

Around the State: UMHB cheers special-need athletes, Garland church recognizes elementary art students

May 16, 2018

To mark both NCAA Division III Week and Autism Awareness Month, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor athletics staff and its student athlete advisory committee served as hosts to the Centex Champs, a softball organization with four teams of athletes with special needs—the Bandits, Indians, Cowboys and Rangers. UMHB athletes—including softball, basketball and soccer players—joined the Champs on the field and cheered when each of the special-needs athletes crossed home plate. Both the match-up between the Bandits and Indians and the game between the Cowboys and Rangers ended in ties, and all of the players went home with autographed baseballs.



South Garland Baptist Church displays artwork by students at Club Hill Elementary School in Garland. (Photo / Pam Woodberry)

When Club Hill Elementary School was undergoing renovations last August, South Garland Baptist Church in Garland made its fellowship hall available for a pair of back-to-school events. At one of the events, the church surveyed parents and teachers to find out how it could serve the school more effectively, and an art teacher asked if her students' artwork might be displayed at the church facility at some point. On May 6, South

Garland Baptist displayed the top artwork of 40 students at the front of its sanctuary. The church invited students and parents to attend a worship service, where students were recognized publicly and awarded ribbons and certificates. Before the service, the church's youth group sponsored a reception in honor of the students and their parents. Fifteen families from the school attended. **Dean Dickens** is intentional interim pastor at South Garland Baptist.



Hardin-Simmons University awarded an honorary doctorate to Phil Christopher, senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Abilene. (HSU Photo)

Hardin-Simmons University awarded an honorary doctorate to **Phil Christopher**, senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Abilene since 1995. Christopher, a native of San Antonio, earned his undergraduate degree at Baylor University, a Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Doctorate of Ministry degree from Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School. United Way of Abilene recognized him as Volunteer of the Year in 2014. He serves as vice chair of the Abilene Association of Congregations and on the board of Noah Project, a shelter for victims of domestic violence.

East Texas Baptist University presented its Professor with Distinction Award to **Laurie Smith**, chair of the department of behavioral science, during spring commencement ceremonies. **Halee Vasquez**, who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in speech communication, received the President's Award, presented to the graduate judged as the best representation of a Christian leader, scholar and servant. In addition to serving as a President's Leadership Fellow and member of the ETBU Student

Foundation, Vasquez was a women's ministry leader on campus and a youth intern at First Baptist Church in Longview. **Jim Teague** of Houston, chief executive officer of Enterprise Products, received an honorary doctorate.



It was “high fives” all around when 117 students graduated from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor's Scott & White School of Nursing. (UMHB Photo)

The nursing faculty at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor pinned 117 students who graduated from the Scott & White College of Nursing at UMHB this month. They included 97 students who had completed their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, 16 students who had completed their Master of Science in Nursing degree, and the first four students to be pinned under the university's Doctor of Nursing Practice program



Emily Roberson

Emily Roberson will rejoin the East Texas Baptist University staff as director of alumni relations, effective June 4. She served previously at ETBU, first as transfer counselor in the admissions office and later as director of marketing. Most recently, she was communications director at New Beginnings Baptist Church in Longview. She earned her undergraduate degree in journalism, public relations and new media at Baylor University, and she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Strategic Communication from Texas Tech University.

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor raised \$70,329.01 for scholarships in

24 hours from 159 donors through its third annual Purple Gives Gold event. The university's Student Foundation, which connects alumni and supporters with the school's student body, hosted an educational event centered on giving students an opportunity to reflect and be thankful for all that donors have provided. Students and staff members wrote the names of every living donor to the university on posters and displayed them in the lobby of UMHB's Bawcom Student Union. Both students and alumni were encouraged to pledge any amount of money and see their name added to those lists.

Hilltop University, a spiritual retreat for senior adults, is scheduled May 30 to June 1 at East Texas Baptist University. Featured guest speakers are **David Hardage**, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; **Ron Lyles**, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Pasadena; and **Bob Utley**, founder of Bible Lessons International. The event also will feature a concert by **The Isaacs**, winners of seven Dove Awards. For more information, call (903) 923-2071, email advancement@etbu.edu or click [here](#).

Anniversary

150th for First Baptist Church in Cleburne. **Danny Crosby** is pastor.