

# BGCT President: UMHB and HBU

August 24, 2016

The new school year is here!

Texas Baptists are so blessed to have nine great higher education institutions. My daughters had a wonderful experience at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor under the leadership of President Randy O'Rear. I also had the experience of being back on the Houston Baptist University campus this summer for a Super Summer leadership camp. That university is led by President Robert B. Sloan.



René Maciel Make plans to come to the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting Nov. 13-15 and stop by the booths of these two outstanding universities.

The two universities highlighted this week have the distinction of one being among the oldest colleges for women west of the Mississippi and the other being one of the newest Baptist universities.

The **University of Mary Hardin-Baylor** played a part in the formation of Baylor University when the male and female departments of a Baptist college were separated.



The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor In the early 1800s, representatives in Washington County asked the Home Mission Board of New York to send missionaries to Texas before the state even achieved statehood. James Huckins and William M. Tryon were sent, and soon after, Judge R.E.B. Baylor came as a teacher, lawyer, soldier and preacher. They recommended forming an education society, and the Texas Baptist Education Society was organized in 1843.

On Feb. 1, 1845, a charter to establish a Baptist university was granted by the ninth Congress of the Republic of Texas.

The school initially included a preparatory division in addition to co-educational classes for college students at Independence. In 1851, under the same charter, a female department and a male department were created, ending co-education. In 1866, the female department obtained a separate charter as Baylor Female College, with its own board of trustees.

Twenty years later, due to changing transportation and economics in the area, leaders decided both schools should move. The male department consolidated with Waco University, retaining the name Baylor University in Waco. Baylor Female College moved to Belton.

Since then, UMHB has undergone several name changes, including Baylor College for Women, 1925; Mary Hardin-Baylor College in honor of a benefactor, 1934; and University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, 1978. In 1971, it became co-educational.

UMHB points to several notable milestones:

- Starting the first work-study program for women in a college west of the Mississippi.
- Serving as the campus model for the Baptist Student Union.
- Establishing the first school of journalism in a college for women in America and being the second institution in Texas to offer the bachelor of journalism degree.
- Being recognized as the first Texas Baptist college accepted into full membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Today, UMHB enjoys a robust enrollment of about 3,900 students and employs more than 400 full-time faculty and staff committed to Christian higher education. More information is available by [clicking here](#).

**Houston Baptist University** is one of the younger Texas Baptist universities.



Houston Baptist UniversityIn 1952, Union Baptist Association authorized a committee to study the possibility of locating a Baptist college in Houston. After the BGCT Education Commission approved the concept of establishing a new college, 25 businessmen pledged to provide \$10,000 each to purchase land. By 1958, 196 acres was acquired in southwest Houston.

In 1960, the BGCT elected the first board of trustees and approved the charter for Houston Baptist College. The institution opened in September 1963 with a freshman class of 193 students, a cluster of new buildings and 30 faculty. A new class was added each year until the college attained a four-year program in 1966-67, bringing enrollment to about 900 undergraduates.

In 1973, Houston Baptist College officially became Houston Baptist University, and the first master's degree program, in business administration, was offered in 1977. HBU received approval last December to launch a doctoral program in executive educational leadership, making the university a fully national, comprehensive university.

Today, HBU has more than 3,000 students and offers [in excess of 40 majors](#) through its eight colleges. The university now offers 20 graduate degree programs, and more than 900 graduate students take classes both on campus and online.

Students have the opportunity to join more than 60 organizations while they enjoy the benefits of living in one of the largest multicultural metropolitan areas in the nation.

Partnerships in the Houston area make it a thriving community and mission field for HBU students and graduates to volunteer, work and live. For more information, [click here](#).

*René Maciel is president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and president of Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio.*