

5th Generation Graduates

SPEAKERS

Gavin Kelly, Teddy, Anna Claire Peel, Melanie Peel, Ashley Hughes

Commercial

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Gavin Kelly

You're listening to Beyond 1894, a podcast dedicated to updating you on research, innovation, and campus life happening in Louisiana Tech University.

Teddy

Hey everybody, this is Teddy Allen from University Communications. Thanks for listening to Beyond 1894. However you're listening or wherever you're listening from Shreveport, Logansport, Port au Prince, Kenny Bundt Port, Port St. Lucy, or your back porch, we're glad that you're with us today in the next few moments. We are going to meet five generations of proud Tech Alums. We have parts of generation four with us today and all generation five, at least all generation five so far. So, hello everybody. We're going to start with a fourth-generation grad, Melanie Peel. Melanie, say hey everybody.

Melanie Peel

Hello, everybody.

Teddy

Hey everybody. And her precious daughter Anna Claire.

Anna Claire Peel

Hello, how are you?

Teddy

That's Anna Claire. She's fixing to graduate, a is her cousin Ashley Nicole Hughes. Hey Ashley.

Ashley Hughes

Hey.

Teddy

Glad y'all could all be with us. Y'all are going to graduate with Honors, so you're usually studying at this time of day. Thanks for coming and spending some time with me, and with your mother, and with your aunt. So, Melanie.

Melanie Peel

Yes sir.

Teddy

Thank you for the respect. I'm never called sir. Me and Melanie are old friends. Melanie is a 1990's-ish graduate. Take us through the first generation through the fifth. Just an outline, then we'll lap back and talk about them.

Melanie Peel

I am happy to do that. So, five generations of some beautiful ladies. Although I never met the first generation, the rest of them are all pretty near and dear to me. So 1911, one of the first sets of bricks, right out there by behind Howard, is a Lilly Leona Driggers 1911. And then a little bit further down that walkway 1935 is Mildred Mall, Mildred Mall Dixon, who is my grandmother. And we call her Mamaw.

Teddy

Mama? Mamaw.

Melanie Peel

Mamaw. And then my mother, Billy Jane Dixon, I think she affectionately went by a Jane, she dropped the "Billy" college in 1967, finished in three years as is Ashley, which is super awesome. And then I finished in 1995 and Ashley's mama finished in 1996, Melissa Hughes who is my twin.

Teddy

Yes. Which I wasn't aware of that.

Melanie Peel

You were not aware of that.

Teddy

Who's the oldest?

Melanie

I win by two minutes.

Teddy

Okay.

Melanie Peel

Two minutes.

Teddy

Congratulations.

Melanie Peel

Thank you.

Teddy

And then now we have the fifth-generation, Anna Claire and Ashley. So, Anna Claire, you're going to be graduating in May with your cousin who is Melanie's niece, who is the daughter of your little sister?

Melanie Peel

My twin. That's correct.

Teddy

Your favorite twin.

Melanie Peel

My favorite twin.

Teddy

Okay, Anna Claire, tell us about your degree and what you're going to do after it.

Anna Claire Peel

So, I'm graduating. I'm majoring in Biology and minoring Chemistry, and I'm going to go to pharmacy school after this at ULM.

Teddy

And you wanted to go to pharmacy school here but...

Anna Claire Peel

That is true. But that isn't offered here, unfortunately.

Teddy

Right. But you had the opportunity to go to the pharmacy program after your third year, but why did you want to stay around here?

Anna Claire Peel

I honestly, a lot of people think that it was my mom, but I really didn't want to graduate from Tech. Just because, fifth-generation is not something that comes around often so I think having an opportunity. I wanted to have that with Ashley because I knew that she was going to graduate the same time as me so I wanted to stay. And I don't think I was ready to necessarily dive into grad school just yet. So I decided to not rush into things and just keep the four years here and graduate.

Teddy

We are glad that you stayed around. That is the daughter of the mother right there.

Melanie Peel

You like that?

Teddy

I'm telling you. Wish it were a video so y'all can see these beautiful people. Ashley, you're going to graduate in May with honors, as is your cousin. So, what are you going to do with your Bachelor of Science in Biology?

Ashley Hughes

I am currently working at Green Clinic to get patient care hours, because I want to apply to PA School this coming fall. But yeah, I graduated in three years and I've loved every second of it.

Teddy

Good for you. And of course, your mother also got her degree from here. We'll talk about some more of y'all's family that graduated from here. Tell me young ladies, if you would, do you have any memories of being little and hanging around school?

Anna Claire Peel

I definitely do. I always remember just growing up, my mom would always take me to Orientation, the presents and everything, to go watch that. But we also got to live on campus while our house was being built. So, I remember being in junior high and living in Park Place and just kind of feeling like I was a big kid when I had no reality of what that would be like, but I always enjoyed that aspect of it.

Teddy

Okay, what about Melanie, you used to play on the elevators? We're doing this in Wyly auditorium and this is where you used to...

Melanie Peel

Well, I can't say that necessarily would play on the elevators. But, I mean, it's terrible that like some of my memories are like my grandmother's retirement party. So, she worked in the Purchasing Office here on campus. And Dr. Guice even mentioned to me, he said, "I remember working with her when I was a student", he was a student worker somewhere on campus. But when she retired, they had a party in Keeny Hall, and Melissa and I were playing on the elevators. And I'm quite certain that my older sister, who was also, a fourth-generation graduate, Michelle, she shoved us on that elevator and closed the door, and everything starts to buzzing, and next thing you know, adults are coming out like "Get out the elevators!". You know, that kind of thing? That happened.

Teddy

I'm surprised they let you come to school here.

Melanie Peel

And then my mom, when she was finishing her plus 30, would bring us after school or whatever, and do her little studies on the flip side of Wiley. And we would, Melissa and I, would get on those elevators just have a grand ole time.

Teddy

Terrorize the Building and Grounds?

Melanie Peel

Grand, grand old time. But I will tell you too Teddy, I can remember every year that they were little. I wish, you know, that they would share that too. The tulips like this time of the year, they always had their pictures made in the tulips in the Quad. You should see some of those pictures. Super sweet.

Teddy

Have y'all had one made yet this year?

Melanie Peel

You know we should do that. Re-create that.

Teddy

You should do that, on this beautiful day.

Ashley Hughes

Oh, lovely.

Melanie Peel

Yep. Tailgating, football games, all of those things. Fun times.

Teddy

I was fixing to ask- Ashley, do you remember your earliest ball game, or whatever, here?

Ashley Hughes

I don't know if I remember my earliest one but I remember lots. We would always tailgate, it was like a big ordeal for all of our friends that grew up around here. And getting to run around the stadium with your friends, I was like, you know, the coolest kid on the block because I knew where I was going.

Melanie Peel

That's right, you did!

Ashley Hughes

I did.

Teddy

Like when y'all are shut up in school here, "Meh, I know where that building is and that building is", and you can always...

Ashley Hughes.

Oh yeah.

Teddy

Okay. Five generations. I don't know that there are six generations, I don't know if we've had enough time yet. I guess we have, if you guys really, what's the word I'm looking for? You know, some early marriages and whatnot.

Melanie Peel

I was going to say, the sixth-generation has not started yet for this crew.

Teddy

Okay, good. We want to have 6 generations, right? Not yet.

Melanie Peel

That's right.

Teddy

All right. Let's go back to Leona- these are such great names, Lilly Leona- I'm just sick that Billy Jane dropped Billy.

Melanie Peel

Well, and I gotta tell you this...

Teddy

I mean, that's as Southern as it gets right there.

Melanie Peel

... out of all the all the blessings, I am the only one that got... So my middle name, which is on my first brick, is Melanie Leona Boone.

Teddy

Aww.

Melanie Peel

So I was named after Lilly Leona.

Teddy

In 1911, that was a really big deal to go to college. And she got a Bachelor of Industry Degree, which I'm not sure what that would equate to today, there were like six degrees you could get back then. This is called Beyond 1894, which is when the school started. So she was among the first to graduate. Did that ever come up in a conversation with your Mamaw, about how you know, mama went to school when not a lot of girls were going?

Melanie Peel

Mamaw, she would talk about how hard of a worker her mom was. And I think she actually passed away before her grandfather, or Mamaw's dad, did. But the comments that Mamaw would make to us were more about that how much it costs to go to school when she was a student.

Teddy

Right.

Melanie Peel

So, in Mamaw's term was, you know, back then... So, like I said even in the 30's is that it was \$25 a semester to go to Louisiana, I guess PoliTech, whatever the name was at that time. But, and she would say "Y'all, that was high cotton." And that they could not afford that. So, they called a bus somewhere, they would walk, you know the whole story about walking uphill in the snow, whatever, they would truly walk to catch the bus, they would and they, this was after they did their chores. They had a farm and animals and they did all that, they'd catch the bus right when the sun was coming up, come to campus, use the books in the library because they didn't have money to buy the books, and then catch the bus on the way home. Well, I mean, and they didn't even pay \$25 because they didn't live on campus. So, since she would just, she would ride the bus back in the evenings I guess, get something to eat, go to sleep, and turn it around the next day.

Teddy

Yeah, when you're walking uphill to and from school in the snow...

Melanie Peel

That's tough.

Teddy

... it's tough. So, she ended up, she must have liked it because she hung around the school a while?

Melanie Peel

She did.

Teddy

She was the Director of Purchasing?

Melanie Peel

She was the Director of Purchasing. So when she graduated and she moved to Shreveport for a little while, that's where she met my grandfather.

Teddy

Aww.

Melanie Peel

And then she came back and was the Director of Purchasing and had some great people that worked with her and kind of grew up here. And that is also one of our little pride moments that we share with our family is that now my twin, as you've referred to, Melissa...

Teddy

Yes. You're favorite twin.

Melanie Peel

... my favorite twin, is now the Director of Purchasing. And that is just something that's real sentimental and special to us. The other thing that Mamaw would say about that is that "The worst thing that ever happened to this University,"- Are y'all ready for this?- "The worst thing that ever happened to Louisiana Tech was computers". And if people would just work hard with their hands and do the work themselves and add things up, then it would be a much better place. But computers were the worst thing to ever happen.

Teddy

I don't think they're really gonna catch on. Computers.

Melanie Peel

You know? I don't guess so.

Teddy

Let's see. Larry Dixon, tell us who that was.

Melanie Peel

That was Papaw.

Teddy

Right.

Melanie Peel

So that was Mamaw's husband. And he worked in, he actually worked for Building and Grounds. He was... they used to have trucks, garbage trucks... And so, he was kind of like the garbage truck man on campus. I don't know if y'all are... Well, I can't say y'all to anybody but you, Teddy. Yeah, so he drove a garbage truck...

Teddy

They didn't know we had that. So, that was self contained in Tech, it had it's own garbage pickup. Alright, Billy Jane or Jane?

Melanie Peel

Jane.

Teddy

Your mother, the girls' grandmama. She graduated from here with a Bachelor of Arts and '67, got her master's degree, and she worked as a student worker? In the alumni section?

Melanie Peel

She did.

Teddy

Where was that then, when she was in undergrad? That was before the building on the hill.

Melanie Peel

I don't that, I'm not, I don't know. I don't... that's a great question Teddy. But I will tell you when she graduated from Tech they gave her these beautiful plates, and I think they still have some at the Alumni House, and she gave me a couple of them but they're these wedgewood, I think, made plates. And one of them has a picture of the old president's home, another is a picture of, maybe Old Maine or maybe even the columns coming into campus. But that was so cool, that she got those little plates, and so now I have, I have some too.

Teddy

If you ever want to see those you can stop by the Alumni House...

Melanie Peel

The Alumni House. Yep.

Teddy

... and see some of those in there. They'd love for you to visit. And then of course you, both your sisters went here and now y'all's daughters. Who's next in line, possibly, to come to school here?

Melanie Peel

Well actually Ashley has a brother, so Logan is graduated from Ruston High...

Teddy

Are any of the boys and y'all's family smart enough to attend college here?

Ashley Hughes

Good question.

Melanie Peel

Logan, Logan is in. He has been admitted and he will be here. And then Anna Claire's brother is a junior at Cedar Creek so he's, he will be here the year after that.

Teddy

All right. Well, they've loosened restrictions a while back to let me in. So if I can get in, I think we're safe. If I can go to college, I told y'all...

Melanie Peel

Hey, I like to pay, I like to tell people too, you know, I got in I think the year before Louisiana Tech actually started like selective admissions. I think that started in the 90's? Anyway, it wasn't like it was today where you apply in October before you get ready to go to school. It was like, we finished high school in May and mom was like, "Hey, we need to stop by the admissions office and fill out an application to go to Tech" and we're like "Oh, okay." You know.

Teddy

Yeah. Big Time. And again, we have Bridges to Bulldogs, we have programs to help you get in if you're not quite academically ready, or whatever, we can get you there. I forget, this episode is actually going to drop on... "drop", that's what we call it in the business... And then you can start listening to it.

Melanie Peel

Okay.

Teddy

There's a thing called the internet and they'll put it on there somehow.

Melanie Peel

On computers?

Teddy

Yes. That's never gonna catch on. Has your grandmother...

Melanie Peel

Mamaw, that's right.

Teddy

... Mamaw, you know Mamaw suggested... Mildred, gosh you don't get people named Mildred no more like that. My grandma was a Ruth, so I'm old school like you. This is gonna drop on Cinco de Mayo.

Melanie Peel

Oh,okay.

Teddy

That's cool because five generations.

Melanie Peel

Oh, wow. That, that took me a second there. But that is very cool.

Teddy

Yes, we're gonna do the rest of this in Spanish for me.

Melanie Peel

I'm French, I speak French, so...

Teddy

Don't know what the French call it. We're going to go ahead and release it on Cinco de Mayo, and we're not going to do in Spanish, we're just going to do it in good ole American Southern drawl. So we can wrap this up... By the way, speaking of the physical plant, you know, a guy who works there.

Melanie Peel

I really do. I know a very handsome guy that works over there.

Teddy

That would be Anna Claire's father, Joe. We love the Joe.

Melanie Peel

We love the Joe.

Teddy

Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. I'm sure you coached him up and helped him get through.

Melanie Peel

Absolutely, I did.

Teddy

He's a wonderful guy. They're doing a heck of a job over there. We love seeing Joe. So, Ashley and Anna Claire, if you're trying to talk to the person who's never been to Ruston or something, and they're thinking about coming to school here. I mean, what would you tell them about Louisiana Tech? That, besides your family ties, what was it that made you want to come here?

Anna Claire Peel

I mean, as a student recruiter, they asked me that question for people that I have to tour that aren't from Ruston. And I, it kind of goes along with family aspect. But even coming Tech, Tech is different from Ruston and I know Ashley would agree with that. We've been here our whole lives, and then Tech feels different when you get here. And that's in all good ways. But, I always tell people that it's so easy to find your family here whether that's through extracurriculars, or even classes where you sit by a student, "You don't know what we're talking about either? That's a good." type stuff. That's always a good way to form a quick connection. But I've never had an incident where I didn't feel like I was meant to be here, just because I always had somebody that I knew, was either struggling with me, or was really excited with me. So, it was always just kind of a comfortable place to be and it's easy to get involved. And that's something that I don't think is necessarily possible in bigger universities, just seeing how difficult it is just to get involved there because you've got so many people to, maybe compete against or whatever. But here, it's just, it's easy.

Teddy

You can find your family at Tech. That's neat, we need to put that on one of those wooden plates, if I can remember to do that. Ashley, I always try to tell people that if you don't know kind of what you want to do, or you feel lost, we'll find you a spot. Have you seen friends to find themselves here and did you find it easy to fit in?

Ashley Hughes

Absolutely. I feel like there's a lot of different kinds of people and personalities here at Tech and I think that it's all celebrated. And whether you, wherever your career choice ends up being, and everything else, there's so many different clubs that you can be a part of, all the different sports and the different, even the jobs here...

Teddy

Sure.

Ashley Hughes

... are all so unique. And I mean, I've been a student worker for like two years and it's always just been an amazing opportunity, even get to know just like the faculty and the staff and the professors. Everyone around here loves this town and loves this place and it's so easy to find parents away from home, family away from home, and not just students, but faculty. And it's always been, I've always felt supported.

Teddy

Well, and good lesson for all of us that were struggling with time management: Ashley graduated in three years with Honors and as a student worker. I did not do that the decade that I attended Tech. Good for you. And Melanie, just wrap this up for us. This is a long line of, we threw a couple of guys in here,

Melanie Peel

We did.

Teddy

... just for diversity's sake. But, as a long line that started back in 1911 with some strong women, and we've got the latest edition of those here, what do you think? Why does Tech hold a special place in the hearts of this line of graduates that have come through here?

Melanie Peel

I think I think for various reasons. But I think because, you know, people hear this saying "Tech is family" sometimes they think that's a little cliché or whatever. It's never been like that for me, it's not just a saying. And, and I think with my, you know, like I said, I don't, I didn't get to spend time on this side of heaven with my great grandmother. But I know, I spent a lot of time with my Mamaw, so with Mildred, and with Jane, my mom, and with my oldest sister and Ashley's mom, as well. And I know the work ethic that comes with this, I know that all of these, these ladies are passionate about the families that they raise, but an extension of that, where we go, that we treat others like family in it's just, it's really a unique dynamic that is very special. And in, you know, I was super proud that Anna Claire wanted to

get her degree here. And really that was nothing that, I don't know, I never questioned that. She never, she was just like, "I'm not interested in this early-entry program", even though she works her tail off to keep good grades. And both of the girls are active in Greek life and in different organizations on campus. So, I think to sum it all up for me is, it's a legacy that's worth living. And, and I'm very proud of this, this fifth-generation. And I have no doubts that the sixth and seventh-generation will make me just as happy, happy or feel so good because, I know where they come from. I know what they've been raised to do. And I know where their hearts are. And I think a lot of it is from strong women with strong educational ties with a heart for family and a heart for the Lord. And those are all big things to me.

Teddy

So, if you are a young lady and you're looking for a school and university, we've got one for you. Or if you're a man, a boy, male... All of that's redundant- We can find a spot for you around here. You can call Melanie, she's the Director Students in Transition, and call admissions, give any of us call, teddy@latech.edu. I tell people all the time, I probably don't know the answer, but I can ship you to who does know the answer. So what I've learned today, this is a legacy worth living. That you can find your family here, you can find parents here in faculty and staff, you can find brothers and sisters, you can find something that you want to do to make your little happy meal money for when you get out in the real world and try to make a contribution. Anybody else got anything they want to add before we take up offering and shut this down?

Ashley Hughes

I'm good.

Anna Claire Peel

Not that I can think of.

Teddy

Alright, congratulations to our honor graduates, Ashley and Anna Claire. We want to thank Carter Carroll too for joining us today, you know, can we clap for Carter?

Melanie Peel

We love Carter Carroll.

Teddy

We've embarrassed him. He's rolling his eyes, but Carter and the rest of the University Communications team, we kind of divvy this up. Spread the word about Beyond 1894. There's some fascinating people that we want to keep introducing you to. And people are always splitting the atom, or building some Trenchless Technology thing, or doing a Nano deal. It's just unbelievable. I don't understand it all. But I know a lot of important stuff is going on around here and we want to try to share that with you. So, thanks to the UC team, thanks to our guests today, we really appreciate it y'all. And, thank you most of all for being a part of Beyond 1894. Remember to go to latech.edu to see what all is happening in at your area's flagship University, latechsports.com. Check out the new ballparks in person as soon as you get a chance. Until we meet again, Go Dogs.

Gavin Kelly

At Louisiana Tech University, Summer 2021 is bright with opportunities for future students. Do you know a high-achieving student who wants to prepare for future success? Summer 2021 is a great time for students to Level Up and get ahead by earning college credit. With scholarships and multiple course delivery options students can achieve their academic goals at their own pace. Student success takes top priority when high school students Level Up at Louisiana Tech. Summer registration opens May 3rd. Learn more about summer classes at latech.edu/summer.

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