

Culp and Spooner receive Texas Baptist Legacy Awards

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INDEPENDENCE—Deep in the heart of Texas at historic Independence Baptist Church, friends, family and former co-workers of Jim Culp and Bernie Spooner gathered to honor the veteran denominational leaders at the annual Texas Baptist Legacy Awards presentation.

Culp and Spooner cumulatively devoted more than four decades to service on the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board staff.



Jim Culp (BP Photo)“The Legacy Award acknowledges that we have seen these men sounding forth what they have received,” BGCT Executive Director David Hardage said. Culp and Spooner could not contain the message of the gospel, and everyone has seen that truth, he said.

The award offers a chance to honor “people who have represented Texas Baptists well,” he added.

As coordinator of black church development with the BGCT, Culp encouraged Texas Baptists to reach out to African-Americans. Over the course of his 19 years on the state convention staff, the number of African-

American churches associated with the BGCT grew from 80 to more than 700.

Culp was pastor of several churches in Texas and Oklahoma.

“We thank God for his willingness to serve not just African-American churches, but to work with everyone to make a difference to accomplish what God has given them in the state of Texas, across the U.S., and around the world,” said Charlie Singleton, director of BGCT African-American ministries.

Although Culp was unable to attend the ceremony due to travel complications, his family represented him and accepted his award on his behalf.



Bernie Spooner worked 22 years as director of the Sunday School/Discipleship Division of the BGCT State Missions Commission. Prior to joining the BGCT staff, he served several churches as minister of education and administration. He also was an associate professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

“Few men have cast such a long shadow across 60 years for us to follow in,” said Chris Liebrum, BGCT Cooperative Program director, who served with Spooner in the Sunday School/Discipleship Division. “His contributions have dramatically impacted Texas Baptists.”

After he retired from the state convention staff, Spooner became inaugural

dean of the Gary Cook School of Leadership and professor of Christian education at Dallas Baptist University.

“It’s always about doing what others give you an opportunity to do. None of us would have served God in the way that we have without someone asking us to church,” Spooner said after accepting his award.