

# Kat Konnection

A Newsletter of the Sam Houston State University Alumni Association  
A Member of The Texas State University System

Vol. 2, Issue 1

## Six honored with Service Awards

Two former SHSU athletes and a current professor are among those who have been selected to receive the 2007 SHSU Alumni Association Service Award for their outstanding commitment to the university and their respective communities.

Tom Freeman, James Hanscom, Robert Lane, John Magee, Michael Murray and Chris Thompson will be honored at a luncheon on April 27, at 11:30 a.m. in the Lowman Student Center Ballroom, for their fulfillment of the university's motto, "A Measure of a Life is its Service."

Tickets for the event are \$18 for Alumni Association members and \$22 for non-members. Reservations can be made by contacting the Alumni Relations Office at 936.294.1841 or by e-mail at alumni@shsu.edu.



*Freeman*

Tom Freeman, a 1958 graduate with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, is a long-time entrepreneur in the Huntsville community. Having owned two businesses - Town and Country Cleaners for more than 20 years and Freeman Investments, L.L.P., a real estate development company, he still manages to devote a considerable amount of time representing Sam Houston "exceptionally well in the community".

Freeman has served as chairman of the Walker and surrounding counties' "Share the Vision" capital campaign, a member of the President's Circle Executive Leadership Council, a Samuel Houston Society member, and an SHSU liaison on the Texas State University System's Governmental Relations Committee.

His community involvement includes serving as a deacon and active member of the First Baptist Church; member and past president/chairman of the board of the Huntsville-Walker County Chamber of Commerce; and former director of American Bank as well as First National Bank.

A professor and former department chair for SHSU's agricultural and industrial science department, Bobby Lane has, over the past 24 years, made a difference inside and outside the classroom.

Lane, a 1977 Bearkat graduate with a degree in agricultural education, was "instrumental in expanding the alumni program in agriculture" using his tenure on the association's board of directors to direct contributions totaling over \$10,000 to student professional development activities and establish a \$500 annual ag alumni leadership award as well as serving as host, for the past 12 years, at alumni annual gatherings in various cities across Texas.

His off-campus accomplishments include leading mission teams for the First United Methodist Church to Mexico, Costa Rica and Alabama; serving as vice president of the Walker County Fair Association; participating as board member for the Walker County Children's Protective Services; and writing a weekly column, "The Scoop on Agriculture," for the Huntsville Item.



*Lane*

A retired music teacher for the Brazosport school district, where he taught for 37 years, John Magee brought "pride to that district" and influenced "thousands of students who have never forgot him."

Magee received his bachelor's degree from SHSU in vocal music in 1950 and his Master of Music Education degree from the University of Houston in 1954. As a teacher, he developed a first-class choral program at Brazosport; directed award-winning "Sweepstakes" choirs; and led Freeport High School to a second place in a statewide recording contest.

After retiring in 1983, Magee's influence spread to the community, where he has served as music director for community musicals, founder and director of the Brazos Area Boy Choir, and as the part-time music minister at three community churches. In 2001, his accomplishments were recognized through the renaming of the high school auditorium to the John Magee Performance Center.



*Magee*

James Hanscom is a 1962 SHSU graduate with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He received his Master of Business Administration degree from Pepperdine University.

A life member of SHSU's Alumni Association, he served on the board of directors for five years, during which time he was a member of the committee that created the campus' alumni garden, and was the organization's president in 2005. Hanscom is also a life member of the Sigma Chi fraternity and past alumni president of the local chapter's house corporation.

His community involvement includes serving on the new clubhouse building and long-range planning committees for Elkins Lake, the Huntsville Item Advisory Board, and the Republican Party's finance committee where he was the Republican Party precinct chairman for Jefferson County. As a charter member of the Birmingham (Ala.) Sunrise Rotary Club, he was chairman of the organization's polio inoculation committee.



*Hanscom*



*Murray*

A former SHSU football and baseball letterman and Hall of Honor recipient, Michael Murray has used his "fund-raising genius" to benefit both the university's athletics department and Letterman's Association.

A Huntsville native, who earned his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1970, has owned Murray Insurance and Financial Services in Spring for more than 30 years.

Murray has given tremendous support to both the university and the athletics department. As president of the Lettermen's Association board of directors, he initiated a Skeet Shooting Tournament as a fundraiser, as well as conceived the idea of selling corporate sponsorships at the annual golf tournament. He's also a Kat Pack board member for many years and contributor to the "Share the Vision" Capital Campaign. Murray is involved in the community through his work with the American Cancer Society and Houston Northwest Baptist Church.

A former "Player of the Year" for SHSU's tennis team and two-time "Coach of the Year", Chris Thompson brings together the university, community and student-athletes through service.

Stressing the importance of community service to her student-athletes, Thompson established the Bearkat Mentor Program, which requires all freshman student-athletes to mentor at-risk students in the public school system. She has "insisted" all "her kids" participate in a local fund raisers for various charities.

After coaching tennis for 16 years, she now serves as the associate athletic director overseeing the athletic academic support program, academic services and NCAA compliance, and the Bearkat Learning Enhancement Center, which works with all student-athletes on class schedules, tutors, degree plans, career selection and academic advisement.

Under her guidance, student-athletes have steadily increased their grade point average to surpass both the general SHSU student population and the average of all student-athletes in the Southland Conference. In recognition of Thompson's leadership, the university has been awarded the Southland Conference Commissioner's Academic Cup for the past two years.



*Thompson*



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Meet the Alumni Board President



John McManners was born in Weldon, Texas but spent his formative years in Huntsville where he graduated from SHSU in 1962 with a BS in history. Through ROTC, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in Field Artillery spending his initial tour as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. John retired in 1992 after a 30-year military career, which carried him to many parts of the world including Europe, Vietnam, Laos and Bosnia. During his wartime service in Vietnam, John worked in northern Laos with the famed Hmong Mountain Tribe in guerrilla warfare against the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese. He was personally decorated by the King of Laos as a Knight of a Million Elephants in 1969. John is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, the United States Army War College and the United States Air War College. He also has a Masters Degree from Webster University. After retirement from the military, he worked for a law firm in San Antonio and Austin specializing in Social Security disability. Since returning to Huntsville in 2005, John has been an active university and community leader. In addition to his new role as President of the Alumni Association, he is a member of the Lowman Student Center Advisory Board, Friends of the Museum Board and Military Memorial Committee. John is also a member of the Rotary Club and The Huntsville Item Reader’s Advisory Board. John and wife Geanie reside at Elkins Lake. They have two daughters, Shannon McManners Hurst and Kathleen McManners Seleny.



Ring Ceremony

The Sam Houston State University Alumni Association, along with Student Services and the Office of the President, hosted the annual Official Ring Ceremony. Once again, more than 500 rings were distributed to eligible students. This year marks the introduction of the newest addition to the university’s official ring. Cast into the inside of the ring is the word “Honor”.



When Sam Houston joined the U. S. Army in 1813, Elizabeth Houston (Sam’s mother) understood her son’s decision. She called Sam to her side and handed him a musket saying “never disgrace it: for remember I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave, than one of them should turn his back to save his life.” She told him to always remember, “while the door to my cottage is open to brave men, it is eternally shut against cowards.” Elizabeth Houston placed a small gold band on his finger with a one-word inscription – **HONOR**.

Ring Collection

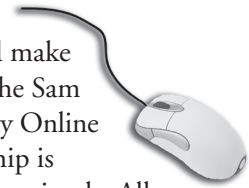
The SHSU Alumni Association can now display anywhere from 60-75 class rings in the new Alumni Relations Office thanks to a donation by SHSU alumni Gene and Ruth Sollock. The two came up with the idea to start a collection of old class rings at SHSU after they saw a similar collection at Texas A&M and the university created its official ring in 2003. The couple was the first to donate their own class rings to the association. “We kept our rings in our safe,” Gene said. “It has been years since either one of us had worn our rings.” Currently, the Alumni Association has 19 rings, with the owner’s name and graduation year, on display in the case.



Gene & Ruth Sollock

Get Clicking!

Search for friends and make new connections with the Sam Houston State University Online Community. Membership is exclusive and free to alumni only. All you need to do to take advantage of all the community has to offer is to proceed through the registration process to establish a User ID and password. Update your information, check out the online directory and class notes, learn about upcoming alumni events, or visit the Career Center. These are just some of the features of joining the university’s online community. Sign up today at alumni.shsu.edu.



Sam Houston State University is a Member of The Texas State University System

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Call the Alumni Offices at 800.283.7478 or visit alumni.shsu.edu for more information on these events

- June 13 SHSU Night @ Minute Maid Park
- June 7 Beaumont Alumni & Friends Event
- June 2 High Meadow Ranch Golf Club in Tomball
- Alumni Legacy Golf Tournament
- May 8 Houston Alumni & Friends Event
- May 1 Bryan/College Station Alumni & Friends Event
- April 27 Visitor and Alumni Center Open House

Upcoming Alumni Events

SHSU Alumni Association  
Box 2022  
Huntsville, TX 77341-2022

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