

Around the State: Ethiopian church hosts children's ministry conference

May 10, 2023



Participants from throughout North American Ethiopian churches participated at a children's ministry conference in Garland. (Courtesy Photo)

Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist Church in Garland hosted a Children's Ministry Experience Conference that drew more than two dozen participants from Ethiopian churches in nine states and from Edmonton, Canada. Topics included the importance of networking with other churches, working with parents and volunteers, the organization and structure of children's ministry, and the spiritual formation of children. Speakers from Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist Church were Pastor **Bedilu Yirga**, Assistant Pastor **Dawit Adege** and **Sewasew Egigou**, director of children's ministry.



ETBU President J. Blair Blackburn (left) and Thomas Sanders (right), provost and vice president for academic affairs, present an honorary doctorate to Joy Fenner, longtime Texas Baptist missions leader. (ETBU Photo)

East Texas Baptist University awarded an honorary doctorate to **Joy Fenner** during spring commencement. Fenner, a 1956 graduate of East Texas Baptist College, served two decades as executive director-treasurer of Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas. In 2007-08, she served as president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas—the first woman elected to that office. In 2009, she was elected president of Texas WMU. She and her husband Charlie served as missionaries to Japan with the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board from 1967 to 1980. ETBU also presented an honorary doctorate to **Robert Morris**, senior pastor of Gateway Church, a multi-campus church based in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Since it began in 2000, the church has grown to more than 100,000 active attendees. His television program airs in over 190 countries, and his radio program, “Worship and the Word with Pastor Robert,” airs in more than 2,800 radio markets across the United States. **Annie Grace Walker**, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in education, received the President’s Award for the Spring 2023 graduating class. She

maintained a 4.0 GPA while serving in residence life, student foundation, as a Titus leader, a Tiger Camp leader, a member of Leadership Fellows, and for three years in the Baptist Student Ministries prayer ministry. **Doug Lockard**, professor of music and the chair of the department of music, was recognized with the 2023 Professor with Distinction Award for his excellence in service, scholarship, teaching and integration of faith and learning. Lockard joined ETBU in 2001, and will serve as the newly appointed dean of the School of Communication and Performing Arts in 2023-24.



Wayland Baptist University seniors Brody Williams, Luis Fernandes and Rene Feliz are pictured with faculty adviser Jason Geesey, associate professor of marketing. The students—along with Diego Cortez, not pictured—are members of Wayland’s Business Strategy Game World Champion team. (WBU Photo)

When it comes to business strategy, four Wayland Baptist University School of Business students are the best in the world among college students. **Diego Cortez, Luis Fernandes, Rene Arturo Nunez Feliz and Brody**

Williams earned a No. 1 ranking in The Business Strategy Game, competing against 3,840 teams from 245 colleges and universities in 44 countries. Jason Geesey, associate professor of marketing, served as faculty adviser for the competition. The Business Strategy Game is a simulation where the students work as an executive team that makes finance, accounting, operations and marketing decisions for their company. Teams compete as executives for a fictional global shoe company that requires them to manufacture and market the company's brand in Asian, Latin American, European and North American markets. "The Wayland team combined for an impressive nine Top 100 rankings and a total of six No. 1 rankings in a simulated 10 years of decision making for their fictional business, BRZ Shoes, Inc.," said **Charles Starnes**, professor of economics. "They attained the highest possible score for the game."



The U.S. Department of Education awarded Houston Christian University a five-year, \$2.8 million grant under the Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions funding program. The grant will fund Project LEAP, which stands for

learn, engage, achieve and persist. The program's goals are: implement best practices in remediation for freshmen-level English and mathematics courses; improve academic outcomes through expanded academic support programs; create a writing center utilized by HCU students to enhance their grammar and composition skills; strengthen access to educational opportunities, particularly in English and mathematics, by upgrading wireless infrastructure in academic buildings; and improve fiscal stability through heightened retention and persistence rates while investing in faculty development. "We are proud of our designation as an Hispanic-Serving Institution and are confident that these significant Title V funds will accelerate and enhance the learning experience of our students,"

President **Robert Sloan** said.

At spring commencement, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor presented **Jordan Thomas** of Belton the President's Award for meritorious service to the university. She was involved in Welcome Week, Stunt Night, Psalm 139, Easter pageant, Wellness Cru, chapel worship and was a chapel speaker. **Anthony Avila** of Troy received the Loyalty Cup, awarded to the student most representative of the university's ideals, traditions and spirit. He was actively involved in campus life, intramurals, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and student teaching, and he played on the Crusader football team.

Baylor University received a \$1.5 million gift from **Charlie and Cindy Fuller** of Woodway and their family to establish an endowed chair for social justice in the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work. The chair will focus on social justice for marginalized populations. "The Fuller Chair provides the Garland School with an opportunity to illuminate biblical justice through social work research, seeking to understand and support the needs of the most vulnerable in our society," said **Jon Singletary**, dean and holder of the Diana R. Garland Endowed Chair of Child and Family Studies.

Dallas Baptist University will offer five bachelor's degrees and up to six master's degrees entirely online at a reduced price in the fall 2023 semester. Online Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in communication, history, sociology, management and marketing will be offered at \$495 per credit hour. Online Master of Arts degrees in family ministry, management and professional development, along with a Master of Education degree in higher education and a Master of Science degree in learning technologies will be offered at \$550 per credit hour. An online Master of Music Education degree also will be available, pending final approval by the regional accrediting agency. "At DBU, we are passionate about quality online learning, and we are passionate about equipping and

raising up Christ-centered servant leaders,” said **Judy Yi**, dean of online education. “We are so excited that more people can experience what DBU uniquely has to offer at this affordable price.”

Retirement

Ed Seay after 33 years as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Magnolia and more than five decades in vocational Christian ministry.