

# Around the State: Richardson church offers welcome after hospitalization

August 17, 2022



Phil Hollen, a former Ironman Triathlete, returned home Aug. 14 after nearly 10 months of hospitalization due to COVID. (Photo courtesy of David Alvey)

Members of The Heights Baptist Church in Richardson lined neighborhood streets and cheered when former Ironman triathlete **Phil Hollen** returned home after nearly 10 months in the hospital following a life-threatening bout of COVID. In October 2021, Hollen was in the best shape in his life, completing a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bicycle ride and a 26.2-mile marathon. A month later, he was admitted to the hospital with COVID. Within days, he was on a ventilator. In a few weeks, he was placed on an ECMO life-support machine, which removed carbon dioxide and sent

oxygen-filled blood back to body tissues. He spent an extended time in a medically induced coma. Members of The Heights Baptist Church provided meals to his family and held prayer vigils in hospital parking lots. Their prayers were answered when he returned home on Aug. 14.



First Woodway Baptist Church provided medical supplies to a hospital in Matanzas, Cuba. (Courtesy Photo)

First Woodway Baptist Church provided 400 lbs. of medical supplies to a hospital in Matanzas, Cuba. The hospital treated burn victims and asthma patients in the aftermath of four fuel tank explosions in the supertanker port area of the city in western Cuba. Officials said lightning struck one fuel storage tank, and the blaze spread to three other tanks. One firefighter died, and more than 120 people were injured. Working with Blessings International, based in Broken Bow, Okla., the Waco-area church secured medicine at a discount. The church supplied 80 tubes of burn medication, albuterol inhalers and nebulizers, blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes and other medical supplies. **Peter Dyson** and three other volunteers from the church traveled with the shipment to ensure its safe delivery to the hospital. His father, retired Baylor University business professor **L.M. Dyson**, has helped Cuban Baptists for two and a half decades by linking resources in North America to needs on the island nation.



President Randy O’Rear welcomed more than 750 new freshmen to the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor campus in Belton during the Aug. 10 convocation service. (UMHB Photo)

**Joe Loughlin**, lead pastor of First Baptist Church in Temple, was featured speaker at the Aug. 10 fall convocation service at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. “Each of you is placed here for a reason, just as God wanted,” Loughlin told students. Loughlin serves on the UMHB board of trustees. UMHB President **Randy O’Rear** welcomed more than 750 new freshmen to campus. He noted when the school began in 1845 at Independence, 24 students attended the first classes. This fall, more than 3,500 students from 33 countries and 41 states are enrolled at UMHB, including 564 students who are the first in their families to attend college.

Baylor University received a significant gift from **Katie and Jimmy Garrison** of Boerne to support the Give Light Campaign and provide support for the capital priorities of Baylor athletics. Baylor will recognize the couple’s philanthropic support through the naming of the Dimmitt Garrison Family Berm within McLane Stadium and the Dimmitt Garrison Family Lobby within the Paul and Alejandra Foster Pavilion. “The Dimmitt Garrison family has truly established an inspiring legacy of family

commitment at Baylor University,” President **Linda A. Livingstone**said. “The family’s commitment to Baylor’s Christian mission is exemplified in their generational support of Baylor’s students, faculty and staff. They understand the vision for the university, and their thoughtful, multigenerational approach to philanthropy is encouraging and inspiring. We are grateful for a family of Baylor alumni who value supporting Baylor’s current priorities to ensure the institution’s future growth and prominence.”



Amy Ford (center), president of Embrace Grace, was honored by Dallas Baptist University at its annual Community Partners Luncheon. She is pictured with DBU President Adam C. Wright (left) and Desi Henk (right), assistant vice president of career and professional development. (DBU Photo by Kirsten McKimmey)

Dallas Baptist University recognized **Amy Ford**, president of Embrace Grace, at its 15th annual Community Partners Luncheon. Embrace Grace is an organization devoted to providing spiritual and practical care for unplanned pregnancies and single mothers in need. Ford, the author

of *Help Her Be Brave: Discover Your Place in the Pro-Life Movement*, experienced her own unplanned pregnancy in her teens. Out of her loneliness and shame, she developed a passion to enact change. “The heart of Embrace Grace is to make the church one of the first places a young woman runs to instead of the last because of shame and guilt, and that is the heart of Jesus,” said **Desi Henk**, assistant vice president of career and personal development at DBU.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth [announced](#) it will provide a full tuition scholarship to all Southern Baptist Convention International Mission Board missionaries enrolled in the seminary’s master’s degree and doctoral programs. President **Adam W. Greenway** also announced students who are current IMB applicants who have not yet received appointments to the mission field will have 100 percent of their tuition covered for a 36-hour Master of Theological Studies degree, which meets the mission board’s theological education requirement for appointment.

## **Anniversaries**

5th for **Juan Valdez** as pastor of Templo Bautista in Abilene.

5th for **Blake White** as pastor of South Side Baptist Church in Abilene.

10th for **DeOri Newman** as pastor of Ash Street Baptist Church in Abilene.

## **Ordination**

**Maddie Rarick** to the gospel ministry by First Baptist Church in Waco. She is pastor of Meadow Oaks Baptist Church in Temple.

# Retirement

**Greg Oppenhuis** from Big Springs Baptist Church in Garland after 19 years as pastor there and after 36 years in the gospel ministry. He plans to become a Christian life coach.