

THIS WEEK
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Former MC student has family heritage in education

BY NANCY THORNE
Public Information Office

Assistant Professor of History Dr. Damon Kennedy was a highly competitive tennis player in high school who didn't care much for history class. In fact, he failed history. "I was pampered. Once my teachers realized I was on the varsity tennis team, they just went ahead and passed me, even though I still wasn't making much of an effort," Dr. Kennedy said.

It was at Midland College that he received the wake-up call which set him on the scholastic straight and narrow. "I was not applying myself, so Dr. Will Morris and Dr. Charles Simmons called me in and delivered an important message in a *very forceful way*," Kennedy said. It was a message he'd grown tired of hearing from his family, but once his college instructors started in on him, the message got through. "I finally took it to heart. I got to class. I read the material. You could see an immediate transition in my grades," he said. What were Bs and Cs became As. He doubts he would have had that same attention or success at a larger school. "MC did me a great service!" he said. He is grateful for the dedicated instructors like Morris, Simmons, James Fuller and Russell Goodyear who "challenged me in ways I'd never been challenged before."

After finishing his core requirements at MC in 1994, he transferred to UTPB where he finished his bachelors and masters degrees in history. He wrote his master's thesis on John Ben Sheppard and the evolution of historic preservation and public history in the state of Texas. At Texas Tech University he continued his doctoral research, with his primary fields of study in "frontier and the west" and "the United States since 1945." His dissertation on the 6666 Ranch and its founder, Samuel Burk Burnett, reflected his interest in ranching history. "This story had never been told," Kennedy said about Burnett, one of the state's most influential ranchers. The 6666 Ranch, the largest privately owned ranch in Texas—in King and Cottle counties, near Lubbock—is still several hundred thousand acres in size.

His research into Burnett's story also fueled another of Kennedy's interests in the



Dr. Damon Kennedy with his U.S. History since 1877 class

Comanche Indians, as Burnett was good friends with Comanche leader Quanah Parker, who served as a liaison (circa 1870s) between Burnett and several other Indian tribes in the region.

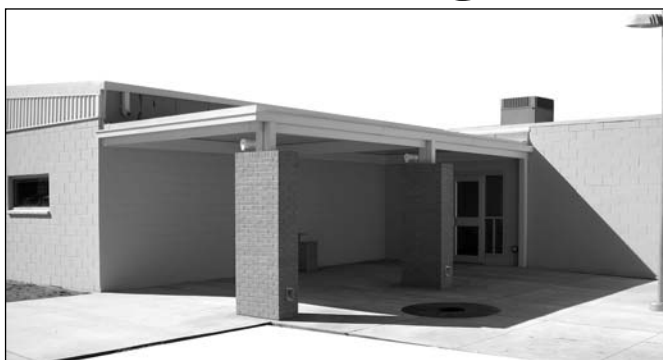
Kennedy believes that he's been genetically predisposed to study history. His great-grandfather, a Johns-Hopkins-educated physician, was also very interested

in the medical and religious history of Texas. His parents both have masters degrees and have spent their lives as educators. Kennedy also thanks his grandfather, Dr. Pat Nixon, (also a physician and history buff, who wrote a family genealogy, *The Early Nixons of Texas*) for setting aside enough money to send all of his grandchildren to college. So far, eight of Kennedy's siblings and cousins have made use of the college fund.

Kennedy has always been drawn to teaching. "I love the interaction with the students, of being able to talk about a subject that initially may not be important to them, but by semester's end, they get it," he said. His students seem to be enjoying his classroom as well. His U.S. History 1302 class is full, lively, and "one of my best classes, ever!" he said. "He challenges us to think rather than just sit and listen," said Nathan Hamilton, an MC junior pursuing his Bachelor's in Organizational Management.

Dr. Kennedy continues the family trend of very high educational expectations for his two daughters, Kaitlyn, eight, and Madelyn, five. When asked if they will be going to college he says, without hesitation, "Oooooooh, Yeeeah!" On a recent trip to Cambridge he bought a bumper sticker boasting "Harvard Dad" which his wife, Susanne won't let him put on the car just yet. His dream is to attend Harvard Law School. "I may be 50, but I plan on enrolling there with my daughters," he said.

FREE tax preparation, credit reporting and FAFSA assistance offered at Cogdell Learning Center



Anyone who earns less than \$42,000 annually is encouraged to take advantage of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at Cogdell Learning Center. Certified tax preparers—who are trained by the IRS—will provide FREE tax preparation and e-filing on Saturday, February 28, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Cogdell Learning

Center, 201 S. Florida. Please call Casa de Amigos, which facilitates tax services, at (432) 682-9701 to set up an appointment for VITA assistance.

Cogdell staff will also be available to assist with completion of the 2009-10 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form on Saturday, February 28. Completed 2008 tax forms will be needed before the FAFSA forms can be filed. Please call (432) 685-6023 to set up an appointment for FAFSA assistance.

Midland College Business Economic and Development Center (BEDC) staff will be available to assist individuals access free credit reports on Saturday, February 28, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Cogdell Learning Center, 201 S. Florida. No appointments are necessary. For more information please call the BEDC at (432)684-4309.

Panelists discuss human intolerance as part of African-American History month



From left, MC Government Professor Lee Almaguer, MC History Professor Dr. Damon Kennedy, UTPB Associate Professor of Sociology Dr. Joanna Hadjicostandi, MC Assistant Professor of History Dr. Todd Houck, MC History Instructor Frank De La O, MC Assistant Professor of Anthropology Dr. Paula Gray and Assistant Coordinator of Developmental Studies James Fuller

Hate crime is defined as an act of violence against people, groups of people, cemeteries or religious structures. Targets are usually convenient, vulnerable or incapable of fighting back. A learned panel of instructors, facilitated by Assistant Coordinator of Development Studies James Fuller, united to discuss this painful issue at a symposium held on February 18. Dr. Damon Kennedy presented information on lynchings while Government Professor Lee Almaguer discussed his personal experience with intolerance: his father was refused service in Lubbock as late as 1963. History Instructor Frank De La O looked at human

intolerance from a national policy perspective and Dr. Todd Houck clarified that any race can commit hate crimes. Visiting UTPB Sociology Professor Dr. Joanna Hadjicostandi focused on the hierarchical nature of hate crimes and how often it is the "power group" who is inflicting violence against a minority group. Dr. Paula Gray discussed the phenomenon in Tulia, Texas where a raid was conducted in 1999 by a corrupt lawman, and, subsequently, many African-American citizens were wrongfully held in prison for years.

Dr. Gray will lead a public viewing and discussion of the documentary, *Tulia, Texas*, at Visionary Hollowell Community United Methodist Church, 400 S. Marshall, tonight at 6:00 p.m.



The new
MC Reading & Writing Center
is hosting an Open House

Tuesday, February 24
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Technology Center Annex, Room 182
King cake and snacks will be served!

Please call (432) 685-6458
for more information.

Briefly

Workforce Continuing Education presents "Finding Time"

Would you invest one hour to save ten in the next month? In this new course, discover how you can unlock the door to productivity and peace of mind with simple and effective time management and planning advice for busy people! The course costs \$69 and meets 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3 and Thursday, March 5 at the ATC, 3200 W. Cuthbert. Online registration is available at www.midland.edu/workforce or at (432) 681-6326.

Creating an Employee Handbook course begins March 3

Every business, big or small, benefits from producing an employee handbook. This short course demonstrates how to create a useful handbook, how to write clear policies and how to implement the handbook into your workplace. The course costs \$69 and meets 7:45 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3 and Thursday, March 5 at the ATC. Online registration is available at www.midland.edu/workforce or at (432) 681-6326.

Last Chance for Advanced Photoshop CS2 begins March 2!

This hands-on course will demonstrate how to create and use masks and vector paths, and how to enhance images using fills and overlays. Course activities also cover automation of repetitive tasks and applying creative special effects to both images and text. The course costs \$139 and meets 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 2 and Wednesday, March 4 at the ATC. Online registration is available at www.midland.edu/workforce or at (432) 681-6330.

Trip to Peru set for April

Calling all explorers! You are invited to discover the wonders of the high altitude tropics in Peru. Dean of Math and Science Dr. Margaret Wade will host a trip from April 17 - 26, with exploration of the wonders of Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley. The course may be taken for continuing education credit or for academic credit. Total cost for the trip will be about \$3,500. Please call Dr. Margaret Wade for more information, (432) 685-4615.

Midland College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award certificates and associate and baccalaureate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Midland College.

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