

Editor Knox to leave Standard for CBF Southwest leadership role

April 12, 2017

After almost 22 years on the *Baptist Standard* staff, more than 19 years as its editor and about four decades in Baptist journalism, Marv Knox will leave to become coordinator of Fellowship Southwest, a new regional network within the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

In his new position, Knox will work with CBF churches and with state and regional organizations—namely CBF of Texas, CBF of Oklahoma and CBF West. He concludes his time as editor and publisher at the Texas news organization July 31 and begins his new role with Fellowship Southwest the next day.

Leaving the Standard ‘in a position of strength’

✖ Marv Knox “Serving Texas Baptists through the *Baptist Standard* has been one of the great blessings of my life,” Knox said. “As a preacher’s kid growing up in small churches mostly in small towns, I never dreamed of such an opportunity to fulfill my calling by working at a task I loved so much.”

Knox “challenged, informed and blessed readers with prophetic words of wisdom and grace,” said Taylor Sandlin, chair of the *Baptist Standard* board of directors.

“Texas Baptists owe Marv a debt of gratitude for his stewardship of the *Baptist Standard*’s rich legacy,” said Sandlin, pastor of Sugar Land Baptist Church in Sugar Land.

“Over the last two decades, many state newspapers have bit the dust as a result of the challenges presented by both denominational infighting and the digital revolution. Thanks to Marv’s strong leadership, the *Baptist Standard* continues to provide exceptional content that’s making a difference in our world. Furthermore, online readership is at an all-time high and continues to grow.

“We will miss Marv at the helm of this great news organization, but we thank him for leaving the *Standard* in a position of strength. The board of directors wishes him well as he continues to serve the kingdom of God at Fellowship Southwest.”

‘Answer to prayer’ for CBF

Suzii Paynter, executive coordinator of CBF, called Knox’s move “a great day for CBF and for Cooperative Baptists and partner churches across Texas, Oklahoma and the West.”

“Marv is the answer to prayer for a leader to step forward that has a heart for communicating, connecting and advocating for all of God’s children,” said Paynter, former director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

“At a time when forming together is more important than ever, Marv will use his vast network and his immense talents to help enhance and equip the work of churches and partners.”

In the days ahead, the *Baptist Standard* board will put together a search committee to begin the process of hiring the next editor, Sandlin said.

“The need for a free, independent press is as significant today as it has ever been. We trust that God will provide just the right man or woman for the next season of the *Baptist Standard*’s ministry,” he said.

Led through a time of turmoil and change

As Sandlin noted, Knox’s career in denominational journalism spanned a tumultuous time in Baptist life and an era of sweeping change in the communications landscape.

“The past few decades have been exacting and difficult—for newspapers, for denominations and, without a doubt, for denominational newspapers,” Knox said. “A perfect storm of challenges perpetually buffeted the *Standard*—an unprecedented, calamitous decline in the newspaper industry; the decline of denominationalism; and cyclical downturns that impacted churches and their budgets.”

As a result, like many news organizations, circulation declined and advertising revenue dropped precipitously at the *Standard* in recent years.

Even so, the *Standard* not only survived, but also became the first Baptist state news outlet to create a financial development program, transition entirely from newsprint to digital news delivery, moved from its old office and printing-plant facility to smaller and more task-appropriate office space, and launched a quarterly feature-oriented magazine, *CommonCall*.

In recent months, the *Standard* also launched two popular columns—“Deep in the Hearts of Texans,” a profile of Texas Baptist ministers; and “Texas Baptist Voices,” opinion articles that offer a variety of perspectives—and prepared to launch an improved website and delivery system.

The *Standard* also tried other experiments that did not last—the New Voice Media collaborative venture with Associated Baptist Press (now Baptist News Global), Virginia’s Religious Herald and Missouri’s Word and Way; and FaithVillage, a digital platform designed to reach a younger audience.

Knox expresses appreciation

“I am grateful for strong, faithful, courageous and wise board members who looked at our challenges without flinching and charted our future without faltering,” Knox said. “I’m particularly grateful the board protected and extended the *Standard*’s legacy mandate for freedom to report the news and to editorialize on the events of our era, even when doing so no doubt made them uncomfortable.”

Knox also expressed appreciation for staff, past and present; loyal readers “who adjusted to changes in delivery systems” to stay abreast of Texas Baptist news; donors who made the ministry possible, since the *Standard* is the only Baptist news organization not subsidized by the denomination; and for “Texas Baptist churches and their leaders, as well as BGCT agencies and institutions and their leaders, who made news worth reporting.”

During his time at the *Standard*, Knox received numerous awards, including a Katie Award from the Dallas Press Club, the James Solheim Award of Merit for Editorial Courage from Associated Church Press, a lifetime achievement award from Baptist News Global and other awards from Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association and Religion Communicators Council.

He also was named a distinguished alumnus of Hardin-Simmons University and its Logsdon School of Theology, received an honorary doctorate from Dallas Baptist University, was named an honorary alumnus of Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary, received the Founder’s Award

from Baptist University of the Americas and the George W. Truett Distinguished Church Leadership Award from the Baylor Alumni Association.

Storied career in Baptist communications

Knox grew up in the Texas Panhandle, primarily in Perryton, before his family moved to Wichita Falls, where he graduated from high school. During his time as a student at Hardin-Simmons University, Knox served summer internships with Texas Baptist Children's Home and the *Rocky Mountain Baptist*. He also worked as editor of *The Brand* campus newspaper and a staff writer at the *Abilene Reporter-News*.

After serving the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board as associate news editor, Knox went to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he worked as news director and earned his master of divinity degree.

After graduation from seminary, he was associate editor of the *Baptist Message* in Louisiana, features editor of Baptist Press news service in Nashville, Tenn., and editor of the Kentucky *Western Recorder*, before he returned to Texas to become associate editor of the *Baptist Standard*.

"I'm grateful to Editor Toby Druin and the *Baptist Standard* board of 1995 for bringing me back home to Texas and to the *Standard*," Knox said. "That was a wonderful gift—to be near family again, to return to the Lone Star State and to spend more than two decades serving and working alongside Texas Baptists, whom I love and whose friendships I cherish."

‘Bright future’ for the Standard

Knox characterized his move from the *Standard* to CBF as “sweet sorrow.”

“While I definitely celebrate the calling to join CBF and to coordinate Fellowship Southwest, I have felt deep sadness to consider leaving the *Standard*, where I have identified so closely for well more than half my adult life,” he said.

The time is right for transition because of the “wise and forward-thinking” board of directors at the *Standard* and its “strong and capable” staff, he insisted.

“After two decades, it’s time for a shift to a new editor,” Knox said. “My successor won’t carry my baggage of almost 40 years of Baptist journalism and will be able to look at the *Standard* and Texas Baptists with fresh eyes. The *Standard* faces a bright future with abundant opportunities.”

‘An unexpected, exciting gift’

In his new post, Knox will help the new CBF regional network supplement the work of three autonomous CBF state/regional organizations to promote Baptist identity, Christian cooperation and to accomplish effective mission and ministry among related partners.

“The opportunity to work for CBF and to lead Fellowship Southwest is an unexpected, exciting gift,” Knox said. “I can’t thank Suzii Paynter enough for her confidence in me and for this opportunity to launch a new venture with Cooperative Baptists in the Southwest.”

Fellowship Southwest will serve an area that is home to more than 500 CBF churches, four partner theological schools and numerous other partners

and individuals, including CBF field personnel, chaplains, pastoral counselors, student groups and church starters.

“Marv Knox loves the church and has been telling the story of everyday miracles and remarkable ministries in Texas and beyond. Congregations new and old look forward to sharing in his gifts as Fellowship Southwest expands a diverse table of faithful ministry partners across the southwest from Texas to California,” Paynter said.

CBF leaders envision the Fellowship Southwest network offering enhanced capacity for collaboration, communication and identity in the region; Hispanic church and mission development in the United States and Mexico; ethnic and ecumenical partnerships; scholarships and support for young leaders; collaborative mission and ministry work; church starting and congregational revitalization; clergy health and effective ministry; advocacy and public witness; recruitment and retention of churches; referral and placement services; and cooperation with state and regional denominational bodies.

“I look forward to committing the balance of my ministry to promoting Baptist identity, advancing Christian cooperation and humbly working with a host of partners to accomplish missions and ministry,” Knox said.

“CBF of Texas, CBF of Oklahoma and CBF West are composed of many faithful, missions-minded Baptists who love the Lord and love people. I’m looking forward to the opportunity to labor alongside them and to embody Christ for hurting people across the Southwest and beyond.”