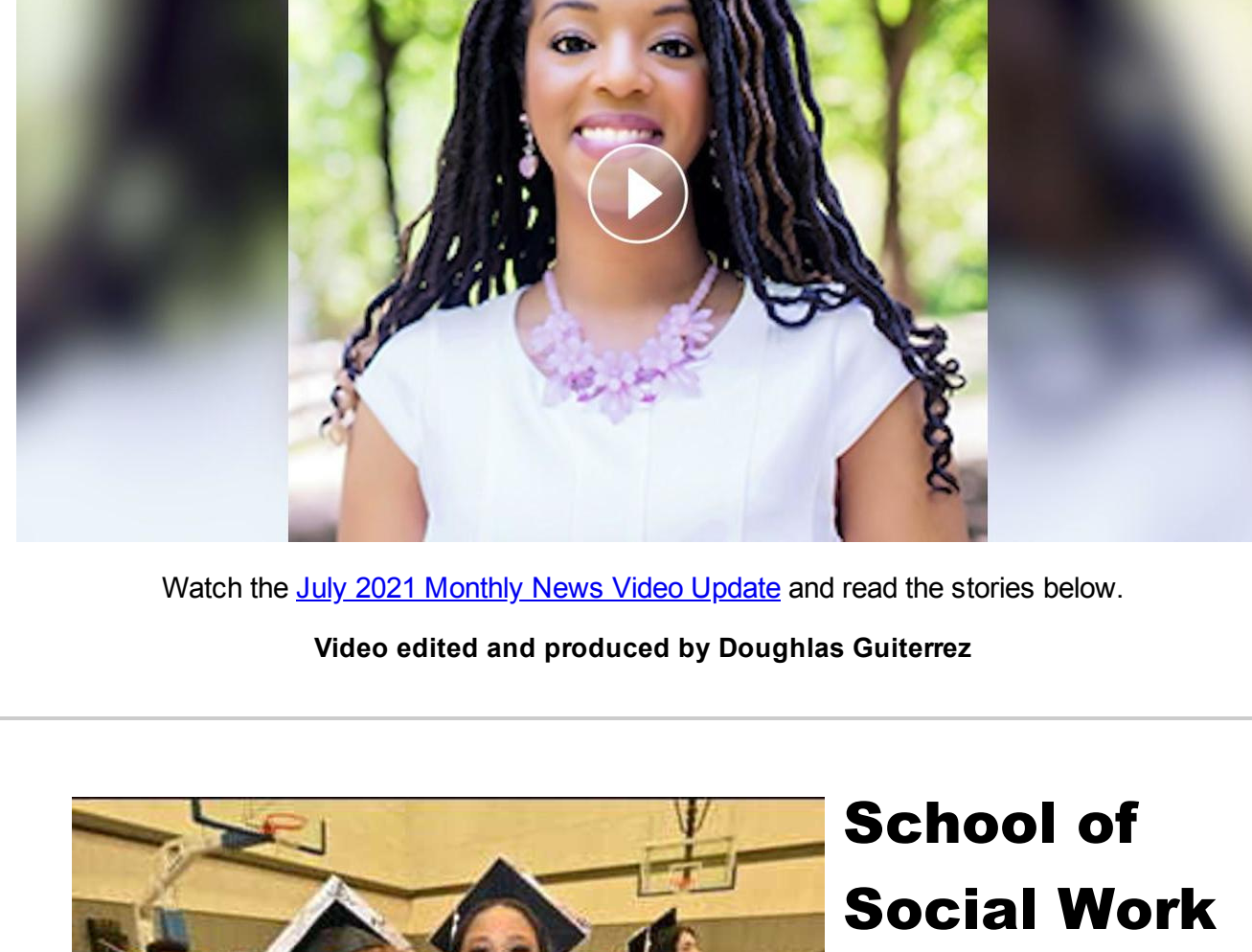
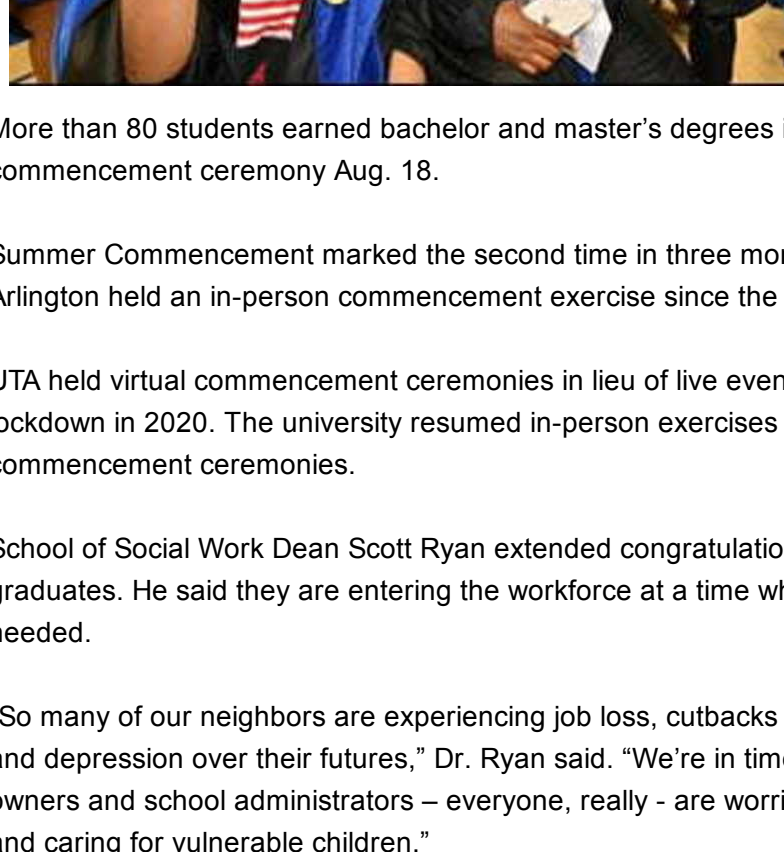


Summer 2021 News Update



Watch the [July 2021 Monthly News Video Update](#) and read the stories below.
Video edited and produced by Douglas Guitierrez



School of Social Work confers more than 80 degrees

By Valerie Fields Hill

More than 80 students earned bachelor and master's degrees in Social Work during the summer commencement ceremony Aug. 18.

Summer Commencement marked the second time in three months the University of Texas at Arlington held an in-person commencement exercise since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UTA held virtual commencement ceremonies in lieu of live events during the state-mandated lockdown in 2020. The university resumed in-person exercises in May with the Spring 2021 commencement ceremonies.

School of Social Work Dean Scott Ryan extended congratulations this week to the School's graduates. He said they are entering the workforce at a time when Social Workers are most needed.

"So many of our neighbors are experiencing job loss, cutbacks in work hours and fear, anxiety and depression over their futures," Dr. Ryan said. "We're in times when parents, small business owners and school administrators – everyone, really - are worried over mask mandates, illness and caring for vulnerable children."

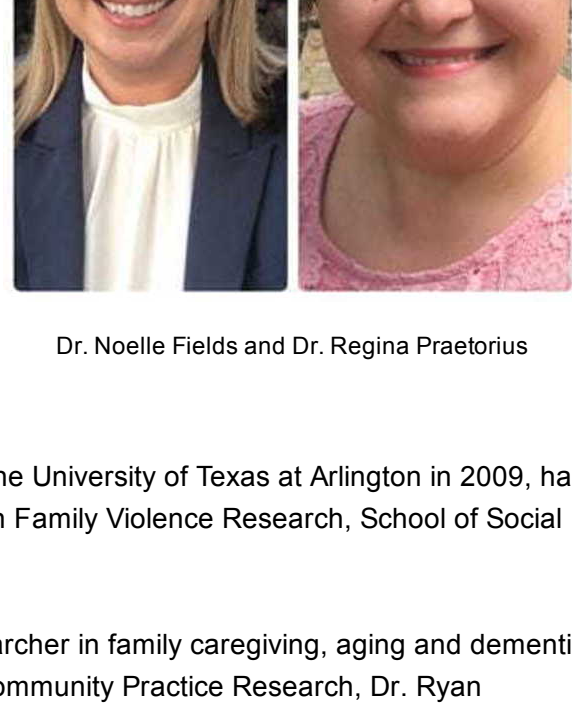
"It's quite a lot," he said. "But our Social Workers are ready to connect workers to resources and families to the assistance they need. Social Workers are really poised to help struggling individuals in this pandemic environment we are in."

Read the rest of the story [School of Social Work confers more than 80 degrees](#)

Social Work faculty appointed to prestigious professorships

By Valerie Fields Hill

Two respected Social Work professors have been appointed to professorship positions, helping expand research and supporting communities in areas such as family violence, suicide prevention, aging and dementia-related issues.



Dr. Noelle Fields and Dr. Regina Praetorius

Dr. Regina T. Praetorius, who began teaching at the University of Texas at Arlington in 2009, has been named the Jillian Michelle Smith Professor in Family Violence Research, School of Social Work Dean Scott Ryan said.

A second scholar, Dr. Noelle Fields, a noted researcher in family caregiving, aging and dementia, has been named the Roy E. Dulak Professor in Community Practice Research, Dr. Ryan announced.

Both researchers will assume their new roles on Sept. 1. They will hold the positions for five years, the dean said. The appointments have been approved by both the UTA president and the UT System.

Both professors are expected to lift research in critical Social Work areas that now, more than ever, need to become a part of the nation's collective conversation, Dr. Ryan said.

"I am very proud of these two faculty members and all they have accomplished to be eligible and selected for these esteemed roles," the dean said. "I look forward to how they will use the professorships and the resources awarded to further their work and its impact."

Read the rest of the story: [Social Work faculty appointed to prestigious professorships](#)



Jamie Lowe, MSW Student
Ima Hogg Scholarship Recipient

MSW student, working mom wins mental health scholarship

By Valerie Fields Hill

Jamie Lowe, a working mother who is pursuing a Master of Social Work degree, has earned one of the state's premier scholarships for students who plan to work in the mental health field.

Lowe won the Ima Hogg Scholarship – and \$5,000 – from the Austin-based Hogg Foundation for Mental Health.

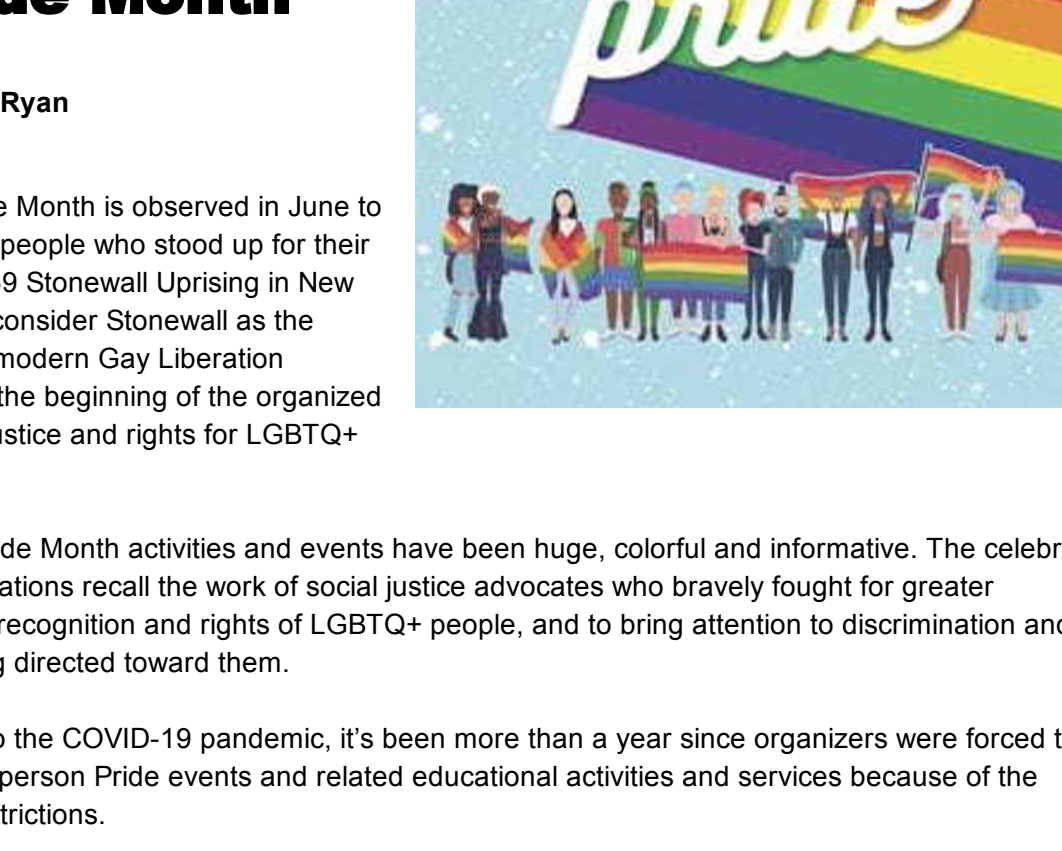
The foundation was founded in 1956 to promote mental wellness throughout Texas. It also aims to increase the number of mental health professionals who work in the state.

"Mental health is where I want to focus my career and, more specifically, in suicide prevention through the creation and implementation of services that are as effective as they are welcoming," Lowe said in a statement released by the foundation.

Lowe is one of 20 scholars in Texas who won the Hogg scholarship. She is the mother of a teenage son and works full time at a behavioral health facility while pursuing her MSW degree.

Lowe hopes winning the scholarship inspires her son, she wrote in her scholarship application.

Read the rest of the story [Working mom wins mental health scholarship](#)



Dean's Statement on Juneteenth

By Dean Scott Ryan

Juneteenth recognizes June 19, 1865, the date Major General Gordon Granger and his Union soldiers landed in Galveston – two years, six months and 18 days after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation - with the news slavery had ended in those states controlled by the Union.

But, had slavery really ended? Had the freedom bell really rung for human beings brought in chains to North America's shores to be enslaved? Indeed not.

Much of what followed the emancipation of slaves in America included a new bondage – an insidious form of institutional, systemic and often legalized chains of oppression.

There would come decades of lynchings across the Southern states, theft of land and property, enactment of Jim Crow laws, discrimination in lending, housing and education, separate but unequal facilities, redlining and, yes, police violence.

Today, we still see the racial and social injustices manifesting themselves in our various institutions by elected leaders and in communities throughout our country. We are seeing countless lives lost from the abuse of law enforcement officers committing acts of violence increasingly and at disparate rates against African Americans, Blacks, Hispanics, Indigenous and other people of color.

As I've mentioned in previous published statements, any form of hate, discrimination and racism is wrong and must end. Those participating in and benefiting from racial oppression and systemic racism must acknowledge and actively participate in educating others as well as in ending the practice.

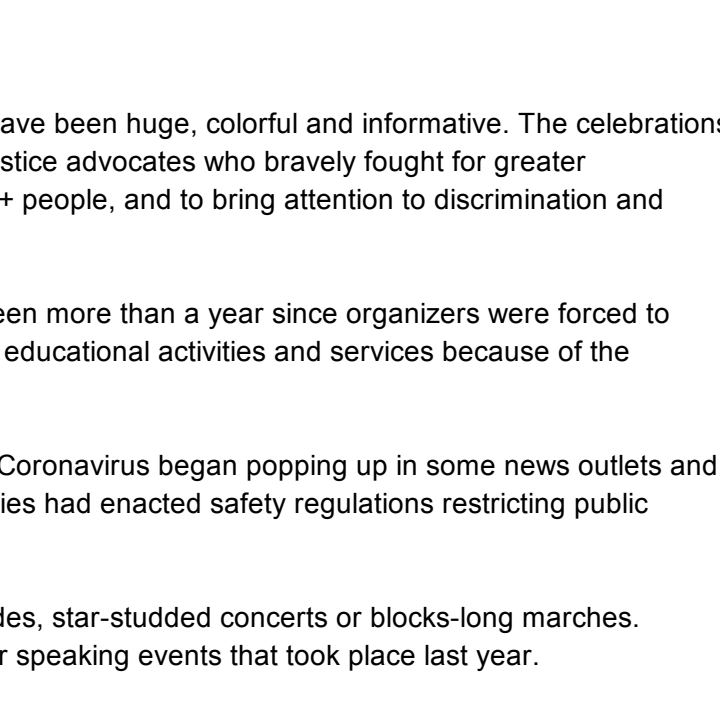
So, as we celebrate this day and the freedom it represents, it is necessary for all Americans to take consistent actions working to ensure equality and justice for people of color.

Just as I mentioned last year, Social Workers play an important role and have a duty to speak out against injustices whenever and wherever they may occur. As mentioned in a NASW article, "Social Workers have a professional and moral obligation to address and end racism. We are not able to be neutral."

Read the rest of the Dean's statement on [Juneteenth](#).

Dean's Statement on Pride Month

By Dean Scott Ryan



Every year Pride Month is observed in June to honor LGBTQ+ people who stood up for their rights in the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in New York City. Most consider Stonewall as the catalyst for the modern Gay Liberation Movement and the beginning of the organized fight for social justice and rights for LGBTQ+ people.

For decades Pride Month activities and events have been huge, colorful and informative. The celebrations and commemorations recall the work of social justice advocates who bravely fought for greater understanding, recognition and rights of LGBTQ+ people, and to bring attention to discrimination and hatred still being directed toward them.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's been more than a year since organizers were forced to cancel many in-person Pride events and related educational activities and services because of the Coronavirus restrictions.

In December 2019, information about the novel Coronavirus began popping up in some news outlets and publications. By early 2020, city and state agencies had enacted safety regulations restricting public gatherings and outdoor celebrations.

For nearly three years, there were no flashy parades, star-studded concerts or blocks-long marches. Primarily there were online activities and webinar speaking events that took place last year.

In the months since the restrictions were put in place, advocates worried LGBTQ+ youth, particularly college students, would fall into a collective deep depression or worse, encounter unsafe conditions while social distancing in homes with disapproving parents or other relatives.

Advocates worried as social service agencies, counseling centers and other facilities serving LGBTQ+ youth and students shut their doors to in-person contact, LGBTQ+ people would have limited access to external support and resources.

With these concerns uppermost in the hearts of Social Workers and LGBTQ+ allies, this month for June 2021 Pride, we welcome the return of more in-person interactions and outdoor Pride commemorations.

Read the rest of the Dean's statement on [Pride Month 2021](#).



Dean's statement on Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

By Dean Scott Ryan

As we close out Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we must remain vigilant in fighting hate and racism against

Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. We must continue to learn and appreciate the contributions and rich heritage Asian and Pacific Islanders have given and continue to give to this country.

In 1978, after two previous resolutions in 1977 failed, Congress passed, and President Jimmy Carter signed a House and Senate Joint Resolution establishing Asian Pacific American Heritage Week beginning in May 1979.

In 1990, Congress passed, and President George H.W. Bush signed a bill extending Asian American Heritage Week to a month. Two years later, May was officially designated as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. In 2009, the name changed from Asian Pacific American Heritage Month to Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

According to the Library of Congress, May was chosen because it recognized the first significant migration of Japanese to the United States in May 1843. Although, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders history in America pre-dates the country as far back as the 16th and 17th Century.

The month of May was also chosen because it recognizes the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869. Most of the workers who laid and built the railroad tracks were Chinese immigrants. The month recognizes Asians and Pacific Islanders for building – literally - a stronger United States of America.

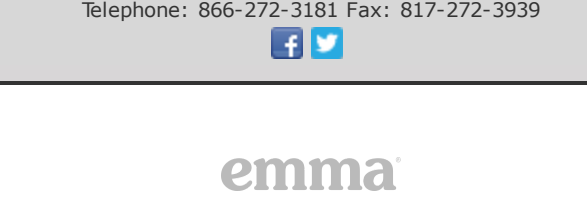
Earlier this month, as a country, we were united in celebrating the 152nd anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. Asian American and Pacific Islanders have contributed so much to the building of the United States such as in the arts, science, education, music, food, and culture.

However, we must be equally united in ending racism, hatred, bigotry, and all forms of injustice. Unfortunately, as I mentioned in my statement in March Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been the target of hate, racism, and discrimination for hundreds of years.

The recent resurgence of anti-Asian racism and violence has been directly linked to the increase in rhetoric from some elected leaders and others attempting to falsely blame and mislabel COVID-19 on the Asian community.

Read the rest of the story: [Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)

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