

# Around the State: Gift benefits Theology, Ecology and Food Justice partnership

March 9, 2022



Jennifer Howell

A \$455,000 grant from an anonymous donor will allow the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty to partner with and provide support for Truett Theological Seminary's Master of Arts degree in Theology, Ecology and Food Justice. The gift will help fund student scholarships for both coursework and experiential learning activities and will allow the collaborative's network of researchers, policy analysts and field workers to lend their expertise to the program. The Theology, Ecology and Food Justice program is a collaborative effort between Truett Seminary, World Hunger Relief and the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty. Approved by Baylor's board of regents last November, the new 45-hour degree will provide Truett students an opportunity to study and be formed at the intersection of faith, food justice, environmental justice and ministry. Students will supplement core coursework in Christian Scriptures, theology and Christian witness with opportunities that address pressing issues in ecology and food justice, while also providing immersive coursework at the World Hunger Farm, Washington, D.C., and beyond. Director **Jenny Howell** commented the gift will allow Truett Seminary "to provide some

truly unique immersive courses for our students while decreasing their financial burden.” The partnership between Truett Seminary, World Hunger Relief and the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty grew out of a shared commitment to innovation and service, said Jeremy Everett, executive director of the collaborative. “At the risk of stretching a metaphor too thin, we have all been cultivating similar soils for quite some time,” Everett said. “I am excited to begin formal work together in training students to share in the efforts of taking care of all God’s creatures and creation.”



Bonnie Strauss receives the Good Samaritan Award from ETBU President J. Blair Blackburn.



Vernia Calhoun receives the Good Samaritan Award from ETBU President J. Blair Blackburn.

East Texas Baptist University presented its Good Samaritan Award to **Bonnie Strauss** and **Vernia Calhoun** for their display of servant leadership in Marshall. Strauss served as the education director at the Michelson Museum of Art for 24 years and was instrumental in connecting ETBU students to fine arts classes at the Michelson. She volunteers at many organizations throughout Harrison County, including Martha's Kitchen at Trinity Episcopal Church, where she has been a faithful member for more than two decades. She has served on the All-American City team, Marshall Regional Arts Council, Harrison County Literacy Council, Marshall Public Library and Belle Maison Society. Strauss is a founding member of the Marshall Symphony League and was selected by the Greater Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce as the 2019 Citizen of the Year. With her husband Frank, who serves on the board of trustees at Wiley College, she gives time to advance the Wiley College mission and to support the students of Marshall's historically Black college, as well as supporting ETBU's music and theatre programs. Calhoun first was elected as City Commissioner for District 5 in May 2014. She is a member of Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church in Marshall and has served on the Harrison

County Children’s Service Board and as a Court Appointed Service Advocate. She has served with the New Town Neighborhood Association and was a member of the Marshall Independent School District Bond Advisory Committee. She has also served on the City of Marshall Planning and Zoning Commission, and as a member of the NAACP and Junior Achievement volunteer.



Howard Payne University President Cory Hines is pictured at the HPU School of Nursing’s recent open house with senior nursing students (left to right) Payton Hackney of Early, Alyssa Corpus of Houston, Chyna Allgood of Brookesmith, Madeline Dawson of Tolar and Hayley North of Early. (HPU Photo)

Howard Payne University’s School of Nursing recently welcomed 200 guests, including members of the community, prospective students and HPU personnel, to an open house at the school’s new location in the Thompson Academic Complex. New equipment highlighted during the event included a high-fidelity patient simulator programmed to listen and respond to students using artificial intelligence. Students also demonstrated infant simulators for shaken baby syndrome, alcohol

withdrawal syndrome and seizure care. Other additions to the school's facility include a critical care area equipped with electronic health record simulators and medication administration software; a health assessment area with an integrated diagnostic headboard and exam tables; a pharmacology area with a dose medication administration system; and newly renovated classrooms.

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor will launch a new degree program in Southwest Borderlands Studies in the fall semester. The program incorporates bilingual communication, social relations between diverse Southwest cultures, advocacy and policy into one degree. It is designed for students interested in careers such as law enforcement, military, social work, law, education, counseling, forensics and ecology. "Very few schools in Texas—and even fewer of our size—have a program such as this," said **Jacky Dumas**, associate dean for the School of Humanities. Students will "deepen their knowledge of diverse cultures ... and their understanding of the influence of various waves of migrations," she added.