

# How will SB17 affect Lamar?



UP photo by Maddie Sims

LU vice president of strategic initiatives & community relations Freddie Titus, left, Emily Ardolino, and SGA president Jonah Smith chat before the Student Government meeting, Feb. 20.

Maddie Sims  
UP editor

In 2023, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 17 which went into effect Jan. 1. With this new law, universities across the state of Texas are not permitted to have activities or build-ings which involve diversity, equity, or inclusion activities as the primary focus. It also excludes employees from hiring candidates based on their eth-nicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

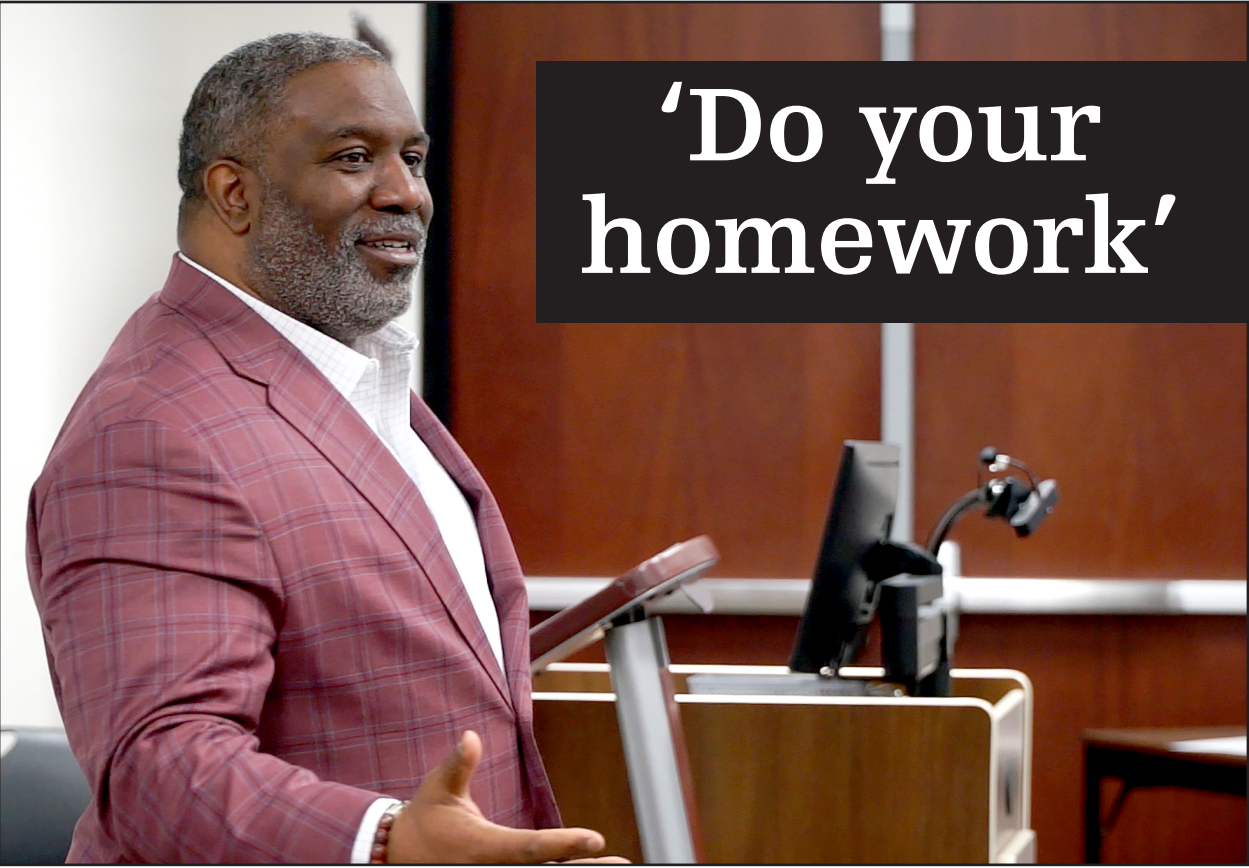
At the Student Government Associa-tion meeting, Feb. 20, Emily Ardolino, Associate General Counsel of the Texas State University System, spoke to stu-dents about how the bill will change certain aspects of campus and its effect on diversity, equity and inclusion pro-grams.

“It’s a pretty new and novel law,” Ar-dolino said. “There’s not really any-thing that quite looks like this. And so, a lot of the work that we have done is really reviewing the statute and doing our best to interpret it, and then make sure that our institutions are in compli-ance.”

“The primary thing it prohibits is in-stitutions from having DEI offices. Not necessarily all of the activities that you would associate with it are actually de-scribed in (the bill), so a lot of that ef-fort has been identifying which of these things have been formally done by the office, and either eliminating or revis-ing those programs.”

Ardolino said there are some excep-tions to restrictions. For example, the

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UP photo by Taylor Justice

Lamar University communication alumni Marion Phillips III talks to students about career in politics and public relations.

## LU graduate shares career experiences

Maddie Sims  
UP editor

Lamar University’s alumni span different majors and profes-sions. Graduates set an example on campus and give students a model to look up to. Marion Phil-lips III is one of them.

Phillips returned to his alma mater to talk to students about how LU shaped his career as a po-litical public relations expert. He

started out at Lamar July 1981, originally intending to major in oceanography, but decided mass communications was a better fit.

“It was my second choice,” Phillips said. “I really wanted to look at journalism and PR, but I just really went the PR route. (I learned about) how you look at other ways to do some things you want to do, (including) politics, through Dr. Price and the respon-sibility of not only voting, but

being a participant in the process. I fell in love from that point on.”

While he was a student, Phil-lips worked for the athletics de-partment covering games.

“We used to have to carry the telescopic teletype,” he said. “That was the precursor to the fax. You would write the story, stick it on there, crank it, and then it would read it and send it over the tele-

See **PHILLIPS**, page 3

## Dorms update laundry rooms

Kami Greene  
UP contributor

Monroe and Campbell dorms have updated their laundry facilities. As well as new washers and dryers, the rooms have new walls and floors.

“Usually, the older ones would take around 45 minutes to an hour for a wash, but these new ones get it done in 30 minutes,” Eddie Macias, Monroe Residential Advisor, said. “The quality of the wash isn’t diminished either. The clothes come out just as clean as before.”

Macias said the old equipment was unreliable.

“No matter how many times technicians would come by and fix the washer and dryers, they would ultimately break after a few weeks, so it was a constant issue being down one or two washers at a time,” Macias said.

Ariana Martinez, Winnie sophomore, said the facilities look nicer.

“The new flooring and repainted walls com-plement each other very well,” she said.

See **LAUNDRY**, page 2



UP photo by Kami Greene  
The updated laundry facility in Monroe Hall.

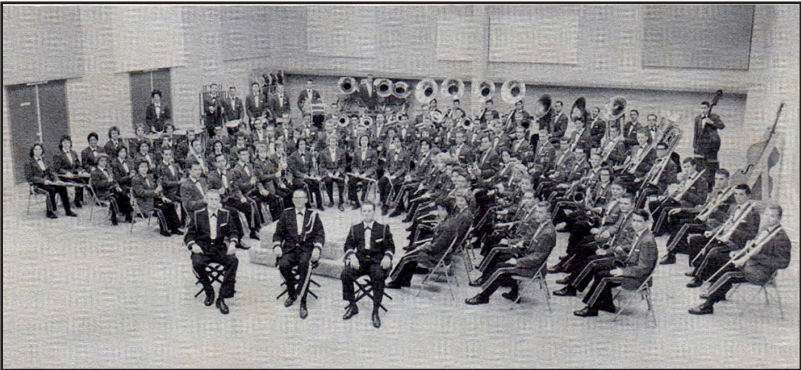
## Simon broke band color barrier

Gracie Anderson  
UP staff writer

Black History Month is a time to recognize and celebrate Afri-can American heritage and his-tory, as well as its firsts. Lynn Simon, who is 81, was the first Black person to be in the Lamar band.

“It was a long time ago,” Simon said. “I was not prepared for the challenges I would face. But I adjusted and overcame. I traveled with the band on the Dallas South Texas Tour. At this time, I wasn’t the only African American on that trip. We were required to have a separate din-ing room, we couldn’t eat with the rest of the band. We had to have different lodging, too. We may have been in the same hotel, but I can’t remember.”

Simon was a clarinet player in



UP photo by E.J. McMillen

The 1962 Lamar State College of Technology (now Lamar University) band.

what was then Lamar Technical College’s in band 1961 and 1962. There he met former Lamar Uni-versity president and fellow clar-inetist Jimmy Simmons.

“I met Dr. Simmons when we were both in the band,” Simon said. “It was hard to adjust, but I found a good friend in Dr. Simmons and to this day we are

still close.”

Being the ’60s, not every band member was happy for Simon to play with them, he said, adding that the only thing that kept him going was his musical ability and that he loved to play his instru-ment.

See **SIMON**, page 2

## Mural Fest set for March 2, 3

Brian Quijada  
UP photo editor

The City of Beaumont is set to host the third annual Mural Festival, Feb. 29.-March 3. Mural Fest is a four-day, live art showcase with artists from across the country and the world.

Muralists will be painting throughout down-town Beaumont and the surrounding area.

An artist meet and greet will be held, Feb. 29, from 7-9 p.m. at Pour09 Bar & Rooftop, 6165 Muela Creek Dr., Suite A. Attendees will have the chance to get to know the artists.

The live mural painting event will start on March. 2, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and continue March 3, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Beaumont Event Centre.

As well as live paintings there will be food

See **MURAL FEST**, page 3



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”

— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

NOTICE

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SB17 from page 1

Title IX Department, is allowed to have training for sexual and racial discrimination, which they are required by law to have.

“Except for those that are federal law, there still are a number of training and programs in the equal opportunity/employment opportunity context, where we have federal and state obligations to do certain training or have certain programs or policies or procedures,” she said. “This (law) is basically saying that institutions may not provide these things, unless they are required by federal and state law.”

Under SB17, Lamar University can no longer establish or maintain an institution which serves as a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Office.

“They also cannot hire or assign an employee, or contract with a third party to perform the duties of a DEI office,” Ardolino said. “(The school is) prohibited from compelling a diversity statement or giving preferential consideration. The legislature did not define what a diversity statement is, but our best interpretation that we have right now, is that it refers to a portion of an application for employment. That is a statement that addresses an individual’s experience with diversity or certain diversity challenges. SB17 says universities cannot require applicants to submit those statements, and if they do, they have to disregard them.”

The bill also has exemptions for some other university features, which include academic course instruction and academic research or creative work.

“Registered or recognized student organizations and programs that are better sponsored and directed by student organizations are exempt, (as are) guest speakers and per-

formers who are on short-term engagement,” Ardolino said. “The assumption is our policies, practices, programs and activities are designed to enhance student academic achievement or postgraduate outcomes, so long as they are implemented without reference to race, sex, color or ethnicity.

“So, your ‘First Gen’ programs, your programs for low-income students, your programs for students from regions of the country that are educationally underserved, things like that. They are all exempted because they are designed and implemented without regard to race or sex or color. Universities can still collect demographic data such as patient data, gender, that type of stuff about their students for purposes of research. (The bill also) does not touch on student recruitment or admissions efforts by the university.”

When asked about certain celebrations which are centered around diversity such as Black History Month and Women’s History Month, Ardolino said those count as exceptions as well.

“There are lots of gray areas and specific scenarios that are not addressed in Senate Bill 17,” she said. “But our best interpretation of it is that it does not generally prohibit celebrations or acknowledgments or recognitions, particularly if they’re driven by student organizations.

“I think so long as those programs are open to participation by anyone who wants to participate, the fact that they may have a focus on Black history, or some other cultural or racial aspect, doesn’t necessarily mean that they’re providing a preference or they’re exclusionary to anyone as far as we understand Senate Bill 17.”

LAUNDRY from page 1

Dorm residents can also sign up for the Speed Queen app that lets them know when their washing is finished.

“Last semester, there would be conflicts with residents leaving or forgetting about their laundry in the machines for a long time, and other residents would get frustrated waiting for them to get their clothes out,” Martinez said. “This semester, there’s an app that allows us to keep up with the machine’s timer, and it notifies us when the machines are available or done.”

BAND from page 1

“It was very different from the way it is now,” he said. “Some people accepted me, and some didn’t care for me, but I didn’t give in. I had to learn how to adapt in situations, but also not to lose myself in the process. There was one time where I was told I had to cut my hair, my clarinet instructor had to make arrangements so that I could get a haircut.”

Segregation was enforced back then, but society has improved over the past 60 years, Simon said, and looking to the future, he hopes things will improve at a faster rate. “I would hope to see things improve even more in the next 25 years or so,” he said. “Hopefully, things will be twice, if not three times, as better then. I hope to see some of that change.”

Simon offered a piece of advice for everyone. “Really get into what your passionate about,” he said. “Do whatever it is to the best of your ability. You can’t do anything without employing your full potential. If you do it the right way, you’ll find great success.”

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## MURAL FEST from page 1

trucks, kid zones, live music, and a vendor area to buy art-work.

This year, Mural Fest sees 14 artists return from last year, and will feature 18 local artists. Six cubes will be painted by muralists, and two additional cubes will be

available for attendees to paint on.

In addition, five murals spanning 8,000 square feet will be painted on the Giglio Distributing Co. warehouse located across from the Event Centre.

One of the murals was fea-

tured in the cover of Texas Highways magazine this month.

Juliana Davila, Digital Media Specialist for the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau, said she is ready for the event.

“Essentially, we’ll cele-

brate our local talent here within Beaumont and the areas, along with artists that we have invited from other parts of the U. S. as well as international artists,” she said. “So, it’s basically a huge celebration of art and our culture and our identity.”

Davila said she would like Beaumont to be known as an art city, where local artists could be celebrated, as well as welcoming people into the community to share their talent.

“Essentially, this is our opportunity to give Beaumont that kind of cultural identity of being able to be the kind of a place where public art is not only welcomed, but then also celebrated,” she said. “(We want) to show people that we have



“Scales of Justice” by Kimmie Flores and W3r3on3, outside of The Byrd Law Firm building in Downtown Beaumont.



“Grateful Beaumont” by Laced and Found, located on 2688 Calder Ave.

UP photo by Brian Quijada

local talent, as well as we welcome people into our community to share their ideas, to share their talent, to share their thoughts — just to remind people that Beaumont is beautiful and that it is a place that celebrates and welcomes all different kinds of people.”

## PHILLIPS from page 1

type. We wrote stories, and then sent them to The Beaumont Enterprise, because they didn’t bring a reporter to cover our sports teams.

“It gave me the broadest and best opportunity to look at many disciplines, be it politics, PR, journalism or business. It gave me all those platforms.”

Phillips graduated with his bachelor’s in December 1984, and has since lived and traveled around the country while working in the political field.

“My buddy and I, he worked for a member of Congress,” he said. “We wanted to look at ballot initiatives and we really lobbied for charter schools, opening the first charter school in New York State, pushing the charter school legislation ac-

ross the country. I’m an advocate of school choice.”

Phillips worked for President George Bush around the early ’90s in the Department of Energy and would travel frequently with the Secretary of Energy.

“I was at the White House quite a bit,” he said. “I was so low level, when I was sent over there to do something you just did your assignment and got out. It’s designed to be intimidating. You walk in and these two Marines are standing outside the door. It was intimidating, but I think it was awesome.”

Phillips worked at Empire State Development for more than 20 years, before eventually becoming senior vice

president of community development & diversity, equity and inclusion at U.S. News & World Report in April 2022.

“The political world is like (being) a candy junkie, a hamburger junkie, sports junkie, knitting junkie, running, whatever you are — politics is that addictive,” he said. “Being able to project how things are going to work for people, and being able to work where you believe in what you want to see accomplished is amazing stuff.”

Phillips grew up in a military family and spent a lot of his early life overseas.

“My father retired in El Paso, but I was born in Japan,” he said. “I lived on the East Coast, so in essence, I have more family on the East Coast

than anywhere else.”

Phillips has lived all around the country and frequently goes back and forth between states.

“I’ve been (traveling) for a very long time,” he said. “There are days, I think ‘I’ve had enough,’ and there are days when I don’t travel where I’m like, ‘I can’t wait to get on the road.’ Right now, I’m in the mood of, ‘I’m ready to go home.’ Traveling is literally two sets of everything. People don’t realize it can be laborious, but I love it.”

Phillips said his Lamar degree has opened up many opportunities.

“At the end of the day, it’s about access and opportunity, and how you make best use of

those based on the skills you have,” he said. “Like I said to students, there’s one thing you can do — ‘Do your homework.’ When I was at Lamar, we may have had eight lectures, maybe 12 a year from outside people. My daughter went to George Washington University where the communication department may have 12 in a semester. The point I’m making is how does the Lamar student keep up with or excel over GW students? Do your homework.

“(Lamar’s) a great place. It’s not for the person who wants to go to Harvard, it’s not for the multimillionaire snob. This is for the person who wants to hustle, grind and work and grow together. And that’s what I love about this place.”



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‘OPPIE’ TO BLOW UP OSCARS

Nolan biopic leads in competitive race

Aaron Saenz  
UP contributor

Films have a global cultural impact. The Academy Awards are scheduled for March 10, and this year’s nominees for the top prizes are truly global.

Although there are many prestigious awards, one that stands above the rest for prestige — the Oscars.

Last year, there are many amazing films vying for the big prize, ranging from the vibrantly pink world of “Barbie” to the rugged and depressing setting of “Killers of the Flower Moon,” there was a film for every movie lover.

The six major categories are Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Screenplay, either original or adapted.

The nominees for **BEST PICTURE** are “The Holdovers,” “American Fiction,” “The Zone of Interest,” “Barbie,” “Oppenheimer,” “Poor Things,” “Past Lives,” “Anatomy of a Fall,” “Maestro” and “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

There are great movies on this list with beautiful plots. Last summer’s “Barbenheimer” phenomenon is credited with saving the movie industry, with “Barbie” earning nearly \$1.5 billion and “Oppenheimer” nearly \$1 billion. “Barbie” is enormously creative, turning a movie about a plastic doll into a thoughtful examination of the patriarchy — it is also tremendous fun. On the opposite end of the blockbuster scale is “Past Lives.” While it only grossed \$24.5 million at the box office, it is a beautifully emotional examination of the possibilities of a modern, long-distance relationship that fully deserves to be on the list of nominees. But let’s be honest, “Oppenheimer” is taking the trophy home. The direction and cast is A-tier across the board. The special effects are amazing, is has a large cast that is managed perfectly. It is moviemaking with a capital M. This is a safe bet for Best Picture.

The **BEST DIRECTOR** category includes Justine Triet for “Anatomy of a Fall,” Martin Scorsese, for “Killers of the Flower Moon,” Yorgos Lanthimos for “Poor Things,” Christopher Nolan for “Oppenheimer,” and Jonathan Glazer for “The Zone of Interest.”

Scorsese is a legendary director and shows why with “Killers.” The organization of scene across the movie sometimes tells more about the story than the characters do. Despite being a four-hour movie, Scorsese keeps our attention grasped throughout. Challenging for this award, Nolan has composed a masterpiece. Nolan’s genius gives us the complete story through the black and white time jumps into the future. All of the build up to the bomb is in color. This beautiful direction should get Nolan the award, but Glazer should come away with the award. “The Zone of Interest” tells a tragic and depressing story about the Holocaust, and in less sure hands it would not have the impact it does. Watch out for this upset.

The nominees for **BEST ACTOR** are Paul Giamatti for “The Holdovers,” Bradley Cooper for “Maestro,” Colman Domingo for “Rustin,” Cillian Murphy for “Oppenheimer,” and Jeffery Wright for “American Fiction.”

Murphy is perfectly cast as the titular scientist. He looks the part, sounds how a scientist sounds, and we can feel his passion for discovering how to create the bomb as a scientific exercise. However, I have a feeling the Academy voters will give this award to Giamatti. He won a Golden Globes for best actor in a comedy (although Murphy won for drama), so it’s a coin toss. I think the academy thinks too highly of this movie — and Giamatti is a long-time favorite — for it not to win a

major award. Watch out for this shocker.

The nominees for **BEST ACTRESS** are Emma Stone for “Poor Things,” Lily Gladstone for “Flower Moon,” Annette Bening for “Nyad,” Carey Mulligan for “Maestro,” and Sandra Hüller for “Anatomy of a Fall.”

Hüller is also up for a supporting actress nod for the role in “The Zone of Interest,” but she is unlikely to win here. Gladstone was amazing in “Killers of the Flower Moon.” She interacts great with Leonardo DiCaprio and a win would be the first for a Native American woman. Unfortunately, Stone was even better. She played her role in “Poor Things,” as a sort of Steampunk Mrs. Frankenstein’s monster perfectly. It would not be a shock, nor undeserved, if Gladstone wins, but bet Stone.

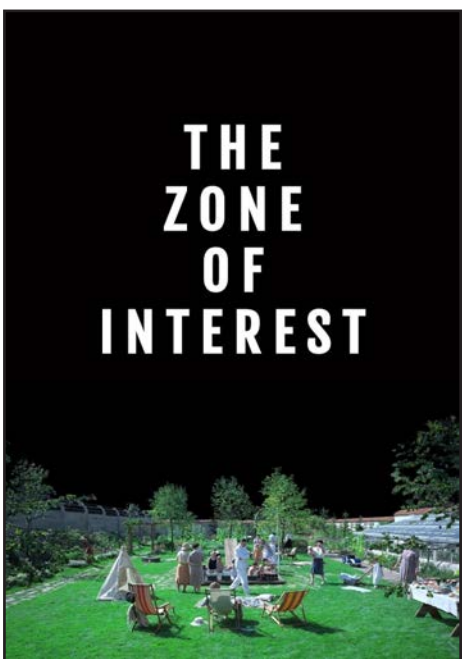
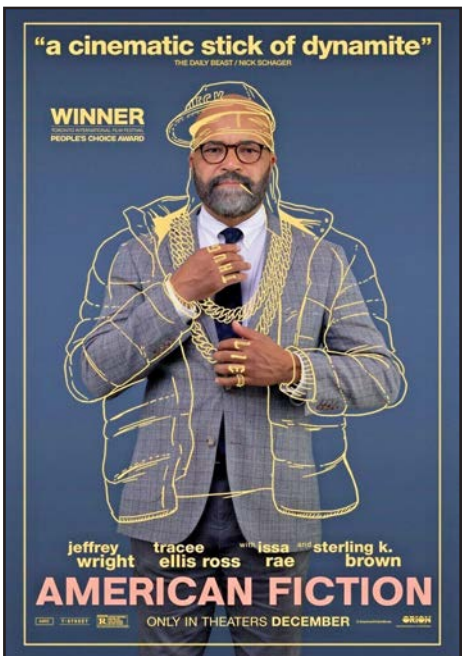
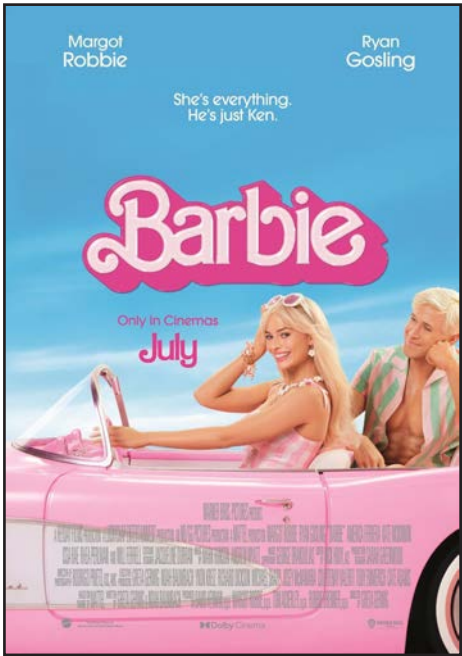
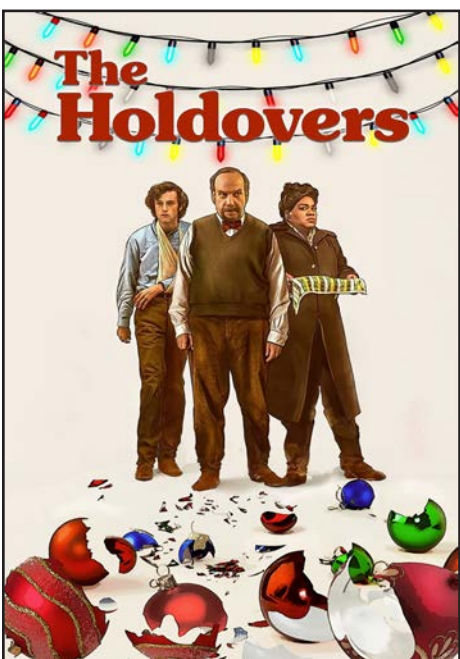
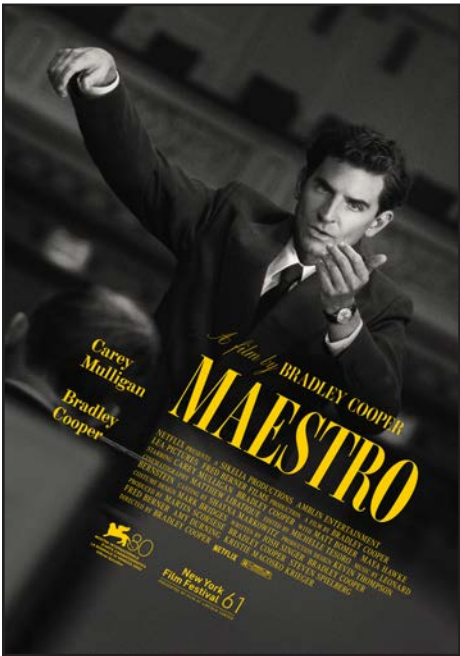
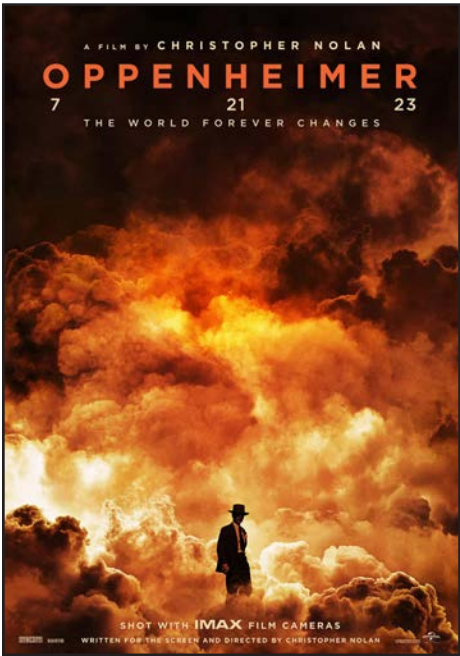
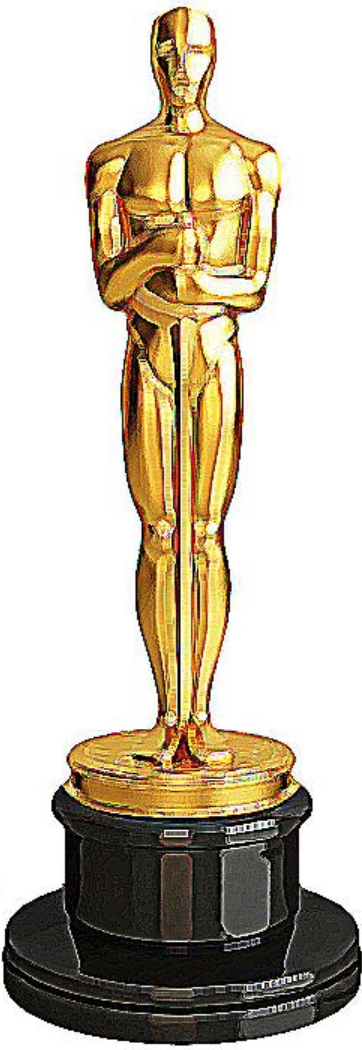
The movies nominated for **BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY** are “The Holdovers,” “May December,” “Past Lives,” “Anatomy of a Fall,” and “Maestro.”

If “Past Lives” is going to win anywhere, it is here. The way the two main characters interact with each other has so much chemistry. Celine Song’s script makes the characters relationship believable, despite the surreality of the story. Unfortunately, the academy could care less about my opinion. “The Holdovers” is well written and Oscar voters may feel Alexander Payne is due. It will end up winning this award.

The nominees for **BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY** are “American Fiction,” “The Zone of Interest,” “Barbie,” “Oppenheimer,” and “Poor Things.”

“Barbie” has a fantastic script. Ryan Gosling and Margot Robbie feed off each other and are great in this movie. Their interactions are one of the main reasons why this movie is thought of so highly. In any other year, the plastic doll would drive the Oscar home in her pink convertible, but this is the year of the bomb. “Oppenheimer” is too strong. Nolan’s screenplay is complex and riveting. “Oppenheimer” will easily win this award.

So that’s the top awards sewn up. Unless there are some surprises. So, grab your popcorn and settle in for the usual four-hour broadcast — or you could see “Killers of the Flower Moon” and still be back for the In Memoriam.





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# 'FISHING UP SUCCESS'

World champion carver Brannan displays work at AMSET

Carlos Vilorio  
UP staff photographer

Most people are familiar with the old saying, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." But only a few people take it as much to heart as Phil Brannan. When he found himself out of work, he discovered a new passion, a gift for fish carving. Originally starting as a hobby, Brannan began woodcarving



UP photo by Carlos Vilorio

Phil Brannan with his sculpture "Lunker Largemouth Bass 1997-2017." His work is on display at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas through March 17. His "Lionfish and Moray Eel 2019," below, left, won Best in World, Decorative Miniature Division at the Breakthrough World Fish Carving Championship. Brannan's attention to detail is evident in "Largemouth Bass and Frog 2021," below right.

in his mid-30s, teaching himself. He has been an avid fisherman all his life, and it wouldn't take long until he combined his love for fishing with woodcarving and start creating realistic sculptures. "It just came out of the sky, and I was so taken back by it," he said. "Sometimes a talent will lay dormant inside you. And you never know it's there until something in life sparks it. And when it sparks, there is nothing you can do to kill that fire. You're going to do it. That was 28 years ago, and I haven't had burnout." The Art Museum of Southeast Texas is hosting "Phil Brannan: Artistry in Wood" through March 17. His fish

carving skills were given by the good Lord, Brannan said, he didn't want to disappoint him. Brannan said it is therapeutic and is something he looks forward to doing every single day. "There's always a different pose," he said. "There's always something really new and exciting to keep it fresh for me. And I look for those things. And when I'm not carving, I'm thinking about carving. And when I'm not doing that I'm fishing." The Lumberton artist is competitive and set about being the best. Brannan began to compete regionally, winning multiple contests, before eventually competing at the

world carving championships. "I competed in the regionals, Houston, New Orleans," he said. "And I won Best-in-Show in all of them, and so I had to go somewhere where I can get beat, because that was the only place I could get better — if people beat me." If Brannan was beaten, he took his aggravation and used it productively instead of destructively, he said. He would tell himself, "They can't beat me," and kept driving for success. Now Brannan has multiple world championship ribbons, including Winner of Best in World, Decorative Miniature Division at the Breakthrough World Fish

Carving Championship. The Art Museum of Southeast Texas is located at 500 Main St. in downtown Beaumont. For more, visit [amset.org](http://amset.org).



# Legacy

The Art of Lowell Daunt Collins and Michael Roqué Collins

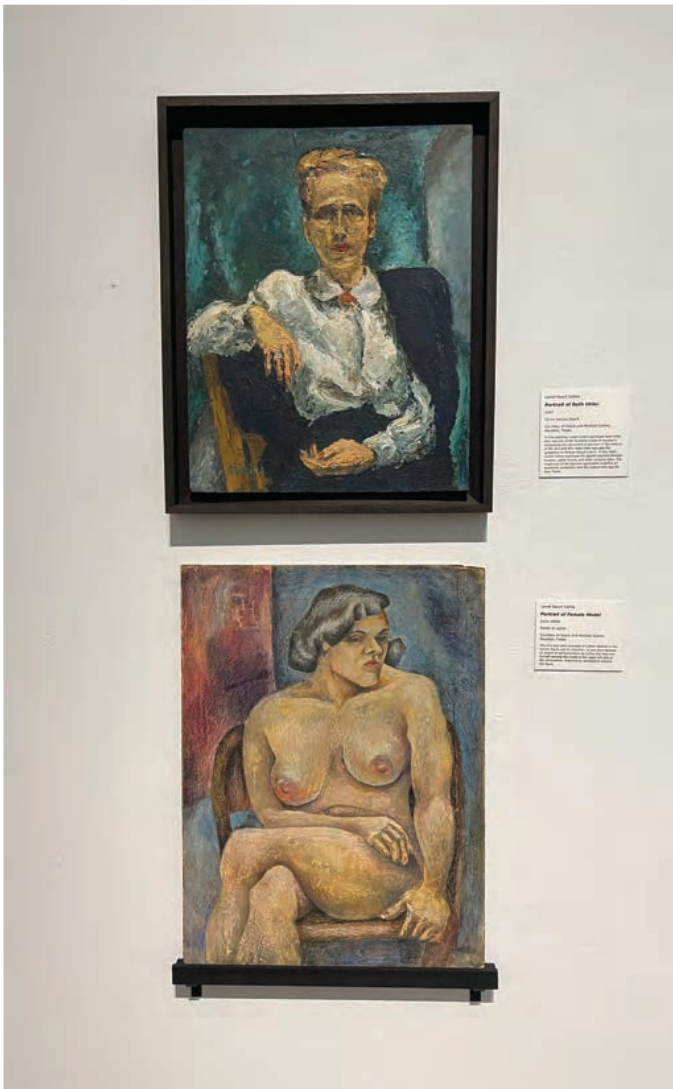


Photo: Terick Guye, Kyra Hall

An exhibition exploring and contrasting Texas based artists and their legacy in the art of the southwest

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# Cards run season record to 5-2

Press Release

SUGAR LAND, Texas – It was another quick start for the Lamar University baseball team as they scored four runs in the first inning to defeat UTSA, 5-3, Sunday, on the final day of the Sugar Land Classic.

The Cardinals (5-2), who have now scored seven runs in the first inning of their last two games, got 12 hits from seven different players, including multi-hit games from River Orsak (3-for-3, RBI, run), Zak Skinner (3-for-4) and Luke Bumpus (2-for-4, RBI).

Hunter Hesseltine got the start and gave the Red and White 5.2 innings allowing three earned runs on seven hits. He also struck out four Roadrunners with just one walk. He was relieved in the sixth inning by Kyle Moseley. The junior lefty went an 1.2 of scoreless baseball with a strikeout before handing things over to Andres Perez in the eighth. Perez needed just 27 pitches to clear an 1.2 with two punch outs, and a walk, for his first save of the season.

In an almost mirror image of Saturday's contest, the Cardinals jumped out to an early lead in the first — all of it coming with two outs in the inning. Brayden Evans and Orsak got things started with walks setting the stage for Ethan Ruiz. The senior doubled down the left field line scoring both runners.

Drake Varnado then followed suit with a double after falling behind in the count to score Ruiz. That hit forced a



Ethan Ruiz scores during the eighth inning of Saturday's 5-0 win over Stephen F. Austin in Sugar Land.

UP photos by Brian Quijada

pitching change but the Cardinals stayed on the attack. Lamar got singles from Luke Bumpus and Zak Skinner to close out inning with a four spot.

The Roadrunners answered with a run in their half of the second, but Lamar got the run right back in its half of the inning. Kanin Dodge led off the inning with a double to right center. It appeared Dodge might be stranded as UTSA got the next two batters out but Orsak took an 0-2 pitch right back up the middle to score Dodge.

UTSA got two runs back in the top of the fourth when Aidan Baumann took a 2-2 pitch over the left field wall trimming the deficit to 5-3, but that would be all of the scoring as the pitchers on both sides took over.

UTSA was sat down in three of the final five innings but got a one-out walk in the ninth that amounted to nothing.

The Cardinals return to action Tuesday when they travel to College Station, Texas to take on Texas A&M. The game against the Aggies has been moved to a 6 p.m. first pitch.



Brayden Evans gets a hit during Saturday's 5-0 win over Stephen F. Austin in Sugar Land.

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SOFTBALL

Cardinals sweep home doubleheader

In their first two games on their home diamond, Lamar University's softball team rattled off two wins in a Sunday doubleheader to push their current win streak to five. Trinity Brandon provided her second game-winning hit of the weekend with a two-run triple in Game 1 while all the bats were on display in Game 2.

Brandon went 3-for-3 in Game 1 to lead the team in hits, while Sherita Tucker, Jayne Sepulveda and Kalyn Xayaseng each tallied hits as well in the 3-2 win. After pitching a nine-inning complete game on Friday, Emma Wardlaw got back on the mound and picked up the win after six innings of work allowing two runs on eight hits with four strikeouts. Mitchell then picked up the save in the seventh allowing no hit with two strikeouts.

Eight of the nine starters recorded hits in LU's 11-0 Game 2 win with four players recording two including Tucker, Sepulveda (RBI), Brandon (RBI) and Raigan Brannon (4 RBI). Cameron Niedenthal (2), Emilee LaRue and Aubrey Brown each added RBI as well. Mitchell picked up where she left off in Game 1 with four scoreless innings allowing just two hits and a walk with three strikeouts. Sabrina Jolin finished things off with a hitless fifth inning.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

LU beat Southern Miss.

The Lady Cardinals defeated Southern Mississippi, 4-0, Sunday in Hattiesburg to improve to 6-3 (.667) overall and 2-0 to start their road trip.

The match started quick with an emotional doubles competition on all three courts. After Southern Miss. grabbed the first match of the day, the team of Saloni Tamang and Natalia Turczuk battled back to even things up with a victory on court No. 2. The Lamar duo ousted Southern Miss.' Hannah Chambers and Sydney Smyczynski, 7-5.

The victory placed all the focus on freshman Marika Mueller and senior Jayci Wong at line 3. Court three was a back-and-forth affair that went to a tiebreak before being decided. In the end Mueller and Wong defeated USM's Angelina Blinova and Malannia Vashkevich, 7-6 (7-2).

In singles, The Cardinals took first-set leads on all six courts and were aided by an injury to Zenn Lim giving sophomore Megan Do an early victory — as Lamar took a 2-0 lead.

The Cardinals didn't have to wait long to close out the match getting straight-set wins from Turczuk and Tamang at Nos. 5 and 6 singles, respectively, for the deciding points. Once Lamar scored the fourth point, the remaining matches were halted.

The Cardinals continue their road trip Saturday when they travel to Thibodaux, La. to open Southland Conference play against Nicholls. The match against the Colonels will begin at 1 p.m.

MEN'S TENNIS

Cardinals fall at Arkansas

Lamar University went toe-to-toe against the nation's 52nd-ranked team in the University of Arkansas. Saturday, but came up short, 4-0.

The Razorbacks grabbed the doubles point with victories at Nos. 1 and 3 doubles to take the early 1-0 lead. Arkansas was able to maintain the momentum into singles picking a straight-sets victory at No. 4 singles.

Trailing 2-0, Joan Crespo was looking to get the Cardinals on the scoreboard at the No. 5 position with an opening-set victory but Arkansas' Foster Rogers managed to even things up in the second. Unfortunately, the Razorbacks were able to get wins at Nos. 3 and 1 singles, respectively, to close out the match.

The Cardinals return home Friday to host Abilene Christian beginning at 11 a.m. at the Thompson Family Tennis Center.



Lamar guard Jacei Denley drives against Texas A&M Corpus Christi, in the Neches Arena at the Montagne Center, Feb. 24. UP photos by Carlos Viloria

Lady Cards stay top of Southland

**Press Release**

Anytime Lamar University's women's basketball team takes on Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, the expectations are always an early Cardinals runaway only for the Islanders to make the game interesting in the fourth quarter. While that would be the case once again, the Cardinals had built a big lead and limited AMCC down the stretch to pull off a 68-63 win at the Neches Arena on Saturday. This extends LU (20-5, 14-1) to a 10-game winning streak for the first time since the 2018-19 season and also has them still in first place of the Southland Conference standings.

LU honored four seniors on

this day and three of them (Victoria Mason, Sabria Dean, and NJ Weems) were announced in the starling lineup. Dean finished with 17 points on five field goals with three from behind the arc while Weems tallied nine points and grabbed five rebounds. Leading the Cardinals overall was Akasha Davis, who possessed her 14th double-double with 18 points and 17 rebounds. While AMCC outshot LU from the field (40.3%-39.1%), Big Red connected on six of the games' nine three-pointers. They also edged out the Islanders 23-20 in both points off turnovers and bench points.

But early on, it was the Islanders that got off to a solid start running ahead 7-2. Unfazed by the slow start, the Cardinals pecked back into the game and seized their first lead with a 9-2 run of their own. AMCC retook the lead at 14-13, but watched as Brooklyn Mitchell came off the bench and knocked down two threes to spark a run of eight unanswered points giving LU a 21-14 lead after one.

There was good and bad news for the Islanders in the second quarter. The good news was that they decided to give LU a sneak preview of how they surge back by opening things on a 9-1 run to grab the 23-22 lead. The bad news was that they would be the victim of the 18th quarter this season in which LU allowed

single digit points. Because of this, Big Red overtook AMCC for good with 14 straight points including a run of eight unanswered from Davis herself to finish the half with 12 points. Going into the locker room, the Cardinals had a lead of 36-23.

Davis began the second half with six more points while Weems tallied a lay-up to give LU their largest lead at 44-25. But any thoughts of the Cardinals running away were put on hold as the Islanders responded on a 9-2 surge. While Dean's three-pointer at the 3:48 mark stretched LU's lead to 49-34, it was AMCC that closed the quarter with a 4-2 run. LU managed to fire up 42.8% from the field in the third.

Up 51-38 going into the fourth quarter, the Cardinals were anticipating another Islander surge. However, they began by stretching their lead to 59-42, which included threes from Dean and Malay McQueen. The Cardinals' defense would maintain this lead with 1:48 left to go. That was when the Islanders began their comeback effort. Fortunately for LU, the comeback came too late as all the Islanders could do was make the final 68-63 in LU's favor.

With three games left in the regular season, the Cardinals will head up to Commerce to take on the Lions this Thursday night at 6:30 p.m.



Taliah Hill lays up the ball against TAMU-CC, in the Neches Arena at the Montagne Center, Feb. 24.

Cardinals drop battle of second-place teams

A slow start for Lamar University combined with a hot shooting performance from Texas A&M-Corpus Christi put an end to the Cardinals season-long conference home winning streak. The Islanders defeated Lamar, 75-61, Saturday at the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center.

The loss, just Lamar's second at home this season and its first in Southland Conference play, dropped the Cardinals to 15-12 (.556) overall and 9-5 (.643) in league games.

The Cardinals never found their rhythm Saturday finishing the night shooting 20-of-57 (.351) from the field and only 2-of-17 (.118) from three-point range. LU also



**UP photo by Carlos Viloria**

Terry Anderson drives past two TAMU-CC defenders, Saturday.

struggled from the free throw line converting just 19-of-31 (.613) attempts.

Junior Jakevion Buckley came off the bench to lead Lamar with 15 points and was one of three Cardinals in dou-

ble figures. He was joined in double figures by 12 points each from junior Terry Anderson and senior Chris Pryor.

The Islanders started hot and never cooled off shooting

50 percent for the game, including a 5-of-10 (.500) effort from long range. A&M-Corpus Christi converted 16-of-20 (.800) attempts at the free throw line.

The Islanders also held an advantage on the glass pulling down 42 rebounds to LU's 31. Big Red turned A&M-Corpus Christi over five more times, 16-11, and held a 20-13 advantage in points off turnovers.

Lamar must have a short-term memory and put this game in the rearview mirror as the annual Battle of the Border, Part II is next up on the docket. The Cardinals will host McNeese Monday at 7 p.m. from the Neches Arena. The game will be broadcast on Newstalk 560 KLVI and streamed live on ESPN+





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