



Marlowe Martensen '22

Charlsie Marlowe Martensen has lived in Oak Cliff all her life. She lives in a historic district of Oak Cliff with her parents, Dorsey and Blake Martensen, and her siblings McClain (class of 2018) and Burke (class of 2027). McClain just finished her third year at University of Boulder, CO, and Burke is in seventh grade at Dunne. Marlowe attended Rosemont Elementary School for K-5 and came to Dunne in sixth grade.

Marlowe has been interested in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) since her freshman year. She has continued to take GIS classes and work on mapping projects with Mr. Brad Baker. Several of her interests and studies came together for her senior project. The idea was sparked in part by reading the novel *Sula* by Toni Morrison for Mr. Damian McDonald's class. The story describes how former slave owners displaced the recently freed enslaved people from land the federal government gave them after the Civil War.

The topic of displacement was already on Marlowe's mind because of conversations about gentrification in her neighborhood and in her Spanish classes. After completing three years of Spanish, Marlowe was taking

Advanced Spanish class as an independent study with Dr. Diana Torres Rivera her senior year.

Marlowe said she has seen big changes in her neighborhood, but not transformational change. As she explains, "It's not really a transformation if you don't take what was there and transform it—incorporate new things with the old." Instead, it was a tearing down of the old to replace it with something new.

So, with her research on *Sula*, her independent study with Dr. Torres Rivera, and her own observations, she began asking the question: What are the main causes of displacement? She also believed gentrification was having a negative impact on her neighborhood.

Using data she collected from U.S. census reports and other public records, and analyzing it through GIS software, Marlowe illustrated her hypothesis of the negative impact of gentrification on Oak Cliff neighborhoods. She researched the 2020 census and other public records for her AP English project. She drew on her experience in her Advanced Geotech course with Mr. Baker to collate that data and create maps to show a variety of factors that influence and shape the makeup of Oak Cliff.

With Dr. Torres Rivera, she created a study called "Gentrification and Oak Cliff." The two presented their study at the annual conference of the National Association of African American Studies and Affiliates on February 15, 2022. Marlowe presented her paper in a bilingual format because Barrio Oak Cliff is bilingual. They presented maps, charts, and other visual information that confirmed the movement and displacement of residents who had lived south of I-30.

Conference participants praised Marlowe's ease of communication and the clarity of her data. At the heart of the project is Marlowe's desire to end displacement of residents and to celebrate the culture and diversity of her community. She presented several solutions to the problems gentrification brings, including protecting senior homeowners; prohibiting luxury development in at-risk neighborhoods; and reducing or freezing property taxes.

Marlowe plans to pursue these goals as she continues her education at Texas A&M. She will major in Visualization in the Department of Architecture with a minor in Urban Planning. She is interested in finding real-world applications for projects like this—in city planning, for example. She wants to integrate these things in her future career.

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