

BGCT executive director search committee named

July 27, 2022

DALLAS—Officers of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and its Executive Board named a search committee to recommend Texas Baptists' next executive director.

The committee will review applicants and seek out the next executive director to succeed David Hardage, who announced on July 1 his plans to retire at the end of the year.

The committee is comprised of seven Executive Board members, chosen by the BGCT chair and vice chair, and eight at-large members, chosen by the president and vice presidents. At-large members are members of BGCT churches who are not members of the Executive Board.

The search committee will be led by Chair David Mahfouz, pastor of First Baptist Church in Warren.

Other members of the committee are;

- Janice Bloom, member of First Baptist Church in Garland;
- Goldenstene Davis Sr., associate pastor of education/ministry at Singing Hills Baptist Church in Dallas;
- Lester Leonares, member of First Philippine Baptist Church in Missouri City;
- Suzanne Liner, member of First Baptist Church in Lubbock;
- Pete Pawelek, pastor of Cowboy Fellowship of Atascosa County in Pleasanton;
- Alfonso Flores, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in San Antonio;
- Eder Ibarra, director of strategy implementation at Rio Grande

Valley Baptist Association and member of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen;

- Cindy Wiles, executive director of Restore Hope and member of First Baptist Church in Arlington;
- Dennis Young, pastor of Missouri City Baptist Church;
- Darin Wood, pastor of First Baptist Church in Midland;
- Duane Brooks, pastor of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston;
- Mark Rotramel, pastor of First Baptist Church in El Paso;
- Wendell Wright, director of church, community and denominational relations at Dallas Baptist University and member of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas; and
- Albert Reyes, president and CEO of Buckner International and member of Park Cities Baptist Church.

“I believe that I speak for each member of the committee in sharing that we are honored to be asked to serve in this capacity, but also must confess that it is a humbling experience,” Mahfouz said.

“This role will require an investment of time and energy on the part of each member of the committee. We need the prayers of all Texas Baptists as we embark on this task. Each member of the team needs to bring to the table spiritual discernment, wisdom, patience, and a commitment to build relational trust and cooperation.”

Advisory group formed

In addition to the committee, an advisory group has also been formed to aid in the search. Unlike the committee, the advisory group cannot vote to nominate but can offer advice to the committee as requested.

Advisory group members are Tamiko Jones, executive director-treasurer of Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas; Mickey Lenamon, executive director/CEO of Texas Baptist Men; Todd Still, dean of Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary; Cory Hines, president of Howard Payne

University; and Phil Miller, director of Texas Baptists' Center for Church Health.

"While we are saddened by the announcement of Dr. Hardage's retirement, we celebrate the tremendously positive impact he made on the ministries of Texas Baptists," said Craig Christina, associate executive director of Texas Baptists.

"The executive board has elected a diverse executive director search committee representing various geographical and ethnic groups across the state. Each member is experienced in Texas Baptist life and will add valuable insights into the nominating process."

The first step for the committee will be to engage in a time of prayer, orientation and listening to best understand the needs of the convention.

After the committee has developed a profile for the next executive director, the position will be announced formally. A special, designated email address will be set up to receive nominations at that time.

Once the search committee has a nominee, the nominee will be presented to the Executive Board for election.

As the committee begins the search process, members request prayers that God will grant them wisdom, patience, discernment and faithfulness.

Christina added: "We ask all Texas Baptists to continue to pray for David and Kathleen Hardage as he retires; the search committee members as they organize; the new executive director as the Lord calls, equips, and prepares them; and the ongoing work of BGCT ministries and staff as we serve the churches and facilitate the movement of God's people to share Christ and show love. We have a strong foundation built upon the love of Christ, and the best days for Texas Baptists lie ahead."