

Around the State: HCU art students help paint Astros mural

April 1, 2025

Master of Fine Arts students from Houston Christian University collaborated with Houston muralists **Bobby** and **Brenda Ramos** to paint a new mural at the Astros Hall of Fame at Daikin Park. The work of HCU art students **Hailey Harvey**, **Chloe Hudspeth**, **Lyndie Swanson** and **Delaney McRitchie Yohe** and Professor **Tiffany Bergeron**, chair of HCU's Department of Visual Arts, was unveiled on March 27, opening day of the Major League Baseball season. "This was a wonderful experience for our graduate students and such a special and memorable celebration, honoring the anniversary of the ballpark's 25th year," Bergeron said. In addition to a significant public exhibition of their own talents honed at HCU, these MFA Studio Art majors gained valuable techniques from the professional muralists through the design and production of the mural. "We learned so much about how to tackle a group mural of this scope, by learning what our strengths were, communicating through our processes, and being flexible with all the circumstances we were given—we truly learned how to work as one team," Harvey reflected. The work of the HCU team and the mural's reveal were covered in a [news segment](#) by the Houston NBC affiliate, KPRC.



DBU students experienced the integration of faith and learning on a Civil Rights Trip over spring break. (DBU Photo)

From serving pancakes and driving vans on South Padre Island to touring the Stock Exchange in the heart of New York City, more than 150 Dallas Baptist University students were hard at work learning and serving across America during spring break. Sixteen students traveled to learn about leadership through the lives of the nation's Founding Fathers in and around Washington, D.C. They visited monuments, connected with DBU alums and friends in D.C., and ventured to Colonial Williamsburg, Va. Twenty-two students journeyed to New York City to study finance, management and kinesiology. Students toured the New York Stock Exchange, talked with representatives at JP Morgan and visited Madison Square Garden, Citi Field Stadium and Rockefeller Center. Each year, DBU partners with Swerve Church in Bushwick, Brooklyn, to serve alongside and learn from North American Mission Board church planters **Danny** and **Melissa Torres**. Students ministered to the Bushwick community, gained understanding of the transient, diverse community in Brooklyn, fostered relationships with Swerve Church leadership and members, and deepened their knowledge of urban church planting. Students painted a low-income housing unit, organized school supplies for a local elementary school, and distributed church invitations. They also engaged in meaningful conversations with

residents, served pancakes and coffee outside the church, and hosted a community gathering for children and families. Other students experienced the integration of faith and learning on the Civil Rights Trip. These students at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level journeyed through the South (Little Rock, Ark.; Memphis, Tenn.; Birmingham, Ala.; Montgomery, Ala.; Jackson, Miss.) to study the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Stops included the Rosa Parks Museum, the Civil Rights Memorial Museum and historic Tuskegee University. Students also visited the home of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site. The DBU chapel worship team journeyed to Westcliffe, Colo., for their annual songwriting retreat. And, nearly 60 DBU students and staff members participated in Beach Reach on South Padre Island, with the Baptist Student Ministry this year.

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor announced the development of a new anesthesiologist assistant academic program, launching in collaboration with Baylor Scott & White Health in 2026. The program will allow students to earn a Master of Science in Anesthesiology degree. Anesthesiologist assistants work under the direction of licensed anesthesiologists as part of the anesthesia care team to design and implement anesthesia care plans. UMHB will be the site of only the second anesthesiologist assistant program in Texas, and students will receive training at both UMHB and Baylor Scott & White Health facilities, enhancing educational offerings for students and building the pipeline of the healthcare workforce. UMHB's Master of Science in Anesthesiology will be a 28-month program that hopes to admit its first cohort of 25 students in the fall of 2026. This academic program is a recent addition to the many health profession degrees offered within the university's [Mayborn College of Health Sciences](#). The college is comprised of three schools with a unified purpose of educating students in a rigorous academic setting. The Mayborn College of Health Sciences aims to prepare more than 1,300 undergraduate and graduate students to provide holistic healing of the mind, body and spirit of their patients.



HPU sent a group of students, faculty and staff to Gracias, Honduras. (HPU Photo)

During Howard Payne University's spring break, several students traveled with various HPU programs. Ten HPU students and seven faculty and staff members traveled to Honduras for a mission trip, the biology department took students in the Global Studies in Biology class to London and Cambridge, and the Baptist Student Ministry took part in Beach Reach at South Padre Island. HPU teamed up with 61 Isaiah Ministries to send the group to Gracias, Honduras, and the village of Las Brisas. During the trip, students taught in the Abundant Life Christian School, led a soccer camp, worked at the Hunger Farm, shared testimonies at the local radio station and built relationships with people in Las Brisas all with one goal in mind: loving the people and sharing the gospel. The Department of Biology sent eight students and three faculty members to England. Their trip to London and Cambridge was inspired by the scientific history of the cities and the belief that experience can help students grow in their understanding of different cultures and the history of science. While on the trip, students explored the Natural History Museum, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens,

Cambridge University and the Old Operating Theatre. HPU's BSM sent two students and director **Bryan Pate** to Beach Reach to spread the gospel with students visiting South Padre Island for spring break. "It was an awesome experience to dive right into evangelism and the Father's will," said **Nicole Griffin**, senior psychology and Honors Academy major from Needville. "We prayed before and during, which reminded us that the Holy Spirit was the one empowering us to share the gospel."



Wayland Baptist University's Abraham Art Gallery is one of four galleries in the United States selected to host the American Watercolor Society 157th International Awards Exhibition. (Wayland Photo)

Wayland Baptist University's Abraham Art Gallery is one of four galleries in the United States selected to host the American Watercolor Society 157th International Awards Exhibition. Open to the public through May 9, the exhibit features work by award-winning artists from the United States and around the world. The gallery is located on the atrium level of the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Learning Resources Center on the university's Plainview campus. The exhibition features 40 works awarded top honors and painted with watercolor, acrylic and gouache. The range of styles includes abstract and nonrepresentational depictions of figures, still life, wildlife,

architectural and industrial landscapes. Many of the works are available for sale to collectors. Catalogs of all awarded artworks for the exhibition are available at the gallery desk for a \$15 donation that will go toward the Art Scholarship Fund. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. For more information or to schedule a group tour, call 806-291-3710.

Howard Payne University will host its annual Spring Family Reunion on April 5. The public is invited to join alumni, students and personnel for a day of fun on the campus, including music, games and food. Other events will include the dedication of the Bob Carter Athletic Park, Virtual 5K run/walk and Outdoor Vendor Market featuring handmade crafts and goods from local artisans. Admission to the event is free of charge, and no registration is necessary. The HPU Alumni Association Virtual 5K run/walk will begin at 9 a.m. at the Mabree University Center on the HPU campus. Registration is \$40 per person and a portion will go to support student-focused events and scholarships. Individuals can participate from home, with other alumni and friends in their area or on the HPU campus. Registration is still open at www.hputx.edu/springfamilyreunion. The dedication of the Bob Carter Athletic Park will be held at 12:45 p.m. The new facility is home to HPU intramurals and is located across from the Doakie Day Art Center on Center Avenue. The Reunion Celebration will be from 1:30-4:30 p.m. at the Mims Auditorium Pergola and Muse Mall and Plaza. Eleven student organizations and alumni chapters will have booths with food and games for all ages. A Student Welcome and Registration Months (SWARM) event also will be held in conjunction with the spring family reunion. Incoming students who have been accepted and made a deposit to attend HPU will have the opportunity to schedule classes, map out their academic journey with academic advisors, meet other incoming students and get connected on campus. Interested students can contact the Office of Admissions at visit@hputx.edu or 325-649-8020.



Hardin-Simmons University's summer Speech Camp is expanding, thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Abilene's Future Fund. (HSU Photo)

Hardin-Simmons University's summer Speech Camp is expanding, thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Abilene's Future Fund. The grant allows HSU's Communication Sciences and Disorders Department to introduce music therapy that helps children practice speech through rhythm, pitch and song. It also funds hippotherapy that uses horseback riding to improve speech development through rhythmic movement and sensory engagement. Hippotherapy enhances speech therapy by leveraging the rhythmic, repetitive movement of a horse to stimulate neurological activity. In a single 20-minute session, a horse takes approximately 3,000 steps, providing far more sensory input than a traditional speech therapy session could achieve in the same timeframe. The heightened sensory engagement improves attention, motivation, breath control, articulation and coordination, making speech therapy significantly more effective. When treating children with multiple needs, music can support verbal communication through song-based learning, prompt timely speech with rhythmic cues, and encourage variations in volume through dynamic vocal play. These innovative approaches offer fun, hands-on ways for children across the Big Country region to develop communication skills,

expanding Speech Camp's impact. Held each summer in June, Speech Camp serves 75 to 100 elementary-aged children from Abilene and surrounding areas, many of whom otherwise would not have access to speech therapy over the summer.



East Texas Baptist University welcomed Julie V. Philley, president of the University of Texas at Tyler, as speaker for the Monday morning chapel service. (ETBU Photo)

East Texas Baptist University welcomed **Julie V. Philley**, president of the University of Texas at Tyler, as speaker for its March 31 chapel service. Philley described her personal life and experiences in numerous roles as a health care professional, researcher and educator. She emphasized how her path diverged from her initial plans and stressed the importance of embracing God's guidance and being grateful for each moment and season in life. A native of East Texas, Philley was raised in Overton. She returned to the region in 2012, serving as assistant professor of medicine at the UT Health Science Center at Tyler, where she continued research into nontuberculous mycobacterial disease and bronchiectasis. Philley reflected on 2 Thessalonians during her address, highlighting the parallels between Paul's encouragement to persevere through confusion and trials and her own unexpected twists in her career and personal faith journey. Just as

Paul reassured the church at Thessalonica that God's plan would unfold in his perfect timing, Philley reflected on how deviations from her original plans ultimately led her to fulfilling experiences aligned with God's purpose. Following chapel, Philley joined students, faculty and staff for a luncheon. Students interested in health care professions had the opportunity to ask questions to gain deeper insight into her career path and the broader work UT Tyler's School of Medicine is doing to equip future healthcare professionals in the East Texas region. In August 2023, ETBU partnered with the UT Tyler School of Medicine's Early Assurance Program, known as "Pathways to Medicine." The initiative prepares 40 students annually from regional colleges and universities for medical careers by providing clinical exposure and developing essential study skills. Up to 15 participants are admitted into the School of Medicine, fostering a pipeline of skilled physicians dedicated to serving East Texas communities.