

Around the State: Bible Drill and speakers compete virtually

July 29, 2020

Although Texas Baptists' 2020 State Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament could not be held in-person due to COVID-19, students from churches around Texas competed virtually. **Savannah Green** and **Katie Kittredge**, both from First Baptist Church at the Fields in Carrollton, tied for first place in the Speakers' Tournament, and **Becca Matthis**, also from First Baptist Church at the Fields in Carrollton, placed third. Five students were recognized for achieving a perfect score of 300 in the Bible Drill tournament—**Jadon Wall** from First Baptist Church at the Fields in Carrollton; **Jenna Scamardo** and **Austin White**, both from First Baptist Church in College Station; **Ariana Cox** from First Baptist Church in Irving; and **Sarah Nelson** from First Baptist Church Alta Loma in Santa Fe. Eleven speakers competed in this year's competition by submitting videos of themselves performing their speeches to be evaluated by a panel of judges. Texas Baptists staff created drills for churches to use in small, virtual competitions for their high schoolers. Students who achieved a perfect score of 300 in the drills were awarded with a certificate of "State Winner Perfect 300 Club." Eleven high school seniors were honored with the Ellen Battles Award for participating in the tournament for all nine years they were eligible—**Tyleigh Phillips** from Central Baptist Church in Evadale; **Hailey Burrow**, **Gracie Daughtrey**, **Caroline Kemp**, **Andrew Kissell** and **Riley Smith** from First Baptist Church in Allen; **Katie Kittredge**, **Eric Neibel** and **Gretchen Warren** from First Baptist Church at the Fields in Carrollton; **Conner Womack** from Friendship Baptist Church in Fairview; and **Anna Bardwell** from First Baptist Church in Tenaha.

New Beginnings Baptist Church will host a drive-through Back to School

Bash from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Aug. 1 at both its Longview and Gilmer locations. Families will receive a backpack filled with school supplies and a lunch without leaving their vehicles. Free haircuts will be available for students whose parents choose to allow them to exit their cars. “We recognize that for so many families, getting back to school can be financially stressful. New Beginnings wants to alleviate, in a small way, some of that stress,” said **Todd Kaunitz**, lead pastor of New Beginnings Baptist Church. “Our desire is to be a blessing to the community and show the love of Jesus by helping our students have access to needed resources that will enable them to be a success in the classroom.” **George Willis**, pastor of missions and pastoral care, said the church wants to offer a “fun, safe event” for students and their families during a difficult time. The events will be held at 2137 E. George Richie Rd. in Longview and at 1977 State Hwy 155 N. in Gilmer. For more information, call (903) 759-5552 or email gwillis@nbbctx.org.



Albert Reyes

Albert Reyes, president and CEO of Buckner International, was installed July 23 to a five-year-term as the North American vice president of the Baptist World Alliance during the first-ever virtual BWA General Council. He follows **Jerry Carlisle** of the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation in that role with BWA. Reyes expressed his excitement about the opportunity to serve, calling BWA “a global network of faithful Baptists linking both missions and ministry as two sides of the same coin through local congregations, associations, conventions and fellowships to bring the kingdom near.”



Michelle Henry

Dallas Baptist University has created an endowed scholarship fund in honor of **Michelle Henry** to support the education of African American students at DBU. Henry is chair of the English department at DBU and has taught as a professor of English since July 2005. She completed undergraduate and master's degrees at Texas A&M University, and she earned her Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Dallas with a concentration in African American literature, history and art. "We are very excited about the establishment of this new endowed scholarship and look forward to the students that it will benefit for years to come," DBU President **Adam C. Wright** said. "Dr. Henry is one of our most beloved professors, and it is an honor for us to be able to recognize her in a way that allows her legacy of scholarship to continue on in the lives of future scholars and leaders." Wright announced the scholarship fund during the DBU Family Forums series, created to discuss inequality and racial reconciliation. DBU's CARE—Community Advocates for Racial Equality—Committee will meet to continue conversations on the DBU campus regarding race and social justice and develop plans for how the campus community can respond in the days ahead.

The East Texas Medical Center Foundation awarded East Texas Baptist University a \$100,000 grant to help meet the growing need for mental healthcare in Smith County. Plans include opening a community mental health clinic that also will offer the university's Master of Arts in Clinical

Mental Health Counseling degree program. The Community Counseling Center will open later this fall, and Clinical Mental Health Counseling classes will be offered at the Tyler location beginning in January 2021. All clinical hours required by the program can be completed through the onsite clinic. "According to the data provided by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, Smith County has a shortage of licensed professional counselors compared to other counties in Texas with similar populations," said **Thomas Sanders**, ETBU provost and vice president for academic affairs. "To address the present need for mental health services in Smith County, ETBU's Community Counseling Center will provide no-cost counseling services to members of the community through local referral partners with counselors or graduate counselors-in-training." Counseling services will be provided by licensed professional counselors, practicum graduates and graduate interns being supervised in their clinical training for licensure. Clients will be referred to the ETBU Community Counseling Center in Tyler through existing partnerships with Tyler Junior College, as well as local churches and ministries.

Howard Payne University's chapter of the Sigma Beta Delta International Business Honor Society recently inducted four new members. They are **Erin Blanchard**, a senior from Rockdale; **Hunter Coffee**, a spring 2020 graduate from Early; **Zachary Gingrich**, a senior from Plano; and **Shaunna Simpson**, a senior from Blanket. Sigma Beta Delta was founded as a national organization in 1994 for NCAA Division III universities and is accredited by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education. HPU's chapter received its charter in 1999.

B.H. Carroll Theological Institute has entered a partnership with Seminary Now, an on-demand streaming video platform. Seminary Now provides exclusive biblical training courses from teachers, ministry practitioners and authors, including a course on servant leadership by **Gene Wilkes**, president of the B.H. Carroll Theological Institute. Other partners in the

Seminary Now network include InterVarsity Press, Northern Seminary and Missio Alliance. To view a preview of featured course offerings, click [here](#).

Retirement



Bill Arnold

Bill Arnold as president of the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation. He has served the Baptist General Convention of Texas more than 40 years—including 36 years leading the foundation—and will continue working with Texas Baptists on a contract basis through the end of the year. Under his leadership, the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation has raised more than \$180 million to support missions and ministries. Arnold joined the BGCT staff in 1980 as a youth consultant. In 1984, he joined the Mission Texas effort to raise \$20 million and start 2,000 churches in five years. The initiative raised more than \$22 million and helped exceed the goal of 2,000 new churches. That fundraising effort developed into the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation, and Arnold became its founding president. Among other projects, the foundation created a \$15 million loan fund for new churches, and Arnold was instrumental in raising funds for the construction of Baptist Student Ministry buildings on the campuses of Texas A&M University, Stephen F. Austin University, the University of Texas at Tyler, the University of North Texas and Texas Tech University. Prior to joining the BGCT staff, Arnold worked for Dallas Baptist Association seven years.



Ronald Bowles

Ronald E. Bowles after 45 years in Christian higher education and congregational ministry. He has been on faculty at Dallas Baptist University the past 15 years, serving as dean of the College of Fine Arts since August 2006 and as director of church music and worship studies. Previously, he was minister of worship and communications at First Baptist Church in El Paso for 22 years. He also served Pleasant Valley Baptist Church in Amarillo and First Baptist Church in Waco. He plans to continue teaching in an adjunct role at DBU and is available for worship consultation and church music supply and interim service. He can be contacted at rebsebowles@gmail.com.