences

UST's new Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences arrives July 1, touting an extensive and award-studded resume as an administrator and an educator in history and business, with early hands-on experience managing two New York orchestras and a dance theater.

Dr. Dominic Aquila, founding dean of the School of Liberal Arts at the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne, Ind., says he was attracted to UST because of "its outstanding faculty and its growing reputation as an institution where the Catholic intellectual tradition holds primacy in undergraduate education."

"The University is fortunate to



welcome Dr. Aquila to our campus," said President Robert Ivany. "He brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge in a number of academic disciplines. I am confident that he will make a major contribution to our mission to educate leaders of faith and character."

His selection is the result of a rigorous selection process, said Dr. John Hittinger, vice president for Academic Affairs. "Dr. Aquila wants to see the Catholic intellectual tradition engage culture and contemporary society. He will work closely with sciences and mathematics, social sciences and humanities to pursue academic excellence."

ACS Students Recognized at Chicago Meeting



The UST Student Affiliates Chapter of the American Chemical Society attended the 233rd American Chemical Society Meeting in Chicago on March 24-27 to receive its award for being recognized as "Outstanding" by the National ACS, a designation that puts the UST chapter in the top 3.5 percent of the 980 chapters in the country.

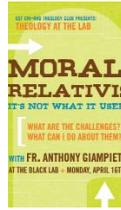
More than 15,000 scientists from around the world attended the meeting, which included more than 9,000 oral and poster presentations.

Adeola Olowu, UST ACS president, accepted the award.

At the meeting, 10 UST students presented five research posters. Students Giancarlo Toledanes and Amy Knutson received certificated of recognition from the Chemical Education Division for their presentations, "NMR determination of the kinetics of deuterium exchange in 3-pentanone" and "NMR determination of the kinetics of deuterium exchange in 3-methyl-2-butanone and 2-pentanone."

Theology at the Lab

Join Chi-Rho for Theology at the Lab with Fr. Anthony Giampietro, CSB, 7 p.m. Monday, April 16, at the Black Lab. He will discuss moral relativism and its challenges.



MACL Arabic Film Festival

Join the Modern and Classical Languages Department for the Arabic Film Festival from 4-7 p.m. Sunday, April 22 in Anderson Hall, Room 103. The film is "Bab el-Oued City."



Student Awarded \$57,450

Linh P. Tran, a senior at Klein High School, recently received an Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps college scholarship worth \$57,450.



She will become the first student at the University of St. Thomas to enroll in Air Force ROTC when she enters this fall as a pre-med student. Air Force ROTC was introduced to St. Thomas earlier this year.

"Ms. Tran competed very well against thousands of other high school seniors across the nation to earn this coveted scholarship," said her future Air Force ROTC Commander, Col. Phil Bossert. St. Thomas also awarded her a presidential scholarship worth more than \$10,000.

ROTC is a comprehensive, four-year college program in which cadets take eight academic courses in leadership, management, teamwork, military studies and ethics.



Origins of Life

Maureen L. Condic, University of Utah, will present "Conceptualizing Conception: A Scientific Perspective on the Beginning of Life," at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 18 in Anderson Hall, Room 103. The lecture is sponsored by the Philosophy Department, Honors Program, Phi Sigma Tau Honor Society, Pre-Health Profession Society and TriBeta.

Condic is an associate professor of Neurobiology and Anatomy at the University of Utah School Of Medicine, with an adjunct appointment in the department of pediatrics.

Condic's primary research focus has been the development and regeneration of the nervous system. In 1999, she was awarded the Basil O'Conner Young Investigator Award for her studies of peripheral nervous system development. In 2002, she was named a McKnight Neuroscience of Brain Disorders Investigator in recognition of her research in the field of adult spinal cord regeneration.

The lecture is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Pam Butler at 713-525-3591 or butlerp@stthom.edu.



Lee Lecture in English

Come to the Lee Lecture with award-winning author Paul Elie at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 19, in Cullen Hall.

Elie is the author of *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, a study of Flannery O'Conner, Walker Percy, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. Named a "best book" of 2003 by The Atlantic, Chicago Tribune and San Francisco Chronicle, among other publications, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in biography and winner of the PEN/Martha Albrand Prize for best first book of nonfiction.

The book also won a Christopher Award, the Beliefnet Book of the Year award, a Catholic Press Association award and annual awards in Southern Literature and Christianity and Literature presented by the Modern Language Association.

Colleagues and friends of the late Rev. Edward G. Lee, CSB, established the Lee Lecture in 1979 to bring outstanding figures from the arts and humanities to UST.

The lecture is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Ligia Leismer at 713-525-6915.



Organ Concert in Chapel

Hear Crista Miller, UST music theory lecturer, perform organ music of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer William Bolcom, Lebanese organist Naji Hakim and famous French musician Jean Langlais at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 22, in the Chapel of St. Basil.

Miller has performed in Italy, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Sweden, Canada and throughout the United States. She is music director and cathedral organist at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. She organized and directed an area-wide auditioned choir that sang at St. Peter's Basilica for Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza's ceremonial receipt of the Pallium from Pope Benedict in June 2005.

Miller earned a DMA in organ performance and the sacred music diploma at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, studying under Hans Davidsson.

In 2004, she was one of only 28 organists, and the only American organist, chosen to perform in the Odense International Organ Competition and Festival in Denmark.

Concert is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Sue Young at 713-525-3159.