



# FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

JUNE  
**CAMPUS  
UPDATE**  
2018



## From Ethiopia to FHSU and beyond

Selam Ball is a long way from the impoverished Ethiopian village where she was born.



Two weeks before graduating magna cum laude from Fort Hays State this spring with a B.A. in modern languages and minor in biology, she was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army, part of her Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship. She is one of 64 students across the country—and the only one in Kansas—to receive this scholarship.

She was adopted by Mark and Krista Ball, Great Bend, when she was 14 and, after five months of hard work, entered eighth grade that fall.

In high school, Ball excelled academically and athletically. She set a Great Bend High School women's pole vault record of 11 feet, 6 inches, and eventually decided to pursue her education at Fort Hays State.

"My dad and my grandpa both went to Fort Hays State, so they were always talking it up," said Ball.

She chose dentistry because she wanted to earn her way through graduate school without depending on her parents, and the other reason was the missionary who removed a rotted tooth when she was 10 and living in an orphanage in Ethiopia.

"I remember wondering why he would want to help people like that," she said. "It made a big impact on me, and I'll never forget it."

## FHSU professor and student publish in prestigious journal *Nature*

Dr. Laura Wilson, associate professor of geosciences and chief curator of the Sternberg Museum of Natural History, and Kristopher Super, an alumnus of Fort Hays State University who is now a graduate student at the University of Kansas, have coauthored a research article published in the journal *Nature*.

In late summer of 2014, Super found a fossil of a bird (*Ichthyornis dispar*) in Gove County. He was about to start his freshman year at Fort Hays State.

"I had an early suspicion they could be bird bones, so I removed a medium sized slab of rock so I could prepare the bones back in my dorm room under better conditions and with better tools," he said. Wilson, his advisor, knew immediately that this specimen was significant.

Over the next few years, Wilson and Super, who earned his Bachelor of Science in geosciences from FHSU in 2017, joined a team of experts from Yale University, the University of Kansas, the Alabama Museum of Natural History, Tuscaloosa, and the McWane Science Center, Birmingham, Ala., all keen on better understanding bird evolution.



"This fossil turned out to be even more spectacular than Kris and I initially thought," said Wilson. "It has helped us not only understand more about *Ichthyornis*, but about how the modern bird evolved."

## Spring is also a time for awards

Commencement is not only a time to confer degrees. It is also a time to honor outstanding performance by faculty and students.

This year at Fort Hays State University, the Torch Award for outstanding graduating senior went to Keshawn Sewell, McPherson. Herrick Smith, St. Augustine, Fla., was named the recipient of the first-ever Lighthouse Award for an outstanding student completing graduate studies.

Dr. Robert Channell, professor and chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, was the Pilot Award recipient as the outstanding faculty member, and Dr. Craig Smith, associate professor of agriculture, was named the recipient of the Navigator Award as the outstanding academic advisor.

The spring faculty awards for research, teaching and service were also announced leading up to Commencement.

Dr. Mohammad Riazi-Kermani, professor of mathematics, was recognized for research; Angela Walters, associate professor of informatics, was recognized for teaching; and Ken Windholz, instructor of psychology, was recognized for service.



## Retired professor shows value of deferred gifts

Dr. Marcia Bannister is a retired FHSU professor and chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders who

stands out through all she has done and continues to do for the university.

Bannister also plans to support Fort Hays State after her passing, when her planned giving initiative will provide supplemental financial resources to enhance the exceptionality of the speech-language program.

Working closely with the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and the Herndon Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, she specified certain parameters for how the chair of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department may allocate the annual earnings from the endowed fund.

At the time of her retirement in 2004, her four sons and her colleagues created the Marcia Bannister Fund for Excellence in recognition of her leadership and dedication to the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and the Herndon Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic.

The fund will support faculty, staff and graduate students with scholarships and assistantships.

## Did you know?

- The largest class ever – 32 students – was recognized by the Kansas Academy of Mathematics and Science in a ceremony on May 5. Students in the class received nearly \$1.5 million in scholarship offers.
- The Science and Mathematics Education Institute is hosting seven camps, from building robots to creating DNA models, for students in grades 2 through 8 during June.
- Zachar Dziadul, a senior majoring in marketing, recently won first place and a \$5,000 scholarship in the Entrepreneurship Challenge at the Collegiate Distributive Education Clubs of America International Career Development Conference in Washington, D.C.
- From June 20 to June 23, FHSU will host the award-winning Hispanic College Institute, a residential program offered free of charge to help prepare students to succeed in college.



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