

From the University President

Look ahead — but remember roots and branches

On Saturday, Aug. 25, Highlands University hosted a beautiful matanza in celebration of the institution's 125th anniversary.

Many students, staff, faculty members, and alumni attended the event and were joined by an enthusiastic group of community members.



Dr. Sam Minner

More than 1,000 people attended the event. The weather was perfect. The food was incredible. The music was wonderful and the support for HU was evident to everyone in attendance.

All organizations must look to the future to remain viable and hopefully to become stronger. No institution can

accomplish those goals by remaining static.

As the saying goes, there is a reason an automobile's windshield is so much larger than its rearview mirrors. Those leading and managing organizations simply must look forward.

However, truly great institutions — like Highlands — rest solidly on their historical roots and honoring those roots is critical in devising a vibrant future.

The best organizations truly take a "roots and branches" approach to development. The branches, the future, reach into the sky and into the future. But those branches rest on solid roots. Roots based on history, culture, time-honored values, and the accomplishments of the many who came before us.

A matanza has many moving parts and it took a small army to organize and implement this one.

At the risk of leaving some impor-

tant people out, I would like to specifically thank Mike Melton, who donated a steer, Felicia Ortiz who donated two pigs, Shiloh Old and Ernesto Fresquez for firewood, Ruben C'deBaca for the use of his log splitter, Kenny Santistevan from the New Mexico Environmental Department, the wonderful pit crew led by Eric Romero and including Margaret Gonzales, Vince Marchi, Robert Anaya, Ernesto Fresquez, and Edward Martinez, HU athletics, and the wonderful HU facilities crew.

Our food provider did a great job at the event. A snowcone and slushy station was managed by HU Housing and yet another crew managed the HU Painted Horse station.

As usual, the horse will appear at our Homecoming.

The H: 125 planning committee really led the way on the matanza. The committee was led by Juli Salman and

consisted of faculty and staff members throughout the institution including Sylvia Baca, Kim Blea, Denise Davenport, Roxanne Gonzales, Brian Henington, April Kent, Theresa Law, Donna Martinez, Margaret McKinney, Iliana Ortiz, Thomasinia Ortiz-Gallegos, Pauline Rindone, Clarence Romero, Stephanie Santillanes, Josephine Sena, Craig Snow, Denise Spicer, Shannon Tillett, and Sean Weaver.

Juli is an amazing person, and our matanza would not have been successful without her high dedication. I swear, Juli can do anything!

This was my first matanza, but it will not be my last. It was such a wonderful event — truly celebrating HU's roots and branches!

Dr. Sam Minner has been the president of Highlands University since June 2015. He can be reached at 505-454-3269.