

# Around the State: ETBU bass fishing team goes on mission to Alaska

August 21, 2024

The East Texas Baptist University bass fishing team traveled to Soldotna, Alaska, as part of ETBU's Tiger Athletic Mission Experience. This trip marks the 21st mission initiative for the university's athletic department and the second for the Tiger bass fishing team, following their 2018 trip to the Amazon River in Brazil. The 16-member team traveled from Dallas to Anchorage with a stop in Seattle before a three-hour drive to Soldotna. They arrived at First Baptist Church in Soldotna just before midnight, ready to begin their week of service. Junior **Brett Jolley** led a Sunday School lesson, and senior **Cade Nettles** preached during the main service at First Baptist Church in Soldotna. After church, the team spent the afternoon fishing in a local river and caught 37 salmon. Throughout the week, they served two ministries, Solid Rock Bible Camp and First Baptist Church in Soldotna. The Tigers spent time splitting wood and painting at the youth camp, which uses upwards of 150,000 pounds of firewood each winter. ETBU partnered with another mission team from Michigan, which was building a teaching facility from the ground up, painting all of the siding for the project. The team also focused on rebuilding the boardwalk at First Baptist Church of Soldotna. During the trip, the team had the opportunity to fish for salmon on the Kenai River, where they fostered connections with local anglers.



Ninety-seven students and more than a dozen faculty and staff at Houston Christian University participated in the Aug. 4-6 Kaleō student leadership and discipleship retreat. (HCU Photo)

Ninety-seven students and more than a dozen faculty and staff at Houston Christian University participated in the Aug. 4-6 Kaleō student leadership and discipleship retreat. The retreat brings together key student leaders to provide a biblical vision for their calling to leadership on campus and equips them with professional development in essential leadership skills. **Xavier Maryland**, campus pastor of Sugar Creek Baptist Church in Missouri City, preached in the four plenary sessions, and HCU leaders provided workshops on time management, handling difficult conversations constructively and building a leadership development pipeline. Student leaders also engaged in discipleship-focused small groups led by HCU faculty and staff throughout the retreat.



Clockwise from top left: Former Baylor Bears John Peers (gold—tennis men’s doubles for his native Australia); Brittney Griner (gold—team USA women’s basketball), Kristy Wallace (bronze—women’s basketball for her native Australia; and Avery Skinner (silver—U.S. women’s volleyball) took home medals from the Paris Olympics. (Baylor Photo via web)

With the 2024 Summer Olympics complete, Baylor Bears are coming home from Paris with [a school-record four medals](#)—earned by four different Olympians—continuing [Baylor’s long history of Olympic excellence](#). Former Baylor men’s tennis standout **John Peers** got things started for Baylor, winning gold for his native Australia in men’s doubles. Appearing in his third Olympics, Peers won his second medal—having won bronze in mixed doubles in Tokyo—by sweeping through this year’s Olympic rounds. Also appearing in her third Olympics, **Brittney Griner**—who led the Baylor women’s basketball team to the 2012 national championship—won her third Olympic gold with women’s basketball—extending the Team USA run to eight straight golds. Griner joins **Michael Johnson** and **Jeremy Wariner** as the only Bears to win three or more Olympic gold medals. Former Baylor volleyball all-American **Avery Skinner** and the U.S. women’s volleyball team won silver, and **Kristy Wallace** and the Australian

women's basketball team won bronze. Baylor's two gold medals were more than 166 of the 206 participating countries in this year's Olympics, and their four total medals would have ranked in the top third of all countries for 2024. And that doesn't include the 10 medals (five gold, three silver, two bronze) coached by Baylor track and field head coach **Michael Ford** in his role as Team USA's men's sprints/hurdles coach. All-time, Baylor athletes now have won 20 total medals (14 gold, four silver, and two bronze) dating back to 1904—more than 85 countries.



Ray Rush, assistant professor of communications and media studies, and Justin Porter, in-house producer and livestream coordinator, paint the Black Box studio in anticipation of the installation of new cameras and lights. (Wayland Photo)

A \$1 million gift to update Wayland Baptist University's multimedia facilities has moved the institution closer to reaching the \$18 million goal of the Thrive Campaign. The gift from **Ben** and **Bertha Mieth** pushes Wayland's Thrive Campaign past the \$17 million mark, while benefiting students seeking careers in multimedia, sports production, media-enhanced teaching and media ministry. The Mieths serve as campaign chairs and previously provided a \$2.5 million gift to update School of Nursing facilities

and equipment at Wayland's San Antonio campus. **Ray Rush**, assistant professor of communications and media studies, said the gift primarily will be used to update the production control area, what he describes as the "heart" of media production—video production, cinema production, audio livestreaming, podcasting, and social media content production. Rush also noted it will enhance the equipment in Harral Auditorium for chapel, based on equipment commonly used in churches for house-of-worship production.



Randy O'Rear presents Shirley V. Hoogstra, J.D., 7th president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, with a Distinguished Service Award for her many years of service to Christian higher education. (UMHB Photo)

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor celebrated the beginning of the school year and welcomed approximately 700 new freshmen to campus during its 179th Fall Convocation service on Aug. 14. This year, more than 3,300 students aged 16 to 67 are attending classes at UMHB. UMHB President **Randy O'Rear** presented the guest speaker, **Shirley V. Hoogstra**, president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, with a Distinguished Service Award for her many years of service to Christian higher education. Hoogstra spoke about God's work in her life.

She encouraged students to “keep both eyes open” as they begin their academic journey at UMHB.

Texans on Mission disaster relief volunteers completed their deployment after Hurricane Beryl on Aug. 15. The Texans on Mission crews and their ministry partners contributed more than 15,500 volunteer hours to the effort, completing 212 chainsaw jobs and logging 754 heavy-equipment hours. Seven remaining chainsaw jobs will be completed by local volunteers at First Baptist Church in Brazoria. Disaster relief teams prepared about 3,800 meals for volunteers and the public and completed more than 30 temporary roof jobs. Volunteers with the shower and laundry units made available more than 1,400 showers for volunteers and 25 for the public, and they washed and dried more than 827 loads of laundry for volunteers and more than 300 for the public. Texans on Mission distributed 178 Bibles, made about 400 ministry contacts, presented the gospel to 44 people, and recorded 14 professions of faith in Christ.



Tammi Outlaw and Gracie Carroll with Parlay. (HSU Photo via web)

Among the many visitors to the Hardin-Simmons University campus, service dogs often can be seen mixed in with students and faculty. While

not permanent residents, these canine guests are there to learn and grow just like their student counterparts. One such dog, a gentle golden lab known as **Parlay**, spends her mornings tucked away in Sandefer Memorial with her handlers, **Tammi Outlaw** and **Gracie Carroll**. Parlay belongs to [Canine Companions](#), an organization dedicated to the training and well-being of service dogs across the United States. She came to HSU when Outlaw and Carroll, of the HSU Registrar and Advising Offices, applied together for the chance to foster a puppy from Canine Companions. The goal of Canine Companions is to allow their service dogs to be fostered for 16 months by volunteers who will expose them to as many people, places and things as possible. By spending time on campus, Parlay is exposed to experiences that set her up to succeed once she moves on to proper training and, eventually, serving a person in need.

Three of the eight young adults the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty introduced as the 2024 class of BJC Fellows have Baylor University ties. **Leigh Curl-Dove**, a graduate of Baylor University and Duke Divinity School, is pastor of Seattle First Baptist Church in Seattle, Wash. **Brittany Washington**, a graduate of Baylor University and Texas Christian University, is a clinical counselor and outreach specialist for BIPOC mental health promotion at Harmony Community Development Corporation in Dallas. **Sejana Yoo** is a hospital chaplain at Baylor Scott & White Hospital in Temple. She is a graduate of Walden University and Baylor Scott & White Hospital's Clinical Pastoral Education program, and she recently graduated with a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in spiritual formation and discipleship from Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary. They join **Margaret L. Conley** of Cartersville, Ga.; **Jamil Grimes** and **Wesley Poole King** of Nashville, Tenn.; **Margaret Hamm** of Somerville, Mass.; and **Lakia Marion** of Knoxville, Tenn.



CHRISTUS Health Senior Vice President Dominic Dominguez and Stark College & Seminary President Tony Celelli sign the education affiliation agreement, Aug. 14. (Stark College & Seminary Photo)

Stark College & Seminary is launching a new Master of Divinity in Chaplaincy degree program, developed in collaboration with CHRISTUS Spohn Health System. The new program is designed to equip students with comprehensive theological education and hands-on clinical training, preparing them for impactful chaplain ministry. The partnership allows students to enroll simultaneously in CHRISTUS Spohn's Clinical Pastoral Education program while completing a Master of Divinity degree at Stark College & Seminary. Through this dual enrollment, students graduate with two degrees: a Master of Arts in Ministry and a Master of Divinity, along with four units of Clinical Pastoral Education. To celebrate the new program, Stark and CHRISTUS Spohn hosted an educational affiliation agreement signing ceremony on Aug. 14, coinciding with the 50th-year celebration of Clinical Pastoral Education at CHRISTUS Spohn Health System.





This year's winners of the Strickland-Davis Scholarship (from left to right): Rylie Burden, Howard Payne University; Sarah Harbison, Hardin-Simmons University; and Daniel Holcomb, Belmont University. (CLC Photo)

Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission announced this year's winners of the Strickland-Davis Scholarship: **Rylie Burden**, a global political science student at Howard Payne University; **Sarah Harbison**, a psychology and social work student at Hardin-Simmons University; and **Daniel Holcomb**, who is pursuing a degree in faith and justice at Belmont University. The Strickland-Davis Scholarship seeks to provide financial assistance to students from Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated churches pursuing degrees in a field of study related to the commands of Micah 6:8—to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. Each school year, three \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to students. The CLC directors select the winners from students' essays on how they will use their degree to live out Micah 6:8. The scholarship is named in memory of **Phil Strickland**, former director of the CLC, and in honor of **Marilyn Davis**, former congregational and commission specialist. Strickland was director

for nearly a quarter of a century, leading the CLC to care for children, the marginalized and the overlooked. Davis worked with the CLC for 42 years, serving with four directors.