

*etCetera*

January 24, 1983

Jarvis mom  
goes from  
the hall  
to the  
hill

... see page 2.

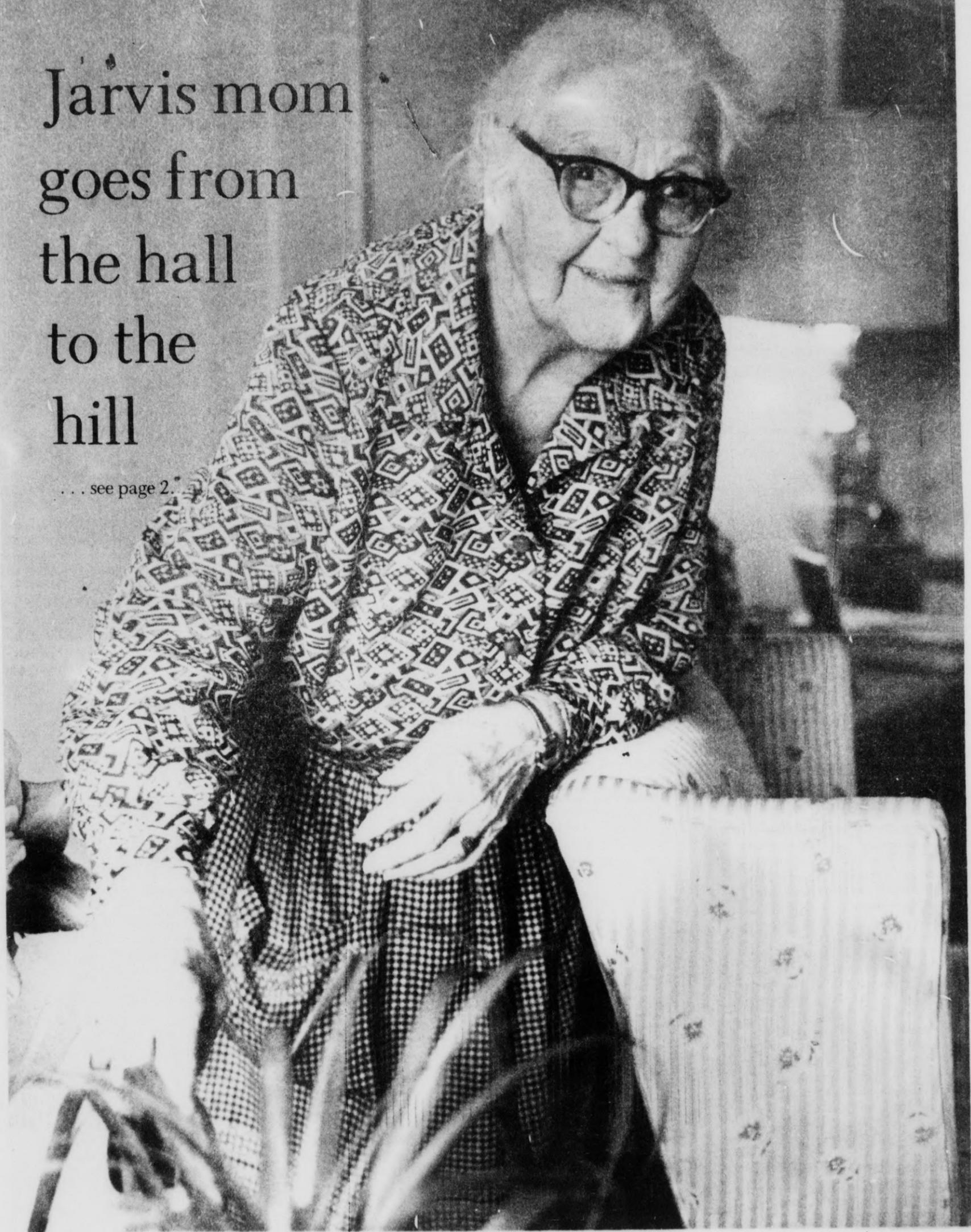


Photo by David Robison

# Cathy says she's never worked

By Susan Thompson

One panty raid was all Catherine Ball said she could handle. Dr. Sadler, president of TCU, told her there wouldn't be any more and there weren't.

Another year, Ball said, "the Aggies came to play and they had a fight on the front porch."

Ninety-two-year-old Ball oversaw such activities for 19 years as part of her duties as a TCU house mother. Back then, Jarvis and Foster were the only two women's dorms, a housemother was called a hostess, curfew was at 11 p.m., and her pay was \$25 a month plus room and board.

Ball was the hostess in Jarvis Dormitory from 1944 to 1951, and from 1957 to 1963. Between those times (during the war) Jarvis was a men's dorm and Ball was in Waits. She retired 19 years ago and has lived alone on "the hill" - Greek hill - ever since.

Ball was invited to TCU in 1944 by Dr. Sadler after her daughter Ruth graduated. "My daughter married in Jarvis Hall... in the parlor," Ball said.

After that TCU asked Ball to fill in as a hostess for a little while, she said as she thumbed through yellowed mementos of her many years there. One was a framed article from the Skiff announcing her retirement. It said she had never missed a day of work.

Ball, however, said, "I like to keep house. I'm just a regular - well - I never did work anywhere in my life."

What about her nearly two decades at TCU?

"Oh," she laughed, "that was fun." Not work.

She showed photos of herself and her cohorts. "This was, all the house mothers, you see, but they are all gone."

The next picture was one of Jarvis in the '40s. "We all had such good times going places, but Jarvis had the prettiest yard," she said.

Ball stays around her apartment a lot. She visits daily with Ruth who lives on McCart. Ruth is one of her four children, three of them girls. She also has 23 grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren. She can't remember how many great-grandchildren she has.

Her hearing and eyesight are getting poor, so she can't do many of the things she used to. But she does know what many of her young neighbors are up to, and keeps up on current events. She said she thinks it's a shame that so much money was spent on Mark White's inauguration when there are people waiting in job lines all over the country.

Ball is also a horticulturist and a Dallas Cowboys fan. "I know more Cowboys than TCU boys now," she said.

For the 1983 Super Bowl she projects that the Cowboys "have a pretty good chance, but the Redskins have some pretty good players."

Her family is important to her, and so is her home. "It's all school children nearby, who live in these houses," she explained. "I've never felt like I wanted to go to a senior citizens home. I never felt like I was old enough."

One item Ball is obviously proud of in her home is her 90th birthday book. Displayed on her living room desk, the book is filled with pictures of the 135 relatives who made it to the birthday party thrown by her kids.

Pictures are a big part of her decor. Also on her desk she points out a black-and-white photo of her grandson as a baby. "He's 26 now," she said. The frame is intricate and gold.

Ball still likes to talk about "her girls."

She said she went easy on them, even when they tried to sneak in after curfew. "I wasn't the boss," she said. "I didn't want to boss."

"They had a lot of respect for me and stuff like that. None of them was ever ugly," Ball said. "When they built the sorority houses, they still wanted to stay in Jarvis."

After the war was over and Jarvis was reopened as a women's dorm, she reflected, "I went back to Jarvis and 70-odd of my girls went with me."

Ball still sees her girls sometimes. She said many of them have two or three children of their own going here now.

"I got some girls that go to University Church that I used to see all the time. But after I got to where I didn't go to football games anymore, I didn't see them as often... except in church circles," she said.

Ball has been attending University

Christian Church since she moved to TCU from Dallas in 1944. "I can't get up and go like I used to," she said, "and I can't hear it (the sermon) when I get there." She watches a Methodist church on television now.

Ball said that overseeing a dorm would be very different now than it was 20 years ago.

"I know they don't close up like we had to. They don't know how to do that because they don't have to do it at home any more," she said, and then added, "they didn't have all those cars back then."

As she walked through her home, Ball ignored the shaking of her

ceiling from the tenants above her. She said the racket didn't bother her at all.

"I don't think they had as much privileges at home as they do now. Everything has changed - everything," Ball said.

Still, TCU is her home. When she retired in 1963, "I come right here on the hill. I lived in a little house." After the "high rises" were built, she said, she moved into her apartment.

Something has kept Catherine Ball on the Hill. Something has kept her at TCU.

Her experience here, she said, "changed my way of thinking."



This photograph of Catherine Ball, her granddaughter Sally Anthony McElroy and her daughter Ruth Ball Clements, was taken in front of Jarvis Dormitory the year before she retired in 1963



Catherine Ball has lived in her apartment on Greek hill since long before the greeks arrived. Photo by David Robison

# Misconceptions

## A Storage

Farm Road 916, and you boom like sculpture on the right. House, you are a haybarn. You're like a scarecrow, and sad. This morning, 8 a.m., a woman late in her 80s, early in these, was driven by a Chevrolet nephew into the gravel beside your rust-shaded figure. And too frail to heave the bails aside she couldn't get in. She couldn't get in, peruse your kitchen, ratish now. They'd scratch the floor as they ran away, and their rodent eyes would perch and fix on her

from the corners she once swept, once been set in. But she couldn't get in.

She had to settle for walking around you, imagining your insides, where your walls, she remembered, met like kin or met like a class she'd loved, distorted now by the queerness of tear. And your walls still meet, you want to tell her, only for opossum mothers and opossum children, for all the animalistic memorabilia still blooming behind the bails.

## Pet Center

She just sold a black poodle puppy that didn't seem to be a puppy at all. Instead, it was like a midget-dog, an old dog that was small. The man didn't want to buy it, either, but the puppy made him. But the man himself was awkward. He seemed to be a policeman, off-duty, and uncomfortable in plainness. He held the puppy like a policeman would and stood that way.

It happened quickly. He stood there and looked at the puppy, patient in his hand. After a while he took out his checkbook and showed it to the woman in the smock, nodded—defeated, as if some man-thing in him had lost. She turned to write it up and he grimaced when he signed. His head bent as he wrote, and she kept grinning at the dog.

## Customer Repair

She lugged the damn typewriter in and banged it accidentally resonantly on the door frame as she huffed in where it said CUSTOMER REPAIR. It was Spencer Tracy that waited on her, at least she thought. And he had a bopping, Mickey Rooney sidekick, only less intelligent, less quick, seeing as how he could only say "Really?" for the first minute or so—but boyishly in his Montgomery Ward monogram.

She thudded the thing onto the counter

as if to say *If It Wasn't Broken When I Brought It In Here, It Is Now*. Spencer took it to the back and consoled it, leaving her there with Mickey and a carbon of the service ticket thin in her hand, which she wadded into her purse. Then she cynicked Thanks, waiting for a reply from Mickey that never came, him grinning a hole in both pockets as he rocked back and forth behind the counter. So she said it for him, only without the question mark, the boy inflection at the end of her voice. Really.

## Downtown Lunch: 1 Hr.

Gray hair combed in one stroke back, all the way, cut neatly at his neck, beautifully. Black eyeglasses, his suit and tie, the tidiness of posture, his sentimentality, his simplicity. His wrinkled-pink hands tremble a wadded napkin, bear it up to his lips and down.

His wife at home hasn't the idea he eats alone—*Maybe With His Friends, Or With The Boss, Or At Meetings, You Know*, she thinks—*The Downtown Ways People Eat Lunch In Cities*. She doesn't know he drops warm coins into this vending machine, that he sits alone and neatly in a vast formica coffee room. She's no idea he wads his napkin and pushes it into an empty soup can along with saltine wrappers that've stubbornly clung to his thumb then forefinger, thumb then forefinger.

He remembers the date, the day, the hour, how much until lunch is done. He flicks his teeth with his tongue, cocks his head and waits. At home, his wife, she thinks he lives at work without her.

## An Entirely Different Grin

Laundromatting, a skinny-short brunette knelt at the Coke machine like an altar and yanked out a Grape Crush as if she believed in artificial grapes. Scrubbing a pair of boots, she kept staring laboriously through her pekingese bangs at me and my poems lying around me like trash, as if she and I both knew they looked like trash, exactly. Through one of our cigarettes I said curtly, I said, *Suede Is A Bitch To Clean*. And she says, *No Bull, I'm A Bartender And Used To Tend At Woodhaven, Which Is A Singles Place*, little did she know, and living there drove her to the other side of town to a new job where she has to wear cowboy boots and grin an

entirely different grin. See at Woodhaven, she'd have to come home and grimace her husband out of the Jacuzzi where he'd be shaping up his skin with five other women that weren't her at all, all the time saying *I Don't Want To Hear It Ed*.

So she *Don't Like WOOD HAVEN*, and did I ever go to Minnesota or Desmoine or anyplace else she grew up? No, I say, *But I Had Suede Boots Once, And Worship Coke Machines, Only I Go For The Saccharin-Type Cans That Leave A Horribly Dietetic Taste For Costing The Same*. No Bull.

# Ex-froggies show true colors

By Susan Thompson

They were few. They usually are. But, as those around them remarked repeatedly, they have big mouths so they make up for it.

TCU alumni might fade from the minds of most they leave behind, but it seems that TCU seldom fades from theirs. They graduate lavender and grow violet by the time their degrees start to pay off. By 40, many ex-froggies are as pure and deep a purple as the heart of Chancellor Bill. They scream purple at every TCU activity they can get to.

Sporting events tend to be dry times for this aging creature, but at the recent conference opener basketball game between TCU and the University of Texas at Austin, that city's clan of horned frogs all but made fools of themselves. They were diverse in age and occupation, but like-minded in spirit.

Perhaps there were 45 purple-clad souls among the several thousand longhorns that night. During the first half this group occupied about three rows in section I (somewhere around the 50-yard-line). Soon they were busted up by a small group of big men in orange pants. One zealous TCU froggette looked as if she might take them on, but thought better of it.

Several times a short string of men wearing purple beanies would stand up with a banner and scream "KILLER FROGS!" They had drawn it with a thin black marker sometime during the first quarter when it became evident that UT's new coach

had forgotten to tell his team that shooting the ball was part of the game.

It seems that the older alumni get, the more daring. A few current students and recent graduates slumped a certain distance from the core gang. They wore yellows and greens. They had no signs—clapped occasionally. A few froggie wives were doing the same thing right in the middle of the mess.

One woman had a television in her lap and wore earphones. She had the loudest voice. She knew the names of all the TCU players—very loudly. When the referee called against her alma mater she yelled, "YOU DIRTY RAT!" When he called against the other team she belted even louder, "YOU'RE REALLY ON THE BALL REF!" She was watching the Cowboy game on television.

Toward the end of the game one big TCU boy used an elbow in the wrong place (that's what the loud woman told me had happened when I asked). The majority of the people there were pretty mad. So the sign carriers decided it would be a good time to stand up and yell, "KILLER FROGS!"

That made the guys in the orange pants even madder.

I wore yellow and green. My dad wore a purple beanie. My mom slumped somewhere in the middle of the mess. When TCU won its conference opener by 16 points my dad whipped out a purple tie tattooed with toad. My mom uncurled her lapel bearing a small silver frog pin. And I, I began to see shades of lavender.



## events etc.

### Monday 24

**Resident Hall Staff** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 214  
**Admissions Lecture** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 203  
**History 1003 Lecture** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 204  
**Interview Tapes** noon, Student Center Lounge  
**Personnel Lecture** 1:30 p.m., Student Center Rooms 205 and 206  
**Retiree Benefit Committee Lecture** 3 p.m., Student Center Room 203  
**Interfraternity Council** 3:30 p.m., Student Center Room 222  
**Lota Reception** 4:30 p.m., Student Center Room 207  
**International Student Lecture and Reception** 6 p.m., Student Center Room 205  
**Baptist Executive Council** 6:15 p.m., University Ministries Office  
**Concert Hour Recital: Arden Hopkin, Baritone** 8 p.m., Ed Landreth Auditorium  
**Campus Crusade** 8 p.m., Student Center Room 207

### Tuesday 25

**Campus Crusade Breakfast** 8 a.m., Student Center Ballroom  
**Admissions** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 203  
**Interview Tapes** 11:30 a.m., Student Center Lounge  
**General Motors Luncheon** noon, Student Center Room 206

**Tom Brown Committee Luncheon** 12:30 p.m., Student Center Room 214  
**Personnel Lecture** 1:30 p.m., Student Center Room 207  
**Parents Weekend** 4:30 p.m., Student Center Room 202  
**Lounge Dedication** 5:30 p.m., Student Center Lounge  
**Wrangler Committee** 6 p.m., Student Center Room 214  
**Angel Flight Rush** 6 p.m., Student Center Woodson Room

### Wednesday 26

**History Lecture** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 204  
**Psychology Lecture** 11 a.m., Student Center Room 207  
**General Motors Luncheon** noon, Student Center Room 206  
**Faculty Recital: Tamas Ungar, piano** 12:15 p.m., Kimbell Art Museum  
**Insurance Exams** 2 p.m., Student Center Room 218  
**"Koinonea" Baptist Creative Workshop** 6 p.m., Student Center Room 218  
**Wednesday Night Bible Study** 7 p.m., Student Center Room 202  
**Forums** 7:30 p.m., Student Center Ballroom  
**Human Sexuality Lecture** 7:30 p.m., Student Center Ballroom  
**TCU Bach IV Series Concert** 7:30 p.m., Kimbell Art Museum  
**Discipleship Study** 9 p.m., Wesley Foundation  
**Marriott Committee** 3 p.m., cafeteria  
**SOC Lecture** 3 p.m., Student Center Room 202

**How To Interview On Campus** 3 p.m., Student Center Room 204  
**Fashion Show Rehearsal** 4 p.m., Student Center Ballroom  
**Hunger Week Lecture** 4 p.m., Student Center Room 203  
**Programming Council** 5 p.m., Student Center Room 211  
**Canterbury Club** 5:30 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church  
**Kappa Kappa Gamma Dinner** 6 p.m., Student Center Rooms 207-209  
**Lance Ferrari Hair Cutting Team and Fashion Show** 7 p.m., Student Center Ballroom

### Thursday 27

**Insurance Exams** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 222  
**General Motors Luncheon** noon, Student Center Room 206  
**University Christian Church Disciples Luncheon** 12:30 p.m., Wesley Foundation  
**How To Interview On Campus** 3 p.m., Student Center Room 218  
**Phonothon Captains** 4 p.m., Student Center Room 205  
**Methodist "Fireside"** 5:30 p.m., Wesley Foundation  
**Pre-Law Association Lecture** 5:30 p.m., Student Center Room 204  
**Angel Flight Lecture** 5:30 p.m., Student Center Room 209  
**Kappa Alpha Theta Dinner** 6:30 p.m., Student Center Ballroom

### Friday 28

**Friday On Campus** 8 a.m., Student Center Lower Lobby  
**Insurance Exams** 9 a.m., Student Center Room 222  
**Methodist Luncheon** noon, Wesley Foundation  
**Texas Council For The Arts** noon, Student Center Room 208  
**Friday Night Club** 5:45 p.m., Student Center Lounge  
**Cornerstone Lecture** 7 p.m., Student Center Room 207  
**Delta Sigma Theta** 8 p.m., Student Center Room 205  
**Student Life Staff** 8:30 p.m., Student Center Room 214

### Saturday 29

**Ranch Management** 7 a.m., Student Center Upper Lobby  
**Ranch Management** noon, Student Center Room 208

### Sunday 30

**Delta Sigma Theta Lecture** 2:30 p.m., Student Center Room 207  
**International Students Covered Dish Supper** 6 p.m., Student Center Ballroom