

Around the State: International Friends ministry marks 50-plus years

May 11, 2022

The International Friends ministry at First Baptist Church in Richardson recently celebrated its 50th anniversary—even though the observance was delayed more than two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The church began offering English-as-a-Second-Language classes to non-English-speaking neighbors on Nov. 13, 1969. In 50-plus years, students from more than 75 countries have benefited from the ministry. During the pandemic, International Friends met online. In-person and hybrid classes resumed in recent months. **Starla Willis** is director of International Friends.



East Texas Baptist University President J. Blair Blackburn presents the President's Award for the spring 2022 graduating class to Christian Lee Phillips, who received a Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitative Science. (ETBU Photo)

East Texas Baptist University awarded undergraduate degrees to 186 students and graduate degrees to 22 students at spring commencement ceremonies. **Christian Lee Phillips** of Murphy, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in rehabilitative science, received the President's Award, presented to a graduate who is considered to have demonstrated consistently the core commitments of the university. He served as

president of Baptist Student Ministry, participated in two Beach Reach mission trips and serves as a children's ministry intern at Mobberly Baptist Church in Marshall. ETBU recognized **Jeff Holloway**, professor of Christian ministry and the John Harris Endowed Chair of Christian Studies, with the Professor of Distinction Award.



Drayton McLane Jr., former president and CEO of the McLane Company, was keynote speaker at the seventh annual Lion's Den DFW Conference, held at Dallas Baptist University. (DBU Photo)

Drayton McLane Jr., former president and CEO of the McLane Company, was keynote speaker at the seventh annual Lion's Den DFW Conference, held at Dallas Baptist University. McLane, a Baptist layman and philanthropist, is former CEO of the Houston Astros. The event is designed to help Christian investors and entrepreneurs connect and collaborate.

Irene Gallegos joined the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission staff as director of hunger and care ministries, where she will oversee the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering. She previously served Texas Baptists as Hispanic women's ministry specialist.

Retirement

Stephen Hatfield after 28 years as pastor at First Baptist Church in Lewisville and 49 years in the ministry.

Charles Smith after 28 years as pastor of First Baptist Church in Willis and more than 40 years in the ministry.