

Star View



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Gray Matter: Alec Marin Graduates UST to Pursue PhD in Neuroscience



If you are looking for **Miguel “Alec” Marin**, chances are you will find him in his “second home”— the biology lab. This University of St. Thomas biology major feels no greater joy than when he is immersed in research to explore his fascination with what he calls the “final frontier of the human anatomy” – the brain. After graduating from UST on May 16, Marin, a native of Brownsville, will pursue a doctorate in neuroscience at Baylor College of Medicine.

Fueled by the encouragement of his UST biology professors, opportunities to conduct research as an undergraduate and a series of internships, Marin shifted his career goals away from medical school to neuroscience research. Two pivotal opportunities – a volunteer position at a psychiatric hospital in Harlingen and the Summer Medical Research Training Program (SMART) at Baylor College of Medicine – left no room for doubt about his desire to pursue a PhD in neuroscience.

“At the psychiatric hospital, I saw that there is so much about the brain and the nervous system that we just don’t know,” Marin said. “I felt that if I am

going to make any real impact in this field, I can contribute more as a scientist and researcher than I ever could as a medical doctor.”

Beyond his biology classes, Marin has seen the benefit of the holistic education he has received at a liberal arts university.

“There are a lot of people who disagree with the things we do in the lab, especially in the field of neuroscience – stem cell biology always incites controversy,” Marin said. “At a liberal arts school, you get to see both sides of the argument. It broadens you, if you stick solely to the technical scientific aspects on an issue, you forget about the people it affects.”

View the complete story at www.stthom.edu.

Baccalaureate Mass

Date: 6:30 p.m., Friday, May 15, 2009
Location: Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
Address: 1111 Saint Joseph Pkwy
(between San Jacinto and Fannin)

Graduate Reception

Date: 8 p.m., Friday, May 15, 2009
Location: UST Campus

Commencement Ceremony

Date: 10 a.m., Saturday, May 16, 2009
Location: Reliant Arena
Address: 1 Reliant Park
Houston, TX 77054

Thomas Mendez Named Student Speaker at University’s Commencement

Thomas Mendez will take the stage as the student commencement speaker at the University’s commencement ceremony at 10 a.m., Saturday, May 16 at Reliant Arena. Mendez is an International Studies major, Spanish and Latin American and Latino Studies minor. Mendez’s speech entitled, “True Success,” explores how the UST experience and his mentors, especially the late Dr. Gustavo Wensjoe, helped him define success.

After graduation, Mendez plans to travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina in January of 2010, as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar to pursue a master’s degree in economics.



Upcoming Events

Ima Hogg, Texas First Lady



The Women, Culture and Society Program presents the inaugural Elsa Zambosco-Thomas lecture series: “The First Lady of Texas,” Ima Hogg, 7:30 p.m., Monday, **May 4**, Ahern Room Crooker Center. RSVP to Fr. Ted Baenziger at ejb@stthom.edu.

Michael Klare Energy Lecture



The University of St. Thomas Social Justice Committee, Houston Peace and Justice Center, Veterans for Peace and OilPatch Democrats present energy expert, Michael Klare, “*How is America’s Energy Dependence Altering Our Country’s Place in the World,*” 7 p.m., Tuesday, **April 28**, Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center.

Catholic Intellectual Lecture



The Office of Academic Affairs and Center for Faith and Culture present Rev. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D, and his talk entitled “*Evidence of Supernatural Design in Contemporary Big Band Cosmology,*” 7:30 p.m., Monday, **April 20**, Scanlan Room Jerabeck Center.

First Friday Forum: Microcredit



The University of St. Thomas Rev. William J. Young Social Justice Institute present Dr. Rogelio Garcia-Contreras, “*First Friday Forum: The UST Microcredit Program: Changing the World One Loan at a Time,*” 7:30 p.m., Friday, **May 1**, Ahern Room Crooker Center.

Global Climate Change



The University of St. Thomas in collaboration with the Weather Research Center will host a day-long symposium entitled “*Global Climate Change: In Search of the Science*” from 1-9 p.m., Tuesday, **April 21**, Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center. The event will examine the science of climate change.

Air Force Veteran Joins UST Community

University of St. Thomas announces the appointment of alumna **Shannon Wilson**, a veteran of the United States Air Force, as director of Graduate Admissions and Veteran Services.

Wilson spent four years in the Air Force and received the Air Force Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Park University in Parkville, Missouri in 2004, and her Master of Business Administration from the University of St. Thomas in 2007. Most recently, she came to St. Thomas from the University of Phoenix, where she spent several years as the corporate education liaison and team leader.

“I have always had a great passion for the military and higher education. I feel fortunate to have found a career that allows me to combine the two most important things to me,” Wilson said.

At St. Thomas, Wilson is responsible for increasing the student enrollment of veterans and their family members and graduate students through focused recruitment and a vigorous student support program.

“With the new Post-9/11 GI Bill scheduled to go into effect in August 2009, I expect to see an increase in the number of veteran students attending our campus,” Wilson said. “The GI bill will offer veteran students an increase in educational benefits and the possibility of attending a private university. We are working diligently to ensure that we can meet the needs of our veteran students.”



UST ECOS Student Group Hold Earth Week Events

Environmentally Concerned Organization of Students (ECOS) the campus to Eweek-long events recognizing Earth Day.

A tree planting was held at Buffalo Bayou Saturday April 18.

Tuesday, April 21: This event will feature:

- Information to help students lower their carbon and water footprint.
- Displays showing students the environmental costs of certain products.
- Quizzes to test environmental knowledge
- A screening of “Stuff Happens,” the environmental show with Bill Nye “The Science Guy.”

Wednesday, April 22: A movie night in the basement of Doherty Library from 7 p.m. – midnight, showing environmentally themed box office hits such as Disney Pixar’s *WALL-E*, the 2008 Academy Award winner of Best Animated Feature. Dr. Maury Harris will give a brief lecture on *WALL-E*. Movie night will finish with a prize drawing and a screening of the latest film in the James Bond series, *Quantum of Solace*.

All Week: ECOS is accepting donations to adopt a zoo animal. Contact Murray Myers for more information at myersm@stthom.edu.

University of St. Thomas Drama Program Gives Wilde's Play, Rock Twist

In April, Houstonians turn their attention to all things Irish during the Houston International Festival's spotlight on Ireland as the 2009 festival's country of honor. In turn, the University of St. Thomas Drama Program will spotlight Irish playwright Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wilde's most popular play, "The Importance of Being Earnest." The play runs April 22-25 and April 29-30, May 1-2, 2009 in Jones Theatre. Curtain rises at 8 p.m.

"This play is designed and performed with a 'wild' edge," said Director and Assistant Professor of drama Gino Chelakis. "Using the music of The Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, AC/DC, Elton John and many others...this UST production anchors its concept and design aesthetic in the lush, unapologetic and gloriously theatrical world of classic rock."

This comedy tells the story of Jack Worthing who is known as Jack in Shropshire and Earnest in London. This ruse allows Jack to court Gwendolyn in the city and lead a secret life in the country. But Jack's scheme runs into trouble when his friend Algernon becomes suspicious and decides to follow Jack to the country. Complications crackle as the formidable Lady Bracknell and other hilarious characters become involved. Of course all of the fun is set against a backdrop of British manners, and all of the action is served up by Oscar Wilde's dazzling witty language.

Cosponsors include the Center for Irish Studies Cultural Outreach Forum and The Irish Society. Tickets are \$10 student and \$15 general public. To reserve tickets call 713-525-3520.



Matt Giampietro and Natalie Nassar

Texas Legislature to Decide Future of Texas Equalization Grant

Once again, the Texas Legislature is meeting to discuss the viability of the Texas Equalization Grant (TEG) and to consider a proposed reduction in funding. The UST Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid urges the UST community to challenge ongoing TEG cuts by participating in letter-writing and phone campaigns and a lobby trip to the Capitol.

The TEG is a state grant created in 1971 to bridge the tuition gap between lower-priced state universities and independent institutions such as the University of St. Thomas. This school year, more than 500 UST students, including undergraduate and graduate students, received an average of \$3,744 each, allowing many students to have access to higher education here at the University.

On April 29, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will take a group of 10 students to Austin to lobby for support among representatives for the TEG. Spaces are still available, and food and transportation will be provided. SAVE TEG 2009 committee members include students Christopher Dupree, Steven Vaughn and Trang Vo.

"The TEG program has always been

advantageous, benefiting not only recipients, but our community as a whole," said Scott Moore, dean of Scholarships and Financial Aid. "There is a limited amount of financial assistance and having the TEG helps broaden the resource base. The TEG makes higher education possible for more students, helping our communities and economies remain competitive. We must ensure our voices are heard by the Texas Legislature by flooding the Texas Capitol with letters and e-mails."

Several links to identify and contact your legislators; TEG facts to incorporate into letters and letter templates are available at www.stthom.edu/grants.

To participate in the campaign, serve as a committee member or represent UST in Austin, please contact Jan Abasolo at (713) 525-2174 or Salomon Medina at (713) 525-3141.



In Memorium

The Rev. Frank Bredeweg, CSB, former president of the University of St. Thomas, died peacefully on Good Friday, April 10, 2009, at age 81. Fr. Bredeweg became acting president on August 1, 1985, was named the fifth University President on January 15, 1985 and served until June 1988.



The Funeral Mass for Fr. Bredeweg will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, **April 21** at the Catholic Central High School in Detroit. A Celebration of Life will follow the Mass.

Fr. Bredeweg was born January 13, 1928. He had a career as a certified public accountant before discerning his priestly vocation. Ordained in December of 1964, he arrived the following year from the University of Toronto to serve the University of St. Thomas in Houston for four years as treasurer and controller.

View the complete story at www.stthom.edu.

University of St. Thomas Professor **Elsa Zambosco-Thomas** passed away Wednesday, April 1. A Memorial Mass will be held at 12:30 p.m. Friday, **May 1** in the Chapel of St. Basil. Rev. Ted Baenziger, CSB, will serve as the celebrant.



A member of the UST faculty from January of 1968 to May 2008, Zambosco-Thomas taught Spanish, Spanish and Latin American literature, creative writing, Hispanic theatre and Hispanic Cinema and served as the director of the Women, Culture and Society Program. She is credited with creating the first UST Study Abroad Program in Argentina in 1970 and 1971, continuing her dedication with 31 years of teaching in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico and four more programs in Argentina. Zambosco also founded *Mundos*, a Hispanic literary magazine for the UST community.

Faculty Senate Honors Years of Service



“Friendship, Teaching and Example,” an event honoring faculty service in the early years of UST, will be held from 3 – 5 p.m. on Thursday, **May 7** in Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center. The Faculty Senate wishes to honor those faculty members who served at least 10 years at the University and began their service before 1978. For more information, contact Mary Kelleher at 713-525-3891.

University of St. Thomas to Host *Festa Italiana*

The University was selected to host the Houston Italian

Festival, otherwise known as *Festa Italiana* on campus for three days, **October 16-18,**



2009. The University’s central

location, accessibility to freeways, ample parking and previous participation made UST a perfect site to host the festival. Anyone with a UST identification card will be admitted free. Visit www.HoustonItalianFestival.com for more information.



Memorial Mass for Dale Stewart

A Memorial Mass for Dale Stewart will be held at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, **April 21** in the Chapel of St. Basil.

Thank You

The Center for International Studies
Expresses Sincerest Thanks
To

University of St. Thomas
Directors, Administrators, Faculty & Staff Colleagues, Alumni &
Students

And the Center’s many friends worldwide
For their Prayers, Condolences, and Support
Upon the tragic loss of our late, beloved Director
Gustavo A. Wensjoe, Ph.D.

A Memorial Service will be held
Saturday, **July 18,** 2009
In Jerabeck Center

Star View is published by the Office of Marketing Communications as a means of informing the UST community about University and campus news. Call 713-525-3116 with questions and/or comments.

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