

MARCH 2026

# ARLINGTON Today

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## Focus on Women In Business



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Dalworthington Gardens

Denise Holmes  
SFC LLP

Valerie Landry  
The Sanford House

Joni Wilson  
Susser Bank

Suzanne Taylor  
Graham Associates  
Women's Alliance  
Rising Star Award Winner

Julie Short  
Author

Reba Blevens  
Media Matrix

Becky Gerro  
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# TOURISM SPOTLIGHT

A Community Report from  
THE ARLINGTON CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



## Please Help Us Bring More Visitors to Arlington

By Brent DeRaad, President & CEO  
Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau

The Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(6) organization that is funded partly by Arlington hotel occupancy tax revenue. The ACVB's other major funding source is revenue from the Arlington Tourism Public Improvement District (ATPID), consisting of Arlington's 50+ hotels with 75 or more guest rooms.

Both the hotel occupancy tax and ATPID assessment are tied to hotel stays in Arlington and are paid primarily by visitors. The ACVB receives no money from Arlington's General Fund.

The ACVB exists to maximize the number of visitors to Arlington, along with the money they spend in our city. The ACVB:

- markets Arlington's visitor assets to potential visitors throughout the U.S.
- partners with Loews Hotels & Co. to book meetings into the Arlington Convention Center and with individual Arlington hotels to secure meetings at those properties.
- works with sports event operators, via its Arlington Sports Commission, and with the Dallas Cowboys, Texas Rangers, City of Arlington, University of Texas Arlington, Arlington Baptist University and Arlington Independent School District to book events into Arlington venues.
- aids Arlington's tourism industry via the Travel & Sports Legacy Foundation (TSLF), the ACVB's 501(c)(3), charitable arm. TSLF provides job training, scholarships, mentoring and internship placement assistance for underserved youth and adults interested in careers in travel and tourism and sports management.

Roughly 16.3 million people visited Arlington last year and they spent \$3.1 billion. Tens of millions of tax dollars were generated as part of these expenditures, which benefits all of us who live in Arlington. Additionally, 14,000 are employed in Arlington's tourism industry. We invite you to help us grow these impacts by being an advocate for Arlington tourism.

Simple steps you can take include:

- Direct visiting friends and family to [Arlington.org](http://Arlington.org), the ACVB's website. The website contains helpful information and links about upcoming events, along with Arlington hotels, restaurants, attractions and more. You can also access our digital visitor guide via [Arlington.org](http://Arlington.org).
- Suggest to friends and family that they will be more comfortable staying in a beautiful Arlington hotel ([Arlington.org](http://Arlington.org)), than at your house!
- Follow us on social media and like/share posts that resonate with you. That lets your network know about big events and happenings in Arlington.

📷 ACVB Instagram:

[@visit\\_arlington](https://www.instagram.com/visit_arlington)

📘 ACVB Facebook:

[@visitarlingtontexas](https://www.facebook.com/visitarlingtontexas)

📷 Arlington Sports Commission Instagram:

[@arlingtontx\\_sports](https://www.instagram.com/arlingtontx_sports)

We all know Arlington is a great place to live. We hope you will remind your family and friends that our city is a great place to visit, as well.

To learn more about the Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau, visit [Arlington.org](http://Arlington.org)

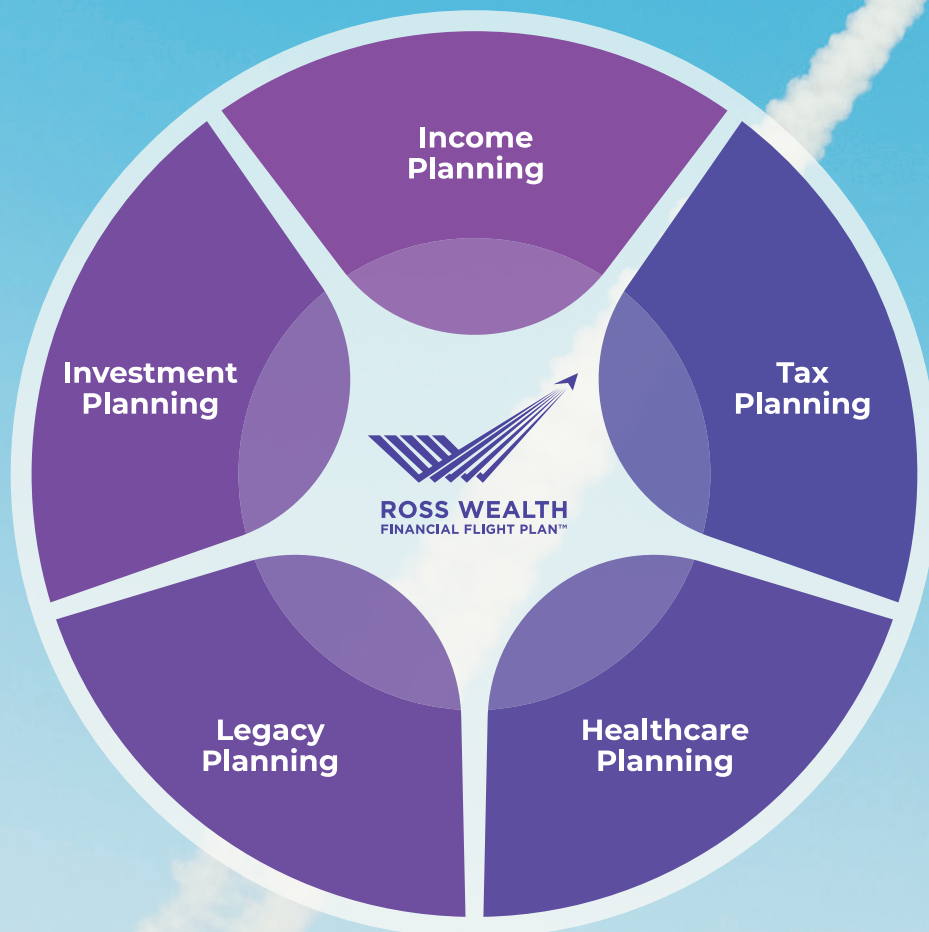
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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
AT ARLINGTON

# SUMMER FUN AT UTA

**FROM BUILDING ROBOTS TO DESIGNING THEME PARKS TO LEARNING ABOUT VOLCANOS**, UTA summer camps are designed to inspire and engage kids and teens. Programs in science, technology, engineering, math, college preparation, sports, art, and music are open to students in grades 1-12 all summer long. Camps come in a variety of lengths, from short workshops to multiple weeks, and are held on the Arlington UTA campus and in Aledo.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE

# FUN WAITING THIS SUMMER!



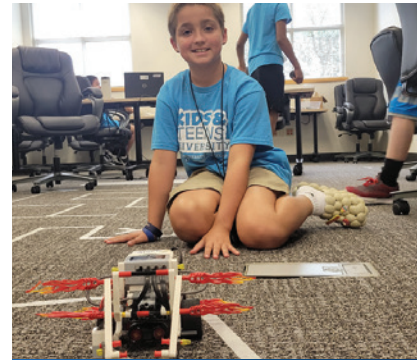
**Astronaut Training Camp**

Campers will build and test rockets, practice space-inspired challenges, and explore the science of planets, gravity, and space travel. Along the way, they'll uncover what it takes to live and work in space while sparking their curiosity about the universe.



**Become a Youtuber**

This camp is the perfect starting point for future YouTubers. They'll learn everything they need to know, from setting up a YouTube account and customizing their channel to finding their content niche and marketing their videos.



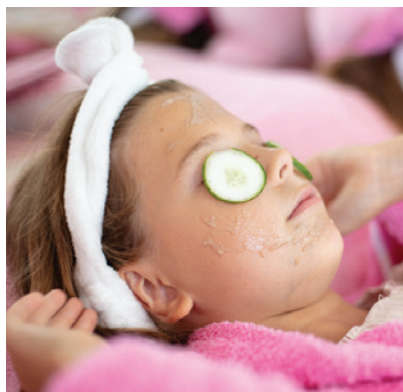
**Lego Robotics Mini Challenges**

Get ready for a week of building, coding, and creative problem-solving in the Lego Spike Builders Challenge! Campers will construct amazing creations and bring them to life using basic coding skills.



**Volcanoes and Explosions**

Campers will build their very own volcano from scratch, learning about the structure and function of real-world volcanoes. Then, they'll explore chemical reactions in exciting experiments that demonstrate the science behind volcanic eruptions and other explosive reactions.



**DIY Beauty Lab**

In this hands-on camp, young beauty enthusiasts will dive into the world of skincare and cosmetics by creating their own products from scratch! From mixing colorful lip balms to crafting personalized lotions and face masks, campers will explore fun, kid-friendly ingredients and learn the science behind self-care.



**D&D: Adventures on the Astral Sea**

Set sail on an interstellar journey at our Dungeons & Dragons Camp! Participants will learn the basics of gameplay and storytelling as they embark on thrilling quests across the Astral Sea, encountering dragons, wizards, and mythical creatures.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND THE FULL LIST AND REGISTRATION DETAILS OR VISIT [UTA.EDU/SUMMERCAMPS](http://UTA.EDU/SUMMERCAMPS).



# CONTENTS

March 2026 • Volume 13 • Issue 3

## FEATURES

ON THE COVER



**22**

### Women in Business

Celebrate the incredible women shaping our community through leadership, innovation, and hard work.



**42**

### Celebrating 150 Years

Sesquicentennial celebrations begin with a tree planting initiative.

**70**

### All in the Family

A secret restoration gift, for Woody and Marsha Davis, turns a golden anniversary into the surprise of a lifetime.



**44**

### Edward Rickenbacker

Before he became the legendary “Ace of Aces” in the skies, his journey to greatness began on the ground.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Starting Line** 10

**Itinerary** 12

**This 'n' Data** 16, 18

**Around Town** 20

**Downtown Arlington** 36

**Scene** 38, 46, 60, 65

**Speaking of Sports** 58

**Bulletin Board** 68

**Keen Cuisine** 72

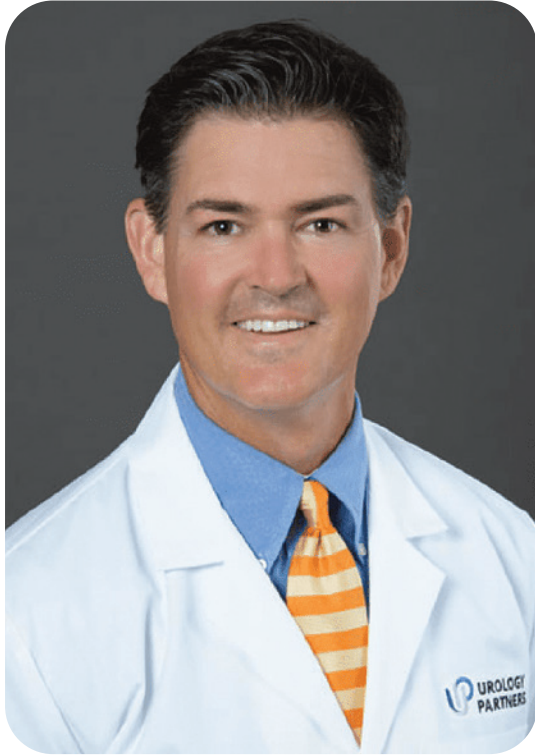
**Finish Line** 74

Cover photo by Ryan M. Brown Photography



# The Modern Robotic Prostatectomy

By Justin Lee, M.D. (Urologic Surgeon – Urology Partners of North Texas)



When men are diagnosed with prostate cancer, they rarely begin by asking about statistics. They ask something much more personal: What will my life look like after this?

For many men with localized disease, a robotic radical prostatectomy remains one of the most definitive surgical options for eliminating cancer. At USMD Hospital at Arlington, success is measured not only by pathology reports, but by a man's ability to return to the life he values.

Using the da Vinci® surgical system, the surgeon operates with high-definition 3D magnification and wristed precision in a space measured in millimeters. The prostate sits deep in the pelvis, immediately next to the nerves responsible for erections and the muscles that control urinary continence. In prostate cancer surgery, those millimeters determine long-term outcomes.

## The Catheter-Less Experience: How much will this disrupt my life?

Most patients walk on the day of surgery and head home within 24 hours.

Traditionally, recovery included a Foley catheter running through the urethra, often the most uncomfortable part of the process. To minimize that discomfort, we frequently use a suprapubic tube, a small drainage tube placed through a tiny incision in the lower abdomen directly into the bladder.

This approach improves early comfort and allows us to test bladder function naturally. If a patient voids well, the tube can be easily removed in the office. It is a small technical decision that meaningfully improves early recovery.

## Dryness and Dignity: When can I leave the house with confidence?

Temporary leakage is common early after surgery. Many men do not require pads long term, though some may wear a light "safety pad" initially, particularly with coughing or sneezing, as control improves.

With careful reconstruction of the urinary sphincter, long-term control rates are excellent. In our experience, fewer than 10% of men require pads 12 to 18 months after surgery, and most see steady, meaningful improvement over time.

Continence recovery is gradual, and it continues to improve with healing.

## The Intimacy Question: Protecting what matters

This is often the hardest question to ask, but it is the most important.

The nerves responsible for erections wrap around the prostate like a delicate spiderweb. Preserving them requires balance.

I describe it like peeling layers off an onion: gently separating the prostate while leaving the nerve network intact. At the same time, we cannot come too close if the cancer is nearby. Cancer control always comes first.

Age, baseline function, and tumor location influence recovery. When nerve-sparing surgery is oncologically safe, many men regain meaningful erectile function. Recovery takes time and patience, but modern robotic techniques have substantially improved outcomes.

## Does experience really make a difference?

Yes. The data consistently show that higher-volume surgeons and hospitals have lower complication rates and better functional recovery.

Our team at Urology Partners of North Texas has been performing robotic surgeries since 2002. At USMD Hospital at Arlington, more than 20,000 robotic procedures have been performed across multiple specialties, with our prostate cancer surgeons playing a major role in that experience.

When a surgeon has navigated thousands of cases over more than two decades, refinements in technique accumulate. In prostate cancer surgery, experience translates directly into patient outcomes.

## Is surgery my only option?

No. Prostate cancer treatment is individualized.

Depending on the personality of the tumor, options may include active surveillance, radiation therapy, or focal treatments such as NanoKnife® therapy, which we will explore in our next segment.

The goal is not simply to remove the prostate. It is to preserve the life that surrounds it.

Because treating prostate cancer is about more than survival, it is about protecting the man behind the diagnosis.

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**FROM THE PUBLISHER**

JUDY M.  
**RUPAY**

March has sprung, bringing the official start of spring on the 20th, brighter days with Daylight Savings Time in full swing, and Easter just around the corner. St. Patrick's Day sparks plenty of green-clad fun, and on March 15, the Java House Grand Prix of Arlington roars into town, transforming the streets of the Entertainment District into a high-speed racing adventure. As warmer breezes arrive and flowers begin to bloom, March invites us to dive into the energy of the season.

Our annual Women in Business section spans 13 pages this month and celebrates the remarkable women shaping our community through leadership, innovation, and determination. Their vision strengthens local businesses, inspires the next generation, and fuels our economy. The section kicks off with this year's Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce Women's Alliance award winners, Suzanne Taylor and Becky Gerro.

What happens when a downtown decides to turn on the lights, open the doors, and let the arts lead? First Thursdays has become Arlington's monthly moment of connection — where music spills onto sidewalks, strangers become neighbors, and familiar streets feel new again. In Garret Martin's column, discover how a simple idea grew into a cultural movement energizing Downtown Arlington, and why its impact continues to build.

What sparked a teenager's lifelong passion for speed and flight? For Edward Rickenbacker, it was one unforgettable ride in an early automobile. Turn to page 44 to follow his journey from Columbus mechanic and race car daredevil to World War I's Ace of Aces—and beyond.

In Texas, the new year doesn't start on January 1 — it kicks off when the NFL calendar flips in March. As Cowboys fans brace for another offseason of big promises and bigger headlines, John Rhadigan takes a clear-eyed look at cap space, defensive changes, and Jerry Jones' vow to "bust the budget." Don't believe the hype — but maybe don't give up on hope just yet.

What began as a shared love of cars became the surprise of a lifetime when a son-in-law set out to restore his father-in-law's ultimate dream — a rare 1956 Buick Roadmaster convertible. In a story fueled by family, nostalgia, and craftsmanship, one unforgettable anniversary gift proves this is more than a car story — it's a love story.

Richard Greene's Finish Line takes readers back to where Arlington's story truly began — from a dusty 1876 train stop to mineral wells, the Interurban, gambling lore, and the roots of Six Flags. As the city marks its 150th anniversary, our former mayor joins historian O.K. Carter to revisit the moments that shaped Arlington into the community we know today.

There's even more waiting for you in this month's issue, and we're grateful to share it with you. From uplifting community stories to can't-miss local events, our team—along with our valued advertisers—works each month to reflect the spirit of Arlington and beyond. Thank you for being part of our community of readers. We appreciate your support and look forward to bringing you even more next month.

*Judy Rupay*

[judy@arlingtontoday.com](mailto:judy@arlingtontoday.com)

# Celebrating Women Owned Business



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We're proud to celebrate Erin Bergin on the exciting milestone of purchasing her own building right here in Pantego for her real estate brokerage, Collective Living Co. Pantego proudly celebrates the incredible women-owned businesses that bring heart, creativity, and community to our town. From photographers and real estate professionals to restaurants, boutiques, yoga studios, and so much more- these businesses don't just open doors; they build connections, support local families, and make Pantego a vibrant place to live and work. If you're a woman-owned business looking for a welcoming community to grow in, we'd love to host you right here in Pantego. **For more information about available commercial spaces, please contact Cathy Allen at [callen@shoppantego.com](mailto:callen@shoppantego.com)**

## We'd love to host your business in Pantego



Larissa Peterson, The Runner



Cindy Newton, CP Fitness



Bobbie Jo Majors, Studi013 Photography



Stacey Brown, THE STUDIO | yoga



Arshula, Main Event Boutique



Kim & Mary, Twisted Chicks/Anything Goes



The park has reopened after its winter break and will operate 18 days in March, including daily openings March 12-22 for spring break fun. Daily summer hours begin on Friday, May 21.

Plus, get ready for the game-changer: Tormenta Rampaging Run—the world’s tallest, fastest, longest, and first-and-only giga dive coaster—debuts late May or early June, shattering six world records!



**12th Annual South Street Art Festival**

The longest running and only fine art festival in the Downtown Cultural Arts District of Arlington.

**April 3-5**  
300-600 Block E. South Street  
Downtown Arlington



**Neighborhood Nights at Restaurant506**

Enjoy a specially curated three-course dinner featuring seasonal dishes in the warm atmosphere of The Sanford House.

Perfect for date night, dinner with friends, or turning an ordinary evening into something special.

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Reservations at [thesanfordhouse.com/restaurant506/neighborhood-nights](http://thesanfordhouse.com/restaurant506/neighborhood-nights)



**Sanford Spotlight: Shaken Not Stirred (Bond Tribute)**

Enjoy dinner in the restaurant and bar beforehand or selections from the Spotlight Courtyard Menu are available during the show. Open seating.

**March 27 • 7-9pm**  
506 N. Center St.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM Arlington Music Hall**

**The King and Cash: A Tribute to Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash**

Tribute artists honor the icons  
**March 14 • 7:30pm**

**A.J. Croce Presents: Croce Plays Croce**

Honoring the Legendary Jim Croce  
**March 20 • 7:30pm**



**John Waite**

Iconic rock anthems  
**March 26 • 7:30pm**



**Pure Prairie League**

Classic country-rock hits  
**March 27 • 8pm**



**Gregorian: Pure Chants**

World-renowned vocal phenomenon  
**April 3 • 7:30pm**

**4/8 – Air Supply**

**4/10 – The Kenny Rogers Band**



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**March 21**



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# ARLINGTON ISD BOND 2026

Arlington ISD conducted a comprehensive, independent third-party review of its facilities and infrastructure to identify projects for consideration in the bond proposal. This process included evaluating the Facility Condition Index and capacity of all existing schools, as well as identifying potential improvements across district departments.

## WHAT'S PROPOSED

### PROPOSITION A - \$438,755,000

- Replacement of South Davis Elementary
- Replacement of an additional elementary campus
- Modernization and renovations to schools
- Facility for districtwide 18 PLUSS Special Education program
- Safety and security upgrades
- 45 new school buses
- Capital improvements
- Academic equipment and program improvements, including Fine Arts and Special Education
- ADA compliance and life-safety improvements
- Cybersecurity modernization

### PROPOSITION B - \$30,955,000

- Instructional student technology devices
- Infrastructure technology devices
- Staff technology devices

### PROPOSITION C - \$31,565,000

- Install synthetic turf at 6 high school class fields (baseball/softball)
- Replace and upgrade athletic equipment
- Add athletic storage facilities

**EARLY VOTING: APRIL 20 - 28**  
**ELECTION DAY: SATURDAY, MAY 2**

**WWW.AISD.NET/BOND2026**



## TAX RATE IMPACT

Based on current financial projections and existing debt obligations, the proposed bond projects can be funded with an estimated **one-cent increase** to Arlington ISD's current tax rate. The maximum impact on an average Arlington ISD home (\$296,704) would be \$1.50 a month (\$18.00 per year).



NOTICE: State law requires all bond materials must state, "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE." Eligible homeowners age 65+ with a homestead exemption will not pay more than their frozen school district tax amount unless substantial improvements are made to the homestead.

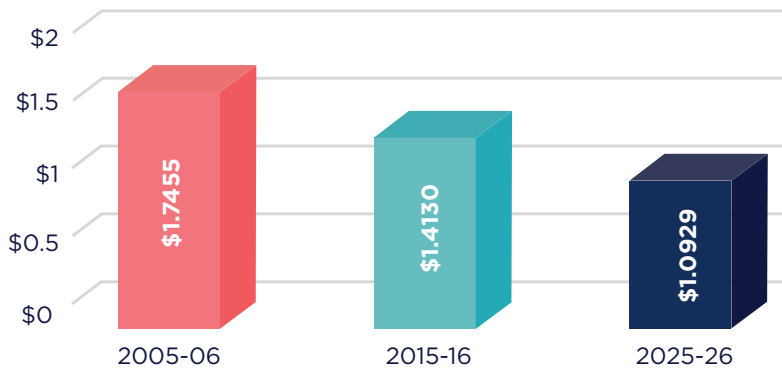
## TAX PAYERS

**65+** **ZERO** INCREASE IN TAXES

Arlington ISD taxes are frozen for homeowners 65+ with a residence homestead exemption on file with Tarrant County. Approval of this bond will not increase taxes above the frozen amount unless substantial home improvements are made.

## TAX RATE HISTORY

Over the past two decades, the district's tax rate has decreased from \$1.74 in 2005-2006 to \$1.09 in 2025-2026, as shown in the graph below.



## BALLOT LANGUAGE

### Arlington Independent School District Proposition A

THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE; the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$438,755,000 for school facilities and buses and the levy of taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds.

### Arlington Independent School District Proposition B

THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE; the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$30,955,000 for school technology improvements and the levy of taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds.

### Arlington Independent School District Proposition C

THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE; the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$31,565,000 for school athletic facilities and the levy of taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds.

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Arlington ISD's financial practices have been recognized by multiple independent organizations through awards and certifications. Each recognition is awarded through an independent review process defined by the issuing organization.





**Our Man in Vietnam**

A powerful new exhibit in UTA Libraries' Special Collections opened in February. Featuring award-winning journalist Bob Schieffer's original Vietnam photographs from 1965, alongside painted portraits of Texas service members, the display shares personal stories of service, sacrifice, and human connection. Through negatives, letters, notebooks, and Schieffer's reflections on reporting "about them, not you," it honors veterans and preserves an accurate history for future generations.

**Through April 4**  
**UTA Libraries Special Collections**



**Art in the Park**

Arlington recently celebrated the installation of its newest public art piece, "Heartfulness," with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Dr. Robert Cluck Linear Park. The 12-foot-tall steel sculpture by artist Katy Boynton, which originally debuted at Burning Man, represents a "mended heart" symbolizing human resilience and the strength found in adversity. Located in the city's vibrant Entertainment District, the project was funded by visitor-generated hotel occupancy fees to help transform the local landscape into a meaningful community experience.



**Animal Services Expands TNR Program**

A \$25,000 grant from Petco Love has enabled Arlington Animal Services to expand its free Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program for community cats.

TNR involves humanely trapping feral cats, spaying or neutering and vaccinating them, then returning them to their outdoor homes. It is widely considered one of the most effective methods for reducing community cat overpopulation, lowering shelter intake, and improving overall animal welfare.

Since receiving the grant in May 2025, Arlington Animal Services has provided TNR services to 267 cats, offering free surgeries, rabies vaccinations, and ear tipping to Arlington residents.

Source: arlingtontx.gov



**3 SCOOPS**

1. Arlington is split east and west by two geologic formations. The eastern section, Eagle Ford, is prairie today, but was a salty sea millions of years ago. The western section is the Eastern Cross Timbers, which was also a salty sea beach. Millions of years of oceanic deposits created the underground gas-rich Barnett Shale. Archaeological discoveries in the area found that pre-Indians lived near the Trinity River about 7,000 years ago and up to 15,000 years ago.
2. For hundreds of years, the dominant population of north Texas was the Caddo Indians. By the time the French and Spanish, as well as the Mexicans, arrived, several other Indian tribes had made their homes here. It is estimated that the west Arlington area was settled by up to 25,000 Native American Indians, including Comanches and Kiowas. The first settlement of Anglo-European Texans started with an 1841 expedition by Major Jonathan Bird to establish a fort on the Trinity River. Bird's Fort failed due to conflicts with the Native Americans.
3. In 1843, Republic of Texas President, Sam Houston, authorized a treaty of Bird's Fort with the American tribes. That treaty started trading and military posts along Johnson Creek. The trading post became a Texas Rangers post and a stagecoach stop called Johnson Station near what is now Mayfield Rd. between Cooper and Matlock roads. Texas Rangers Commander, Col. Middleton Tate Johnson, bought land for a plantation, and the town of Johnson Station eventually became Arlington.



**North Police Substation**

Construction is underway on North Arlington's first police substation—a \$29.3 million multi-purpose facility at 1715 E. Lamar Boulevard, repurposing a 40,000-square-foot building on a 4.3-acre site purchased in 2021, with opening planned for spring 2027. It will house over 120 employees, including ~100 police personnel for the North Patrol District (covering Downtown, Entertainment District, and neighborhoods like Viridian), 11 in Property and Evidence, and 13 in the Crime Scene Unit, plus a new crime lab, evidence storage, Code Compliance offices, a community room, and a walk-up service desk.

Source: arlingtontx.gov



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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



# Arlington by the NUMBERS

**16.3-\$3.1/15.6-\$2.8**

In 2024, Arlington set a new visitors record of 16.3 million compared to 15.6 million in 2023. Visitors spent \$3.1 billion in 2024 and \$2.8 billion in 2023 which represents a 10.5% increase in spending by visitors.

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**507 – 1695**

Americana by Loews Hotels will become the third hotel in the Sports & Entertainment district owned and developed by Loews Hotels and Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of Loews Corporation. The new hotel will have 507 guest rooms including 39 suites. The Americana will replace the existing Sheraton Arlington Hotel that is to be demolished in June of this year.

## PET OF THE MONTH

Mazikeen (or Maize Moo) found her way into my life one June night almost four years ago. After a long shift at work, I darted across the street to grab some Taco Casa for dinner on the way home. As I rounded the corner in the drive-thru line, a tiny, multicolored face peeked out of the bushes right next to my car. We made eye contact, and she scurried across the lane toward a storage area by the building. She ducked under a bin and peeked out at me. I knew in that moment she was coming home with me. After calling my mom and sister for backup, and after a bit of coaxing, we got her out and I brought her home. She has proven to be the most loyal little demon I’ve ever come across, and her name suits her. She is sassy and sweet, only to those she chooses to be. She has such a huge personality and is definitely the queen of the house around here. – *Gabrielle Komatz*



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# Curiosity Doesn't Retire

For Linda Cunningham, the end of work was the beginning of wonder



KENNETH PERKINS

Some people retire into the couch.

They sink into the cushions with a remote in one hand, iced tea in the other, the rhythm of daytime television replacing the rhythm of deadlines and those dreaded alarm clocks. They say things like, “I’ve earned this,” and they’re not wrong.

But then there’s Linda Cunningham.

Retirement, for Cunningham, is not a landing place. It’s a launch.

While others scroll through streaming menus, she scrolls through airline routes. While some retirees measure time in episodes watched, Cunningham measures it in passport stamps and boarding passes. While some call it her academic curiosity – she was, after all, during her working days, a pathologist and educator – she corrects them with “travel curiosity,” and says so with the kind of spark that makes you lean in a little closer.

For decades, her life was structured by responsibility — work schedules, meetings, calendars filled with autopsies, and later teaching medical students and residents. Travel was something squeezed between obligations. She saw places, sure, but always with an eye on the return date.

Full retirement in 2022 changed all that.

Now there is no clock ticking in the background. Just an open calendar and a world map.

And she is using it.

In the past few years, Cunningham has been so close to free-roaming lions she could touch them. She’s seen the birthplace of Jesus, strolled through the Jordan River, spoken with tribal elders in villages in Fiji, braved Iceland, and hung out with koalas in Australia. She read about the Serengeti in Tanzania as a young girl, and now her boots have been on the soil.

That uncertainty, she says, is the point.

Speaking with Cunningham by phone, I



noticed something quietly rebellious about her vibe. Retirement in American culture often comes packaged with images of rest — porch swings, golf courses, quiet routines. And there’s nothing wrong with that. But Cunningham seems to see rest not as a destination but as something that happens naturally between flights.

She doesn’t travel to escape her life. She travels to expand it.

Friends sometimes ask if she ever feels tired of moving, of packing and unpacking, of navigating airports and train stations. She laughs at that.

“I was tired when I was working full-time,” she said. “This is different. This energizes me.”

Travel, for Cunningham, isn’t about luxury. It’s about exposure. She wants to understand how other people live. She wants to walk streets she’s never walked before. She wants to feel small in the best possible way — like having a majestic giraffe look at her as though she’s not all that.

She talks about the way conversations unfold when you’re the visitor. The way stepping outside your comfort zone sharpens your senses.

Some retirees mark their days by what they no longer have to do. Cunningham marks hers by what she still can.

She is proof that retirement doesn’t have to be a shrinking of life. It can be an expansion. It can be the season where the questions you’ve always had finally get answered — or at least explored.

When she says that she was so close to a lion “that I could literally touch it,” there’s this sense of awe. How do the people live? What does a city like Singapore feel like at night? What stories live behind those doors?

Cunningham is out there finding out.

And speaking with her, I felt a gentle challenge to us all, retired or not. What are we curious about? What have we postponed until “someday”? What would happen if we treated time not as something to guard tightly, but as something to invest with a sense of courage?

Retirement, in the Cunningham version, isn’t the end of motion but a freedom of motion.

Curiosity, whether academic or travel, ought not come with expiration dates.

And if you ask Cunningham, neither should adventure. **A**

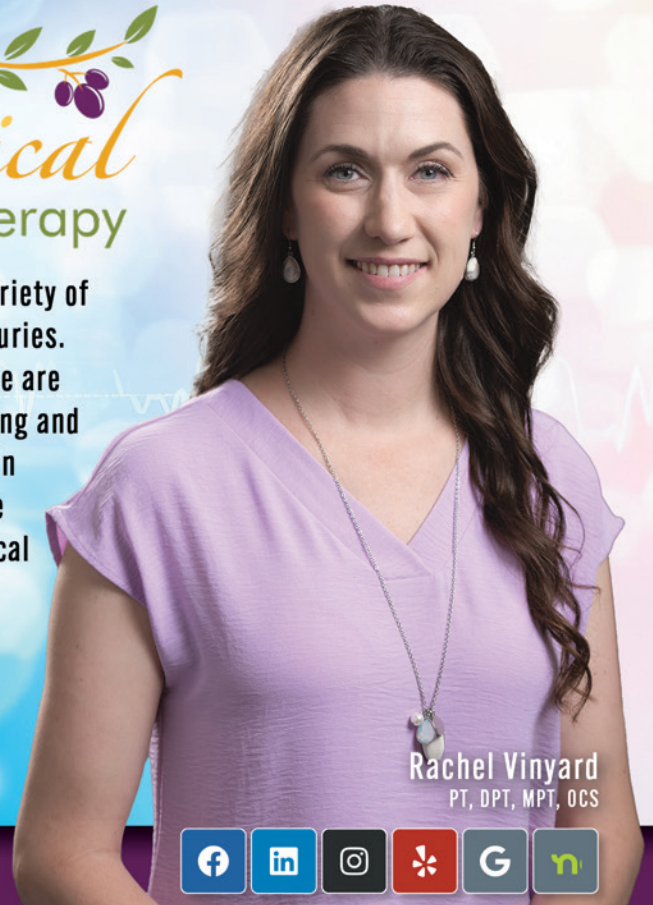
*Kenneth Perkins has been a contributing writer for Arlington Today for more than a decade. He is a freelance writer, editor and photographer, and teaches Journalism and Writing at Bowie High School.*



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## **Suzanne Taylor** *Rising Star Award Winner*



Suzanne Taylor, J.D., serves as Chief of Staff at Graham Associates, Inc., a civil engineering and survey consulting firm. She assists with the firm's culture and people, client and project coordination, and leverages her legal background to support business operations. Suzanne has played a critical role in projects such as the Lakesong Master-Planned Community in Grand Prairie, Arlington Commons in Arlington, WJ Boaz Rd. in Fort Worth, National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, and more. She is also particularly proud of the progress made internally to develop a strong culture of teamwork, appreciation, and support.

Suzanne also serves as President of the Arlington ISD Education Foundation, helping raise and distribute funds for teacher initiatives that extend beyond traditional classroom budgets. This year, the Foundation awarded more grants to teachers than it has ever awarded in its history. She has supported the National Medal of Honor Museum and its Leadership Institute, including coordination of the museum's civil design efforts. The Museum is a finalist for the State's top civil engineering award through the American Society of Civil Engineers and was awarded the #1 Best New Museum in America by USA Today.

An engaged community leader, Suzanne serves as a PTA Grade and Room Representative at Little Elementary and is active at First Baptist Church Arlington, where she serves as a deacon, Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee, and Sunday school teacher. She also volunteers with Mission Arlington and supports various city and school district initiatives. Suzanne is a past member of the Levitt Board, Leadership Arlington, Director of Polished Fort Worth, and the Tarrant County Probate Bar Association.

Suzanne and her husband, Brandon, are dedicated Texas Tech Red Raiders. Suzanne received two degrees from Tech, Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and her Juris Doctorate from the School of Law. Suzanne and Brandon have been married for 15 years and are grateful to be raising their three children in Arlington, a community they are passionate about serving.



*Women's  
Alliance*

## **Becky Gerro** *Hero Award Winner*

A passionate community leader, educator and advocate, Becky Gerro is dedicated to connecting people with their purpose. Born in Miami Beach, Florida, and raised in Corsicana, Texas, she earned degrees in Elementary and Special Education from Texas A&M University and Texas Woman's University. While at Texas A&M in 1982, Becky co-founded The Big Event, now the nation's largest student-led day of service.

She began her career teaching young children with disabilities before co-founding her family businesses, ACP International, SA-SO Signs & Safety, and Capital Streetscapes, creating meaningful employment opportunities in Arlington. Today, Becky serves as the Development Director for River Legacy Foundation, where she leads fundraising efforts and expands access to nature-based education.

Becky leads with compassion and joy, whether supporting Scouts with intellectual disabilities, teaching the Amazing Grace Class at First United Methodist Church, or championing nonprofits such as Miracle League, Women Inspiring Philanthropy, and North Texas Community Foundation. Joyfully married to Mike, she shares life with six children, six grandchildren, two crazy dogs, and wonderful friends. Becky believes that when we serve together, our impact is truly unmatched.

# Kim Crawford and Team: Building Impact in the Community

SFC LLP Certified Public Accountants

For Kim Crawford, leadership has never been about a single title or a corner office. It is about staying rooted in community, growing alongside a team, and knowing when to trust both her expertise and the people around her. After beginning her career in Dallas, Crawford returned home to Arlington and joined SFC nearly 30 years ago, when the firm had just 12 professionals.

Today, it is approaching 70, a transformation she has witnessed and helped shape firsthand. Now an audit partner and member of the firm's executive committee, she manages audit clients, helps guide the firm's long-term strategy, and helps to oversee the nonprofit tax compliance team, a role that reflects her belief that strong firms are built on both competence and connection.

That philosophy shapes SFC's culture. "We approach everything we do as a team," Crawford says, emphasizing that trust is not just a value; it is a business strategy. The firm's commitment to community mirrors that mindset, with many professionals serving on nonprofit boards or volunteering throughout Arlington.

For Crawford, giving back is not a side project; it is part of the firm's identity. Her leadership has also been shaped by learning to trust herself and not let fear of mistakes stall progress. "I've also learned to not let the fear of making a mistake keep me from trying," she says, noting that growth often comes from the lessons mistakes provide.

A defining milestone came with her appointment by Governor Greg Abbott to the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy, where she gained insight into how the profession is regulated and advocated for across Texas. Even with those responsibilities, her focus remains on people. What excites her most is watching young professionals, many of them first-generation college graduates, build their careers and futures.

"It really makes me excited to be a part of a young, hard-working team of professionals who are committed to our firm and our clients," she says. For Crawford, that is leadership, building something lasting by investing in people and shaping a culture that outlives any single role.



KIM CRAWFORD

## A Partner in Purpose: Denise Holmes

Standing alongside Crawford on the cover is Denise Holmes, a tax partner whose work reflects the same people-first philosophy. In her role, Holmes focuses on serving clients and leading the firm's tax team in the delivery of tax returns and consultation services for corporations, partnerships, and individuals. After nearly 25 years at the firm, one of her proudest accomplishments is not a single project, but the collective growth of the organization and the opportunities that growth has created for employees.

"I enjoy building relationships with both clients and our employees," Holmes says. "It is rewarding to collaborate as a team and provide quality service to our clients." That emphasis on relationships shows up in how she leads, with a focus on mentorship, collaboration, and creating an environment where people can do their best work. For Holmes, success is measured not only in results delivered but in the strength and sustainability of the team behind them.

Like Crawford, Holmes sees community involvement as inseparable from the firm's success. She values giving back to Arlington through



DENISE HOLMES

SFC's continued growth and its support of local businesses and nonprofit organizations. The result is a leadership approach that balances technical excellence with a clear sense of responsibility to the community the firm serves.

### Strength in the Team

That same balance shows up across the leadership team, including partners like Deanna Frisby and Jennifer Guse, whose work adds depth and dimension to the firm's impact. Frisby, an audit partner, specializes in assurance services for nonprofits, with an additional focus on government grant compliance. She takes the most pride in the specialized value the firm delivers to its nonprofit clients, especially during what can be a stressful and disruptive audit process.

"Recognizing that audits can be a daunting period for any organization, my goal is to streamline the process and minimize disruption," she says. "By providing a seamless audit experience, I ensure our clients can keep their primary focus where it belongs, on their charitable missions."

### CONTACT TEAM MEMBERS AT:

Kim Crawford: kim@sfcllp.com

Denise Holmes: denise@sfcllp.com

Deanna Frisby: deanna@sfcllp.com

Jennifer Guse: jennifer@sfcllp.com

She credits the firm's culture for making that possible. "We're focused on the goals, for sure, but we still know how to keep things light and have a good time while doing it," she says. Frisby is also passionate about encouraging the next generation of women to enter public accounting and other high-demand fields, pointing to how technology and evolving workplace culture have created more flexibility and autonomy than ever before. With the right environment, she believes, it is possible to build a sustainable work-life balance, even at the executive level.

Jennifer Guse, CPA, a tax partner at the firm, brings that same forward-looking energy. Her focus is on growing her practice, delivering high-quality service, and finding new ways to serve the Arlington community. In 2023, she was named to the Arlington Chamber of Commerce's Top 40 Under 40, an honor she says carried special meaning as a full-time working mom with young children. "Receiving this award represents the dedication, balance, and perseverance it takes to be successful both at home and in my career," Guse says.

What she values most about the firm is the sense of support and collaboration among the team. "We have really good synergy and truly enjoy working together," she says. "Being part of a firm that values growth and teamwork makes it incredibly rewarding to come to work each day."

She is also proud to be part of a company that is deeply committed to giving back. "We're not only here to provide high-quality services to our clients, but we also care about the community and making an impact," she says. Together, Crawford, Holmes, and their team represent more than a successful firm. They reflect a leadership model built on trust, collaboration, and community investment, proof that sustainable growth is not just about the numbers on a balance sheet, but about the people who make those numbers possible.

by Elijah L. Quintanilla

# Laurie Bianco: A Mayor Who Answers the Phone

When Mayor Bianco's phone rings, she answers it. If she can't, she calls back as soon as she can. In an era when public officials are often buffered by assistants, inboxes, and press statements, Bianco prefers something simpler: direct conversations with the people she serves. For her, leadership isn't about being hard to reach. It's about being present. Bianco's path to City Hall began with a nudge from a close friend, former mayor Kimberly Fitzpatrick, who suggested she consider stepping into the race. At the time, Bianco didn't see herself as "that person." She prayed about it, asked for clarity, and waited for direction. What followed were signs she could no longer ignore. Years later, she still doesn't describe the role as a career move. She calls it one of the greatest blessings of her life, second only to being a parent. "I'm not lucky," she says. "I'm blessed." That sense of gratitude shapes how she talks about both the job and the city she serves.

Bianco describes her community as full of people who care deeply about where they live, about safety, and about one another. At the heart of her leadership philosophy is a simple idea: serve others. Bianco likes to say a good leader is "the last person in the buffet line," someone who puts the needs of citizens, businesses, and the broader community ahead of their own. For her, that is not a slogan; it is a daily practice. It shows up in how she prioritizes issues, how she handles concerns, and how accessible she tries to remain. Communication, she believes, is part of that responsibility. When concerns come up, she makes a point of addressing the issue directly, sometimes in person. While she acknowledges that kind of hands-on approach would be unrealistic in a much larger city, in her community, it reflects something she values deeply, the idea that local government should feel human, not distant. "We're really one big family," she says, and families, at their best, take care of each other. When asked about defining moments in office, Bianco doesn't point to a single headline or milestone. Instead, she talks about the everyday privilege of walking into City Hall and working alongside people who are there for the right reasons, employees who do more than show up for a paycheck and who, in her words, "plant their feet in the concrete" and commit to the community for the long haul.



Faith, she says, is something she tries to live out through action, not just words, by offering forgiveness and remembering that everyone is carrying something you might not see. "You only go around once," she adds, and relationships are what give life its meaning, which is why she believes sincerity has to be demonstrated, not just stated, in everyday life. Looking ahead, what excites Bianco most isn't a specific project or political ambition; it's the chance to keep serving. The real reward, she says, isn't financial; it's meeting people, helping them through challenges, and strengthening the connections that make a community feel like home. She often returns to the importance of face-to-face relationships, noting that while emails and texts have their place, real understanding happens across a table, looking someone in the eye, and listening. It's why she jokes that "everybody in the world" seems to have her phone number, and she wouldn't have it any other way. For Mayor Bianco, leadership isn't about being in charge. It's about being reachable, being present, and being willing to show up, again and again, for the people she serves.

by *Elijah L. Quintanilla*

Laurie Bianco | Mayor, Dalworthington Gardens

# More Than Marketing: Reba Blevens' Human-Centric Approach

When Reba Blevens graduated from Texas A&M in 1979, she stepped into a corporate world that was not exactly designed with women in mind. She began her career as an account executive for Monsanto's AgChem Division, selling and servicing distributors, dealers, and farmers for products like Roundup and Lasso. Out of roughly five hundred men nationwide in that division, only five were women. Blevens was one of them.

By her fifth year, Blevens was invited to keynote Monsanto's national meeting, a rare honor that clearly signaled her success in the industry. But in the early 1980s, upper management questioned her future because she was married with children. "Discrimination was real for women then," she says. Faced with those barriers, she chose to step away and move home to raise her family.

That pause, however, turned out to be more of a pivot than a stop.

After returning to Arlington, Blevens was recruited by WBAP to sell radio advertising, a turning point in her career. For five years, she worked with small, family-owned "mom and pop" businesses on tight budgets. "When they spent money on the radio station, it had to be effective," she recalls. More importantly, she loved the relationships, and many clients soon asked if she could handle everything for them.

With encouragement from a friend who was an attorney, Blevens decided to do the math. She made a list of the clients who wanted her help, assigned a dollar figure to each, then cut that total in half, and in half again. Even then, the number was substantial enough to justify a leap of faith. In 1990, she left her job, sublet office space next to two colleagues who were starting a television show, and began building her own advertising agency. "I've never looked back," she says.

Today, Blevens manages a wide range of clients with a highly personal approach, planning and producing radio, television, and print advertising. She thrives on the variety of the work and has embraced the shift to digital, freelancing some tasks so she can focus on what matters most: her clients.

Two people stand out as especially influential along the way. One is Mike O'Donnell, a friend from junior high and later the sales manager at WBAP, who insisted she consider becoming an account executive in 1984. "He recognized my potential before I fully did," Blevens says, and that role opened doors she never expected. Another is Jim Hardick, general manager



for Moritz Dealerships, who extended her role as director of marketing for multiple Moritz locations. The partnership has lasted since 1987 and remains a cornerstone of her professional life.

Leadership, for Blevens, is rooted in listening and consensus. When navigating challenges or differing perspectives, her approach is simple and effective: diffuse objections, listen intently to everyone involved, and encourage agreement around a shared path forward. It is a style shaped by decades of client relationships and real-world problem solving, not buzzwords.

Beyond business, Blevens is deeply invested in Arlington's philanthropic landscape. She serves on the Salvation Army Advisory Council, the Salvation Army Family Life Committee, the Arlington ISD Education Foundation, and Women Inspiring Philanthropy. "At the end of the day, I hope I make a difference in the lives of the underserved in our community," she says.

Looking ahead, what excites her most is impact, not expansion. "I love Arlington and the people who live and work here," Blevens says, and hopes her contributions continue to make a difference. In an ever-changing industry, her constant is simple: build trust, work with integrity, and never underestimate the power of betting on yourself.

*by Elijah L. Quintanilla*

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# The Heart of Home: Brandee Kelley's People-First Leadership

For Brandee Kelley, real estate was never just a career choice; it was a calling that kept showing up until she finally said yes, and a path that reflects the growing influence of women shaping both business and community leadership.

Long before she wrote her first contract, Kelley was already selling, from Girl Scout cookies to cheerleading fundraisers and student council drives. Adults took notice, and in high school, a friend's mother, Marsha Bane, suggested real estate as a career. Kelley took the advice seriously, earning a real estate minor alongside her finance degree, a foundation that would support a decades-long career in a demanding industry where women continue to redefine leadership.

Still, life took a few turns first. Kelley spent a decade working as a banker, then several years as a stay-at-home mom, but real estate didn't let go. When Bane revisited the conversation years later, the timing finally aligned. Kelley joined her highly successful team, and more than two decades later, she is still doing what first drew her in, helping people navigate one of the biggest decisions of their lives.

"The amazing clients I've worked with over the last 21 years are what keep me here," Kelley says. "It's truly fun and a joy to help friends and family with their real estate needs."

That word, friends, is not accidental. Kelley's business is built largely on relationships and referrals, with many clients returning again and again. That continuity creates trust, a critical currency in an industry where decisions carry long-term financial and personal weight. Her team stays connected well beyond closing day, whether that means recommending vendors, sharing tax information, or connecting clients with trusted agents in other cities.

Real estate, she says, is both highly strategic and deeply personal, and she treats it as such.

That balance defines her leadership. An avid learner, Kelley led 750 realtors who closed more than 5,000 homes annually, sharpening her communication and consensus-building skills. She has built a leadership style rooted in service and clarity, noting that the lessons from real estate often mirror her work in ministry.

Her background as a former banker adds another layer. As a Dave Ramsey Trusted Realtor, Kelley enjoys helping clients think through the financial side of homeownership with intention and responsibility. "Real estate provides an opportunity to guide others with financial decisions," she says, and for her, that guidance is leadership in action.



From 2016 to 2020, Kelley stepped even further into that role, overseeing several Keller Williams offices. The experience brought growth and perspective, but it also clarified what matters most to her. She missed working directly with clients, the relationships that first drew her to the business. "It reaffirmed my calling to be working directly with clients," she says.

Today, Kelley and her team keep things simple, focusing on integrity, experience, teamwork, and smart pricing while staying proactive for both buyers and sellers.

But for Kelley, the impact goes beyond transactions. Each deal helps support not only her team's families and churches, but also causes close to her heart. A portion of every commission goes to Bikes for Mission Arlington, and the team also supports Restore Hope, Bible Study Fellowship, and other charitable organizations.

"It's about so much more than a property," Kelley says. "It's about the people, the relationships, and the impact."

After more than two decades in the business, that philosophy has become her through line, and a quiet reminder of why women like Kelley matter in leadership, not just for what they build, but for how they build it, with trust, purpose, and community at the center.



by Elijah L. Quintanilla

# Tremendous, Sincere Hospitality: Valerie Landry at The Sanford House

At The Sanford House, hospitality is not just a service standard; it is a philosophy. For General Manager Valerie Landry, leadership begins with curiosity, collaboration, and a deep belief in empowering people around her.

“I’m very collaborative,” Landry says. “We have a strong leadership team, and it’s important they have the autonomy to do their jobs well.” She leads as a sounding board, helping refine ideas, course-correct, and keep the team focused.

That approach has shaped a culture of open communication and thoughtful decisions. Landry’s curious, intentional leadership builds trust and ownership across teams, creating an experience guests feel, even if they can’t quite name it.

The Sanford House itself holds a special place in Arlington’s story. More than a venue, it has become part of the city’s fabric, a place where milestones are celebrated, weekends are slowed down, and everyday moments are made special. Landry sees her role as both steward and ambassador.

“The Sanford House has become an institution, which is amazing,” she says. Over the years, the team has expanded its offerings so guests can “celebrate, relax, and rejuvenate” all in one place, whether that means an event, a restaurant reservation, or a spa escape. A big part of her work happens beyond the walls of the property, representing The Sanford House throughout the community and building relationships that keep it top of mind for locals and visitors alike.

“As an entrepreneur, it is imperative that I ensure The Sanford House is top of mind,” Landry explains. For her, community connection is not a marketing tactic; it is a long-term investment. Seeking out partnerships, maintaining relationships, and staying visible in Arlington helps ensure that The Sanford House remains an active part of the city’s future, not just its past.

That people-first mindset also shows up in how Landry invests in her team. Growth and empowerment are not abstract ideals; they are built into daily operations. The Sanford House celebrates employee achievements, communicates regularly about learning opportunities, and encourages cross-training across departments.

Once an employee is trained in a primary area, they may have the chance to learn a secondary department based on business needs. The result is a more flexible operation and a more confident team. “This allows flexibility with scheduling and gives employees confidence they can help guests in a variety of ways,” Landry says.



That confidence pays dividends at the guest level. When staff can respond in the moment, make informed decisions, and adapt quickly, guests feel supported and assured. “Being able to respond in the moment gives the guest confidence in my team, and that drives satisfaction,” she adds. In other words, empowerment behind the scenes shows up as ease and warmth out front.

Looking ahead, Landry is clear about the legacy she hopes to leave. At The Sanford House, the guiding mantra is “Tremendous, Sincere Hospitality,” and she carries that standard into both her leadership and her community work.

“I want people around me to feel encouraged, accepted, and uplifted,” she says. She hopes to be known as someone who keeps possibilities open, builds meaningful connections, and brings a bright outlook to the work ahead. More than anything, she wants to honor the legacy she has been given and expand it, so future generations can continue to experience what makes The Sanford House special.

In a world where “hospitality” can feel like a buzzword, Landry makes it tangible. Build strong teams, trust them, and stay rooted in community, and the culture follows. It’s simple, not easy, and it’s exactly what makes her leadership, and The Sanford House, an example of tremendous, sincere hospitality.

*by Elijah L. Quintanilla*

# Where Purpose Meets the Page: Julie Short on Faith, Identity, and Truth

Julie Short's writing career did not begin with theology. It began with something far more practical: helping overwhelmed people regain control of their daily lives.

Her first book, *Cleaning Your House in Minutes a Day* (2018), offered a practical approach to organization, but its deeper aim was "restoring dignity and showing people they were capable of change without shame," Short says.

That blend has grown into a broader mission, with commitment, connection, and compassion now guiding Short's work even more.

"Every book I've written has been born from a desire to relieve overwhelm, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual," she explains. "Commitment means writing honestly about faith. Connection means meeting readers where they are, in doubt, curiosity, or conviction. Compassion means recognizing that conversations about God require humility and care."

That evolution is especially visible in her upcoming release, *The Truth About God*, available February 17 on all major book platforms. Where her first book addressed physical order, this one turns toward spiritual clarity. For Short, the shift represents both professional growth and personal courage.

"There is a difference between organizing a home and examining eternity," she says. "Writing about God requires surrender. It requires removing ego from the process and asking bigger questions than comfort allows."

The book marks a defining moment in her journey as an author. "My first book proved I could write something practical and helpful. This second book confirmed I could write something foundational and lasting."

That urgency built over time. In a world she sees as increasingly divided, Short says the message could not wait. "After seeing that division hit so close to home, I knew there could be no more delay. It's about building a body of work centered on truth, identity, and perspective that can change hearts and lives."

That long-term vision is already taking shape in two additional works currently in progress: *What Color Is Your Spirit* and *What Good Are Diamonds to a Man Dying of Thirst*. Both titles move further into questions of identity, value, and eternal perspective.

"At the core of all my work is one question," Short says. "What truly matters?"

Balancing that depth with the realities of publishing requires discipline. "Publishing is strategic," she notes. "There are deadlines, positioning decisions, editing processes, launch plans, and marketing considerations. Writing, however, is sacred work, especially when you are addressing faith and the human spirit."



For Short, the solution is not to separate the two. "Strategy helps the message reach people. Authenticity is what makes it stay with them. I approach publishing with professionalism and writing with reverence."

As a woman building a growing body of faith-centered work, she has also learned that leadership does not have to be loud to be effective. "Your voice evolves as your understanding deepens," she says. "Leadership means steadiness. It means standing confidently in what you believe, even when cultural conversations shift."

That steadiness is what allows her to work on multiple projects at once without losing focus. Rather than chasing trends, she stays anchored to a single, connected arc:

- Order your environment.
- Understand your faith.
- Discover your identity.
- Reevaluate what you truly value.

"They're not random titles," she says. "They're connected conversations."

Looking ahead, what excites her most is not scale, but depth. While *The Truth About God* represents a milestone, she sees it as part of a much longer journey. "My hope is that my work helps people step back from distraction and reconsider what is eternal."

And if her writing leads someone to pause and seriously consider what they believe about Jesus, she says, then the mission is already being fulfilled.

by Elijah L. Quintanilla

Julie Short, Author | Email: [julie@mchtexas.com](mailto:julie@mchtexas.com)

# A Life in Banking, A Heart for Arlington: Joni Wilson

For Joni Wilson, banking has never been just about numbers on a page. It is about people, stories, and long-term relationships, the kind that grow stronger over decades. As Banking Center President for Susser Bank in Arlington, Wilson leads with a steady hand shaped by more than four decades in the industry and a lifetime spent in the same community she now serves.

No two days look the same for Wilson. Her first priority is always clients, especially the commercial businesses she serves. Some days involve helping a business owner think through their next phase of growth, while others focus on capital strategy, liquidity management, or protecting what they've built. She is continually identifying opportunities to support both long-standing relationships and emerging businesses across the Arlington region. "Taking care of clients is first off the bat," she says. "But then you make commitments as well."

Those commitments are rooted in a career that began in 1982, when she worked full-time while attending the University of Texas at Arlington in the evenings to earn her finance degree. Over a 44-year career, she has worked at just four banks, including Arlington Bank & Trust, Frost Bank, Worthington Bank, and now Susser Bank. Having attended Arlington Country Day School, Lamar High School, and UTA, Wilson has watched the city grow and change alongside her. That perspective shapes her leadership. She credits her upbringing with building independence and resilience, and she draws daily inspiration from her Christian faith and a belief in listening and learning from others.

Susser Bank's mission aligns closely with her own values. The Texas-based bank emphasizes relationships over transactions, positioning itself as a long-term partner rather than a one-time service provider. That philosophy resonates with Wilson, who describes herself as deeply relationship-driven. She finds meaning in helping business owners navigate what's next, whether that means expansion, transition, or strategic investment. She is known for putting herself in her client's shoes and delivering thoughtful, forward-looking guidance. Even when she cannot directly help a company, she still looks for ways to offer guidance or point them toward helpful resources. "You know, you can't help everybody. But you try," she says, a line that neatly sums up her approach to both banking and leadership.

For Wilson, leadership is a team effort. After 18 years at Susser Bank, she regularly leans on colleagues to deliver thoughtful, strategic solutions for clients. The bank's officers, from all Texas markets, meet quarterly to align on priorities, share market intelligence, and evaluate evolving technologies, creating a collaborative environment that ensures clients benefit from the team's shared expertise and a culture rooted in proactive communication and shared accountability. A lifelong Arlington resident, Wilson sees community banking as a disciplined, relationship-driven business built on



trust, follow-through, and keeping the right stakeholders informed. She brings that same focus to her civic roles as chair of the Greater Arlington Chamber and through her work with organizations including the Tarrant County College Foundation, Dental Health Arlington, Powerful Purses Inc., and Women in Philanthropy.

Wilson is energized by what is ahead for Arlington, from the Grand Prix and FIFA events to a busy election season. "I'm really excited about what we've got planned ahead," she says, as she steps into her role as chair of the Greater Arlington Chamber. Even after a lifetime in the city, she still enjoys meeting new people and discovering shared connections in a community she knows so well.

Community engagement is also central to Wilson's work at Susser Bank. While the bank is known for hosting its annual Susser Bank Golf Classic benefiting MD Anderson Cancer Center, its commitment extends far beyond a single event. Across its markets, Susser Bank supports numerous local nonprofits and civic organizations, reflecting a broader belief that strong communities and strong businesses grow together. Wilson's own board service and civic leadership embody that same philosophy.

Outside of work, family anchors her life. Married 43 years, she has two sons and is a grandmother of four. Much of her free time is spent traveling and attending sporting events. For Wilson, success is measured in people, not titles, in trust, not transactions, and in the community she has spent a lifetime serving.

*by Elijah L. Quintanilla*

Joni Wilson/Susser Bank | 3030 Matlock Road, Suite 101 | 817-987-2413 | [susserbank.com](http://susserbank.com)

# Women in Leadership, Strength in Numbers

For over 60 years, PSK LLP has been a trusted name in accounting, tax, audit, and business consulting among clients in Texas and more than 20 states. With over 45 dedicated professionals, the firm provides experience across multiple industries, including construction, healthcare, manufacturing, not-for-profits, and transportation. PSK prides itself on a culture of collaboration, mentorship, and professional growth.

Of note, four of the firm’s seven partners are women, including Kathy Howlett, Marie Bosillo, Kylie Lindsey, and Cat Samson, each of whom built her career within the firm.

Kathy, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) since 1994 and a partner since 2010, shares why she values teamwork and mutual respect. *“Our clients and team members rely on us—we succeed by supporting each other.”*

Marie, who began as an intern, earned her CPA in 2004 and became a partner in 2015. She believes relationships are at the heart of success, saying, *“Numbers are just part of what we do. Strong connections with clients and colleagues set us apart.”*

Kylie, also a former intern, earned her CPA in 2008 and became a partner in 2022, and was recognized as a Greater Arlington Chamber 40 Under 40 honoree in 2023. *“Learning from others is crucial to success, and as you grow, it’s important to share that knowledge.”*

Cat, who became a partner this January, joined PSK in 2018, earned her CPA in 2019, and was honored in the starting class of the Greater Arlington



Partners: Marie Bosillo, Cat Samson, Casey Campbell, Kathy Howlett, Kevin Brock, Kylie Lindsey, Bryan Baughman

Chamber 40 Under 40 program. *“When we work together as a team, it makes the successes so much sweeter.”*

With a commitment to integrity, excellence, and community, PSK continues to develop top talent while delivering skilled, personalized service. As one of Arlington’s largest firms, its legacy of leadership ensures a strong future for both its clients and team.

PSK LLP | 3001 Medlin Dr. #100 | 817-664-3000 | pskcpa.com

## Joe Hall Roofing & Contracting

The Hall family knows roofing after five generations in construction and three generations specializing in roofing.

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“We like to say that we are large enough to serve you and small enough to treasure you,” the owners said. “Our mission is to empower roof owners to make educated and effective roof-related decisions. Driven by core values of integrity, family, innovation, knowledge, and health, we strive to provide exceptional service and build lasting relationships.”

“Beyond our daily business, our multigenerational workforce is committed to fostering a company culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that our team members are always growing and appreciated,” they said.

Joe Hall Roofing & Contracting | 1925 W. Pioneer Pkwy. 817-274-6777 | joehallroofing.com

## Stephanie Foster Family Law

Stephanie Foster’s name is synonymous with trust, compassion, and relentless advocacy in family law. For over 32 years, she has guided clients in Tarrant County through one of life’s toughest transitions. While she is a fierce litigator when necessary, Foster is also a strong advocate for collaborative divorce, believing in solutions that protect both emotions and finances.



She balances the roles of warrior and peacemaker—fully prepared for the courtroom but always striving for resolution over conflict. Her dedication to creative, family-first approaches has helped countless families navigate divorce with less stress and greater stability. Clients appreciate her ability to blend strength with empathy, ensuring they feel supported every step of the way. Foster’s impact is profound, leaving a lasting difference in the lives she touches.

Law Offices of Stephanie A. Foster, P.C. | 4214 Little Road 817-277-2805 | StephanieFosterLawyer.com

## Carla Sue Worley

Spinning Spaces Custom Closets & Lux Furnishings

When you first meet Carla Sue Worley, you immediately notice her vibrant energy and signature bling. A dynamic force in the Arlington business community, Carla Sue is the “entrepreneurial genius” behind two thriving companies: CS Preferred Solutions, where she helps clients navigate the complexities of the energy industry, and Spinning Spaces, her luxury home transformation brand.



The vision for Spinning Spaces began with a personal quest to organize her own collection of shoes, clothes, and crafts, and has since evolved into a full-scale design experience. Beyond her famous custom rotating closets, Carla Sue curates entire environments by hand-selecting luxury furnishings and creating original custom paintings. Whether she is analyzing energy data in the morning or at her easel in the afternoon, Carla Sue brings a creative spark to everything she touches. Visit her Lincoln Square showroom to see how she makes your home—and your lifestyle—truly shine.

Spinning Spaces/CS Preferred Solutions | 817-677-8184  
780 E. Road to Six Flags, Ste. 262 | spinningspaces.com

## Kristene Toledo

Inspirations Fork & Table

For nearly three decades, Kristene Toledo, founder of Inspirations Fork & Table, has built a thriving business fueled by passion, purpose, and perseverance. What began as a way to balance work and family evolved into a dynamic journey of creativity, impact, and heartfelt connection through event planning, design, and cooking. Along the way, she inspired her daughters, showing them the power of forging their own paths. Kristene believes success is rooted in meaningful relationships, crafting memorable experiences, and bringing people together. Deeply committed to her community, she exemplifies how family businesses remain vital today—giving back and making Arlington stronger. Her advice to women entrepreneurs: embrace the highs and lows, cherish the unexpected, and uplift others with strength, integrity, and an unwavering belief in their potential.



Inspirations Fork & Table | 506 E. Division St., Suite 130  
682-270-8352 | inspirationsforkandtable.com

## Becky Gerro & Carla Sue Worley

Heart of Arlington Luxury Vacation Rentals

When local entrepreneurs and philanthropists Becky Gerro and Carla Sue Worley teamed up, they didn’t just create a place to stay—they created a destination. Heart of Arlington Luxury Vacation Rentals is the premier high-end lodging experience in the city, featuring two stunning units: Ruby Lux Skyline Retreat and Sapphire Skyline Penthouse.

As the owner and a dedicated community leader, Becky Gerro is a familiar face in Arlington, known for her business acumen and her passionate work with River Legacy. To bring her vision for world-class hospitality to life, she turned to her friend and design expert, Carla Sue Worley of Spinning Spaces.



Carla Sue meticulously curated every detail of the interiors, from the high-end furnishings to the original, hand-painted artwork that adorns the walls. Together, Becky and Carla Sue have combined their love for Arlington and their eye for luxury to offer a “turn-key” experience that is as vibrant and sophisticated as the city itself.

Heart of Arlington Luxury Vacation Rentals  
817-888-8311 | heartofarlingtonrentals.com

## Healing Starts Here: Inside Olive Physical Therapy

When Rachel Vinyard, PT, DPT, MPT, OCS, was named Woman Owned Small Business of the Year 2025, the recognition came as a surprise. Personally, she felt grateful and proud of the team that built Olive Physical Therapy. Professionally, it confirmed what she had hoped, that the clinic’s mission of patient-centered care is resonating with the Arlington community.



Inside the clinic, healing begins with time and attention. Olive Physical Therapy emphasizes one-on-one treatment so patients feel seen, heard, and supported throughout recovery. Vinyard believes outcomes improve when therapists are fully present, and that belief shapes daily care.

Balancing patient care with business operations requires intentional structure. Vinyard separates clinical days from administrative work, allowing her to protect the quality of care and staff well-being. “You can’t have one without the other,” she explained, noting that sustainable care depends on strong systems and healthy clinicians.

Her commitment to excellence is reflected in advanced training. Earning her Orthopedic Clinical Specialist credential pushed Vinyard to think more critically, rely on research, and re-examine her approach to treatment. She views learning as a responsibility, not a milestone, and believes growth requires humility. “When seeking help and advice, always be the dumbest person in the room and be willing to learn from those around you,” she said. That mindset keeps her practice evolving and care grounded in evidence.

Beyond the clinic, Vinyard is passionate about educating the community on physical therapy access, insurance limitations, and proactive health. At Olive Physical Therapy, care extends beyond treatment into knowledge, confidence, and long-term well-being.

Olive Physical Therapy | 2400 W. Pioneer Pkwy., Ste. 108  
682-276-30409 | olivephysicaltherapy.com

## Great Skin Spa & Facial Club

Great Skin Spa & Skin Care has been transforming skin and boosting confidence since 2011. Specializing in a wide range of services, including facials, microdermabrasion, non-surgical lifts, and waxing, they focus on enhancing the natural beauty of each client.

Whether addressing blemishes, hyperpigmentation, or signs of aging, their expert estheticians use top-tier, effective products tailored to individual skin types. The spa also offers rejuvenating treatments like Hydra Glow facials and body contouring to revitalize and maintain healthy, glowing skin.

For special occasions like weddings or proms, Great Skin provides personalized makeup services and spa packages designed to pamper and prepare you for your event.

Great Skin's mission is to exceed client expectations by offering innovative, affordable services while creating an experience that keeps clients coming back. Their dedication to customer satisfaction and skincare excellence makes them a standout choice for all your beauty and wellness needs.



Great Skin Spa & Facial Club | 3851 SW Green Oaks Blvd.  
817-478-2114 | greatskin4you.com

## Dr. Joan Bergstrom

### Women's Health Services

Every morning, Dr. Joan Bergstrom shows up ready for work—though it has always felt more like a calling.

That calling began in high school as a nurse's aide in a small Nebraska hospital. A physician invited her to shadow him in the ER and office, inspiring her to pursue medicine. "I was enthralled within months," she said. She later worked in his office during college and completed a medical school rotation with him, assisting in surgeries and delivering babies.

Her people skills started even earlier. At nine, she helped run her family's motel. "You learn quickly how to take care of people," she said.

That mindset defines her work as founder of Women's Health Services, an OB/GYN practice with three locations—two in Arlington and one in Grand Prairie. Since opening in 1986, it has grown to include seven physicians while maintaining a focus on long-term patient relationships.

After forming strong ties at Arlington Memorial Hospital, she became the city's first woman OB/GYN. Nearly four decades later, she still finds joy in caring for patients—and plans to continue as long as she can.



Women's Health Services | Arlington/Grand Prairie  
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## The Law Offices of Stephanie A. Foster, P.C.

Deciding to divorce is one of the most important decisions a person can face, so it makes sense to know your options. One option is traditional courtroom litigation. Another option is collaborative divorce.

Although attorney Stephanie A. Foster is prepared to be the warrior in your courtroom battle, as she has been in thousands of Tarrant County divorce cases over the past 33 years, her preference is to be the peacemaker in your interest-based negotiations through the dignified, private, child-protecting process known as collaborative divorce, which involves no court.

Stephanie A. Foster is confident that the collaborative process is a powerful way to generate creative solutions in family law disputes while minimizing financial and emotional damage to the couple and their children, all the while promoting the post-divorce psychological and financial health of the restructured family.

As a family law mediator and one of the first Tarrant County attorneys trained in collaborative law, attorney Stephanie A. Foster will help you navigate through your divorce options and zealously represent you through the process of your choice.

Contact attorney Stephanie A. Foster today to discuss your options.

**One option is traditional courtroom litigation.  
Another option is collaborative divorce.**

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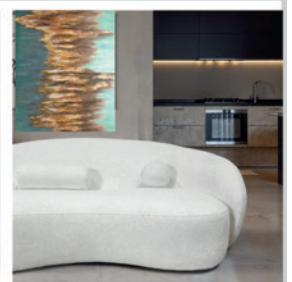


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# First Thursdays: By Locals, For Locals



**GARRET  
MARTIN**

First Thursdays started as a simple idea: what if Downtown came together once a month to activate the arts for one shared evening?

For years, we've talked about creating a walkable downtown. We've talked about the critical mass of folks living, working, and playing here. We've talked about the idea that if enough lights are on, enough doors are open, and enough people are moving at the same time, something different starts to happen. Energy builds, conversations overlap, then you run into someone you didn't expect to see.

First Thursdays have become that point of community connection where it all comes together.

Great places are always led by the arts. Downtown Arlington is no different. Between the Levitt Pavilion, Arlington Music Hall, Theatre Arlington, UTA's amazing arts facilities, Miss Persis Studio of Dance, Symphony Arlington, and the murals and sculptures on every street corner, it's who we are. As the state-designated Arlington Cultural District, First Thursdays was our way of putting our artistic identity into action.

One of my favorite parts of First Thursdays is how simple it is. It's an excuse to wander.

You start at one spot for live music. Then someone tells you there's a poetry reading down the street. A photographer group is gathering at another corner. There's a dance floor forming at a taqueria. And before you know it, you've walked a mile without realizing it.

That's the point.

I think about artists like Patrick Pombuena. Back in college, I hosted house shows at my place, and he graced the stage. They weren't raging parties, just people packed into a living room, listening closely, supporting local talent. The neighbors brought cookies. First Thursdays feels like that same spirit, just scaled up to a district. It's still intimate. It's still personal. And Patrick just happens to be playing in a storefront instead of my living room.

Then there's the bravery of stepping into a drum circle on a street corner. You may never have touched a bongo in your life, but there's an instructor there, and your friends laughing beside you. Not everyone is a drummer. But when the vibes are good, and the group feels safe, you see people get into the groove. You see strangers clap for each other.

Or how about the Arlington Camera photowalks. A group of photographers walking downtown

together, looking at familiar streets through a different lens. Literally! It's a reminder that our city is worth paying attention to.

First Thursdays gives people permission to see Arlington differently.

## A Growing Commitment

This year, we were honored to receive a season sponsorship from Medical City Arlington. Their belief in this effort means a lot.

As Matthew Eiserloh, Director of Communications & Community Engagement at Medical City Arlington, shared:

"As we celebrate 50 years of serving Arlington in 2026, we are incredibly proud to support the Downtown Arlington business community — a vibrant network that plays such an important role in the strength and vitality of our city. Our commitment to this community extends far beyond this sponsorship. From being named a Healthgrades Top 100 Hospital to investing \$144 million into our hospital to expand and enhance care, we continue to demonstrate our dedication to delivering exceptional healthcare close to home. Medical City Arlington has grown alongside this community for five decades, and we remain deeply committed to its health, prosperity and future."

For us, that partnership reinforces something we've always believed: a healthy downtown and a healthy community go hand in hand. We're grateful to Medical City Arlington, the City of Arlington, and all the folks who've come together to make this possible.

## What People Are Saying - What do First Thursdays mean to you?

"Community! I love that we can get on our bikes and ride around, seeing different businesses joining in with each other. Makes it feel like a tighter community, makes it more home." - Clint S.

"First Thursdays are a great way to see downtown Arlington in a brand new light, and visit many places you drive by all the time when you're too busy to stop." - Bryan W.

"My young adult daughter and I love First Thursdays!! It's a great way to discover new businesses and a good excuse to hang out together... She's new 'back in town,' and the specials and incentives are a great way for her to experience new Arlington!" - Carrie W.

"I love the diversity of our amazing city that is on full display during First Thursdays! Retired folks, young families, college kids, and more are all

walking around experiencing downtown in a new or different way. People are building connections through art and creativity while supporting businesses. It really showcases what makes Arlington special!" - Ellen V., First Thursday host at Wondrous Works in Wood

"It's a wonderful evening to bring the community together. I love being able to pick my son up and head straight to the activities. Starting as early as 5:30pm means we can enjoy everything, grab dinner downtown, and still stay on schedule for bath and bedtime. I really appreciate the variety and family-friendly options." - Catherine L.

First Thursdays isn't complicated.

It's about reinforcing Downtown Arlington as a cultural destination in a way that people can feel. It is about giving artists a platform. It's about helping businesses grow. It's about creating a critical mass of open doors and open minds.

Most of all, it's about giving Arlington an excuse to walk around and be a part of the arts.

If you have not experienced it yet, come see for yourself. Start at one place. Then wander. **A**

*Garret Martin is Vice President of Downtown Arlington Management Corporation.*



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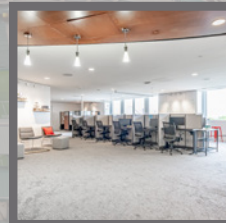
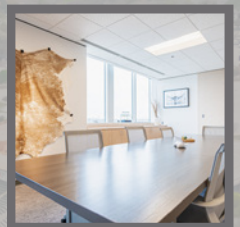
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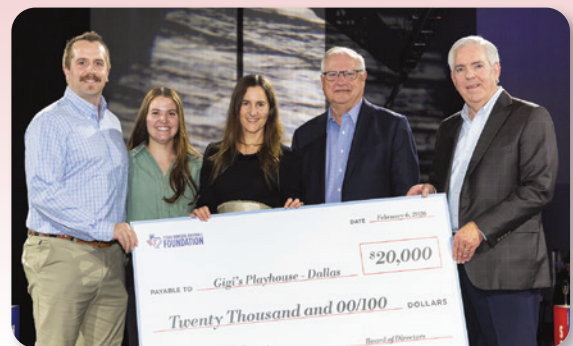
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*Daughter of  
Shannon & Patrick Reilly*

The 66th Annual Cinderella Charity Ball, presented by the Ladies' Auxiliary, will take place April 4th at the Loews Arlington Hotel. Cocktails will be served at 5:30 pm, followed by dinner and presentation of the candidates at 7:00 pm. As Arlington's oldest continuing social charitable event, the Cinderella Charity Ball raises money to support the Arlington branches of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County. The event has raised more than \$16 million to date. Last year's candidates raised \$789,429.11 with Reese Reilly raising \$133,360.23, earning her the title of Miss Cinderella 2025.

*Introducing the 2026 Miss Cinderella candidates –*



*Hala Ibrahim Abdallah*  
Martin High School – Junior



*Brittany Ann Allman*  
Lamar High School – Sophomore



*Tatianna Marie Beeman-Willis*  
Arlington High School – Sophomore



*Kaitlyn Grace Bush*  
Martin High School – Junior



*Sloane Adyson Cabral*  
Arlington High School – Sophomore



*Milly Frances Chambers*  
Grace Preparatory Academy – Junior



*Ryleigh Brooke Ingram*  
Venture High School – Junior



*Lillian Hayden Kirk*  
Arlington High School – Junior



*Hannah Grace Kirkbride*  
Martin High School – Junior



*Jocelyn Ann Mayo*  
Nolan Catholic High School – Sophomore



*Claire Diane Novoselsky*  
Arlington High School – Junior



*Canela Rose Oliva*  
Arlington High School – Junior



*Isha Vinitkumar Patel*  
Lamar High School – Sophomore



*Sophie Hong-On Pham*  
Martin High School – Junior



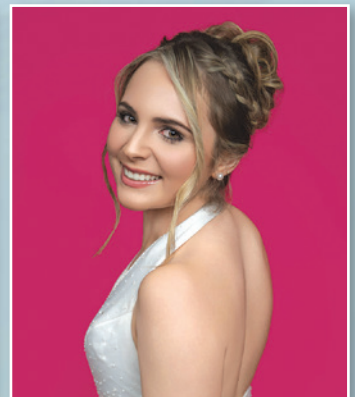
*Sofia Alexa Romero*  
Arlington High School – Junior



*Madelyn Rose Stewart*  
Martin High School – Junior



*Madilyn Rose Swanson*  
Pantego Christian Academy – Sophomore



*Cassidy Mae Tucker*  
The Oakridge School – Sophomore

# City of Arlington Kicks Off Tree Planting Initiative to Celebrate 150 Years

The City of Arlington has much to celebrate this year, including its 150th anniversary and the lasting benefits of hosting the largest sporting events in the world, FIFA World Cup 2026™. To commemorate these historic milestones, the Arlington Parks, Recreation & Culture Department has set a goal of planting and distributing a total of 1,800 trees, or an average of 150 per month, in honor of the City's sesquicentennial celebration.

These native and adapted tree species will be planted across the 99-square-mile city during optimal seasons to ensure their long-term health and survival. This ambitious initiative will unfold through a mix of community tree giveaways, new plantings in parks and public spaces, and strategic replacement trees in parks, medians, and other public spaces across the city.

Tree plantings kicked off earlier this year in street medians, followed by the planting of 17 trees at J.W. Dunlop Park in North Arlington on Tuesday, Feb. 24. The public park, located at 1500 NW Green Oaks Blvd., saw new Texas

Redbud, Desert Willow, Brodie Juniper and Sweetgum trees added.

Arlington's green initiative will continue with a special tree planting event from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 27, 2026, near the new "Heartfulness" sculpture at the Dr. Robert Cluck Linear Park, 1600 E. Randol Mill Road. This event will be hosted in collaboration with partners from FIFA and the North Texas FWC Organizing Committee.

On Nov. 6, 2026, the City will cap off this milestone year with a Sesquicentennial Tree Planting event in Downtown in celebration of Texas Arbor Day. This event includes plans for a Legacy Tree to take root in Founders Plaza, near Levitt Pavilion Arlington.

Information about upcoming tree planting events, community giveaways, and volunteer opportunities will be posted on [www.arlingtontx.gov](http://www.arlingtontx.gov) and shared on the City's social media channels. Join us in growing forward and celebrating Arlington's green legacy!

For event updates, follow @cityofarlington on Facebook, Instagram, and X, and subscribe to the City's newsletter by adding your email address at [www.arlingtontx.gov/enews](http://www.arlingtontx.gov/enews). For story ideas, historical photos, or to contribute a memory, contact [news@arlingtontx.gov](mailto:news@arlingtontx.gov).



## 175 Years of Stories at Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds

Join us at Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds (600 West Arkansas) as we honor and celebrate this historic burial ground, deeply significant to Arlington's history. In conjunction with the city's 150th anniversary, the Memorial Grounds will mark its own 175th anniversary with a special event on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 11am-2pm.

Visitors are invited to join guided tours or explore the grounds individually. Parking is available on the east side of the cemetery or across the street in the park. We look forward to seeing you there!



## From Italy to France: A Timeless Concerts Event

Experience an intimate evening of French and Italian masterpieces featuring music by Debussy, Ravel, Respighi, and Gaubert. The performance showcases a talented ensemble of strings, piano, flute, and operatic vocals.

### Event Dates & Locations

**Arlington:** April 11, 8 PM | River Legacy Nature Center

Highlights: Recital-style seating (80 seats), complimentary drinks/snacks, and post-concert mingling.

**Fort Worth:** April 18, 8 PM | Holt Hickman Center

Highlights: Hour-long concert followed by a request-based piano party with Simon Petty. Table seating available; complimentary bites/drinks provided (BYOB allowed).

### Ticket Information

General: \$40 | Senior: \$35

Students/Teachers (K-12): \$15

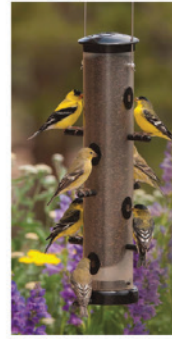
Youth (Ages 11–High School): Free (Reservation required; not recommended for under 11).

Fort Worth Tables: \$97 (Private for 2) | \$350 (Private for 10).

Book Now: [www.timelessconcerts.com](http://www.timelessconcerts.com)



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**MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>**  
**JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>**  
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**AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>**  
**OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>**  
**NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>**

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# Edward Rickenbacker: The High-Speed Origins of a World War Hero

by Kali Schick

How many of us remember our first car ride? For most of us, it was likely to come home from the hospital as a newborn. But for teenage Edward Rickenbacker, his first ride in a car was life-changing. Today, Rickenbacker is best known as America's Ace of Aces from World War I, but the daring pilot started his career as an engineer, mechanic, and racecar driver.

Born in October of 1890 in Columbus, Ohio, Rickenbacker was the third of eight children. His parents, William and Elizabeth, both born in Switzerland, met in Columbus. When Rickenbacker was three years old, they moved into a small home William built for the family. The Rickenbackers (Edward changed the spelling during World War I) grew vegetables and raised goats for milk. Money was tight, but every member of the family worked hard to contribute.

When Rickenbacker was a teenager, two events had a significant impact on the course of his life: his father died when Rickenbacker was 13, and he rode in an automobile for the first time a few years later. Reacting to his father's death and the financial hardship the family faced, 13-year-old Rickenbacker quit seventh grade and got a job at a glass factory. When that job lost its appeal, he moved on to the next. For a few years, Rickenbacker jumped from job to job. Although he needed to provide for his family, Rickenbacker saw work as a form of continued education.

By 1906, Rickenbacker was working for Lee Frayer, an innovator in the development of automobiles and engines. When Frayer learned Rickenbacker was taking a correspondence course in mechanics and engineering, he pulled him off his shop cleaning duties. Frayer gave Rickenbacker hands-on learning, moving him from department to department at his factory. In 1906, Frayer took Rickenbacker to New York as his mechanic and assistant driver for the Vanderbilt Cup. Their car broke down in the elimination round, but Rickenbacker was hooked.

When Frayer left his own company to work for the Columbus Buggy Company, which was shifting from horse-drawn buggies to "horseless carriages," Rickenbacker went with him. He had already proven himself as a natural with machines and a reliable problem-solver. Rickenbacker continued to race with Frayer until

1913, when he began racing on his own. Between 1913 and 1916, Rickenbacker participated in 42 major racing events, winning 7. Auto racing at the time was dangerous, and engineers like Rickenbacker used races to test everything from engines to tires.

World War I resulted in a slowdown of auto racing in the United Kingdom, although car companies continued refining the technology as they built vehicles for the military. In late 1916, Sunbeam Motor Car Company invited Rickenbacker to London to view their cars to race in the United States. The trip went awry when an English police officer assumed the young man traveling under the last name Rickenbacher was potentially a German spy. Though he never fully convinced the British otherwise, he was allowed to meet with Sunbeam.

Forced to return to the United States in February 1917 without a racecar as the relationship between the US and Germany began to break down, Rickenbacker returned home with a new passion—flying. An attempt to build a flying squadron composed of racecar drivers as pilots was rejected by the Army, but in May, Rickenbacker (who had changed the spelling of his name in part due to his experience in England) was recruited as a driver for the Army. Quickly inducted and sent to Europe, Rickenbacker began driving Army and Army Air Services (the predecessor to the Army Air Corps) officers.

One of those officers was General Billy Mitchell, who was in command of the American air units. Rickenbacker desperately wanted to fly, but at 27, he was two years over the age limit and, having quit school in seventh grade, considered undereducated. Not one to easily take no for an answer, Rickenbacker advocated for himself until he was allowed to undergo pilot training. After just 17 days of lessons, Rickenbacker was an Army Air Services pilot.

Over the course of seven months in 1917, Rickenbacker completed fifty combat missions and was credited with 26 aerial victories. Both statistics made him the leading pilot of his unit, the 94th Aero Squadron. It also made him an ace, five times over. A familiar name in the American press due to his racing career, Rickenbacker gained renewed fame as America's "Ace of



Edward Rickenbacker

Image courtesy of the National Archives

Aces." His record of 26 aerial victories was not broken until early 1944.

Returning from the war a highly decorated pilot with eight Distinguished Services Crosses and various foreign awards, Rickenbacker never returned to auto racing. His postwar career was a series of business adventures, including his own car company and eventually an airline. In 1927, he bought the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, where he had once raced. Rickenbacker kept the track running through the Great Depression, but World War II forced the track to shutter, and he sold it in 1945. Among his many accomplishments was becoming a Medal of Honor Recipient in 1930, when President Herbert Hoover presented him the Medal for one of his daring World War I flights.

Rickenbacker died in Switzerland in 1973 at the age of 82. As he grew older, he estimated that he had had 135 close calls with death, including a plane crash that left him and others adrift in the Pacific Ocean for 24 days during World War II. Rickenbacker had as many failures in life as successes, but lived by the idea that you should "try like hell to win, but don't cry if you lose."

Kali Schick is Senior Historian, National Medal of Honor Museum

# Loews Hotels in Arlington is Off to the Races

The Java House Grand Prix of Arlington is set for March 13-15, 2026, featuring a full weekend of world-class racing and entertainment. The street circuit will come racing down the front drive of Loews Hotels in Arlington, the official hotel partner of the race. Guests are invited to fuel up and cool down with IndyCar themed cocktails and race-weekend dining specials:



## Loews Arlington Hotel – THE | BAR COCKTAILS

*The Grand Prix Lavender Drop Martini* | Empress 1908, Cointreau, Lavender Syrup

*Speedway Mezcalita* | Los Siete Mezcal, Agave Nectar, Triple Sec

*Victory Lap French 75* | Glendalough Rose, Jeio Bisol Rose, Elderflower

*Turbocharged Boulevardier* | Michter's US1, Campari, Vermouth

*Pit Stop Paloma* | Don Julio Private Cask, Coconut Cream, Pineapple, Fever Tree Sparkling Pink Grapefruit

## BITES

*Smoked Brisket Sandwich* | House TX BBQ Sauce, Cole Slaw, French Fries

*Loaded Baked Potato* | Chopped Burnt End Brisket, Cheddar, Sour Cream, Scallion, Whipped Butter

*Signature TX Chili Bowl* | All Natural Ground Beef, Sour Cream, Scallion, Cheddar, Chopped Red Onion

## Live! by Loews - Arlington – Bar Bourbon

### COCKTAILS

*Running on Fumes* | Java House Espresso martini mix, TX Blended Whiskey, Coffee Liqueur, Hazelnut, Caramel Cold Foam

*Slipstream Shandy* | Garrison Brothers HoneyDew Whiskey, Shiners "Off Road" IPA

*Ghost Lap* | Clear Negroni, Roku Gin, Lillet Blanc, Salers

*Sixth Gear Martini* | Hendricks Gin, Aperol, Italicus Bergamot, Lemon, Raspberry

For fans looking to stay in the heart of the action, Live! by Loews - Arlington and Loews Arlington Hotel will serve as the official hospitality hubs. Guests will enjoy upscale resort accommodations steps from the track, exclusive race-weekend experiences, and ten unique dining and entertainment options, all within Arlington's premier sports and entertainment district.



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- Two bottles of wine at the table
- One room with valet parking at the Arlington Loew's Hotel
- Large logo displayed throughout night of event, as well as in online and print materials
- Eight wristbands to Exclusive VIP Reception before event

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## Salsa Sponsor

- Eight seats at Tier 1 prime seating
- Two bottles of wine at the table
- Logo displayed throughout night of event, as well as in online and print materials
- Eight wristbands to Exclusive VIP Reception before event

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## Twist-n-Shout Sponsor

- Eight seats at Tier 2 prime seating
- Sponsor name displayed throughout night of event, as well as online and print materials

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## Rhumba Sponsor

- Six seats at Tier 2 prime seating
- Sponsor name displayed throughout night of event, as well as online and print materials

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**Advocates  
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People**

*Brittney Garcia-Damas*



**Mission  
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*Cameron Haddad*



**River Legacy  
Foundation**



**The AWARE  
Foundation**

*Kristy Kundysch*



**Miracle League of  
Arlington**

*Lauren Kerschen*



**Open Arms Health  
Clinic**

*Dr. Moody Alexander*



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*Paige Payne-Neal*



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*Raul H. Gonzalez*



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*Larry Mike and Sarah McMurrough*



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## Judge's Table Sponsor

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21 Anything Goes

# APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR LEADERSHIP ARLINGTON CLASS OF 2027

## *Two Mother–Daughter Pairs Reflect on the Generational Impact of Leadership Arlington*

**ARLINGTON, TEXAS** – Leadership Arlington is now accepting applications for the Youth and Adult Class of 2027, with the application window closing soon. Community members interested in deepening their civic engagement and leadership capacity are encouraged to apply at [LeadershipArlingtonTX.org](http://LeadershipArlingtonTX.org).

As Arlington continues to grow in influence and complexity, Leadership Arlington remains one of the city's most established pathways for cultivating informed, connected leaders. The nine-month immersion program brings together individuals from across sectors to explore Arlington from the inside out, strengthening the relationships and understanding that drive long-term community impact.

### **A SHARED LEADERSHIP JOURNEY ACROSS GENERATIONS**

Leadership often shapes a city from boardrooms and council chambers. This year in Arlington, it also shaped two families.

For the 2026 program year, Leadership Arlington welcomed two mother-daughter pairs participating simultaneously in the Youth and Adult classes.

For Lydia Fain and her mother, Giana Ortiz, the decision began with simple curiosity. Lydia, a high school student eager to expand her horizons, was looking for an opportunity to meet students from across Arlington and better understand the city she has grown up in. When she applied, Giana followed, seeing the program as a chance to invest in her own growth while supporting her daughter's emerging leadership journey.

Across town, Brynn Duncan had long planned to apply to Youth Leadership Arlington after watching her brother complete the program two years earlier. Through his experience, her mother, Mari Duncan, came to understand the impact of the Adult program and realized that participating alongside Brynn would be a meaningful way to model engagement and growth in real time.

The experience begins with a retreat at Camp Thurman, where participants step outside their comfort zones to build trust, discover strengths, and lay the groundwork for the months ahead. While the Youth and Adult cohorts meet separately, both families describe how the program naturally extended into their homes.

For Brynn and Mari, the Gallup Strengths session was a turning point. Learning each other's top five strengths—where they overlapped and where they differed—sparked conversations that deepened mutual respect and understanding. Leadership was

no longer an abstract concept. It became personal.

For Lydia and Giana, the shared rhythm of learning about Arlington at the same time has been especially meaningful. "Being in Leadership Arlington together has been a rare and meaningful shared experience for us," they reflected. In the rhythm of everyday life, weekday commitments rarely overlap. "This program has given us intentional time to reflect on similar themes and connect in a deeper way than we would have had otherwise."

Both families describe seeing Arlington differently now.

Students who once viewed the city primarily through school hallways and familiar neighborhoods now recognize the layers of leadership that keep it running—public safety, education, healthcare, business, nonprofit work, and local government. Both parents gained a renewed appreciation for how interconnected those systems truly are, and a stronger sense of responsibility to engage thoughtfully in the city's future.

Perhaps most striking is how leadership has become a more natural conversation at home.

Brynn and Mari speak openly about what it means to be strong, confident women, and how leadership shows up in everyday decisions. Lydia and Giana echo a similar insight: effective leadership begins not with having all the answers, but with listening; asking thoughtful questions, seeking context, and showing up consistently.

Leadership Arlington is not simply a leadership course. It is a long-term investment in Arlington's next generation of informed, engaged leaders... who sometimes happen to be within the same family.

### **STRENGTHENING THE PIPELINE OF ARLINGTON'S FUTURE LEADERS**

For business owners, executives, and community leaders, Leadership Arlington offers a structured opportunity to deepen knowledge of Arlington's ecosystem while building relationships across industries. For students, it provides early exposure to civic leadership and a broader understanding of their role in shaping the city's future.

Leadership Arlington is currently accepting applications for the Youth and Adult Class of 2027. Community members are encouraged to apply soon at [LeadershipArlingtonTX.org](http://LeadershipArlingtonTX.org) before the application deadline closes.


### **ABOUT LEADERSHIP ARLINGTON**

Leadership Arlington is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop the next generation of community leaders. As a distinctive charitable model, tuition raised through the adult program fully funds Youth Leadership Arlington. As a result, the youth program is completely free, ensuring that high school students from across Arlington have access to transformational civic education regardless of financial circumstance.

Apply for the Youth and Adult Class of 2027 at [LeadershipArlingtonTX.org](http://LeadershipArlingtonTX.org).



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# Loews Hotels & Co Announces Americana by Loews Hotels in Arlington, Texas

*The company's third hotel in the Entertainment District of Arlington marks a milestone for Loews as a developer, owner, and operator.*

**ARLINGTON, TEXAS (January 22, 2026)** - Loews Hotels & Co, a wholly owned subsidiary of Loews Corporation (NYSE: L), and a branded owner, operator, and developer, today announces plans for Americana by Loews Hotels – Arlington, TX, its third hotel in Arlington, Texas' Entertainment District, reinforcing the company's long-term belief in the destination and its continued growth as a premier meetings, events, and entertainment hub.

Set to replace the existing Sheraton Arlington Hotel, Americana by Loews Hotels represents a significant evolution for the market and for the brand. A "ground-shaking" event, where the existing hotel will be demolished, is planned for early June, marking the official start of construction on the new Americana by Loews Hotel this summer.

Americana by Loews Hotels will be the brand's 28th property, and its name pays tribute to the iconic Americana Hotel in Bal Harbour, Florida — a Loews landmark that opened in 1956. The term "Americana" embodies the spirit of American hospitality, a hallmark of Loews Hotels for decades. This new, contemporary addition to the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex is designed to honor the past, embrace the present, and shape the future: celebrating Loews' rich heritage in

refined hospitality, joining two existing world-class properties in Arlington's Sports and Entertainment District today, and creating a best-in-class destination for tomorrow's travelers.

"This project reflects our strong belief in Arlington as a dynamic destination and our confidence in its continued growth," said Alex Tisch, President and Chief Executive Officer of Loews Hotels & Co. "Americana by Loews Hotels honors our heritage while looking ahead, bringing together scale, service excellence, and design to support group and leisure travelers alike. As our third hotel in Arlington, it also marks an important milestone for Loews as owner, operator, and developer."

The hotel will feature 507 guest rooms, including 39 suites, and standard room sizes ranging from 350 to 400 square feet. Designed with meetings and events at its core, the property will offer more than 83,000 square feet of total indoor and outdoor meeting and event space, including a 10,000-square-foot, Event Barn, positioning it as a premier destination for large-scale gatherings.

Meeting and Event Highlights Include:  
 Interior Meeting Space - 44,789 SF Total  
 Grand Ballroom: 17,337 SF

Event Barn: 10,000 SF  
 Junior Ballroom: 6,808 SF  
 Breakout Rooms: 10,644 SF  
 Pre-function space: ~24,000 SF (excluded from total)  
 Exterior Meeting Space - 38,651 SF Total  
 Event Lawn: 23,820 SF  
 Pool Terrace: 7,633 SF  
 Junior Ballroom Terrace: 2,760 SF  
 Three-Meal Terrace: 2,272 SF  
 Grand Ballroom & Boardroom Terrace: 2,168 SF

Americana by Loews Hotels – Arlington, TX deepens the company's presence in the Arlington market and reinforces its strategy to invest in destinations where it can deliver long-term value for guests, partners, and the surrounding community. With the opening of the third hotel, the Loews Hotels & Co campus in Arlington will have a total of 1,695 guest rooms and more than 374,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space.

For more information about Loews Hotels & Co or to book your upcoming travel, call 1-800-23-LOEWS or visit Loews Hotels online.

# A NIGHT WITH THE STARS CELEBRATING DEBUTANTE EXCELLENCE

The Arlington Foundation for Excellence in Education (AFEE), in collaboration with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Xi Theta Omega Chapter, proudly concluded the 2025 Debutante season. Since its inception in 1991, the Debutante Program has served as a signature initiative dedicated to cultivating excellence, leadership, and service among young ladies.

Last May, 22 exceptional participants embarked on a transformative six-month journey centered on personal development and community engagement. Through a series of enriching workshops, the Debutantes explored topics such as mental health, personal branding, scholarship essay writing, hair care, and etiquette. They also dedicated numerous hours to meaningful service projects, including writing letters to seniors, distributing school supplies at AISD's Back to School Bash, packing snack bags for CHIPP to address childhood hunger, assisting at the XTO Arlington 5K Run/Walk, and collecting toiletries and bags for children in foster care through the Rainbow Room.

The 2025 season was marked by two signature events: the Mother-Daughter Tea - "Reawakening Fashion" in June and the Pearl Ceremony - "A Green Carpet Affair" in October. The culminating event, the Debutante Ball: "A Night With the Stars," was an elegant celebration of the participants' achievements and a major fundraiser supporting AFEE's scholarship mission.

The program awarded more than \$39,000 in scholarships, recognizing excellence in academics, community service, fundraising, and congeniality. Honorees included: • Miss Debutante 2025: Christen Anderson • 1st Runner-Up: Addisyn Richard • 2nd Runner-Up: Morgan Shelby • Kamaria Satcher Warrior Princess Scholarship Recipient: Addisyn Richard • Miss Congeniality: Neriyah Davison  
We are immensely proud of these poised young ladies and remain excited about their continued growth and success. We also extend heartfelt thanks to the volunteers, families, donors, and community partners who made this season extraordinary.

For those interested in joining next season's Debutante Program, female students in the Class of 2027 are invited to attend an informational Zoom meeting on March 21, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. For details, please contact Angela Richard, Vice President of Scholarships, at [scholarships@arlingtoneducation.org](mailto:scholarships@arlingtoneducation.org).

To ensure the continued success of this impactful and empowering program, as well as the many other educational initiatives supported by AFEE, we invite you to consider donating. With your support, local students can access vital resources that help them pursue their academic and personal aspirations.

To donate, please visit:

<https://www.arlingtoneducation.org/support-us>



# HOME SWEET! HOME



## MODERN COMFORT MEETS TEXAS CHARM

Welcome to 2237 Merritt Way in Arlington's sought-after Hunter Pointe community, a beautifully updated, single-story home that blends comfort, style, and everyday functionality in all the right ways.

With 2,317 square feet, 4 bedrooms, 2 full baths, and a dedicated office, this home offers a flexible layout that truly works for today's lifestyle. From the moment you arrive, the mature trees, manicured landscaping, and custom water features set a peaceful tone that continues throughout the property.

Inside, you'll find extensive updates and timeless finishes. The kitchen has been beautifully refreshed with custom cabinetry, granite countertops, a large island, breakfast bar, and updated appliances - all designed to make both everyday meals and entertaining effortless.

Granite continues into the bathrooms, where thoughtful updates create a cohesive

and elevated feel. The spacious primary suite offers a relaxing retreat, complete with a fully updated bath featuring dual sinks, a garden tub, a separate shower, and a walk-in closet.

The entire home features tile flooring, adding durability, easy maintenance, and a clean, polished look. The open living area with fireplace flows seamlessly into the kitchen and breakfast space, creating a warm and inviting setting for gathering with family and friends.

Step outside and you'll discover one of the home's standout features - a covered patio with a fully equipped outdoor kitchen complete with a Bull grill and refrigerator; perfect for year-round Texas entertaining. Three custom water features throughout the property add charm and a tranquil ambiance. The backyard also backs directly to the HOA greenbelt and includes a private gate for easy access, offering both privacy and additional space to enjoy.

Major system updates provide peace of mind and include a TRANE HVAC system installed in 2019, a new roof in 2016 with 30-year shingles, and a new water heater in 2019.

As part of the Hunter Pointe neighborhood, residents enjoy gated community amenities that include a pool, clubhouse, outdoor kitchen area, basketball court, playground, and beautifully maintained green spaces.

Located within Arlington ISD and convenient to shopping, dining, and major commuter routes, this home offers the perfect balance of privacy and accessibility.

2237 Merritt Way is more than just a home - it's a thoughtfully updated, move-in-ready retreat in a welcoming community ready for its next chapter. Schedule your private showing today by calling The Brandee Kelley Group at 817-635-1141.

*Photography by Robin Lee of DayDream Photography*



# Resolve to Ignore the Hype (But Embrace the Hope)



JOHN  
RHADIGAN

So what are your plans for New Year's Day? Do you have any resolutions? I know it seems like I am a little late to the party with these questions. But we live in Texas, where football is king, and on March 11 at 3:00 pm, the new NFL year begins. So, depending on when you are reading this, Happy New Year!

For Cowboys fans, you should resolve not to believe the hype. Many of you already have, but it doesn't hurt to double down on the resolution. Perhaps you can resolve to stay resolved. The Cowboys are so popular around the world and such a big television draw that each offseason, "experts" talk themselves into believing that this will finally be the year that the Cowboys get back to Super Bowl Glory. It won't be. I know that sounds harsh and blunt and negative, and that is no way to go through life, so let me offer this: Jerry Jones is dedicated to changing the way the Cowboys approach the offseason.

In fact, the philosophical switch has already begun. The hiring of Christian Parker as the defensive coordinator represents change. After finishing last in the NFL in total defense in 2013, Jerry got stuck in a rut as it pertained to hiring defensive bosses. Each of the coordinators had previous head coaching

experience, but none had sustained success in Dallas. Last year, with former Bears head coach Matt Eberflus at the helm, the team had the worst defense in the league. Maybe even worse than that, according to Stephen Jones at last month's NFL Combine. When asked about the defense, the Cowboys co-owner said, "You are what you are, and unfortunately, we were historically bad on the defensive side of the ball."

Offensively, the Cowboys are in great shape. Having already signed Javonte Williams to an extension, the to-do list is short: 1.) Restructure the contracts of Dak Prescott and CeeDee Lamb to create salary cap space. 2.) Sign George Pickens to a long-term deal or slap the franchise tag on him.

When Jerry Jones was talking about the changes the club is willing to make this offseason, he was, therefore, talking about the defense and the overall club philosophy. "Bottom line is this (offseason) is, yes, very important," Jones said. "They're right. We want to, while Dak (Prescott) is playing the game and got it down the way he's got it, we want to get out here and basically do better than what we did this year. So, a combination of those things gives us the incentive to, dare I say it, bust the budget to try to get something done now. Yes. Yes. We'll do some dramatic things."

As the previous NFL season ended, the Cowboys were 24 million dollars over the

salary cap. But restructuring contracts can create as much as \$100 million in room under the cap. When Jerry referred to "dramatic things," this is what he meant. In the past, the Cowboys have been reluctant to restructure too many contracts at once. In a way, they were saving some of the restructuring for a rainy day. But if Jerry is going to bust the budget, this is how it will be done. Something like if you or I max out our credit cards for a big purchase.

The bulk of that money will be spent on defense, obviously. Expect the Cowboys to be more active in the free agent market this offseason. The money must be spent wisely, but if it is, it can pay huge dividends. Last year, the two teams in the Super Bowl were both in the top five in free agent spending during the 2025 offseason. The Patriots were second, spending over \$214 million, and the Seahawks were fourth, north of \$191 million. The Cowboys were 17th on the list of spending, but had lots of money in that rainy day account.

There is also the draft to help restock the defense, and those players will not cost nearly as much. Perhaps next month we will spend some time looking at those possibilities. Until then, I remind you, don't believe the hype. But also remember you need to change only one letter in hype to come up with hope. **A**

*Sports columnist John Rhadigan is the host of The Rangers Podcast on DLS Sports.*





# Thank You!

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Provides emergency assistance for utilities, rent, and food for those in crisis in the Arlington community.



# Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County Celebrates Youth Leadership at 2026 Youth of the Year Gala, Honors Rotary Club of Fort Worth with Humanitarian Award, Unveils Centennial Logo

**FORT WORTH, Texas (Feb. 25, 2026)** – Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County (BGCCTC) welcomed community leaders, supporters and partners to the 2026 Youth of the Year Gala presented by BNSF Railway at Omni Fort Worth on Feb. 20. The event honored Ja'Miyah as the organization's 2026 Youth of the Year for the second year in a row, recognized the Rotary Club of Fort Worth as the recipient of the Dr. Robert & Sara Brown Humanitarian Award, and unveiled BGCCTC's 100th anniversary logo.

"No matter what background you have or what you're going through, you are loved and supported when you walk through those doors," said Ja'Miyah, BGCCTC's 2026 Youth of the Year. "I hope my story shows other kids that they, too, can accomplish great things if they believe in themselves."

The evening, hosted by 2020 Youth of the Year Torion Lewis, spotlighted the leadership, resilience and character of BGCCTC's Youth of the Year finalists while honoring a legacy that stretches back to 1926, when the Panther Boys Club first opened its doors in Fort Worth.

That history was brought to life during the centennial logo reveal — a defining moment in the program that connected past and present. As the organization reflected on 100 years of service, it honored the community champions who shaped the early movement, including the women who organized and sustained the Club in its formative years and the civic leaders who believed young people deserved a safe place to grow.

The impact of that belief became especially clear during times of national hardship. During World War II, young men who once walked through Club doors wrote letters back to branch directors while enemy planes droned overhead, thanking them for the mentorship, structure and encouragement they received as Club kids. Preserved in BGCCTC's archives, those letters tell the story of youth who carried lessons of leadership, discipline and character from Fort Worth into military service around the world.

"Through decades of change — from wartime uncertainty to expansion across North Texas and the inclusion of girls as the mission evolved —

one truth has remained constant: the Club has always been a steady, dependable home for young people," said Daphne Barlow, CEO and President of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County. "For a century, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County has been a place where kids find belonging, opportunity and adults who believe in their potential."

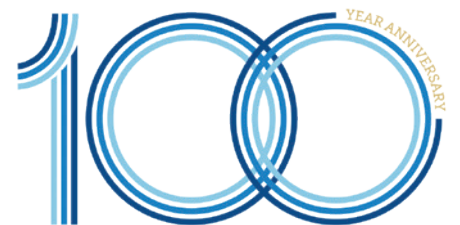
The Dr. Robert & Sara Brown Humanitarian Award, first presented in 1998, honors individuals and organizations whose service and leadership have made a lasting impact on Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County and the youth it serves. This year's award was presented to the Rotary Club of Fort Worth, recognizing the organization's foundational role in the history of Boys & Girls Clubs in the Fort Worth community. Ann Sheets, President of the Rotary Club of Fort Worth, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

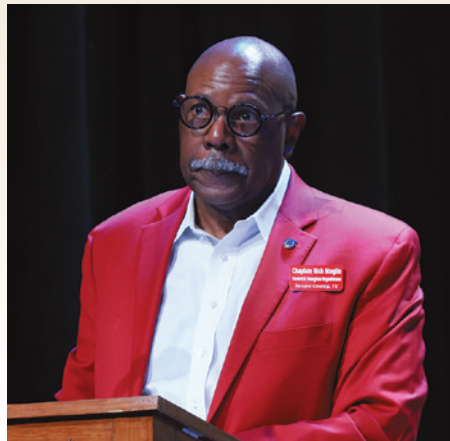
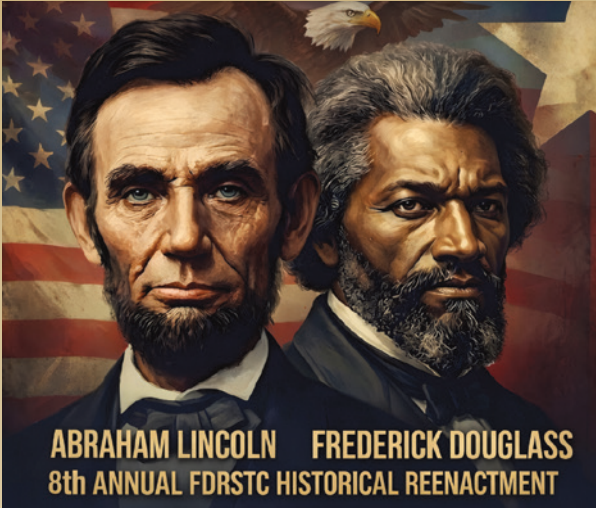
Youth of the Year is one of the most prestigious programs in the Boys & Girls Clubs Movement, recognizing teens who demonstrate academic success, leadership, service and strong character. Finalists complete months of mentorship, interviews, community service and public speaking development as part of the program. As the 2026 Youth of the Year, Ja'Miyah will advance to represent BGCCTC at the state level, serving as a youth ambassador for Club kids across Texas.

"Tonight, we celebrate young people who lead with courage and purpose, and we celebrate a community that has chosen, for 100 years, to show up for kids," said Barlow. "Our centennial year reflects on every young person who has walked through our doors, every mentor who has believed in them and every partner who has helped turn potential into possibility."

Proceeds from the gala support BGCCTC's mission to enable all young people, especially those who need the Club most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program or Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County's centennial year, visit [bgcctc.org](http://bgcctc.org).





# ARLINGTON-MANSFIELD AREA YMCA RELAUNCHES “PLAY DAYS” FOR SPRING 2026 WITH TRINITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*“Free, joy-filled play + connection to local resources returns to underserved Arlington neighborhoods”*

**Arlington, TX – February 23, 2026** – The Arlington-Mansfield Area YMCA (AMA YMCA) is relaunching Play Days this spring—an outreach initiative designed to bring kids the simple joy of being a kid, while connecting parents and caregivers to trusted community resources. Play Days is led through the YMCA’s Community Outreach efforts and is presented in partnership with the Trinity Community Foundation (TCF).

Play Days offers children in underserved Arlington and Mansfield communities a welcoming day of games, activities, and sports, along with a hot meal and groceries, and a chance for families to learn about support options such as food and rent assistance.

“Play is a great way to get parents out and connect them to the resources already here for their families,” said Bill Bowie of the Trinity Community Foundation. “When we lead with joy and relationships, we can open the door to real support.”

## Spring 2026 partners powering Play Days

This Spring 2026 relaunch is made possible through a growing network of organizations working together to strengthen families, including:

- Trinity Community Foundation
- Texas Health Resources
- Dental Health Arlington
- H.O.P.E. Tutoring
- The H.I.M. Center
- Arlington Charities
- Arlington Police Department
- Church 360

## 2026 Play Day Themes

Each month’s Play Days will spotlight a unique theme to inspire participation and community spirit:

- March – March Into Momentum: Momentum starts with me.
- April – Spring Into Action: New season. New goals.
- May – Family Fun & Community Heroes: Strong families. Strong community.
- June – Splash Into Summer: Safe. Strong. Summer ready.

These themes provide a framework for activities, engagement, and community discussions that resonate with families and reflect seasonal priorities.

## What to Expect

Play Days provide children in underserved Arlington and Mansfield communities with a welcoming space to play games, participate in activities, and enjoy light meals, while volunteers and partner organizations share information about community services—such as food assistance, oral health resources, tutoring and more—that families may not otherwise discover.

## Call to Action

Support for Play Days directly fuels the AMA YMCA’s outreach efforts in Arlington and Mansfield. Individuals and organizations can make a financial contribution at [amaymca.org/give](http://amaymca.org/give).

Those interested in volunteering at Play Days or becoming a community partner are invited to contact Joseph Williams at [JosephW@amaymca.org](mailto:JosephW@amaymca.org) to get involved.



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Arlington Mayor  
Jeff Williams

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# Arlington Classics Academy Youth & Government Program Celebrates Record-Setting State Conference

**Arlington, TX** — Arlington Classics Academy's Youth & Government delegation concluded a record-setting State Conference, making this the most successful year for ACA at the state level. Competing among approximately 450 student-authored bills statewide, ACA students earned top honors, demonstrated exceptional leadership, and achieved a rare legislative milestone.

Arlington Classics Academy was named a Premier Delegation, recognizing the collective excellence of its students throughout the conference. In addition, Braelyn Januta was honored as Outstanding Club Leader, acknowledging her leadership and commitment to the program.

A highlight of the conference was ACA's first-ever signed bill, House Bill 33, authored by Sofia Gonzalez and sponsored by Ashley Simou. Titled "An Act to Decrease the Price of Adoption and Declaring an Emergency," the bill successfully advanced through District Conference, State

Committee debate, both legislative chambers, and ultimately received final approval by the Governor. Of the hundreds of bills introduced across the state, only four reached signed legislation this year.

Additional student honors further reflected the strength of the ACA delegation. Genevieve Strawn, Suenan Cazier, and Delaney Farmer were recognized as Distinguished Delegates for their contributions to state committee debate. Sultana Mirza and Sofia Gonzalez were named a Distinguished Chair and Clerk Team, honored for their professionalism and leadership in committee proceedings.

"This season represents the most successful year our Youth & Government program has ever experienced," said program leaders Matt Baltensperger and Brandi Borougerdi. "That success belongs to the students who worked together, prepared thoroughly, and represented Arlington Classics Academy with integrity and excellence."



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### Spring in the Garden

Celebrate the start of spring with the free Spring in the Garden event at the Lake Arlington Native Plant and Pollinator Garden! Enjoy guided tours of the five large demonstration beds featuring drought-tolerant Texas native plants, pick and pot two free native landscaping plants (while supplies last), get spring planting tips from Tarrant County Master Gardeners, learn how to support pollinators from Arlington Bee City USA experts, participate in fun nature-based activities for kids, and meet Splash, the Arlington Water Utilities leak detection K-9.

March 21 • 11am-1pm • 5500 Lake Arlington Dr.

### What's Going There?

The City of Arlington launched "What's Going There, Arlington?", a new video series showcasing new businesses, restaurants, parks, and experiences across the city. The debut episode highlights:

- **Mama Cuca's** (authentic Mexican) now open at Urban Union, Downtown
- **The Original Roy Hutchins Barbeque** opening March 2026 on E. Copeland Rd.
- **Caravan Court Hotel** (boutique, retro-modern) debuting May 2026 in the Entertainment District
- **DICK'S House of Sport** (120,000 sq ft interactive sports store with climbing wall, golf simulators, and more) opening summer 2026 at Parks Mall
- **Al Rollins Park** opening late summer 2026 next to Southwest Branch Library
- New **Chipotle** with drive-thru opening Feb. 25 at 1537 W. Randol Mill Rd.
- Upcoming **7 Leaves Café** at 1430 S. Cooper St. and **McDonald's** at 4801 W. Pioneer Pkwy.

Search "What's Going There" at [arlingtontx.gov](http://arlingtontx.gov) for more episodes on Arlington's growth!

### ENDS THIS MONTH!



Features costumes and jewelry from film adaptations of two of Jane Austen's most iconic works and highlights Regency-era fashion and its significance in literature and film. Admission is free.

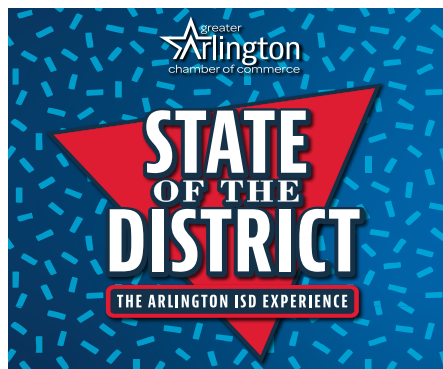
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March 7 vs Colorado Rapids 2 - 7:30pm

April 10 vs Sporting KC II - 7:30pm

Choctaw Stadium



March 26 • 11am-1:30pm

AISD Center for Visual & Performing Arts  
Register at [arlingtontx.com](http://arlingtontx.com)



### MARCH BOOK CLUBS

The Grim Readers – 3/9 • 7pm

*Cutting Teeth* by Chandler Baker

Ron Wright Lake Arlington Community Room

Southwest Morning Reading Group –

3/11 • 11am

*The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post*

by Allison Pataki

Southwest Branch Library Community Room

Good Grounds Book Club – 3/18 • 11am

Bring any book and enjoy coffee

Woodland West Branch Library Community Room

Texas Authors Book Club –

3/19 • 6:30pm

*Big Woods* by May Cobb

Fielder House Museum, 1616 W. Abram St.

Southwest Spine Crackers – 3/19 • 7pm

*The House in the Pines* by Ana Reyes

Southwest Branch Library Community Room

Silent Book Club – 3/28 • 11am-1pm

Bring any book and enjoy refreshments

Savor Coffee Bar, 1101 E. Bardin Rd. #101

Kutub: Arabic Book Club – 4/4 • 1-4pm

Discuss what you've read. Learn Arabic calligraphy afterward.

George W. Hawkes Downtown Library Resilience Room

### Opening Day is Near!



April 3-5 vs Cincinnati Reds

4/3 – Opening Day Magnet Schedule

4/4 – Dot Race Results Bobblehead

April 6-8 vs Seattle Mariners

4/6 – Chenille Crewneck

4/8 – Retro Ceramic Bobblehead



Pop art crafts, board games, and other activities for creative teens.

March 28 • 6-8pm

Arlington Museum of Art

Register at

[benevolate.com/display\\_form?id=288](http://benevolate.com/display_form?id=288)

# Mansfield ISD Board of Trustees Votes Dr. Tiffanie Spencer as New Superintendent

On Tuesday, Feb. 24, the Mansfield ISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to hire Dr. Tiffanie Spencer as the next superintendent of the district. A standing-room only crowd gave Dr. Spencer a huge round of applause and took photos as she signed her new contract.

Dr. Spencer thanked God, her family and her support system for helping her reach this point in her career and said she is excited to get to work.

“I’m going to lead with heart, and my focus is our people—students first, our staff and our Mansfield ISD community,” said Dr. Spencer. “We have great leaders who have come before us, and they set the foundation. I believe in Vision 2030, and its requirement of continuous improvement, but part of continuous improvement is moving. As an organization...as a person, you can’t stay the same that you were yesterday. The world is still moving. As a district, we are going to move in the same direction together. We’re going to grow together.”

The district held a meet-and-greet reception, at the Dr. Jim Vaszauskas Center for the Performing Arts to formally welcome Dr. Spencer into her new role. Key members of the community and the district were there to honor her. The room was filled with family, friends and former coworkers who’ve known Dr. Spencer through the years.

Prior to being named superintendent, Dr. Spencer served MISD as Area Superintendent of Accountability and Special Populations in the Curriculum and Instruction Department.

Throughout her career as a teacher, principal and area superintendent, Dr. Spencer has focused on strengthening academic outcomes, supporting educators, and building collaborative partnerships with families and communities. Her leadership approach emphasizes transparency, continuous improvement, and student-centered decision-making.

“Dr. Spencer has consistently demonstrated a clear vision for student success, a deep respect for educators, and a strong alignment with the values of

the Mansfield ISD community,” said Board President Dr. Benita Reed. “We are confident her leadership will help advance our district’s mission and ensure continued excellence for our students and families.”

Dr. Spencer grew up in Mansfield and attended the district from third grade through graduation from Mansfield High School. She graduated from the University of Houston with her undergraduate degree, earned her Ed.D. from Texas A&M Commerce, and received a superintendent’s certificate from The University of Texas at Tyler.

Dr. Spencer’s official first day as Mansfield ISD’s new superintendent is Sunday, March 1.



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# Save the Date. Every Month!

# ALL IN THE FAMILY



by Mike Ames / Photos by Mike Ames

Woody and Marsha are driving their dream car, a virtually brand-new 1956 Buick Roadmaster convertible. Their story is one of coincidence in a close family that expanded to include a son-in-law who would make that dream car a reality.

Woody and Marsha Davis were thrilled 16 years ago when their oldest daughter, Laura, announced her marriage plans. And the good news continued when the son-in-law-to-be shared Woody's passion for cars. More than that, the new family member is Paul Gale, renowned restoration genius and the driving force behind BIG DADDY'S CUSTOM CARS in Azle.

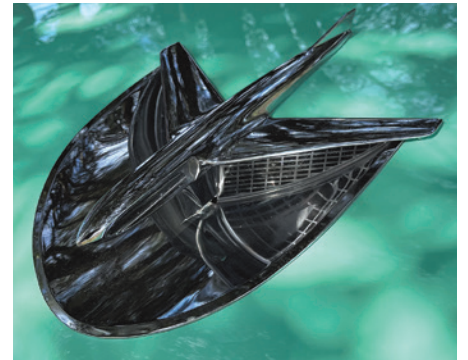
Paul's personal journey is a story in itself. A successful career in general contracting that he left because his real passion is building ... not commercial properties ... but cars. Disappointed in the shop that was working on one of his treasures, Paul decided he could do a better job, and Big Daddy's was born. His work has received the highest honors in the "car hobby." Paul's big heart and philanthropy are as legendary and special as the work that emerges from his shop.

The connection between these two families by marriage has resulted in an extended family that has drawn even closer because Paul wanted to show his love and appreciation to his wife's parents. Paul's private plan began when he learned that a '56 Roadmaster "rag top" was number one on his father-in-law's dream car list. Maybe he could find one and restore it as a

personal project with a secret plan to ultimately make it a gift to Woody and Marsha.

Woody was born in 1956 and has deep nostalgia recalling times with his dad, who was a big fan of cars from the fifties and sixties. The '56 Buick, his dad's favorite, takes him back to those close father/son relationship days. By 1968, the car-afflicted 12-year-old was learning about things mechanical by shadowing his larger-than-life dad ... a natural mechanic. Woody recalled a tale when Dad was under a 1965 Oldsmobile to replace the starter. The car was lifted to the top notch of the bumper jack on a gravel driveway with dad underneath, wrestling to remove the starter! The jack was bowed, wobbly, and precarious! Woody was scared and greatly relieved as Dad emerged with starter in hand. About 5 years later, Woody was learning to weld at his first "real" job with the Union Pacific Railroad. When his class assignment was to fabricate something that tested his newly acquired skill, Woody remembered that still scary episode with his dad under the Oldsmobile, so Woody built a pair of jack stands that "could support a Sherman tank" ... and he still has them!

Paul started the Roadmaster search in early 2025 and fortunately, found an excellent example in an online auction. With only 40,000 original miles, the car had great "bones" but was in serious need of Paul's skilled, meticulous attention to detail. He could "see through" the



cosmetic shortcomings and was the top bidder. It wasn't until a close inspection that he realized just how good the car was. Now the fun began. An all-new, hand-crafted, leather interior and convertible top from the hands of the best upholstery guy in Texas, Gordon Burke, a friend of mine for 30 years who introduced me to this great family. The paint and chrome were in remarkable



condition and sparkled like jewelry after days of hand polishing ... all the way down to every single spoke on the glamorous wire wheels. A complete, front-to-rear servicing and replacement of every critical component makes the 70-year-old cruiser run, drive, and operate as good as it looks.

Roadmaster was at the top of the Buick line for decades. The final one was built in 1996, right here in Arlington. In 1956, 553,799 Buicks were built ... less than 1% of that number were Roadmaster convertibles. Just 4354 to be exact. Perhaps 25 still survive ... rare and beautiful! And BIG, almost 19 feet long, 7 feet wide, and 400 pounds, over two tons! Powered by the fabled 322 cubic inch, 255 horsepower, "Nail-Head" V8. It is incredibly smooth and powerful, but more importantly, it was originally built with great attention to detail and restored with an even deeper commitment to excellence and quality.

Paul and his son Duane, along with the team of craftsmen at Big Daddy's, had a short time from the successful auction until Paul's planned

date of delivery to Woody and Marsha on their 50th anniversary, July 18, 2025. Woody and Marsha were looking forward to their big day ... little did they know, their kids, Laura, Kyle, and Curtis, were busy putting together a party with family and friends scheduled to arrive from Arkansas, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Illinois. Dressed in chauffeur's garb, including the hat, Paul's plan was to pick up Woody and Marsha for an anniversary ride in the Buick. Unfortunately, a last-minute mechanical issue forced a change of plans. The dilemma became a high point when Paul substituted a very red, very large, fully customized Ford truck as the limousine to deliver Woody and Marsha to their surprise anniversary party. The Roadmaster convertible was there, and Woody's dream became a reality when his daughter Laura and her husband Paul gave him the keys and the title to the best 1956 Buick in the world!

This is more than a car story ... it is a love story, and it's all in a very special family. **A**





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M'Jays House of Smoke • 4261 W. Green Oaks Blvd., Ste. 502 • 817-572-1600 • mjayshouseofsmoketx.com

Spring Creek Barbeque • 3608 S. Cooper St. • 817- 465-0553 • springcreekbarbeque.com

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Tic-Taco • 715 W. Park Row Dr. • 817-617-2980 • tictacogo.com

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Gyros To Go • 710 E. Sublett Rd. #101 • 817-419-2878 • gyrostogo1.com

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Prince Lebanese Grill



Candlelite Inn

## AMERICAN

Candlelite Inn • 1202 E. Division St. • 817-275-9613 • candleliteinnarlington.com

Dino's Subs • 2221 S. Collins St. • 817-274-1140 • dinossubs.com

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Hearsay Lounge & Restaurant • 1711 E. Randol Mill Rd. • 817-591-1700 • hearsayarlington.com

Mercury Chophouse • 2221 E. Lamar Blvd. • 817-381-1157 • mercurychophouse.com

Tipsy Oak • 301 E. Front St. • 817-962-0304 • thetipsyoak.com

The Tin Cup • 1025 W. Abram St. • 817-303-5518 • tincupdeli.com

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Italy Pasta Pizza & Subs • 2221 Browning Dr. • 817-276-3200 • italypastapizzasubs.com

Old School Pizza Tavern • 603 W. Abram St. • 682-310-6266 • oldschoolpizzatavern.com

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# Why Early Arlington History Matters



**RICHARD GREENE**

It is likely that only a small percentage of Arlington's current residents, more than 400,000 people, have any idea of the city's earliest history.

With this year's celebration of our 150th anniversary, there are many ways to raise awareness of the reality that who we are today was actually set into motion all those years ago.

That's a very good thing because it raises our sense of community pride in our hometown. Seemingly, everyone would want to make that connection.

I've had an opportunity to join with Arlington's premier historian in delivering the stories that beg to be told.

After a five-decade-long career as a premier journalist and author of the most complete book on our history\*, O.K. Carter asked me to join him in the first podcast kicking off the anniversary celebration.

His introduction to the series - "We're bringing you the voices and legacies that make this city a cornerstone of Texas and a proud part of America's story."

Pretty big promise, but it's what he knows and wants to share. Here are some excerpts from the script to whet your appetite.



**TRAIN STOP** - It begins on July 18, 1876, as Texas & Pacific Engine No. 20 pulls into a newly surveyed community on brand new railroad tracks midway between Fort Worth and Dallas - a half-mile by half-mile community laid out in neat 100-yard blocks. A place that will become

Arlington. Its first identity will be as exactly what it is - a train stop farming community where farmers brought their cotton and other crops. People from all over, even other states, decide to settle here. Its destiny is to be far more than a train stop.



**MINERAL WELL** - By 1892, so many farmers (hundreds sometimes) were coming to Arlington on weekends to have their cotton baled and shipped that it created a dilemma - those farmers and livestock needed water. The city decided to drill a well right in the middle of Center and Main streets. The deep well came through that year. Much to everyone's surprise, the water gushed up; it was a mineral well under so much pressure that for a while, 50,000 gallons a day flowed into the street. Arlington promoted the waters as being medicinal both for drinking and bathing. So our first brand, other than farming, was for mineral water. Arlington would be called a "water stop" until the early 1950's when the well was shut down.



**THE INTERURBAN** - An electric trolley system called the Interurban came right down the middle of Arlington in 1902, creating another sort of brand for lots of people, even then, the convenience of a residence halfway between Fort Worth and Dallas seemed obvious - the first hint that Arlington would become well-known as an ideal commuter location, made even more convenient by better roads and the automobile.

**GAMBLING** - Ask most people what Arlington's biggest claim to historical fame is, and they'll say gambling. The Top O'Hill Terrace began as a 1920s tearoom before transforming into an infamous illegal casino, drawing celebrities and operating behind hidden rooms and tunnels until raids shut it down in the early 1950s. Benny "The Cowboy" Binion used his Arlington earnings to open the famed Horseshoe Casino in Las Vegas.



Millionaire W.T. Waggoner had a small ranch in Arlington, using it as a location for Arlington Downs, which opened in 1929 as a major Texas racetrack, thriving after pari-mutuel betting was legalized in 1933, but declined once the law was repealed in 1937. The site was later demolished. A developer named Angus G. Wynne, Jr. bought the ranch and used it for the eventual creation of the Great Southwest Industrial Park and another of Arlington's famous brands, Six Flags Over Texas.

There's much more to come. Check in on the city's website, [arlingtontx.gov](http://arlingtontx.gov), and click the "Arlington's 150th Anniversary" Hot Topic button to take a look. Do it often, as it is updating all year long. [A](#)

*\*Caddos, Cotton and Cowboys: Essays on Arlington*  
Photos courtesy of the Arlington Historical Society.

*Richard Greene is a former mayor of Arlington.*



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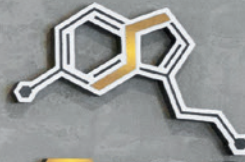
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