

# Around the State: Seniors attend Hilltop University at ETBU

May 31, 2023



The Purple Hulls, a bluegrass gospel group from Kilgore featuring twins Katy Lou and Penny Lea Clark, performed at ETBU Hilltop University. (ETBU Photo)

About 200 senior adults participated in Hilltop University at East Texas Baptist University, an annual conference featuring worship, Bible teaching, fellowship and entertainment. **Mike Lawson**, pastor of First Baptist Church in Sherman, was the keynote speaker. The Purple Hulls, a bluegrass gospel group from Kilgore featuring twins **Katy Lou and Penny Lea Clark**, and Grammy Award-winning artist **Sandi Patty** provided music. Breakout session leaders included **John Hatch**, pastor of Forest Hill Baptist Church in Longview; **Laurie Smith**, dean of the ETBU School of Natural and Social Sciences; and **Bil Barkley**, minister of education and senior adults at First Baptist Church in Mount Pleasant. **Don Parks**, associate pastor and minister of music at Ebenezer Baptist Church in El

Dorado, Ark., directed the conference choir.



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The Dallas Baptist University women's golf team won their second NCAA Division II National Championship. The Patriots defeated No. 3 Nova Southeastern in the final round of Medal Match play at the Fox Run Golf Club in Eureka, Mo. The team held off the four-time national champions, 3-2, to finish the 2022-23 season as the top team in the nation. "I just love walking in this journey with these girls and am just so happy for everyone involved," said Head Coach **Kenny Trapp**. "It truly takes a village and players that buy in, and this group exemplifies everything on and off the course that it takes to be a champion."



Bobby Hall (left), president of Wayland Baptist University, and Mike Davis (right) of Pampa, who established the JoAnn T. Jones Alaska Endowed Scholarship, are pictured with Christie Demetriades, daughter of the late honoree, and her family — Keith, Jordan, Peyton, Micah and Kegan. (Wayland Baptist University Photo)

**Mike Davis** of Pampa, who remembered the late **JoAnn T. Jones** as his teacher, school counselor and friend, established an endowed scholarship in her honor benefitting students attending the Alaska campuses of Wayland Baptist University in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Jones once lived in Fairbanks. The JoAnn T. Jones Alaska Endowed Scholarship is the 13th endowed scholarship Davis has established at Wayland.



**LaDonna Gatlin** is the featured musical artist when Hardin-Simmons University hosts its Hymn Sing at 2 p.m. on June 4 in Logsdon Chapel. Gatlin, a West Texas native, grew up onstage with her siblings, the Gatlin Brothers. In the 1970s, she performed with the Blackwood Singers and with Dallas Holm and Praise.

Houston Christian University—in partnership with Verizon and the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship—will offer a free project-based immersive science, technology, engineering and math program, [Verizon Innovative Learning STEM Achievers](#), for middle school students starting June 5. The program aims to empower middle school students in under-resourced communities to explore science, technology, engineering and math; learn problem-solving skills; and gain exposure to career opportunities in technology fields. Participating students will receive mentorship, access to next-generation technology and hands-on training connected to real-world challenges. The initiative provides engaging programming where students can learn design thinking, 3D printing, augmented reality and social entrepreneurship. No prior knowledge or experience is required. The program begins with a four-week in-person session this summer June 5-30, and an in-person full-day workshop at HCU in the fall and in the spring.



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East Texas Baptist University will host the NCAA Division III Softball National Championship June 1-7 at Jason Bell Park at Taylor Field. The tournament will feature eight teams from across the country vying for the championship title. “ETBU is honored to be chosen to host the NCAA Division III Softball National Championship,” said **Ryan Erwin**, vice president for student engagement and athletics. “We are excited to showcase our beautiful campus, state-of-the-art facilities, and the historic city of Marshall to universities and fan bases from across the country. In addition, we are thankful for our community partners from the East Texas region who have helped us bring the event to life.”

**Richard Fountain**, professor of piano at Wayland Baptist University since 2008, was named dean of Wayland’s School of Creative Arts, and **Yahui Zhang**, professor of communication and media studies since 2008, was named associate dean. Fountain, who has served as associate dean, succeeds **Ann Stutes** as the top administrator for the School of Creative Arts.

# Anniversary

10 years for **Thomas Estes** as pastor of Cottonwood Baptist Church in Cross Plains.

100 years for Wylie Baptist Church in Abilene. **Mike Harkrider** is pastor.