



Hayes: Mendoza finds a pocket to fill at Georgia Tech

SPORTS, 1B

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Dr. Walter Wendler, outgoing president of WTAMU, watches proudly as WT Marching band performs after an announcement of a \$3 million gift from the new Prairie Thunder Band program on Aug. 18. NELL WILLIAMS/AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS

Andrea’s Project honors founding member

T-Miller Wrecker’s David Ferril recognized for advocacy, dedication

Nell Williams
Amarillo Globe-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Andrea’s Project recently presented founding member David Ferril with the organization’s inaugural Legacy of Impact Award, recognizing his extraordinary advocacy, dedication and lasting impact in the fight against impaired driving, according to a news release from the organization.

Ferril’s support of Andrea’s family began shortly after Andrea’s death and continued as the family transformed their loss into the impaired driving prevention work of Andrea’s Project.

Shortly after 17-year-old Andrea Elizalde was killed by an impaired driver in 2019, Ferril and T-Miller Wrecker became connected to Andrea’s family under tragic circumstances.

T-Miller Wrecker responded to the crash, helped clear the scene and recovered Andrea’s vehicle.

In the days that followed, Ferril’s involvement became much more than the work of his business. He connected Andrea’s father, David Elizalde, with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), which was preparing to hold an impaired driving forum.

That connection gave a grieving father an opportunity to share Andrea’s story and become involved with others working toward the same goal: preventing another family from

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Major donation to WT funds student experiences in band, business

Nell Williams Amarillo Globe-News | USA TODAY NETWORK

A gift of \$3 million was presented to West Texas A&M University’s band program Tuesday morning, Aug.18, for the newly named Prairie Thunder Foundation which will encompass the Sound of West Texas Marching Band and the Symphonic, Concert and University bands in WT’s School of Music within the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts & Humanities, to provide extensive funds for scholarships and program needs.

The gift also included a program endowment to offer invaluable corporate experiences for students in the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business along with the Prairie Thunder Corporate Culture Experience endowment in Engler College.

The Prairie Thunder Foundation was established by a WT alumna and her husband, both of whom wish to remain anonymous, according to WT.

Dan Peterson, dean of the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities at WT, said that when he started over two years ago, he watched concerts, musicals, poetry readings, debates and was particularly impressed with the quality of the faculty and students. But he was particularly enamored by the School of Music.

“I couldn’t get enough of them, and in the evenings I found

myself engrossed in watching YouTube videos of band performances and choir concerts to the point that when I finally arrived on campus in the fall, I was a little star struck as I met these amazing faculty and student performers and got to visit with them and their talent in person,” Peterson said.

Peterson said he was grateful for the gift because it demonstrates passion and gratitude, specifically for the bands at WT and the influence these ensembles have on performers.

Michael Genera, drum major for the WT band, said the donation was a something most people only dream about in the band education area.

“The donation will elongate the rich history and provide better opportunities and success all around the program,” he said.

Genera, who is a senior music education major from El Paso, said he plans to go into the field as a band director.

“The musicians that are currently on the field hold a power not many possess, and that is a power of commitment and dedication to perfect their own craft, work tirelessly, practice every day just to get better and do something that at one time sparked their passion,” he said.

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Family of former volleyball player gives generous grant to program

Nell Williams
Amarillo Globe-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Terk family has made an historic \$760,847 gift to Amarillo College athletics - the largest to a designated AC sport, set to benefit the AC volleyball program.

The Amarillo College Foundation, along with the Terk family announced the gift at a news conference Tuesday morning, Aug. 18, at the FirstBank Southwest Center on AC’s Washington campus.

The gift to the AC volleyball program will benefit three funds established through the family’s generosity.

The gift includes:

- Madison Kellogg Endowed Volleyball Scholarship: \$250,000

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The Terk family, who donated a generous gift to the Amarillo College Volleyball program, was at the ceremony on Aug. 18 at AC to present the donation.

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