

# PRESENCE

The University of Texas at Arlington Magazine  
for Alumni and other Friends Vol. XVI No. 3



UTA's wheelchair  
Movin' Mavs win their  
fourth consecutive  
national championship

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Donna Darovich

**Editor**  
Mark Permenter

**Assistant Editor**  
Rita Nute

**Editorial Staff**  
Helen Risenhoover  
Janis Cordell  
Sherry Wodraska Neaves

**Design**  
UTA Print Graphics

**Photography**  
UTA Media Services

**Cover**  
Joel Quintans

**On the cover**

A confetti-flecked Jason Van Beek cuts down the net after leading the Movin' Mavs to their fourth consecutive National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball championship.

**Letters to the editor**

Presence magazine welcomes any correspondence regarding its content. Please send your comments to Presence magazine, UTA Box 19137, Arlington, Texas, 76019. If you would like your comments published in Presence, please direct them to "Letters to the Editor." Include your name, address and, if you are a former student, the year(s) you attended or graduated from UTA and the degree you earned.

# Presence

VOL. XVI, No. 3

## Reinventing Education .....2

An innovative teacher education program provides hands-on experience for UTA interns while benefiting students at four Arlington public schools.



## Traditions Stir Nostalgia .....4



Homecoming '94 featured an entertaining mix of new and old, giving both alumni and current students reason to celebrate their University.

## Decade of Dominance .....10

With their fourth consecutive National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball championship, the Movin' Mavs have become a dynasty in the '90s.



## On the Inside

From the President .....	1
Outstanding Student .....	7
Faculty Essay .....	8
University News .....	12
Fine Arts .....	14
Athletics .....	15
Alumni Notes .....	16

APRIL 1994 Vol. XVI, No. 3

Presence (I.S.S.N. 1043-4240) is a quarterly publication of The University of Texas at Arlington News Service, 701 S. Nedderman Drive, Arlington, TX 76013. It is distributed to alumni, faculty and staff and other friends of the University. Second-class postage paid at Arlington, TX 76010.

POSTMASTER: Send Form (3579) to: UTA Box 19137, UTA Station, Arlington, TX 76019-0137.

## Wheelchair fails to stop Falcon from soaring

By Rita Nute

Last spring, Ciprian "Cipi" Falcon got an opportunity that most Americans only dream about.

He and his teammates on the wheelchair basketball national champion Movin' Mavs visited the president of the United States — a major event for a native Texan who grew up in a small West Texas town.

Washington, D.C. is a long way from Trent, Texas, "population 300 on a good day." The road that led Falcon to the nation's capital unfortunately began with an act of violence.

It was the summer before his high school junior year. A bullet fired by a disgruntled youth shattered his dreams of becoming a star athlete. Falcon decided he didn't want to be a victim to paralysis all his life. Instead, he turned a tragedy into triumph.

"Being in a wheelchair is a change. It took some time to adjust. One day you're walking, and the next day you're not," he said. "When I was in the hospital in Abilene, the doctor came in with

a wheelchair. He asked me, 'See this? You better get used to it. You're going to be in this for the rest of your life.'"

Following physical and occupational therapy at a Dallas rehabilitation center, Falcon was ready to resume his life — including athletics — back in Trent. The only difference, as he saw it, was that life now included a wheelchair.

"When I was in high school I was very competitive, playing football and running track," Falcon said. He continued to enjoy the physical challenge of basketball competition with his five brothers and two sisters.

As salutatorian of his 1991 graduating class, Falcon knew he wanted to go to college. He considered two other universities in Texas. But there were several features drawing him like a magnet to UTA: the national champion Movin' Mavs, the College of Business Administration's academic reputation and UTA's accessible campus for students with disabilities.

"When I got in contact with (Movin' Mavs coach) Jim Hayes and learned they were defending national champions, I knew where I wanted to go," Falcon said.

"I think the University is one of the most handicap accessible in the state. That is definitely a plus. Somebody in a wheelchair can get around to just about anywhere on campus."

Falcon, a junior honor student, has interests in a wide range of subjects, but he's concentrating on accounting. He chose the five-year accounting option because he wants to work on his master's right away.

As a freshman, he received the Allan Saxe Handicapped Student Scholarship, and he was awarded the Andy Beck Memorial Scholarship, named for a UTA student killed in a campus traffic accident.

Hayes, director of the Office for Students with Disabilities, calls Falcon the epitome of a student-athlete.

"Cipi went from suffering a gunshot wound to being a member of a national championship team and being one of our top academicians," Hayes said.

Falcon recently joined Beta Alpha Psi accounting fraternity and is looking forward to the practical work experience a summer internship will provide.

But his more immediate plans may include taking another special trip. After winning their fourth consecutive national championship this spring, the Movin' Mavs are hoping to receive another invitation to visit President Clinton at the White House.

For Falcon, it would be another improbable dream come true.

