

# TEXAS FIJI

The Longhorn Fiji—The University of Texas at Austin  
Established 1883

Fall 2022

## Making Great Strides Toward a Strong Future

### TEXAS FIJI MAINTAINS A GOOD REPUTATION

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article asked, “Will hazing and misconduct end Greek life on campus?” A quick Google search of the many national fraternities that have recently been disciplined or disbanded for hazing or misconduct suggests that fraternity culture is on the ropes. It is indeed a challenging time for the Greek system, and many wonder if it can be sustained.

One of the contributors to the WSJ article put it this way: “Physical abuse, sexual misconduct, and toxic exclusivity all pervade American chapters today. But the answer to this problem should not be the unilateral dissolution of Greek life. Instead, fraternities must become more transparent with administrators, parents, and students. Chapters should inculcate individual integrity in the face of collective pressures. These reforms are possible because Greek life is

a tradition too empowering and dynamic for us to abandon. It is the wellspring of institutional belonging and lifelong relationships.”

As head of the Board of Chapter Advisors for the past few years, I know that Texas Fiji has made sincere efforts and great strides to get ahead of these problems. Our Chapter’s student leaders not only recognize the need to develop a “a better business model” for being a sustainable 21st century Fraternity, but they have also taken steps to cultivate a culture of community service that moves our ship along a constructive path.

It’s not an easy path—and the stakes are high—but I have confidence in these young men and in their ability to lay a solid foundation that includes accountability, respect for others, and reaching out to those in need. This includes

formation through service and philanthropy, taking care of Buen Retiro, and defying the *Animal House* frat stereotypes.

Texas Fiji has been around since 1883, the year UT was founded; it has a glorious tradition that means so much to so many. Let’s press on and keep it going! In the next few months, I will send a letter to all alumni requesting specific ways to support our community service programs. Your commitment will help Texas Fiji build on its already good reputation to serve others.

GTBO,

**Rev. Stephen W. Kinney, Ph.D. ’74**

Head of the BCA

swk.kinney@gmail.com

## A Brotherhood of Leaders

*Members Serving the Campus and Community*

Texas Fiji functions as one unit, bound by a commitment to friendship, knowledge, and service. This fall, we have applied these values toward philanthropic, scholastic, and extracurricular excellence within and beyond the fences of Buen Retiro to maximize its brotherhood-building potential.

### Service

Last year, our Chapter’s commitment to service merited its distinction as “Most Outstanding Service or Philanthropy” by the University of Texas Office of the Dean of Students among the 63 chapters affiliated with Sorority and Fraternity Life on campus.

Philanthropy Chairmen **Brooks Ballard ’20** and **Gregor Smith ’20** expanded Texas Fiji’s emphasis on working for justice through community service partnerships with Feed My People, Hands on Housing, The B+ Foundation, Second Harvest Food Bank of New Orleans, and the Central Texas Food Bank.

This fall, brothers have volunteered with Feed My People and the Central Texas Food Bank on a bimonthly basis, collecting 623 total hours of community service, and have raised \$38,678 to support the B+ Foundation’s childhood cancer research. On September 9, we hosted the first Jake Ehlinger Memorial Fundraiser, raising over \$10,000 for the Jake Ehlinger Foundation.

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Brothers spend time with Ronnie, a B+ Foundation cancer patient.  
Pictured: John Trahan ’21, Jack Nelson ’21, Oliver Ames ’21, Teel Sabom ’21,  
Jack McMahon ’21, Brooks Ballard ’21, and Kenan Oldham ’21.





# CHAPTER OFFICERS

President  
Austin Russell '20

Corresponding Secretary  
Trey Ashmore '20

Recording Secretary  
Rance Holman '20

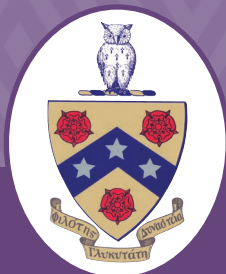
Historian  
Tripp Soriero '20

Treasurer  
Tucker Chenoweth '20

House Manager  
Dyer Rawlinson '20

House Manager  
Reed Butler '20

Recruitment Chairman  
Chase Walker '20



## Improving Each Day

Texas Fiji Sets Three Goals

With a new school year comes a time to reflect on our achievements and find new ways to build upon them so we can continue to be a strong Chapter at UT. This year, we are striving to bond as a Chapter via involvement through:



Service



Athletics



Religion

## A Brotherhood of Leaders

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### Knowledge

Texas Fiji has also demonstrated academic and extracurricular excellence to its greatest extent this fall. Five young alumni recently graduated with degrees in top-ranked honors programs within the McCombs School of Business and the College of Liberal Arts, among 11 brothers currently enrolled in these programs. Members of the 2018, 2019, and 2020 pledge classes have placed among the most prestigious firms and graduate programs in the world, including Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Evercore, Citi, PwC, Exxon, Columbia Law School, Baylor College of Medicine, and MIT Sloan School of Business.

### Extracurriculars

The 2019, 2020, and 2021 pledge classes dominated fall intramural football. QB1 **Rance Holman '20** led the 2020 pledge class to a championship victory, while the 2019 and 2020 pledge classes suffered defeat in the semifinals.

Individual brothers also lead prestigious organizations on campus, directing or co-directing the Texas Equity Group, Phi Gamma Nu Business Fraternity, Wall Street for McCombs, and co-founding the Texas Future Investors Group, Texas Alternative Investments Association, and Hooked on Live Music Club. By leading with tenacity, charisma, and integrity, these leaders reinforce Texas Fiji's reputation as effective and moral leaders across the 40 acres and beyond.

### Brotherhood

When brothers are not living out values on campus and beyond, they are playing basketball, fighting Josh's meals, or watching TV together at 300 W. 27th. It certainly is good to be a brother.

GTBO,  
**Austin Russell '20**  
Chapter President  
jamesreedo@gmail.com



*The 2021 pledge class welcomes Blake Holst '21, who traveled from Denver to visit for the weekend. Festivities included a pledge class fajita dinner and bonding at the house.*



*The 2020 pledge class's flag football team after winning the flag football championship for the junior class.*





# Creating a Connection

## Hear Why Some of Our New Brothers Chose Fiji

### Ryan Spier

"The active members made me feel welcome as well as the vast alumni network."

### Jude Trahan

"Texas Fiji introduced me to an amazing group of men who push me every day to better myself and my community. Coming to college knowing nobody was a little scary, but the group here welcomed me with open arms. The connection with alumni for job opportunities is also incredible. I'm excited to continue getting closer with everyone here; it's been amazing so far!"

### John Trahan

"For a plethora of reasons, but overall, I felt at home. The inclusion within the new member cohort was phenomenal, but so was the entire Chapter. They mentor me in my schoolwork and guide me through school organizations and job opportunities. I've met Fiji alumni across the country, and the members of this vast network all want me to succeed and coach me through navigating career paths."

### Harrison Walton

"The Chapter shared the same values as me, and the actives were examples of the person I wanted to become in my time in college."

### Ford Dickerson

"What really drew me in was its strong history of brotherhood and leadership. I noticed quickly how each active member would hold each other to a high standard as well as keep each other accountable. It made me realize that these guys were more than friends, and that's what I wanted to be a part of."

### Tucker Sachs

"I wanted to be a part of a brotherhood that would help me grow as a person and push me to be the best I could be. Fiji is a network of brothers with upstanding character who have helped me develop leadership skills and build strong relationships and provided guidance through times of adversity."

### Sam Bakht

"I felt a unique sense of brotherhood and unity among members. I was always welcomed with friendly faces and big smiles. During Rush, I quickly learned that Fiji had upstanding values that aligned with mine and was an organization that I would be proud to be a part of."

### Luke Thompson

"During the Rush process, I met many people who were ambitious in their academics and also had a genuine interest in getting to know me as a person. Also, my uncle was a Texas Fiji in the '90s and some of his lifetime best friends are his pledge brothers. Listening to their conversations about the amazing experiences they had made me positive I wanted to join."

### Rhodes Crow

"Growing up in a UT family, the idea of being a Longhorn was always a dream. After being admitted into the school, the decision process for what Fraternity I would hopefully pledge was easy. It was always Fiji. Watching my dad's interaction with his pledge brothers, I could tell that there was a true bond or 'brotherhood' that they will always share. My dad has always preached to me to surround myself with people who will make me a better person and will push me to achieve greater things. After being here for only months, I can tell that these are the people he has always been talking about."

## Welcome, Fall 2022 New Members!

Samual Bakht  
Richard Beuerlein  
Cody Burke  
Rhodes Crow  
Rogan Crumley  
Jonathan Dickerson  
Andrew Ebert  
George Eubank  
Alexander Gottsegen  
Christopher Holland

James Jordan  
Jack Mabery  
Robert Marshall  
Charles Matthews  
Patrick McBroom  
Owen McCabe  
Alasdair McFarland  
John McGee  
John McMahan IV  
Luke Mooty

John Morstead  
Jack Nelson  
Kevin Newkirk  
Kenan Oldham  
John Rose  
Teel Sabom  
Tucker Sachs  
Ryan Spier  
Baker Stockton  
Charles Teeple

Bond Temple  
Luke Thompson  
John Trahan  
Jude Trahan  
Reid Turlington  
Gantt Walton Jr.  
Brock Williams



The 2022 pledge class at Texas OU.

## Know Someone Who Would Make a Great Fit for Fiji?

### Send in Your Referrals

We are always looking for quality men who embody Fiji's core values of friendship, knowledge, service, morality, and excellence. If you know a man who is attending or planning on attending UT who would make a great addition to our brotherhood, please refer him today.

Send his name, phone number, and high school to **Thompson Huthnance '21** at (469) 416-5301.

## ALUMNI UPDATES

### AD ASTRA

**Dr. Fred W. Riley Jr. '50** – March 24, 2021

**Bob W. Little '60** – January 15, 2021

**Paul A. Schweizer '85** – June 14, 2021

**Trey Odom III '90** – November 23, 2021

### ALUMNI NEWS

**Rock D. Valerius '54** is enjoying retirement in Eagle's Trace in Houston, Texas.

Email: rdmrval@gmail.com

**Barry C. Wukasch, Ph.D. '57** is retired from working in the Maricopa County Community College District. Over the course of 38 years, he served as a professor, honors program director, and department chairman at three colleges in the district. He lives in Cave Creek, Ariz.

**W. Darrell Willerson Jr., M.D. '59** lives in San Antonio, Texas, and is a member of the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Board of Ophthalmology, and the American Society of Retinal Surgeons. His brother, **Jim Willerson '57, M.D.**, was also a member of the American Board of Internal Medicine. Email: dwillerson@aol.com

**Roy E. Rushing '61** lives in Lakeway, Texas, and is enjoying his grandkids. This year, he traveled to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, with his daughter's family. His eldest entered Ole Miss this fall. Email: royerushing@gmail.com

**Larry R. Hankamer '65** developed a device to mediate the spread of zebra mussels, an invasive species in the Highland Lakes, and hundreds of lakes across the City of Austin are testing his devices. He resides in Austin, Texas. Email: lhankamer@aol.com

**G. Doug Wiley '65** and his wife both have ranch land in Parker County, Texas, between Weatherford and Springtown. Each has cattle, and among them are four Texas Longhorns. Doug embraces Fiji in his family; both of his sons, **Douglas II '91** and **Barney '93**, were Chapter presidents at UT. His daughter, Eloise, a Texas Kappa, married a Texas Fiji, **Chris Williams '98**. "I'm Fiji blessed." Doug resides in Springtown, Texas. Email: dwiley2141947@hotmail.com

**Jay K. Turner '73** is a partner with Dos Rios Partners, a \$225 million Texas Private Equity Fund. He resides in Dallas, Texas. Email: jaykturner1@gmail.com

**Keller Towns Sr. '79** retired from Exxon Mobil on May 31, 2021. He lives in Houston, Texas. Email: tkeller@townsgroup.com

# TEXAS FIJI

PHI GAMMA DELTA  
BUEN RETIRO COMMITTEE  
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AUSTIN, TX 78703

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## Help Us Shine a Light on Our Fiji Brothers

### *Send in Your Stories!*

**T**exas Fiji wants YOUR help identifying brothers to feature in future issues of *Texas Fiji*. Do you know a brother with an interesting story to tell? Are you one of them? We want to hear from you!

In our newsletters we love to share alumnus' stories of class reunions, family and friend connections, volunteer missions, career paths, unique hobbies, life accomplishments, and anything in between!

If you have a suggestion, please contact our communications coordinator, Ali, at [aolbrych@penningtonco.com](mailto:aolbrych@penningtonco.com) with "Texas Fiji Spotlight" in the subject line.

Thank you for staying connected with Texas Fiji. We are excited for your input on who we should feature next!

