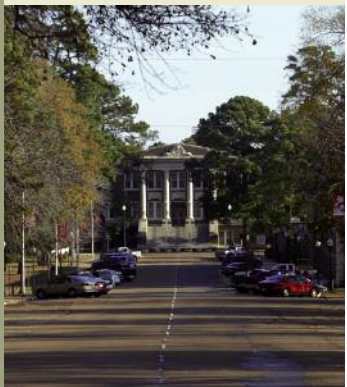




Vista Drive has long been one of the most memorable glimpses visitors enjoy of Stephen F. Austin State University's beautiful campus, and SFA photographer Hardy Meredith suggested it as an ideal name for the university's new magazine.

We hope you enjoy the view into the 1925 campus above, the 2008 campus below, and the activities and inspirations in this premiere issue of the university's magazine, *The SFA Vista*.



Additional photos and video at [www.sfasu.edu/vista](http://www.sfasu.edu/vista)

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
P.O. BOX 6100  
NACOGDOCHES, TX 75962



# VISTA

THE SFA



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE SPRING 2008

**THE SFA VISTA VOLUME ONE, ISSUE ONE**  
 The Vista is published for the Stephen F. Austin State University community, alumni and friends by the Office of Public Affairs.

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Comments and letters to the editor are welcomed. Letters must include contact information and may be edited for length. Send correspondence, including address changes, to: P. O. Box 6100 Nacogdoches, TX 75962 (936) 468-2605, vista@sfasu.edu © 2008.

**THE SFA VISTA**

Welcome to the premiere issue of *The SFA Vista*, the Stephen F. Austin State University magazine.

Our goal for this publication is to share with you the remarkable accomplishments of the people in the SFA community.












The name of this magazine was inspired by Vista Drive, which has provided a unique view of the campus since the doors of the Austin Building were opened to the first SFA students in 1924.

In this and future issues of *The SFA Vista*, you will gain a view of some of the many great people that make SFA the outstanding university that it is. Our faculty, staff, students and alumni enrich this university with their dedication of service and their engagement to achieve success. *The SFA Vista* is dedicated to sharing their stories.

Whether you count yourself among SFA's alumni, current students, faculty or staff, or you know of someone who is a prospective future student, let me encourage you to read *The SFA Vista* for a fresh view of what makes Stephen F. Austin State University a great place to call your own.



— Baker Pattillo  
 President  
 Stephen F. Austin State University

	4	<b>PASSION FOR NURSING LEADS TO GIFT, LEGISLATIVE BOND FUNDING</b>
	8	<b>SFA ALUM'S BUSINESS, ADVICE BOOK IS BEST SELLER</b>
	10	<b>STUDENT LEADS UNIVERSITY TO \$32 MILLION BUILDING PROJECT</b>
	12	<b>BUSINESS PROFESSOR OFFERS EDUCATION, INSPIRATION</b>
	14	<b>COLLEGE OF EDUCATION NAMED FOR EAST TEXAS BANKER • NCATE</b>
	17	<b>COMPOSITION STUDENT RECEIVING RECOGNITION</b>
	18	<b>SFA SCIENTISTS SEEK CURES WITH NATIVE PLANT RESEARCH</b>
	20	<b>STUDENTS WALK ON THE WILD SIDE IN LOUISIANA</b>
	22	<b>SFA STUDENTS HELP REBUILD NEW ORLEANS</b>
	24	<b>MUTUAL BENEFITS TO SUPPORTING SFA • AUDIOLOGY LAB: LISTEN AND LEARN</b>
	26	<b>PRIVACY LAW PROTECTS STUDENT RECORDS • SEN. HUTCHISON VISITS SFA</b>
	28	<b>VOLLEYBALL TEAM: CHAMPIONS ON AND OFF THE COURT</b>
	30	<b>NEWEST DEANS • FOND FAREWELLS</b>

# SFA ALUM'S BUSINESS, ADVICE BOOK IS BEST SELLER

**F**lip Flippen has achieved the goal of almost every aspiring author—a book on the New York Times' bestseller list. Life for the Stephen F. Austin graduate has not always been filled with such success. Flippen, a native of Orange, Texas, failed second grade. The good news is—he never realized it until he was an adult.

"The principal called me and several other boys in and asked us to stay in second grade to be part of a special team to help the incoming second-graders adjust," Flippen recalled. "I didn't read very well at all, but I just remember feeling honored to be asked to help someone."

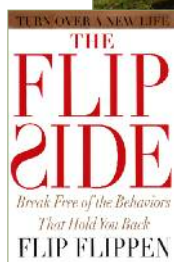
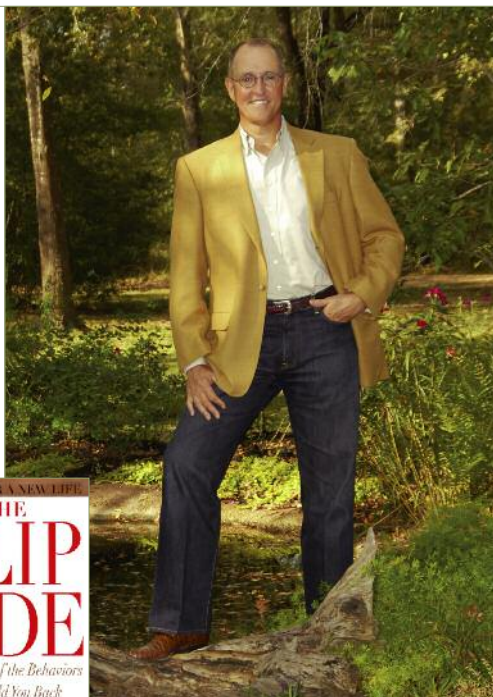
The request transformed what could have been a humiliating experience for the youngster into a school year in which he felt needed and valued. It was a feeling Flippen didn't experience often during his childhood, but he has devoted much of his career to empowering schools to offer students the same encouragement he received.

"I always had a hard time with math; my grades were not good," Flippen recalled. "But SFA was very good to me."

Flippen received his undergraduate degree from SFA in beef cattle production, with minors in sociology and psychology. He went on to earn a master's degree in sociology from Texas A&M and became a licensed professional counselor.

"All I ever wanted to do was raise cattle," he said. "I think I'm the only shrink in the state with a degree in beef cattle production. But, if you can herd cattle, you can herd kids."

The philosophy has proven true for Flippen and his wife, Susan, who have helped raise more than 20 children of various ethnic backgrounds.



"All of our children have been very successful," Flippen said. "Cultural diversity was a blessing for our family."

After graduation, Flippen had the opportunity to take a lucrative position in another country, but chose to open a counseling center to treat patients struggling with substance abuse and gang-affiliation issues, regardless of their ability to pay.

"It was basically a realignment of my priorities based on deep reflection of what I wanted my life to count for," he said. "I think we all have a purpose in life, and it is incumbent upon each of us to find that purpose and fulfill it. I was dirt poor when we started, but I saw things and learned things I had never dreamed of."

Flippen's center grew to a staff of 35, and he went on to establish a 500-acre residential treat-

ment facility in the College Station area. Flippen no longer practices as a licensed professional counselor, instead concentrating his attention on his business, The Flippen Group, one of the fastest growing corporate training companies in the U.S., and the largest educator training company in North America. The company and its products are based on the philosophy Flippen developed during his years of counseling and learning from his young clients who were able to overcome obstacles and lead successful lives.

"Parenting is basically a process of removing constraints," he said. "Parents who potty-train an 18-month-old realize the child has a lack of self-control, and they've got to get that out of there because at some point in life, that lack of self-control is unacceptable. The same thing happens when parents deal with their children's temper tantrums. After a certain age, tantrums just aren't acceptable anymore."

Flippen's book, "The Flip Side," debuted at No. 10 on the New York Times best-seller list for advice books and made the top 150 books list by USA Today. The Flippen Group was recently ranked by Texas Monthly's Texas Business Partners as the second-best company to work for in the state. The book explains Flippen's theory for removing personal constraints and examines the behavioral weaknesses that prohibit people from reaching goals.

"The 10 constraints we deal with in the book are the most common ones we see," he said. "When parents have someone to help them overcome their own personal constraints, they are able to set good boundaries, stay focused and deal with their kids on a more healthy level. For example, when one of my sons was 11, we were having an argument, and he told me that I had a need to be right all the time. I told him he was correct, that I did have a need to be right. He pointed out to me that he had the same need. We were both dealing with the same constraint."

The Flippen Group, with offices in five states, Australia and France, has worked with more than 5,000 school districts in the U.S. to help teachers learn to tap into the potential of their students.

"Just because a child is not learning does not mean that child is not capable of learning," he explained. "It's just that we haven't yet learned how to tap into that student's potential."

Flippen said tapping into this potential is key to improving the future of education and ensuring the future success of the state.

"Among the incarcerated population, 70 percent can't read," Flippen said. "Every student in the state should have access to great teachers and a great education. Every child should know how to read."▼

—Shirley Luna

## Alumni groups offer networking opportunities

The SFA Alumni Association's alumni chapter program provides opportunities for SFA alumni and friends to celebrate the SFA spirit in their respective geographic regions. The chapters offer social, networking and fundraising events that promote the university and play a positive role in the future of SFA and the SFA Alumni Association.

Currently, there are more than 20 different chapters in Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, and Ohio. Six chapters focus on special interests—African American, agriculture, ROTC, rugby, nursing, and Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity. The chapters help develop future leadership for the association's board of directors by identifying individuals to serve on board committees.

The chapters host activities that promote fellowship between members of the SFA family and current students, including family picnics, Coaches Night, Freshman Send-Off Parties, tailgate parties, networking luncheons, golf tournaments, and legislative events in Austin.

To learn more about the SFA alumni chapter program, visit [www.sfaalumni.com](http://www.sfaalumni.com) or call (800) 765-1534.

—Rhonda Minton