



**COLLIN  
COLLEGE**

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**In the Words of Alumni**

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*Collin College  
25th Anniversary  
Commemorative Anthology*



**COLLIN  
COLLEGE**

## Why Collin College?

Students attend Collin College for many reasons. Some are searching for small teacher-to-student ratios, like a private university. Some are looking for nationally renowned, award-winning professors. Some want to bolster their resumes with undergraduate research experience. Some want to take advantage of the college's partnerships with universities and transfer with ease. Some want to take classes to gain employment in the jobs of their dreams. Like the diverse 46,000 students who attend Collin College annually, the reasons are varied and abundant.

To commemorate 25 years of quality education, Collin College is shining the spotlight on some outstanding alumni and their reasons for choosing this exceptional institution of higher education. After all, what better way is there to learn about the college experience than from the experts who experienced it first hand?

At Collin College, we take great pride in our students and their accomplishments. Our students are the leaders of the future, and it is an honor to touch upon a few of their many accomplishments in this publication.

We look forward to the next 25 years of innovation and preeminent education and hope to add your name to the next edition of our alumni book.



*Cary A. Israel*  
*District President*  
*Collin College*

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**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

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## Guillermo Ameer, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Surgery,  
Northwestern University

*“Collin College serves the community. It is an excellent school. I felt prepared to go on to the university. All of my professors were exceptional. Attending Collin College worked for me. The price I paid for my education could have been 30 times as expensive.”*

- Founder and President of ProSorp BioTech, Inc. and VesselTek BioMedical, LLC.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ph.D., Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, 1999
- The University of Texas at Austin, Bachelor of Science, Chemical Engineering, 1993
- Collin College, Magna Cum Laude, 1990

# Erin Schafer, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Speech and Hearing Science,  
University of North Texas

*“Collin College offers the same course work as universities, except instead of 200-300 or more students in a class you have less than 30 people. Something happened when I was at Collin College. I was a B or C student in high school, but I maintained a 4.0 as an undergraduate. The small classes and willingness of professors to meet with me really did help me.”*

- The University of Texas at Dallas, Ph.D., Communication Sciences, 2005
- The University of Texas at Dallas, Master of Science, Audiology, 2001
- Texas Woman’s University, Bachelor of Science, Communication Sciences and Disorders, 1998
- Collin College 1995





# Dennis Garcia, R.D.H.

Dental Hygienist,  
Dental One

*“The Collin College Service Learning program opened the door for me. What I was learning in class I was already applying. While working with kids through programs sponsored by the North Texas Food Bank, I was able to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents and was able to educate them with regards to nutritional and oral health. Six-year-old kids did not have their own toothbrushes, and sometimes they said they would use their brothers’ toothbrushes. Not all the money in the world or any material possession will ever measure up to the feeling I get in helping someone. My goal is to leave the world a better place and to know that one life has breathed easier because I lived a life that made a difference.”*

- **The University of Texas Southwestern Allied Health, Bachelor of Science, Clinical Nutrition, 2007**
- **Collin College, Dental Hygiene Graduate, 2003**





## Michael Urie

Actor,

Featured as Marc St. James on the hit ABC TV show *Ugly Betty* and  
Rudi Gernreich in the Off-Broadway play *The Temperamentals*

*“While I was taking classes at Collin College, I decided I was really going to be an actor. It was Professor Brad Baker’s suggestion that I audition for Juilliard, and without that I might not have had the confidence I needed to do well in the audition. I would have been much further behind if I had gone to Juilliard straight out of high school and not gone to Collin College. I still go back to things I learned at Collin College.”*

- Golden Globe winner, Outstanding Comedy Ensemble, *Ugly Betty*
- Best Actor at the Lortel Awards for role in *The Temperamentals*
- The Juilliard School 2003
- Collin College 1999

# Vu Phung, M.D.

Geriatric Fellowship,  
University of Cincinnati

*“At Collin College, the professors gave us challenging problems to help us understand difficult concepts, so I was able to comprehend new concepts easier than other people. Even now, when I am reading medical articles about the latest advances I find that the new concepts are not that difficult to understand because of the solid base I acquired at Collin College. I believe my brother and I would not have had the success we have today if we went straight to the university.”*

- Family Practice Residency, Mt. Carmel Hospital
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine, M.D., 2005
- The University of Texas at Dallas, Bachelor of Science, Biology, 2000
- Collin College 2001





# Dawn Spradling, R.N.

Nurse,  
Denton State Supported Living Center and Camp Summit

*“If it wasn’t for Collin College I would be not be a nurse today. On the day I found out I passed the nursing certification, I sat down and cried on the steps of the Central Park Campus because I knew I was a success. I never in my whole life dreamed I would make as much money as I am making now.”*



- Texas Tech, Bachelor of Science, Nursing, Magna Cum Laude, 2009
- Collin College, Nursing School Graduate, 2004

# Aspen Bischoff

Teacher,  
Hickey Elementary School

*“Friends of mine, who are teachers, recommended Collin College over all of the other schools. The professors are amazing! They are always willing to help and have an abundance of information to share. After graduating, I have stayed in touch with many of them. Collin College definitely prepared me to teach. Their program offers up-to-date knowledge and prepares you for real classroom situations. I was able to share new information with my team, and together we were able to initiate new strategies for teaching. I would absolutely recommend Collin College to anyone interested in becoming a teacher.”*

- **Beginning Teacher of the Year Award, 2008-2009**
- **Collin College, Alternative Teacher Certification Graduate, 2008**







## Roderick C. Hunter Jr., D.P.M.

Podiatry Resident,  
Kingwood Medical Center

*“Collin and Professors Kyle Wilkison and Kay Mizell saved me. I credit those two professors with my success hands down. They told me, ‘You are smart enough to be a success.’ Dr. Mizell asked me to be in her honors English class. Before I knew it, I was taking other honors classes, and I was getting A’s. I wanted to do well because I didn’t want to disappoint them.”*

- New York College of Podiatric Medicine, D.P.M., 2009
- The University of Texas at Dallas, Bachelor of Arts, Biology, 2004
- The University of Texas at Dallas Redman Scholar
- Collin College 2001

# Tri Phung, M.D.

Anesthesiology Resident,  
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

*“Collin College made a big impression on my life. If you want to go to medical school, I would recommend Collin College. I would recommend that my own children go to this school.”*



- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine, M.D., 2007
- The University of Texas at Dallas, Bachelor of Science, Biology, 2000
- Collin College 2002





# Matthew Uppole, BATT CHF

Battalion Chief,  
Coppell Fire Department

*“Collin College was the best opportunity to get my career started. The instructors make Collin College’s fire science program unique. They are from the different area fire departments, so the students are exposed to multiple perspectives and procedures. In fire service, it is critical to be open-minded and learn to do things in different ways.”*

- Collin College, Fire Academy Graduate, Class # 1, Valedictorian, 1992



## Brian Allen

Director of Internet Marketing, RadioVision

*“I wasn’t a rich man, so I had to work before and during college. I worked in welding for two years and traveled all over the U.S. You get extremely hot, cold and tired. While I was in school doing homework until 2 a.m., I thought about sledgehammers and how I did not want to run them anymore. One day, I asked my graphic design professor if I could see his portfolio, and he said, ‘You guys are my portfolio.’ That is the stuff you hear on greeting cards, but that is how it is at Collin College. Those kinds of things change your life.”*



# Niclas C. Tan, Ph.D.

Scientist, Millennium Pharmaceuticals:  
the Takeda Oncology Company

*“The Collin biotechnology classes introduced me to molecular biology skills that a graduate student would need to succeed in a program. What I love about the biomedical field is that there is always something different every day. It is satisfying to know that you are contributing to the eventual health of patients who may be at risk. This is science that impacts people’s lives.”*

- **The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Biomedical Engineering, Ph.D., 2008**
- **Texas A&M University, Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering, 1999**
- **Collin College 2003**



# Marcela Guerrero Casas

Policy and Advocacy Manager,  
Africa Fairtrade Network, Cape Town, South Africa

*“My passion to see the world was fostered at Collin College. Talks with my professor motivated me to pursue that dream. It made me realize that everything is connected. I hope that I am helping to plant the seeds that will translate into a more peaceful environment. Those are long term goals that one individual does not affect by himself; I see myself as a piece of the puzzle.”*

- **Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Master’s degrees in Public Administration and International Relations**
- **Collin College 1999**





- The Juilliard School, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Acting, 2007
- Collin College 2003



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**SGU**  
STARGATE UNIVERSE

## Brian J. Smith

Actor,

Featured as Lt. Matthew Scott, MGM's *Stargate Universe* and Hector MacQueen, ITV production of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* for PBS' *Masterpiece Mystery*

*“I think there is no better place to start than Collin College. People get accepted to expensive theater programs and are not happy. I wish I had gone to Collin College first and got the base and good advice and guidance. It would have saved me two years and a lot of money. When you look at the success rate coming out of Collin College—it is head and shoulders ahead of expensive colleges—that says a lot about the faculty. You can make millions and have big houses and have people that will stroke your ego, and at the end of the day it will not matter. What is important is what you have said as a human being through your work.”*

# Geoff Bailey

Regional Leader of Pickens Plan

*“My time at Collin College was tremendous. I developed a great work ethic and a passion for education which I took with me to UCLA. Collin College offers fantastic night and Weekend College classes. As a Collin College Honor’s Institute student I had a private lunch with Robert Gates, who at the time was the president of Texas A&M University and former director of the CIA and now is the Secretary of Defense. That is just one example of the many opportunities that students have at Collin College.”*

- **Former White House Intern**
- **University of California, Los Angeles, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, 2006**
- **Collin College, with Honors, 2004**



# Nicholas Palmer, J.D.

Attorney,  
Law Office of Rob Wiley, P.C.

*“Collin College caused law school for me. I was going to be a music major. Collin College was the turning point at which I began to think analytically. In law school people were afraid of the Socratic Method, but I was comfortable because of the classroom debates at Collin College.”*



- Former Clerk for U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas
- The Pennsylvania State University, Juris Doctorate, 2009
- University of North Texas, Bachelor of Science, Criminal Justice, Magna Cum Laude, 2005
- Collin College, Cum Laude, 2003



# Dena Pritchett

Fulbright Scholar,  
United Arab Emirates

*“Collin College has extremely committed faculty, and the classes are rigorous. The college encourages dialogue and scholarship, so I felt I had the tools to write papers and speak on subjects with authority. I did not want to leave Collin College. I give credit to the constant encouragement and inspiration that the professors bestow on their students.”*

- Southern Methodist University, Bachelor of Arts, International Studies, with Honors, 2004
- Collin College, with Honors, 2002





# John Payton, J.P.

Collin County Justice of the Peace

*“Without education, there is no independence because you have cornered yourself into a hole, and you will never be able to do what you want to do. If you do not get an education, all doors close. To attend Collin College is an honor. Everyone exceeds expectations and is always willing to give selflessly in what they are doing. That is what makes Collin College stand above everyone else.”*



- Collin College, Magna Cum Laude, 2002
- All-USA Academic Team Member



## Seth Rutherford, R. Ph.

Pharmacist,

Las Colinas Pharmacy Compounding and Wellness Center

*“You have to be willing to work hard for Collin College classes, but I had the hardest and best professors that I could have ever hoped for in calculus, chemistry and microbiology. Collin College has a university-level style of education in a small community that offers personal relationships with the professors. Collin College is not the 13th grade; it is a preparation program to get into pharmacy or medical school.”*

- Texas Tech, Doctor of Pharmacy, 2009
- Collin College 2005



# Carlos Carrion

Dental student,  
University of Texas Health Science Center at  
Houston Dental School

*“Collin College was my ticket to dental school. If it were not for Collin College, I could not have done this. This college gave me the flexibility to work full time and take prerequisites. Some people tell you not to take prerequisites at a community college. However, I have been to graduate school twice, and I can easily spot a piece of cake class. This is really a top notch institution. It is up to par with any other four-year university. The professors here know what they are talking about. My education here has been excellent.”*

- **Monterrey Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Science, Electronic Systems Engineering, 1985**
- **Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Master of Science, Computer Science, 1988**
- **Southern Methodist University, Master of Science, Applied Mathematics, 1990**
- **Collin College 2006**



# Adele DeVries

Project Manager, Barnard Howard LLC

*“When making my decision about where to attend college, I looked for the best. Quite simply, Collin College is the best, and it will continue to attract and produce the best students. With the infrastructure and resources the college provided, I was empowered to grow into a scholar, leader and servant in school, my community and nation. Not only did the funding from scholarships enable me to complete my degree, it also provided an imperative incentive that spurred me to greater excellence in all my endeavors.”*

- Villanova University, Master’s Certificate, Project Management, with Distinction
- Southern Methodist University, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Magna Cum Laude, 2007
- Collin College, Summa Cum Laude, 2005
- All-USA Academic Team Member





# Arminda Callejas Weintz, M.D.

OB GYN Resident,  
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

*“Half of my medical school prerequisite science classes were from Collin. I didn’t feel like I was giving anything up as far as the quality of the education at Collin. Dr. Jury was awesome because there is no getting through his class without learning organic chemistry. On the last day of class I told him, you keep doing what you are doing. You gave me hell for a full year. Thank you very much. Dr. Broyles is also awesome. I never understood physics until his class.”*

- The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, M.D., 2009
- Texas A&M University, Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, 2001
- Collin College 2001





## Jon Dooley, J.D.

Attorney,  
Closing Manager, Invesco Real Estate

*“I was stunned at how much the professors at Collin College wanted to work with the students. In any class where I had questions and wanted to learn, they were really there. You do not see that at all at the larger colleges. At Collin College they are more about the students. Anyone who says all the classes at Collin College are easy is wrong. It was a challenge. I had to work as hard for an accounting class at Collin College as any of my undergraduate classes at SMU.”*

- **The University of Texas School of Law, Juris Doctor, 2001**
- **Southern Methodist University, Bachelor of Business Administration, Cum Laude, 1999**
- **Collin College 1997**



# Brian Cook, PA-C

Physician Assistant, Acute Management

*“Collin College had the classes I needed, offered a flexible schedule, and best of all the professors were highly motivated to teach at the highest levels. I was surprised by the number of professors with doctorates. Grades at Collin College are not given out; they are earned. I appreciated that. Some people think if you take classes at a community college you cannot get into good professional programs. Well, I attended Collin College and graduated from Yale.”*

- Yale University Physician Associate Program, 2007
- Texas A&M University, Bachelor of Science, Industrial Engineering
- Collin College 2003



# Scott Michael Foster

Actor,  
Featured as Cappie on the hit  
ABC Family show *Greek*

*“Why wouldn’t people want to go to Collin College for theatre classes? For me, it was a great experience because I had seen so many plays there, and I knew what I could be a part of. If you really want to be part of an amazing theatrical program, go see the plays and get excited about joining. I have seen so many amazing people come out of Collin College and do fantastic things; there is proof of its success.”*

• Collin College 2003



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## CORE VALUES

We have a passion for:

*Learning*

*Service and Involvement*

*Creativity and Innovation*

*Academic Excellence*

*Dignity and Respect*

*Integrity*

**For more information on  
Collin College,  
*visit [www.collin.edu](http://www.collin.edu) .***



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