

Around the State: CASL Conference held at ETBU

January 31, 2024



Students gathered at East Texas Baptist University for the Christian Association of Student Leaders Conference. (ETBU Photo)

East Texas Baptist University hosted the Christian Association of Student Leaders Conference Jan 18-20. The conference is designed to nurture the intersection of leadership and faith, empowering students to lead with purpose and make a meaningful impact on their campuses and communities. The event was supported by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and featured student leaders from institutions including ETBU, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Hardin-Simmons University, Howard Payne University, Houston Christian University, Dallas Baptist University and Oklahoma Baptist University. Featured speakers included **Fred “Chip” Luter**, senior associate pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans; **Kelly King**, women’s minister at Quail Springs Baptist Church in Oklahoma City; and **Todd Kaunitz**, lead pastor at New Beginnings Baptist Church in Longview.



David Coffey

Global Baptist leader **David Coffey** is the featured speaker at the inaugural Nexus Ministry Leadership Conference at Dallas Baptist University, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 26. Topics include leading change, crisis leadership and

mentoring as leadership. Coffey served 15 years as general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and was president of the Baptist World Alliance from 2005 to 2010. He also served 10 years as global ambassador for BMS World Mission, is a past president of the European Baptist Federation and was moderator of the English Free Churches and a leader of Churches Together in England. Coffey has visited 80 countries on six continents, focusing on human rights and religious liberty and the development of emerging leaders. The Nexus Ministry Leadership Conference is sponsored by DBU Graduate School of Ministry in partnership with the Gary Cook School of leadership and with financial support from the Pinson Lecture Series. To register, [click here](#).



Houston Christian University and the Blinn College District announced a new transfer partnership Jan. 25 that will provide Blinn students pathways to bachelor's degrees from HCU. (HCU Photo)

Houston Christian University and the Blinn College District announced a new transfer partnership Jan. 25 that will provide Blinn students pathways to bachelor's degrees from HCU. Through the transfer and co-enrollment agreement, Blinn electrical engineering and computer science students can apply their credits toward a Bachelor of Science degree in cyber engineering, electrical engineering or computer science from HCU. "We are truly grateful for this partnership with Blinn College," HCU President **Robert Sloan** said. "Blinn has a great history and is an outstanding institution with strong and thoughtful leadership. We are honored to enter into this enrollment agreement and are confident it will benefit students and programs in both our institutions."



Libby Cleveland



Freda Provence

Wayland Baptist University will recognize **Freda Provence** and **Libby Cleveland** with awards for lifetime service at its Blue and Gold Awards Banquet on Feb. 9. Provence and Cleveland will receive the Joe and Freda Provence Distinguished Lifetime Service Award. Provence served 25 years as administrative assistant to three presidents and an interim president at Wayland, and she and her husband Joe were longtime supporters of the arts and athletics at the university. Cleveland taught more than 30 years in public schools before joining the faculty of Wayland's Kenneth L. Mattox School of Mathematics and Sciences, where she has served about three decades. Wayland will honor educator **Vernon Stokes** and counselor **Patrick Timothy Aland** with its Distinguished Alumni Award. Stokes served as a classroom teacher at the elementary, junior high school, high school and college levels before he became a campus administrator, assistant superintendent and ultimately a superintendent. Aland has worked with combat veterans and their families at the Lubbock Veterans Counseling Center. **JR Dunn**, Baptist Student Ministries director at Wayland, will receive the Distinguished Young Alumni Award. **Ben and Bertha Mieth** of Glen Rose will receive the Distinguished Benefactor Award.



Ryan S. Hunter was recognized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with two awards.

Texas State Game Warden **Ryan S. Hunter**, an alumnus and instructor at

Hardin-Simmons University, recently received the 2023 Texans Caring for Texans award for the Panhandle-area Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He also was named the Texas Game Warden of the Year for the Region 6 Area, which includes Amarillo, Lubbock, Wichita Falls and Abilene. Hunter currently serves in the Randall County/Potter County duty station. Hunter earned his undergraduate degree from Hardin-Simmons in 2009 and was hired as a Texas Game Warden the following year. After completing his Master of Science degree in criminal justice, he began teaching as an adjunct instructor for the HSU criminal justice department in 2015. He worked as a full-time faculty member in the department from 2016 until 2018, then returned to working for the state as a game warden. He has continued to serve as an adjunct instructor at HSU, teaching both undergraduate and graduate students.



Keynote speaker Patricia Daza (center) is greeted by Matiko Austin (left), chair of the psychology department at Houston Christian University, and Leslie Fridge, dean of the HCU College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. (HCU Photo)

Houston Christian University's psychology and counseling departments sponsored a continuing education and professional development symposium for more than 130 mental health providers. "Together We Rise" was the theme of the Jan. 27 symposium. **Patricia Daza**, associate professor and director of psychology at the Menninger Clinic in Houston, was the keynote speaker.



The Marshall Greater Chamber of Commerce named Debbie Rogers, director of campus services at East Texas Baptist University, as Employee of the Year.

The Marshall Greater Chamber of Commerce named **Debbie Rogers**, director of campus services at East Texas Baptist University, as its Employee of the Year. Rogers represents ETBU on the Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, and she is a softball umpire, youth basketball coach and former youth softball and baseball coach. “I have had the privilege of serving alongside Debbie for the past eight years and have been able to personally witness her love, serve and invest in the lives of the ETBU students and staff on a daily basis,” said **Ryan Erwin**, vice president for student engagement and athletics at ETBU. “Debbie sees her position at ETBU as a calling and an opportunity to show Christ to everyone she interacts with on campus and in the community.” Rogers has served on both the baseball and football booster clubs at Marshall High School, and she teaches Bible study classes for women on Sunday and Wednesday at River Crossing Cowboy Church.



Donna Dean



Jimmy Dean

Wayland Baptist University announced what currently is valued as the largest estate gift commitment in the school’s 115-year history. “Wayland is honored to be the beneficiary of the generosity of **Jimmy and Donna**

Dean, long-time friends of the university,” President **Bobby Hall** said. “Their love for Wayland and heart for helping others shine brightly through this estate gift, which will help shape the future of the university and strengthen its commitment to education, scholarship and leadership.” Jimmy Dean, a country music star and sausage tycoon, and his wife Donna first made a significant gift to Wayland in 2008, which prompted the university to name its newest men’s dormitory in his honor. After her husband’s death in 2010, Donna Dean provided funds for Wayland’s Jimmy Dean Museum. While the details of the estate gift commitment were not disclosed, Hall and **Mike Hammack**, vice president of institutional advancement, said it will have a lasting impact on the university and has the potential to be the largest gift in Wayland’s history.

Retirement

Tim Randolph as director of Waco Regional Baptist Association, effective March 31, after more than 15 years at the association and 47 years in the gospel ministry.