

# **Foundation fulfilled founding vision by supporting missions**

December 2, 2019

AMARILLO—More than six decades after its creation, the Panhandle Baptist Foundation has ceased operations, but not before fulfilling the vision of its founder—dedicating \$1 million to missions causes.

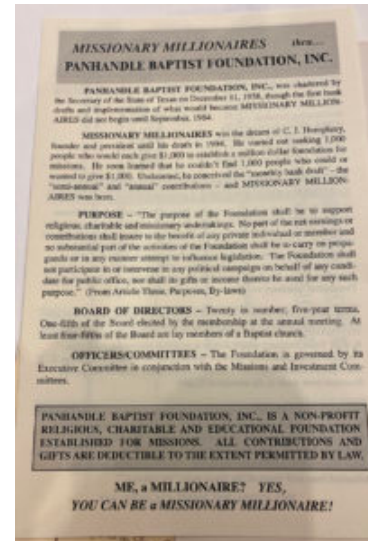
The foundation's Dec. 11, 1958, charter listed six incorporators, all from First Baptist Church in Amarillo—C.J. and Ophelia Humphrey, Clyde and Mattie Yoes and Pastor Carl Bates.

The Humphreys, in particular, had a passion for missions. He was instrumental in founding Texas Baptist Men in 1967 and was TBM president from 1971 to 1974. She was president of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas from 1964 to 1968.

Humphrey served as the Panhandle Baptist Foundation's president from its beginning until shortly before his death in 1994.

"His dream was to have \$1 million to go to missions," said Bryan Houser, missions coordinator of Amarillo Area Baptist Association and president of Panhandle Baptist Foundation the last 12 years.

## **'Missionary millionaires' helped churches**



C.J. Humphrey challenged individuals to become “missionary millionaires” by pledging monthly, semi-annual or annual contributions to the Panhandle Baptist Foundation.

Humphrey initially envisioned enlisting 1,000 people to donate \$1,000 each. When he was unable to find that many people to make such a sizeable donation, Humphrey developed a new strategy. He challenged individuals to become “missionary millionaires” by pledging monthly, semi-annual or annual contributions to the foundation.

The foundation granted its first loan to Sunrise Baptist Church in Amarillo. In its early years, the foundation provided loans or other financial assistance to between 35 and 40 churches, said Linda Loper, executive director of the Panhandle Baptist Foundation.

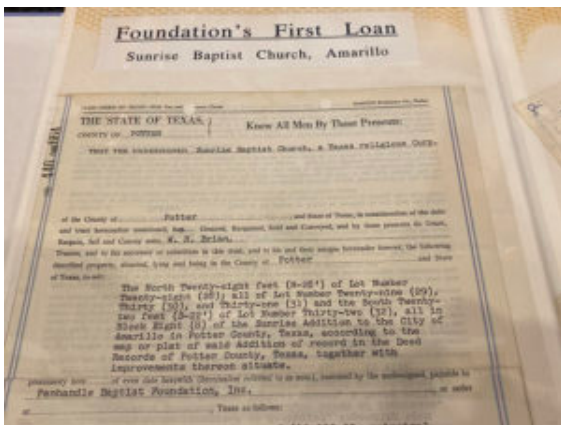
Most of the churches either were in the greater Amarillo area or in what

the Southern Baptist Convention then called “pioneer” areas, such as Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas, she noted.

The foundation also provided funds for a Texas Baptist Men disaster relief shower and laundry unit used by First Baptist Church in Amarillo. The unit was named in Humphrey’s honor.

## Supported Pioneer Penetration program

“Probably the most important project the foundation supported was the Pioneer Penetration program at Southwestern Seminary,” Loper said.



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From 1966 to 1993, the foundation provided \$368,850 to enable students from the seminary in Fort Worth to travel to pioneer areas to lead weeklong revival meetings and other evangelistic outreach during spring

break, she said.

Dan Crawford, longtime evangelism and missions professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, directed the Pioneer Penetration program for the last eight years the foundation provided funding.

In a September 1993 letter to Humphrey, Crawford expressed appreciation for the foundation's support.

"Your work through the Panhandle Baptist Foundation has made possible the sending of thousands of seminary students into pioneer areas to preach the gospel in and through small, needy churches," Crawford wrote.

"Literally thousands of people have come to know Christ as Lord and Savior as a result of Pioneer Penetration. Many of these persons may have never entered the kingdom of God had it not been for the financial support that made Pioneer Penetration possible."

## **Help for Wayland, Truett and BUA**

After a change of administration at Southwestern Seminary in 1994, the Panhandle Baptist Foundation redirected its financial support to other institutions—primarily Wayland Baptist University, Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary and Baptist University of the Americas.

"The foundation was the first sponsor of Wayland's seminary work in Kenya," Loper noted. For 13 years, Wayland partnered with Kenya Baptist Theological College near Limuru. Later, Wayland worked in partnership with Moffat Bible College in Kijabe.

"The foundation never had \$1 million at one time. But over the years, it provided more than \$1 million to missions projects and \$1.3 million in loans to churches," Loper said.

In recent years, after the deaths of many of the original “missionary millionaires” who pledged financial support, the foundation was unable to replace them with new donors, Houser said. So, the board decided to begin the process of dissolving the nonprofit entity. Its remaining assets will be divided among Wayland, Truett and BUA to endow scholarships and other programs.

“Through the scholarships, we’ll continue to be a part of educating theology students and training students for church-related service, hopefully until the Lord comes again,” Loper said.