

# Dorrells and Stricklin among Baylor alumni honorees

December 1, 2023

Janet and Jimmy Dorrell, co-founders of Mission Waco/Mission World, are the recipients of Baylor University's *Pro Ecclesia* Medal of Service—one of five 2024 Baylor Alumni Awards announced Nov. 30.

"Baylor alumni serve in unique ways through their professions and in their communities. The 2024 Baylor Alumni Award honorees stand as examples of how our mission, to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service, is lived out among our alumni every day," Baylor President Linda Livingstone said.

"As a Christian research university committed to providing a transformational education rooted in faith, Baylor continues to invest in the lives of our students, helping them find and follow their callings. It is our honor to showcase this remarkable group of Baylor Alumni Award recipients and to tell their stories of impact and contributions to Baylor and society."

A celebration honoring the award recipients will be held on the Baylor campus Feb. 23.

The *Pro Ecclesia* Medal of Service is awarded to individuals whose broad contributions to Christian ministry are considered to have made an immeasurable impact.

More than four decades ago, Jimmy and Janet Dorrell sensed God's calling to "incarnational ministry" among the poor. So, they moved to a blighted neighborhood in North Waco known for its prostitution, crack houses and deep poverty.

The Dorrells began seeking to make a difference by building a basketball court next to their house and inviting youth from the area to play there. Relationships with the children and teenagers led to friendships with their parents.

As the Dorrells listened to what their neighbors taught them about the community, one transformational ministry after another took shape under the umbrella of what became Mission Waco.

Jimmy Dorrell, now president emeritus of Mission Waco/Mission World, serves as pastor of Church Under the Bridge, a congregation that includes unhoused people who meet for worship beneath the I-35 overpass. He is on the adjunct faculty of Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary.

Janet Dorrell is director of Mission World, a ministry that serves families in Haiti, Mexico, South Asia and Colombia. Through Mission World, she helps to empower women and provide for children through tutoring programs, computer and sewing classes, and microcredit initiatives. She also seeks to connect hospitals and universities with community service efforts among the marginalized.

## **Gil Stricklin honored posthumously**

Baylor named Gil Stricklin, founder of Marketplace Ministries/Marketplace Chaplains, as the posthumous recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award.



Gil Stricklin

After graduating from Baylor and serving as an officer in the U.S. Air Force, Stricklin worked with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association as a special assistant to Graham.

He served 15 years on the Baptist General Convention of Texas staff, where he pioneered the Super Summer Youth Evangelism program.

In 1983, he founded Marketplace Ministries, which offers chaplain care to business employees. The organization now serves more than 1,000 companies with 1.2 million employees being helped.

Stricklin also served as a U.S. Army chaplain during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield. He retired from the U.S. Army as a colonel after 37 years of military service—15 years in the Air Force and 22 years in the Army.

## **Baylor also will recognize:**

- David Wills of Waco, co-founder of Generous Giving and TrustBridge Global Foundation and president emeritus of the National Christian Foundation, as Alumnus of the Year.
- Jessica Beachum of Phoenix, Ariz., co-founder of the Beachum

Charitable Fund and co-curator of the Jessica and Kelvin Beachum Collection, as Young Alumna of the Year.

- Gabrielle “Gabe” Madison, president of Bonton Farms in Dallas, a nonprofit farm that serves a former food desert in South Dallas, as recipient of the *Pro Texana* Medal of Service.

*Based in part on information provided by Lori Fogleman with Baylor University Media and Public Relations.*