



ART WRIGHT • THE BATTALION

Prairie View A&M University President **George C. Wright** delivers his speech, "Is There Still a Need for Black History Month?" to a capacity crowd Tuesday afternoon at Sterling

C. Evans Library. **Wright's** speech was sponsored by the Texas A&M University Libraries and the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute.

## Black historian cites struggle, progress

By Rhiannon Meyers  
THE BATTALION

George C. Wright, president of Prairie View A&M University, said Tuesday afternoon that Black History Month is important not just for blacks, but for all of American society.

Standing in the middle of a packed lecture room in Sterling C. Evans Library, Wright told 140 students, faculty and staff that Black History Month shows the contributions both whites and blacks have made in the long struggle with race relations.

"Ultimately, I think Black History Month says that we can do remarkable things against incredible odds," Wright said.

Audience members nodded their heads in agreement as Wright gave his speech titled, "Is There Still a Need for Black History Month?" that critiqued the significance of Black History Month and the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which outlawed segregation in American public schools.

"The Brown decision would leave significant changes in American society," Wright said. "It launched the Civil Rights Movement and led to us sitting in here together without beating the hell out of each other."

Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, began nearly 80 years ago and is celebrated nationwide.

Wright, who has written three books and co-directed two television documentaries on black history, said he began to question the importance of Black History Month when he

noticed that people had become apathetic about it.

"I began to worry that people take Black History Month for granted," he said.

Wright said he has celebrated Black History Month since he was young, and it has always been an important part of his life because it has helped him understand the contributions that blacks have given to society.

"I learned how blacks made contributions that aided America," Wright said. "I came away with a strong sense of black pride."

Wright said to understand Black History Month, that society must know the history. He detailed several Supreme Court decisions in the last 150 years that caused great changes in race relations in America.

"You have to look into your background," he said. "Knowing your past will help you put things in context and can in fact be a road map for the future."

Wright said Black History Month is vital for blacks because it helps black people understand their history as well as the histories of others.

"I think far too many black people are not aware of the struggle of others, black, white or whatever," he said. "And it is important for us to remember our long struggle."

Rebecca Hankins, assistant professor in Cushing Memorial Library, said she agreed with Wright that blacks should understand other cultures.

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## Wohlgemuth sets out to defeat Edwards in District 17 election



JOSHUA L. HOBSON • THE BATTALION

District 17 Representative candidate for Congress **Arlene Wohlgemuth**, talks to supporters in the MSC Flag Room Tuesday afternoon.

By Anthony Woolstrum  
THE BATTALION

State Rep. Arlene Wohlgemuth said Tuesday she would look forward to representing Texas A&M in Congress if elected to represent District 17 in the House of Representatives.

Wohlgemuth is running in the Republican primaries for the newly-drawn Congressional District 17. The Republican candidate who wins the primary will then proceed to face the 14-year incumbent, Democrat Chet Edwards.

Wohlgemuth said one of the key issues in the Republican primaries will be who can beat Edwards.

"I have proven leadership," she said. "I have been widely recognized

as one of the most conservative members of the Texas House and I have a proven voting record pro-business and pro-family."

Wohlgemuth has served in the Texas Legislature for the past five terms, campaigning out of the same geographical area that Edwards ran from, which is Waco. With name recognition in the district, she has an advantage in campaigning

that the other candidates do not necessarily possess.

During the last 20 years, Wohlgemuth has made frequent trips to Brazos County on official and unofficial business. Recently, her two daughters attended A&M.

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Second in a series on candidates running in District 17

## Hispanic Studies offers new doctoral program

By Jason Hanselka  
THE BATTALION

Students interested in graduate study focused on Hispanic culture will have the opportunity to participate in a new Hispanic studies doctorate program at Texas A&M.

The new degree will be a Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies that will be offered at A&M and three other schools in the A&M University System.

Larry Oliver, associate dean for the College of Liberal Arts, said the degree will be offered at A&M, Texas A&M-Kingsville, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Texas A&M International University in Laredo. All of the degrees will be awarded from the College Station campus instead of each specific

campus, he said.

"Step one is a cooperative degree," Oliver said. "In the future the other schools may develop their own graduate program."

Oliver said classes will be taught at the A&M main campus and students at the other system schools can enroll in them through distance education.

"There are no plans to hire any new faculty for the program at any of the schools," he said. "It will be a model of efficiency and cooperation."

There are Ph.D. programs in Spanish at the University of Texas, Texas Tech University and the University of Houston, Oliver said.

Craig Kallendorf, head of the

See Doctorate on page 2A

## Veterinary medicine student inspires others

By Michael Player  
THE BATTALION

With a background in careers such as a flight attendant, fashion model, magazine editor and a public relations specialist for Neiman Marcus, third-year veterinary medicine student Pat Ryan wants to add something more to her list: a veterinarian.

Ryan, 56, will graduate next May and will be the oldest student to graduate from Texas A&M University's School of Veterinary Medicine.

"If there is one thing that I would want people to learn from my story it is that it is never too late to realize your dreams," Ryan said.

Ryan began her collegiate career at Blinn College in her home state of Connecticut.

"I was a theater major there and before I was 19, two plays that I had written were produced off-Broadway," Ryan said.

Ryan said her desire to pursue a career in veterinary medicine was sparked when she began to volunteer in the emergency clinic at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. She began post-baccalaureate pre-vet studies and then had her daughters, Emily and Elizabeth.

In 1981, Ryan moved to Houston where her husband worked as an architect.

While living in Houston, Ryan

helped raise \$200,000 for the Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Although Ryan's life has been varied, it has not always been an easy road to follow. In 1983, Ryan was diagnosed with cancer.

"That period provided me with three positive gifts: patience, focus and best of all, absolute (confidence) about my choice of paths," Ryan said.

Once accepted into A&M's veterinary school, Ryan realized how many things had changed since she was last in college.

"The amount of change that technology has brought to the study of medicine is staggering," Ryan said.

Ryan said she had to retake some of her anatomy and physiology courses to catch up.

Ryan's classmates said they admire her dedication and learn from her.

"I have really learned a lot from Pat," said Angel Tapia, a third-year vet student. "After we get our exams back, we begin to beat ourselves up over the things that we missed, and Pat reminds us of how lucky we really are just to be here."

Debbie Kochevar, professor in the veterinary school, said Ryan is excellent to have in class.

"Pat is a great student and she really adds a lot to the classroom environment," Kochevar said. "(Pat) is the perfect example of how diversity enhances the educational experi-

ence." Every year, the school hosts the Barbecue Play, a show that the second-year veterinary students perform for the first-year students, Kochevar said.

This year's play, "Bow Wow Luau," was directed by Pat and is still a topic of conversation around the school, Kochevar said.

In her application letter to the veterinary school, Ryan compared



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Pat Ryan with Lucy, a Labrador mix, one of the three dogs Ryan now lives with in College Station while studying for a graduate degree in the DVM Program. Ryan, at age 56, will be the oldest person ever to receive a DVM degree at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

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## Undergrad spring enrollment down, graduate numbers up

By Joaquin Salcedo  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's Spring 2004 enrollment dropped 1.3 percent compared to the Spring 2003 numbers, but the number of graduate students increased, according to the University Registrar's Office.

A&M's undergraduate enrollment stands at 41,654, a decrease of 530 from last year, while the number of graduate students stands at 7,763, an increase of 149.

The increase of the numbers are from the 12th class day. The official numbers will be available on the 20th class day and may change only slightly.

Frank B. Ashley, assistant provost for enrollment, said it is a possibility that the graduating Class of 2003, with 7,300 students, may be the reason for the sudden drop in undergraduate enrollment.

"It's not that we're admitting fewer students - it's that one freshman class of 7,300 - we finally got them out, we finally got them graduated," Ashley said.

Ashley said the increase in tuition could also be one of the catalysts for the decrease.

"I believe that a lot of students who would have normally transferred after a year might be thinking that they can save money by staying longer at the community college before actually transferring to A&M," Ashley said.

Although the average number of

### SPRING 2004 ENROLLMENT

These numbers were recorded on the 12th class day. Official tallies are taken on the 20th class day, so numbers could change slightly.

TAMU	41,654
↓	Down 1.3 percent from Spring 2003
Blinn	10,246
↑	Up 5 percent from Spring 2003

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

SOURCE : TAMU REGISTRARS' OFFICE, BLINN ADMISSIONS OFFICE

freshmen accepted into A&M has remained the same, the transfer student enrollment has decreased, Ashley said.

Blinn College in Bryan, which has set a personal record in spring enrollment, supplies A&M with almost half of the transfer students it has enrolled, Blinn officials said.

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