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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FORMER CLEAR BROOK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT
GRADUATES FROM UST, HEADS FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL**

HOUSTON (May 2, 2006) — In just a few weeks after she receives her diploma on Saturday, May 20, in Reliant Arena, Melissa Blancas will join a half-dozen other St. Thomas graduates as she embarks on an arduous course through medical school. But while her colleagues go on to allopathic medical schools, such as those in the Texas Medical Center, Blancas will start at the University of North Texas' Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) in Fort Worth.

“To become an osteopathic physician, you must pass two board exams,” she explained. “You have to pass the one that all doctors pass, and you must pass another one dealing with holistic approaches to medicine and manipulative medicine.”

An allopathic doctor treats detectable symptoms directly related to an illness or disorder, while an osteopathic doctor tends to focus more on disease prevention and health promotion while treating the whole person, she said.

Blancas, who will graduate from University of St. Thomas with a Liberal Arts degree with concentrations in biology and psychology and a minor in philosophy, came to St. Thomas partly on the recommendation of a friend and as a result of a campus visit. “I could tell from the website (www.stthom.edu) that UST had a successful pre-med program and I like the fact that it was a small school with small classes. I liked that it was Catholic, and that I could go to Mass frequently,” she said.

Blancas goes to Mass in the Chapel of St. Basil from three to four times a week.

Initially, Dr. Larry Nordyke helped Blancas along, but before too long, “all the Biology faculty was very helpful, especially Dr. Rosie Rosell.”

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