

# reynolds\_award\_60903

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## **BGCT Elder Statesman Award presented to Herbert Reynolds**

**By Marv Knox**

*Editor*

INDEPENDENCE- Praised as “a Baptist from the top of his head to the tip of his toes,” Herbert Reynolds received the Baptist General Convention of Texas' Elder Statesman Award June 1.

Friends and admirers from across Texas gathered at the historic Independence Baptist Church to recognize Reynolds, known for more than three decades as a leader in Christian higher education and a champion of religious liberty.

The BGCT's Baptist Distinctives Committee and Texas Baptist Heritage Center present the Elder Statesman Award each year in coordination with the Independence Baptist Association. The award is reserved for Texas Baptists who have had distinguished careers in Christian service.



John Belew of  
McGregor  
greeted Joy and  
Herbert  
Reynolds after  
the Sunday  
morning service  
at which  
Reynolds,  
former  
president of  
Baylor  
University, was  
named Elder  
Statesman  
among Texas  
Baptists.  
(Debbie  
Sheppard/BGCT  
Photo)

The setting at Independence—original site of the two oldest schools affiliated with the BGCT, Baylor University and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor—was particularly appropriate this year. Reynolds has served Baylor for 34 years.

He was elected the university's executive vice president in 1969, president in 1981, chancellor in 1995 and president emeritus in 2000.

Both personally and professionally, Reynolds is a worthy recipient of the Elder Statesman Award, said Paul Powell, dean of Baylor's Truett Seminary, who made the presentation.

Before joining the Baylor administration, Reynolds completed a distinguished career in the U.S. Air Force, including service as the commander and director of plans for the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory, Powell noted, citing Reynolds' professional expertise in psychology.

“Herbert Reynolds is a scholar and a scientist of the first rank, but he still has a child-like-not to be confused with childish-faith and rock-like convictions,” Powell said.

“He's a Baptist from the top of his head to the tip of his toes. He has worked tirelessly to preserve Baptist ideals.”

Reynolds also has exhibited “lion-like courage,” Powell added, specifically referencing Baylor's charter change more than a decade ago, which gave the university's regents authority to select 75 percent of their members, with the BGCT selecting the other 25 percent.

“He preserved academic and religious liberty for Texas Baptists, and he never faltered,” Powell claimed. “Herbert Reynolds is a John the Baptist kind of man. When he takes a stand, he stands there, even if he has to stand alone.”

In addition, Reynolds has “prophet-like conviction,” Powell said. To illustrate, he noted how Reynolds legally preserved the name “George W. Truett Theological Seminary” for Baylor and then opened the seminary “long before it was needed.” Now, the seminary is destined for greatness and to preserve Baptists' grand tradition of ministerial education, he added.

“Herbert H. Reynolds is the most influential and revolutionary Texas Baptist in the second half of the 20th century,” Powell declared. “He stands head and shoulders above everyone else.”

Other program speakers also praised Reynolds' leadership.

“He has deep passion for the things that make Baptists—particularly Texas Baptists—important in the world of faith,” said Charles Wade, the BGCT's executive director. “He has been generous with the Baptist vision for Texas. He has encouraged others to think about the whole Baptist family and not just Baylor.”

“He is a shining example of 'contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,'" said Winfred Moore, visiting distinguished professor of religion at Baylor, quoting the New Testament book of Jude.

“He's done what he's done with grace, love and compassion, sometimes standing against evil when others did not understand,” Moore said. “He is a man of great ideas, and all of them have been around 'contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.' ... My prayer is that you and I will imitate Herbert Reynolds as he imitates the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Here is a life to celebrate, a life to imitate, a life to thank,” noted Bill Pitts, religion professor at Baylor and president of the Independence Association.

“Dr. Reynolds has been a friend to Baptists around the world,” added Bill Pinson, the BGCT's executive director emeritus. “I cannot think of one more deserving.”

While president of Baylor, Reynolds was named one of America's 100 most effective chief executive officers in a study of the 3,400 presidents of American colleges and universities. He also was elected chairman of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. In 2001, he received the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas Founders Medal.

He is a graduate of Trinity University and Baylor, where he earned master's and doctor's degrees.

He has served on numerous boards and committees related to business and

education.

He is an active churchman and member of First Baptist Church in Waco, where he has served on committees and been chairman of deacons.

He and his wife, Joy, have two sons and a daughter, all married, and seven grandchildren.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.