

Morgan Woodward '48

Morgan Woodward (AA '48) has probably been shot more than any other UT Arlington alumnus. Chances are you've seen him shot, in episodes of "Gunsmoke," "Bonanza," "Wagon Train," or many of the other 250 television shows and movies he appeared in from 1956-1997. Woodward, 84, usually played bad guys. "I was 6'3", 221 pounds ... bigger than practically everybody else," Woodward said, "and with a face that is not really all that pleasant."

Woodward's best-known role came in *Cool Hand Luke* (1967) in which he played Boss Godfrey, the silent, stone-faced guard behind the mirrored sunglasses who personified evil. Woodward's performance was lauded by critics, his salary doubled, and in 1969 *Newsweek* named him one of the six most wanted bad guys in Hollywood.

Woodward wasn't always a bad guy. He grew up in Arlington, Texas, and graduated from Arlington High School in 1943. Like his four brothers, Woodward attended UT Arlington (then North Texas Agricultural College) before finishing his degree at UT Austin in 1951. It was in Austin that Woodward met Fess Parker, a fraternity brother and roommate who became famous portraying Davy Crockett on television in 1955. Parker helped Woodward secure a movie deal with Disney in the mid-1950s, which started Woodward's Hollywood career.

After appearing in a number of individual episodes of a dozen different television westerns, Woodward found a recurring role as Shotgun Gibbs in "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp" from 1958-1961. He appeared in many popular television shows over the next 40 years, including "Perry Mason," "Rawhide," "Star Trek," "Starsky and



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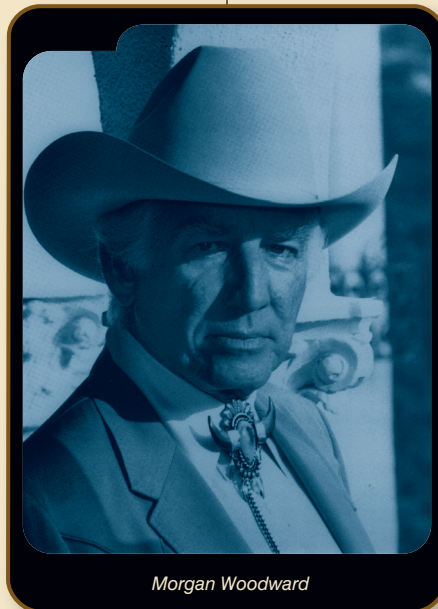
Hutch," "The Waltons," "Fantasy Island," "Hill Street Blues," "The Dukes of Hazzard," "The X-Files," and seven seasons as Marvin Anderson on "Dallas." Woodward retired in 1997.

By all accounts Woodward's career in Hollywood was a success, although what he really wanted to be was an opera singer. During lean times in Hollywood, Woodward even wondered if he might make a better living as a watchmaker, but after winning lifetime achievement awards and the prestigious Golden Boot Award, he appears satisfied with his body of work.

Last year Woodward decided to give something back. He established the Morgan Woodward Distinguished Professorship in Film and Video with a \$250,000 gift that will be matched by the University's Maverick Match, bringing the value of the endowment to \$500,000.

"You've got to have a great faculty or you are not going to attract great students," Woodward said. "My hope is that the gift might attract a distinguished professor who could then entice would be actors, writers, and directors to the University."

The gift comes at an exciting time for the film program in the Department of Art and Art History. Just this summer Ya'Ke Smith, widely regarded as one of today's most promising young film directors, joined the faculty as a tenure-track assistant professor and last summer award-winning director Daniel Millican (BA '89) filmed his movie *Rising Stars* on campus. Woodward's gift will help sustain this momentum. Who knows, it might even inspire another young actor to seek a career as a Hollywood bad guy. After all, Woodward says, "bad guys always have the best parts."



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