

# Around the State: Speak Freedom conference at DBU

March 24, 2021

“Speak Freedom: Developing Emergent Leaders in the Struggle for Justice,” a conference sponsored by 21 Wilberforce, will be held April 12-13 at Dallas Baptist University. Featured speakers include **Drayton McLane Jr.**, chairman of the McLane Group; **Ralph West**, founding pastor of The Church Without Walls in Houston; **Jeremy Everett**; founding executive director of the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty; **Michael Evans**, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church and mayor of Mansfield; **Gus Reyes**, director of Texas Baptists’ Center for Cultural Engagement; **Suzii Paynter March**, CEO of Prosper Waco; **Bob Fu**, founding president of China Aid; **Hormoz Shariat**, founding president of Iran Alive Ministries; evangelist **Sammy Tippit**; and **Getaneh Getaneh**, founding president of Watch and Pray Ministries. The in-person event will be available online to registrants. Individuals who attend will receive a free copy of a new book, *Speak Freedom*, by **Randel Everett**, president of 21Wilberforce and former executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. For more information or to register, [click here](#).



Katie Gravens, former Baptist

Student Ministry state lead team director, spoke to the 2021 Women's Summit at East Texas Baptist University.

The 2021 Women's Summit at East Texas Baptist University featured guest speaker **Katie Gravens**, former Baptist Student Ministry state lead team director. "An opportunity to serve is never an opportunity wasted," Gravens told the group. "You can come to a better understanding of your gifts through serving. Our gifts are a part of what God is doing in our lives as well as the lives of others." "Growing Where You are Planted" was the theme of the March 9-10 event.

A research team that includes a Baylor University scholar on race and religion will help establish Churches that Thrive for Racial Justice, a national effort to help congregations confront structures of racism in their communities. The Lilly Endowment is funding the initiative with a \$1 million grant to Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., which will coordinate the project. The five-year collaboration will connect Baylor sociologist **Kevin D. Dougherty** with two colleagues at Davidson College and Calvin University who will study race and religion with a cohort of 25 churches affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists. Project directors are **Gerardo Martí**, professor of sociology at Davidson College, and **Paula Clayton Dempsey**, director of partnership relations for the Alliance of Baptists.



Aleah Curtis



Teri Davis Andrews

The Howard Payne University Women's Club will recognize **Teri Davis Andrews** of Houston and **Aleah Curtis**, a sophomore theatre major from Georgetown, at this year's Yellow Rose Scholarship Luncheon. Andrews will receive the Yellow Rose Award, presented annually to a woman who has exhibited exemplary leadership within her sphere of influence, and who has played a significant role in the execution of the mission and vision of HPU. Curtis will receive the Yellow Rose Scholarship, awarded to a female student who will begin her junior year in the upcoming fall semester and has maintained at least a 3.0 GPA since beginning her freshman year at HPU. In addition to her studies, she is the secretary and chaplain for Alpha Psi Omega and a member of the School of Music and Fine Arts student council. She also serves as a greeter at Coggin Avenue Baptist Church on a monthly basis. The luncheon is scheduled at 11:30 a.m. on April 15 in HPU's Mabee University Center.

Outdoor commencement ceremonies for May 2021 graduates of Houston Baptist University are scheduled May 15 at Husky Stadium/Durham Football Field. The 9 a.m. ceremony will recognize graduates from the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, the School of Christian Thought, the School of Fine Arts and the School of Humanities. The 11:30 a.m. ceremony will recognize graduates from the Archie W. Dunham

College of Business, the College of Science and Engineering, and the School of Nursing and Allied Health. Gates will open for guests one hour before each ceremony. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremonies will be rescheduled for 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on May 16.

**Javier Perez**, regional director of strategic initiatives and program design for Latin America and the Caribbean with Buckner Children and Family Services, has been named director of global missions programs and impact with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Perez holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and a master of divinity degree from International Baptist Theological Seminary in Colombia. Prior to his decade of service at Buckner, Perez led missions and community ministries at Woodland Baptist Church in San Antonio.

## **Retirement**

**Rick Lamb** from Northside Baptist Church in Corsicana, where he was senior pastor 15 years.