

# TEXAS★FIJI

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

Spring 2023

## PRESERVING OUR HISTORY AND LEGACY

### Funding Renovations for Buen Retiro

The active chapter of Texas Fiji continues to mature in its ongoing efforts to defy negative fraternity stereotypes and become a 21st-century fraternity that we can all be proud of. We aspire to be respectful and non-abusive to others, open to the greater community, and oriented to service. Friendship, knowledge, service, morality, and excellence are becoming more than just brand slogans.

It is now time to turn our attention to the goal of protecting and renovating historic Buen Retiro. I asked **Gary McClure '76** to share with us the recent efforts of the Purple Owl House Corporation to help us achieve that goal, which you will find below.

Let's Press On!

**Stephen W. Kinney '74**  
BCA Head

Texas Fiji was 25 years old in 1908 when Louis Goldbeck's six-year-old home was purchased for \$25,000 to serve as the fraternity house. Christened "Buen Retiro," it has continuously served the fraternity for 115 years—remarkable considering that period and the sheer number of brothers who have passed through its doors!

Heavily renovated only two times in 115 years, Buen Retiro was last revamped 35 years ago. The time has come for another renovation. Owned by a separate 501(c)(2) corporation, the Purple Owl House Corporation serves as landlord to the Tau Deuteron Chapter. The corporation seeks to modernize, update, and provide the functionality necessary to carry the history and tradition forward.

After an extensive search, an architectural firm with historic experience and the ability to take on the project was retained. A Texas Historic Landmark, Buen Retiro's renovation is subject to review by the Texas Historic Commission, the City of Austin Historic Commission, and the normal permitting process. Appropriately, the board retained a historic preservation consultant to review the architects' work, prepare forms for submission to the historic commissions, navigate the commissions' constraints, and help obtain historic tax credits.

We've completed the feasibility study, and the necessary renovations are extensive given the needs of the growing active chapter and the overall state of the facility. The kitchen, for example, is almost obsolete; we are serving over 150 men per meal in a kitchen that was designed for 75.



*The executive board shares some Christmas spirit on the porch of Buen Retiro.*

Other major priorities include additional toilet facilities, new or repaired windows, and modernized mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. We anticipate these improvements will be costly, but thanks to the efforts of several members in 1972 to obtain historic status for Buen Retiro, tax credits are available from the state of Texas and are anticipated to pay for 25% of qualifying project costs.

While we are in the exploratory and planning phase of the project, we are asking any alumni who pay from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million in Texas franchise tax to consider a donation to this project in return for tax credits. These credits are applied directly toward franchise taxes owed in Texas.

If you, or someone you know, might be interested, please reach out to **Gary McClure '76**, board president, at (325) 656-9890 or [gary@gmccclure.com](mailto:gary@gmccclure.com) for discussion. The remainder of the funding will come from alumni gifts.

Alumnus **Bob Coffee '52** said it best in 1987: "To continue this tradition, we must attend to this house—and restore Buen Retiro to its former place as the graceful home of a great fraternity."

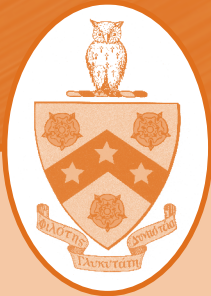
Board of Directors

**Gary McClure '76** | **Kevin Snodgrass '78** | **Chad Auler '88**  
**Jason Downie '88** | **Curtis Hutcheson '88** | **Daniel Madera '04**  
**Tommy Ward '04**



# Welcome, NEW Members

Holden Carter  
Rogan Crumley  
Michael Dehlinger  
Ryan Egger  
Tyler Gardner  
David Greskovich  
Walker Houdek  
Chase Lancaster  
Jake Lewis  
Thomas McConn  
Thomas Oliver  
James Osborn  
William Putman  
Robert Zackary



## Send Us Your Recruitment Referrals

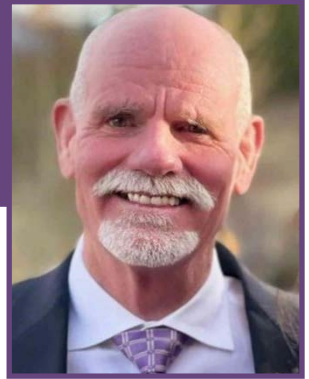
### HELP GROW THE BROTHERHOOD

The Fiji recruitment team is eager to find new members who can lend their skills to our chapter and grow through their time at The University of Texas. Recruitment is a crucial component to the success of our chapter, and our team is grateful for the help of alumni and active members. To refer a potential member, please contact me with their name, phone number, and high school.

*Thank you for your support of Texas Fiji!*

GTBO,  
Thompson Huthnance '21  
(469) 416-5301

## Brother, Husband, Father, Friend REMEMBERING C. SHAWN "BULLDOG" MOWLES '81



**S**hawn Mowles '81 passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on January 22, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas. Shawn was born on May 2, 1962, in Odessa, Texas, and was raised in Midland, Texas.

After graduating from high school, Shawn attended Midland Junior College for one year. He then transferred to UT, where he graduated in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in economics. While at Texas, Shawn served as pledge trainer and in various other leadership roles. Shawn "Bulldog" Mowles was as legendary a Texas Fiji as any who have roamed the halls of Buen Retiro.

Upon graduation, Shawn moved back to Midland and began working at Berg Motor Company as a car salesman. In 1995, he took an opportunity to move to Longview, Texas, and work with his friend and fraternity brother, **David Houston '81**, at what was then Brew Pontiac-Honda. Under Shawn's leadership and guidance, Brew Honda was recognized as one of the top automobile dealerships in the country for customer satisfaction.

In 2012, Shawn went to work for friend Will Adamson at Sabine Pipe Inc. in Kilgore, Texas, where he stayed for eight years. He was most recently employed at Platinum Pipe Rentals. Shawn loved being a salesman and providing value for his customers while building lifelong relationships.

One of Shawn's passions was slow-pitch softball. He played under coach Tommy Hawkins for Dickey Box Motor Company, Bud Light, and Coors of Midland. He also coached and played for Brew Pontiac in Longview. Shawn's teams won championships at the highest levels of state, regional, and national competitions and, as a pitcher, he was instrumental in his teams' successes. Shawn was an able bowler, a frustrated-but-slowly-improving golfer, and obsessed with physical fitness. He ran marathons, competed in triathlons, and was the founding member of the Shawn Mowles Running Club.

Shawn was a long-standing member and integral part of The Henderson Hill Bennett Mowles Memorial Fantasy Football League where he, along with his brothers, held the 2020 championship belt. Shawn would drive eight hours to participate in an HHBMFFL draft, golf tournament, or league event.

Shawn was preceded in death by his father, Jimmy Mowles; and brother, Joe Mowles. He is survived by his wife, Tammy; his two sons, Tyler and Aslan; Tammy's children, Brady and Channing (Craig); and a granddaughter, Perry. This year would have been he and Tammy's 10th wedding anniversary. Shawn is also survived by his two most favorite dogs in the world: Shooter and Chubbs.

## 3 GOALS FOR FIJI

- #1** Expand our horizons and remain leaders at UT.
- #2** Raise enough money in the next year to be able to renovate Buen Retiro.
- #3** Exceed this year's outstanding philanthropy statistics and expand our outreach in the community.





## MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL

### NEWS FROM BUEN RETIRO

**F**iji functions as one unit bound by a commitment to friendship, knowledge, and service. This semester, Texas Fiji continued to apply these values toward philanthropic, scholastic, and extracurricular excellence within and beyond the fences of Buen Retiro to maximize our impact on the surrounding community.

Last fall, active and new members challenged each other to maximize their academic potential, and in doing so, Fiji ranked fourth among 22 fraternities at The University of Texas in GPA.

Philanthropy Chairmen **Brooks Ballard '20** and **Gregor Smith '20** expanded Fiji's emphasis on working for justice through community service partnerships with Feed My People, Hands on Housing, The B+ Foundation, and Second Harvest Food Bank of New Orleans. In particular, **Ryan Cusack '21** and **Grey Nakfoor '21**

demonstrated dedication to serving those in need through weekly volunteering at the Central Texas Food Bank. Their efforts have led the charge in Texas Fiji amassing 833 total hours of community service since August 2022 and raising \$38,778 to support B+ Foundation's childhood cancer research.

On campus, **Danny Barfield '20** and **Connor Hrachovy '20** have paid forward their mentorship by serving as co-presidents of the Texas Equity Group, a premier student-run investment group, and members of the Wall Street for McCombs Executive Committee. In these roles, both can pass on their knowledge to sophomores and freshmen aspiring to one day fill their shoes.

In athletics, **Carter Hooten '21** is the captain of the water ski team and, last season, won first place in the DII national jump championship. As captain, he carries the responsibility of holding his team members

accountable as well as encouraging them to be the best skiers and members of the team they can possibly be.

Another Phi Gam who exemplifies leadership on campus is **Saunders Wood '20**. He, with the help of fellow brothers, started the Texas Trophy Hunters Association. This organization promotes ethical outdoor hunting practices and Texas wildlife and land conservation and works to bring together students who are passionate about the outdoors.

When brothers are not living out Phi Gamma Delta's values on campus and beyond, they are hooping, playing poker in the Buen, or watching basketball in the war room. It is good to be a Phi Gam.

GTBO,  
**Austin Russell '20**  
Chapter President  
russeld1015@gmail.com



*Members of the 2020 pledge class hit the slopes during the annual Fiji ski trip in Telluride, Colorado.*



*Carter Hooten '21 makes a splash at the DII National Water Ski Championships.*



*Saunders Wood '20, founder of the Texas Trophy Hunters Association, shows off his latest prize.*

## Outgoing Chapter Officers

President  
**Austin Russell '20**

Corresponding Secretary  
**Trey Ashmore '20**

Recording Secretary  
**Rance Holman '20**

Historian  
**Tripp Soriero '20**

Treasurer  
**Tucker Chenoweth '20**

Recruitment Chairman  
**Chase Walker '20**

House Managers  
**Dyer Rawlinson '20**  
**Reed Butler '20**

## Incoming Chapter Officers

President  
**Brady Lamme '21**

Corresponding Secretary  
**Robert Sweet '21**

Recording Secretary  
**William Watson '21**

Historian  
**Thomas Daniel '21**

Treasurer  
**Worthey Wiles '21**

Recruitment Chairman  
**Thompson Huthnance '21**

House Managers  
**James Schupbach '21**  
**Christopher Scott '21**



**We Need You!**

## How You Can Help Texas Fiji

- **DONATE** to support our upcoming house renovations. Contact Board President **Gary McClure '76** at (325) 656-9890 or [gary@gmcclure.com](mailto:gary@gmcclure.com) to find out how you can give.
- **REFER** an incoming freshman you believe would live by our values. Contact **Thompson Huthnance '21** at (469) 416-5301 with their information.
- **VOLUNTEER** as a board member. Contact **Gary McClure '76** at [gary@gmcclure.com](mailto:gary@gmcclure.com) to express interest and ask questions.
- **SHARE** your copy of the *Texas Fiji* newsletter with brothers, family, and friends. Help keep them up to date on everything happening with the chapter!

PHI GAMMA DELTA  
BUEN RETIRO COMMITTEE  
P.O. Box 303153  
AUSTIN, TX 78703

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## ALUMNI NEWS

**Ted C. Hager '53** served as recruitment chairman, junior and senior fraternity representative, Sing Sang chairman, and chairman of Greek Week during his time in Fiji. He met his wife, Louise, at a Fiji lake house party; they celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary this past year, and they live in Dallas, Texas.

**J. Scott Susong '64** and his wife, Judy, are enjoying retirement. They are involved with Tulsa Bible Church and enjoy spending lots of time with kids and grandkids! Scott and Judy reside in Tulsa, Okla. Email: [ssusong1@att.net](mailto:ssusong1@att.net)

**Ron D. Willis '80** is retired and living in Horseshoe Bay, Texas. Email: [rjwillis@flash.net](mailto:rjwillis@flash.net)

**Reed G. Clemons '11** started a business called Kaighin and Clemons Advisory Team with his business partner, Jim Kaighin. He has recently moved back to Austin, Texas, and is excited to support upcoming Fiji events. Email: [reedclemons92@gmail.com](mailto:reedclemons92@gmail.com)

## WHAT ARE ALUMNI SAYING ABOUT FIJI



## WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE FIJI MEMORIES?

"Winter nights on sleeping porch; dining and singing Fiji songs at dinner; building floats for Varsity Carnival."

**Judd Miller Jr. '51**

"Developing close friendships through social life and intramural sports with the brothers as well as sharing the academic experience with them."

**Dean M. Greenwood '61**

"Lifelong friendships and being a member of the best fraternity at the university. Thanks to you, the active chapter, for continuing that tradition. Pass it on!"

**James L. Geary '68**

"Big Bend canoe trip in spring 2013, annual Low Hoop tournament, and football tailgates."

**Alex Turner '09**