What an Occasion!

The purpose of this newsletter is to give readers the opportunity to experience the celebration of the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences 50th Anniversary!

This newsletter includes the history of RPTS, pictures from the celebratory weekend, and a “thank you” to those who made it all possible!

Thank you for joining RPTS in keeping the spirit, advancing the vision and living the adventure!

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While the Department began its official existence in the Spring semester of 1966, planning for its development began several years earlier when individuals in the College of Agriculture decided that a natural-resource based recreation program would be an excellent complement to existing programs. There was a proposal made as early as 1938 “to establish a course in park appreciation, park administration…”

Under the leadership of Dr. R.C. Potts, Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture, a curriculum was approved through the University and the Texas State Coordinating Board. An announcement was made in the spring of 1965 that the new curriculum in outdoor recreation would now be offered through Texas A&M University. Thus, the Department of Recreation and Parks was created.

The announcement about the new curriculum was circulated primarily through rural news outlets, radio announcements and word-of-mouth. Due to this publicity, one graduate student was admitted in the fall of 1965. Since there was no faculty or staff, the student was placed in an adjacent department.

During the Fall semester, Dr. Leslie M. Reid, a faculty member at Michigan State, was brought in to interview for the position as Department Head. Dr. Reid was impressed with the potential he saw at Texas A&M and recalls his meeting with then President, Earl Rudder. After this meeting, Dr. Reid stated, “That single conversation changed me from a mildly-interested candidate into the person who left the campus committed to leaving Michigan State to join President Rudder at Texas A&M.”
1966-1967: Plant Sciences Building

1967-1968: Herman Heep Building

1968-1973: Horse Barn

1973-1983: Goodwin Hall (Demolished)

1983-2011: Francis Hall

2011-Present: Agriculture & Life Sciences Building
Amanda Pape (Class of 1978): I was the reporter-historian for the RPTS Club (then just RP) in 1976-77, the president in 1977-78, and I won the Silver Chaparral Award in December 1978. I edited the club newsletter, “Park It Here,” 1975-1978, and also worked on the department’s newsletter, contributing articles and photographs.

Debbie Janysek (Class of 1979): One of the most challenging classes was Dr. Crompton’s RP 402, a very involved class where we had to apply many of the skills and ideas we had examined to create a virtual recreation and parks department. When it came time to interview for jobs in the real world, referring to skills used in Dr. Crompton’s class helped me land my first job!

Eva Claire Watson (Class of 2016): One could say I stumbled into the RPTS major, and they would be correct! I began studying in the department in the Spring of 2014. Adapting to the RPTS department was a challenge at first, but after two years in this major, I cannot imagine myself anywhere else. I am extremely appreciative to all the RPTS faculty and students who have made this major feel like home.

Lester Coalson (Class of 1970): My 38-year career as a Department of Defense civilian employee employed in the morale, welfare, recreation and services career field would not have happened without my degrees from Texas A&M. After graduating with a B.S. degree in R&P in 1970, I served three years in the U.S. Army, half of which as chief of recreation programs on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal Zone. The education and experiences I received in the Department of Recreation and Parks at Texas A&M is the basis for my career.

Ronald Pivonka (Class of 1970): I simply wanted to share a photo taken in the spring of 1970 of the RPTS graduates on the old bleachers of Kyle Field before walking across the stage to receive our degrees.

Top Row (L to R) – Robert Mason, Mike Davis, Greg Roland and Doug Schoppe. Bottom Row (L to R) – Bill Willings, Danny Muzyka, Bob Cain, Ed Hill and Ronald Pivonka

Share Your Story!
Russ Tillman (Class of 1978): I seemed to flounder through Texas A&M during my first two and a half years with no direction, vision or passion. I was then that a classmate suggested I take Dr. Frank W. Suggitt's “Resource Development” course in the RPTS Department. I very soon discovered Frank had the unique ability to teach his students how to think and was the master of using motivation to accomplish tasks. To this day, the only course notes that I still keep (and are still useful) are from that recreation resource development class!

Harry Yates (Class of 1969): My career goal was to work as a Park Ranger at the Grand Canyon National Park, which I had hiked many times during my youth. After emigrating to Canada, I acquired citizenship in 1976 and had my American citizenship restored in 1991. I retired from my position as an Industrial Relations Supervisor for Canadian Forest Products in 2012 at the age of 65 and continue to live in Canada.

Larry Pressler (Class of 1972): I served 32 years as Director of the McAllen Parks and Recreation Department before retiring in 2016. I arrived to McAllen following graduation from Texas A&M University where I began as the City’s Superintendent of Recreation and Aquatics before being promoted to Director in 1977.

Wilfred Korth (Class of 1979): In 1981 we took a picture in front of the park sign on the day Coleto Creek opened. Initially, the park was staffed with all Aggies and graduates of Recreation and Parks Department. A following picture was taken in 2015 with 5 original staff members.

Teri Harper (Class of 1993): It was the Spring of 1993 and I was finishing up my masters under Dr. Crompton’s direction and also the TA for his 403 course. One of the very talented undergraduate students created the design for t-shirts. I think it really captures the essence of 403!
EVENT ITINERARY

**Thursday, April 21, 2016**

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>5:30pm to 6:15pm</td>
<td>Pre-Muster Gathering (Agriculture &amp; Life Sciences Building, 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Floor)</td>
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<td>7:00pm to 9:00pm</td>
<td>Muster (Reed Arena)</td>
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**Friday, April 22, 2016**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:30am to 8:30am</td>
<td>Breakfast (AgriLife Center)</td>
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<td>9:00am to 11:00am</td>
<td>Campus Walking Tour&lt;br&gt; Including: Previous RPTS homes with Crompton “Adhocs” in Francis Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30pm to 1:00pm</td>
<td>Lunch (Memorial Student Center Courtyard)</td>
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<td>1:15pm to 2:30pm</td>
<td>Kyle Field Tour</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00pm to 4:00pm</td>
<td>Quiz Bowl (AgriLife Center)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00pm to 7:00pm</td>
<td>Mocktail Hour (Thomas G. Hildebrand Equine Center)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary Banquet (Thomas G. Hildebrand Equine Center)</td>
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**Saturday, April 23, 2016**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Explore Bryan/College Station on your own</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Suggested Activities will be provided</td>
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Softly call the Muster, let comrade answer 'Here'...
Campus Walking Tour

Quiz Bowl
The Banquet

What a Night!
Ceremony and Awards

Dr. Muzzo Uysal

Ms. Sara Hensley

Mr. Jay Daniel
Awards, Honors & Thanks!

RPTS Undergraduate Award Winners

RPTS Graduate Award Winners

Rho Phi Lambda Inductees

A special thanks to Debe Shafer, Debbie Barnes, Melyssa-Anne Stricklin and all RPTS students who helped make the 50th Anniversary Celebration a success!

RPTS Department Heads, past and present!
Thank You Sponsors!

A very special thank you to our sponsors for helping the Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences Department in keeping the spirit, advancing the vision, and living the adventure! We couldn’t have done it without you!

**Platinum:**
- Dr. Lou Hodges
- Oldham Goodwin Group
- SeaWorld: San Antonio
- Hilton: College Station
- Texas A&M: AGLS

**Gold:**
- Dr. Peter Witt
- Joyce Nies
- Russell K. Tillman
- Party Time Rentals

**Silver:**
- Dr. Scott & Debe Shafer
- Dr. David & Susan Scott
- Dr. Jin-Hyung Lee
- Dr. Young A. Park
- RPTS REPS

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**Contact Us**

Agriculture and Life Sciences Building
600 John Kimbrough Blvd
MS-2261
College Station, TX 77843-226

Front desk: 979-845-5411