

Wayland executive VP killed in plane crash

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By Teresa Young

Wayland Baptist University

PLAINVIEW—Wayland Baptist University Executive Vice President Bill Hardage was killed March 25 in a plane crash in central California.

Hardage, a university employee for close to 40 years, had traveled to Watsonville on a personal trip to pick up a recently purchased Air Coupe plane, reportedly one of his favorites to fly. Details of the accident still are under investigation.

Bill Hardage

An accomplished pilot, Hardage had spent many years as the university's pilot along with his administrative duties, often shuttling officials to graduation ceremonies at external campuses or to other locations on Wayland business.

Hardage first came to Wayland in 1963, transferring from Hardin-Simmons

University to run for Wayland's new track and field program. After earning his degree in 1965, he moved to Lubbock to coach football and track at Coronado High School, then to Texas Tech University as assistant track coach and physical education instructor. He earned his master's degree in education there.

Hardage came to Wayland as assistant track and field coach and assistant professor of physical education, serving five years before taking a two-year break to earn a doctorate in education at East Texas State University, now Texas A&M at Commerce. He returned to Wayland to chair the physical education department and to coach track before moving eventually into administrative roles.

In 1979, he became director of special services, taking the reins of the four existing external campuses and helping to start another. Since then, he has been instrumental in expanding Wayland's reach through adding eight additional external campuses in the United States and another location in Kenya, Africa.

He went on to serve in the academic vice president's office, the advancement vice presidency, external programs leadership and back to academic and student services and provost. In 2001, he was named vice chancellor, and his title changed to executive vice president when the chancellor's position was eliminated in 2002 with Wallace Davis' retirement.

"Words cannot begin to express Wayland's grief and my sadness over the loss of our gifted executive vice president," President Paul Armes said. "Bill loved Wayland and contributed to her success as an institution of higher learning in more ways than any of us will ever know. He will be missed greatly by every member of the Wayland family."

Hardage is survived by his wife, Nell; a son, Tim, of Plainview; and a

daughter, Cindy Bessire of Muleshoe, along with their spouses and numerous grandchildren.

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