

# THE BUFFALO BANNER



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March 2015

## Upcoming Events

**4/3/15 @ 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.**  
TAILGATE for baseball and softball  
on the Grand Lawn

Baseball:

**4/3/15 @ 7 p.m.**  
Buffs vs. Texas A&M-Kingsville  
\*Military Appreciation

**4/4/15 @ 1 p.m. (DH)**  
Buffs vs. Texas A&M-Kingsville  
\*Military Appreciation

**4/14/15 @ 6 p.m.**  
Buffs vs. Lubbock Christian  
\*Physician's Surgical Hospital T-Shirt Night

Softball:  
**3/31/15 @ 4 p.m.**  
Lady Buffs vs. Lubbock Christian

**4/3/15 @ 5 p.m. (DH)**  
Lady Buffs vs. Texas A&M-Kingsville  
\*Military Appreciation

**4/14/15 @ 1 p.m.**  
Lady Buffs vs. Oklahoma Christian  
\*Physician's Surgical Hospital T-Shirt Night

**4/14/15 @ 3 p.m.**  
Lady Buffs vs. Oklahoma Christian  
\*Physician's Surgical Hospital T-Shirt Night

Track & Field:

**4/10/15 - 4/11/15**  
Buffs A&M Classic & Multi  
All Day  
WTAMU Track & Field Complex

*This list only includes home games.  
For a complete schedule visit  
GoBuffsGo.com.  
\*Special Promotions*

## Launching WT Athletics into the National Spotlight

### All-American Athletes Gaining Recognition for the Buffs

The Buffs are gaining recognition in the national spotlight, thanks to athletes like track and field star Libby Strickland.

With an impressive athletic resume far too long to publish here, Strickland has earned numerous awards and accolades for her abilities in high jump, long jump, and 4x1 and 4x4 relays. Most notably, she led WT to its first-ever Lone Star Conference title at the 2014 Indoor Championship, earned five All-American awards, and was named LSC Female Field Athlete of the Year and Panhandle Sports Hall of Fame Co-Track Athlete of the Year for 2014.

Strickland credits the athletes who came before her in the track and field program—formed only six years ago—for pushing her to succeed.

***“The support we get [as athletes] is overwhelming,” she said. “People I don’t even know approach me and tell me how well I’m doing. You can’t get this anywhere else.”***

“In my freshman year they taught me the way to balance running track and being a student athlete,” she said. “This is what you need to be successful.”

She also says that her coaches have contributed to her success, both on and off the track. With an emphasis on academics, track and field athletes have required study hours, access to tutoring resources, and help with eligibility or scheduling.

“The coaches really care about us as



**Libby Strickland**

athletes,” she said. “They push us, but not over the limit, and emphasize the ‘student’ in ‘student-athlete.’”

Finally, and perhaps the most important inspiration for Strickland, comes from the WT community. She came to WT and joined the track team on a last-minute whim, after applying to D1 schools to play her first-choice sport of volleyball. But the hometown feel at WT, and the benefits she’s gained compared to her friends at D1 schools, is validation that she made the right decision.

“The support we get [as athletes] is overwhelming,” she said. “People I don’t even know approach me and tell me how well I’m doing. You can’t get this anywhere else.”

Strickland is so enamored by the community support that she became involved with the Student Athlete Leadership Team, an organization that fosters a positive student-athlete image on campus and participates in community service projects. She says the experience and benefits she’s gain-

*Continued on page 4*

# West Texas A&M Inducts 2014 Athletic Hall of Champions at Annual Gala

## Celebrating Achievements, Accomplishments and Support of Lady Buff and Buffalo Athletics

Since 1987 the Hall of Champions has been honoring outstanding student-athletes, coaches and administrators for their achievements, accomplishments and support of Lady Buff and Buffalo athletics. Awards were handed out at the annual Hall of Champions Gala on Friday, February 27, 2015 in Legacy Hall inside the Jack B. Kelley Student Center.

Congratulations to this year's inductees who exemplify the spirit of what it means to be a WT student-athlete: **Emily (Brister) Cooper** (Women's Basketball 2005-09), **Jared Brock** (Football 2005-08), **Charly Martin** (Football 2004-08) and **Kendra**

**Morgan Potts** (Volleyball 2000-03).

The inductees were all four-year starters, All-Americans, record holders and WT graduates who continue to support the WT brand today.

**Thanks to the many fans and supporters who joined us at the Hall of Champions Annual Gala.**

The 2014 inductees were also honored during the basketball doubleheader on Saturday, February 28 against Eastern New Mexico in the First United Bank Center.

### LEGACY AWARD

The Hall of Champions Selection Committee is also charged with selecting a Legacy Award winner(s) each year. The Legacy Award was established in 2008 to recognize individuals and organizations not eligible for the Hall of Champions, but who have made significant lifetime contributions (service, financial or another form of support) to the success and legacy of West Texas A&M Athletics. This may include fans, boosters or an organization that has provided distinguished support. This year's recipients of the Legacy Award are Dr. Bob and Cleo Robinson and Jimmy and Sally Fincher.



Left to right Emily Brister Cooper, Kendra Morgan-Potts, Jared Brock, Charly Martin



Jared Brock played football at WT from 2005 - 2008

## Herdsmen Take Charge Of Live Buffalo Mascot Since 1977

### "Thunder" the Buffalo Brings Spirit and Strength To Home Games

Deciding to use a live, 750-pound buffalo as a mascot during home football games is a great idea, but it isn't the type of mascot that you can just let walk across the field all alone. So in 1977 when it was decided that this would bring some much-needed spirit and excitement to the games, the Herdsmen were born.

The original buffalo was named Lollipop, a name that didn't embody the spirit of strength and fight the Herdsmen hoped to portray. A contest was held to rename the buffalo and the winning entry was Thunder. Since then there have been many renditions of Thunder, as the mascots age and retire and younger ones take their place. The current buffalo is known as Thunder 11.

#### A home where he can roam

For years it has been a goal of the Herdsmen

to have a home for the buffalo near campus. This provides easy access for training and transporting. They have found a 15-acre property that when finished will include a parking lot and a building with meeting and storage space. Most importantly, it will include a turn out area for the buffalo where they can graze and roam as in their natural habitat.

"Providing a space for the buffalo that properly represents the majesty of the animal and the importance of the University's mascot has been a longtime dream," says Shawn Burns, chief of the University Police Department and Herdsmen adviser.

The new facility will cost approximately \$150,000 to build. It will be a wonderful home for Thunder where fans can visit and children can come to learn about these amazing animals. To make a donation to this worthy cause, please visit <http://wtamu.edu/wtamu-herdsmen.aspx>.



The proposed new home of Thunder.

## Where Are They Now? Alumni Profile: Matthew Madison

### Basketball Star Matthew Madison '04 Grew as a Player and a Man

Like many WTAM athletes, Matthew Madison '04 gained far more than the physical skills and abilities needed to succeed in his sport from our university. It's where he learned about life.

A member of the two-time conference champion men's basketball team in the early 2000s, Madison has earned numerous athletic achievements of which he's proud. But, he says, the coaching and lessons he received off the court have had a much farther reach.

"Coach Cooper was a big influence for me and he taught me not only a lot about

basketball, but a lot about life and how to handle situations on and off the court," said Madison. "Through the years the coaches helped me to grow not only as a player, but also as a man."

Madison also credits the school's emphasis on academics for student athletes as helping him to get where he is today. He earned his BBA in Accounting at WT, and is currently pursuing an MBA while employed as a controller at Amarillo Gear Service.

"I was at WT to play basketball, but I was also there to get an education," he said. "I believe that if you have an organization that not only strives for greatness on the field but also in the classroom, then you are equipping men and women for the real world."

During his time as a WT athlete, Madison also learned the value of giving back to the community through his involvement with Big Brother Big Sister and the Special Olympics camp and participation in several instructional seminars at Ceta Canyon. This spirit of service is apparent in his life today, as he and his wife Donna are planning a mis-

sion trip to South Africa this summer. They are extremely involved with Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo, where Donna is a children's pastor.

***"...if you have an organization that not only strives for greatness on the field but also in the classroom, then you are equipping men and women for the real world."***

Madison had such a great experience at WT—one that he believes he wouldn't have had elsewhere—that he does what he can to pay it forward. He financially supports WT's athletic program so that other men and women can benefit, just as he did.

"I am proud to be Buff because I received a top-notch education," he added. He is appreciative of the many different and influential people he met during his time at WT—connections that are beneficial to him in his career today.

The Madisons live in Amarillo with their daughters, Tatum, Scout, and Reese, and son, Pate.



**The Madison family**



### Action Shot of the Month

*Senior Chontiquah White (Dallas, Texas), women's basketball, moved into sixth all-time in scoring and second all-time in rebounding.*

### Gear of the Month: Drinkware

With summer and warm days on the way, it's important to stay hydrated. It's time to start packing water bottles and your favorite refreshing drinks, so why not grab some West Texas A&M gear for your drinks to show your WT spirit? Choose from collapsible can holders, bottle koozies, small and large mugs, and glasses. Purchase some drinkware today and show your West Texas pride. Beginning March 26th, all drinkware is 10% off at [www.gobuffsgogear.com](http://www.gobuffsgogear.com).



## Winning Championships with Student-Athletes Who Are Graduating from WT

### Sharon Brown '66 Brings A Taste of Home to WT Basketball Players "Basketball Cookers" Prepare and Serve Comfort Food After Home Games

Nothing says "home" more than a delicious meal with some good old fashioned comfort food. Macaroni and cheese, fried chicken, pot roast, and lasagna, are just a few of the delectable delights that Sharon Brown and her crew of "Basketball Cookers" prepare for the men's and women's basketball teams to enjoy after home games.

Sharon has been organizing the Basketball Cookers for the past seven years. Since many of the girls on the basketball team lived local, their moms would cook for the girls after home games. The boys were from further away though. They often resorted to eating cold pizza after a game.

Sharon graduated from WT in 1966 with a degree in business and has been a supporter of WT athletics ever since. While she has been voted an outstanding alumnus, she is very humble about all that she does.

"It really makes you feel good," she says. "It's our way of letting them know that the people in the community care. It is overwhelming how appreciative the players are."

Sharon prepares menus and then solicits help from the cookers. With 40 people to feed between all of the players, coaches and staff, it is quite an undertaking to coordinate. If you are interested in cooking contact Sharon at [sbrown9003@aol.com](mailto:sbrown9003@aol.com).



Players Antjuan Ball and Tez Dumars with Sharon Brown

#### Do We Have Your Email Address?

#### Don't Miss Out on Buffalo Communications!

If we don't, you're missing out on some of our communications! Send us your email address at [alumninews@affinityconnection.com](mailto:alumninews@affinityconnection.com) to keep up with the Buffs in your inbox! Be sure to mention West Texas A&M.

#### Libby Strickland... *Continued from page 1*

ing from her time as a WT student athlete will stay with her long after graduation.

**"Our donors are helping us put WT on the map at a national level."**

"I'm always going to be supporting WT athletics, even if it's from afar," she said.

After all, it's because of alumni support that the track and field team—and the entire athletics program—has helped to launch WT sports into the spotlight.

"We're promoting WT through their donations," she said. "Our donors are helping us put WT on the map at a national level."

**Compliance Corner** The WTAMU athletic department is committed to following all NCAA rules governing the recruitment and treatment of student athletes. Being a booster, we know that you share in our goal of athletic success within the rules. Each month we will include a different guideline for our boosters. Boosters may continue to maintain relationships with friends and neighbors who may have a college prospect in the family. Booster contacts with prospects are permitted as long as they are not made for recruiting purposes and are not suggested or initiated by WTAMU staff members.