

René Maciel: Texas Baptists' special places

January 7, 2016

Happy New Year! I am truly excited about the New Year and what God has in store for Texas Baptists as we serve and care for families and children, educate and train many through our universities and seminaries, and provide for the sick and suffering through our hospitals.



René Maciel Texas Baptists are so blessed to have 28 institutions we can call our lifeline. So much of the work done in Texas Baptist life is done through our institutions, and this year at our annual meeting, Nov. 13-15 in Waco, we will highlight our Texas Baptist institutions. Make plans to join us for this special emphasis, and please keep our institutions in your prayers.

The next several weeks, I will share with you a brief history of several of these special places, and I would like to start with two that are very special to me.

Chartered in 1845, **Baylor University** in Waco is the oldest continually operated university in Texas and has stayed true to its mission of being a Christian university for the ages. Enrolling more than 16,000 students from 50 states and 86 countries, Baylor has an international reputation for

academic excellence, a high ranking as a research university, and a faculty committed to teaching and scholarship.



Pat Neff Hall sits at the center of the Baylor University Campus. Students not only receive a superior education in the classroom, but the university also offers an active community of faith that prompts students and employees to volunteer in the Waco area and abroad through mission activities. Among many efforts, students and professors have brought light to a slum in Nairobi and created a health clinic for Waco's homeless. George W. Truett Theological Seminary sits on the campus.

Baylor also is among the top 10 percent of schools in number of attending National Merit Scholars and one of only 212 universities in the nation with a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, one of the oldest and most prestigious honor societies. The student-faculty ratio is 15-1.

Baylor's rank of alumni include missionaries and pastors, heads of Fortune 500 companies, governors of Texas and professional athletes. For more information, visit the [university website](#).

Hardin-Simmons University began as Abilene Baptist College in 1891 after pioneer settlers dreamed of locating a college in their fledgling town. With support of Sweetwater Baptist Association, citizens raised \$5,000, and an Abilene businessman and his Fort Worth partners donated 16 acres of land and an additional \$5,000.



The Logsdon School of Theology building greets visitors to the Hardin-Simmons University campus. Financial struggles prompted trustees to accept funding from a New York preacher, James B. Simmons, and to rename the school Simmons College. The college became Simmons University in 1925 and struggled to the point of collapse during the Great Depression. John and Mary Hardin of Burkburnett donated part of their fortune to the school. The Hardins' generosity and commitment brought the university long-term stability and, in 1934, a new name: Hardin-Simmons University.

Hardin-Simmons enrolls 2,200 students in undergraduate and graduate classes with a 12-1 student-faculty ratio. Sitting on 96 acres in Abilene—a large community of 120,000 people with a small-town feel—the university has more than 50 student clubs and organizations. It also is the home of the Logsdon School of Theology. Learn more at the [university website](#).

Please continue to pray for the many ways Texas Baptists are assisting with the relief work being done around Garland and the other areas affected by the Dec. 26 tornado.

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