



THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

# THE PILLARS

SUMMER 2022

*Celebrating*  
**FIRSTS**

**HBU** HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY  
7502 Fondren Road  
Houston, Texas 77074-3298

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MAIL-SORT INC.

     Like us / Tweet us / Share us / View us

For more information about  
Houston Baptist University,  
call 281.649.3000 or visit HBU.edu.

**HBU** HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY | *A Higher Education*

**A**ll of us recently celebrated Memorial Day. It was a reminder to us of the meaningfulness of the past, our memories of it, and how examples of courage and faithfulness become significant traditions to remember and reflect upon as they inspire us in the present and carry us along into the future. The Scriptures likewise emphasize the importance of tradition, whether it's the acts of God contained within Scripture that must be remembered and reflected upon, the teachings of Christ, the gospel itself, or the ethical teachings that are part and parcel of living for Christ in this present age of moral, spiritual, and political decline. Christian traditions are vital and must be retained if we are to sustain our culture.

A source of hope, and one of the central promises of Scripture emphasized in the great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, is that one day God will—based

upon the traditions of the past—make all things new (see, for example, Isaiah 42:9; 43:19; 48:6; 62:2; 65:17; 66:22; Jeremiah 31:22; Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31; 36:26). These prophecies declare that God will establish a new covenant with his people and that with this covenant will come the forgiveness of sins and eventually even a new creation inhabited by his people, whose hearts have been renewed by the Spirit so that they are then enabled to keep the laws of God faithfully.

The New Testament continues this emphasis upon the renewal of the great traditions: the newness of life that we find in Christ (see Romans 6:4; 7:6), the new covenant that he inaugurated by his death and resurrection (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8ff.), and the new heaven and new earth that God will establish at the return of Christ (2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-2). And until

those days happen, even now by his Spirit, we are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), enabled to walk in newness of life.

The work of God, based on his historic deeds of salvation, whether the creation, the Exodus, or the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, reflects his ancient promise to “make all things new.”

This issue of The Pillars is full of new and refreshing signs of God's blessing upon HBU. There is much that is new—highlighted in the articles that follow with reference to the many “firsts” (in engineering, theology, and education, among others) recently accomplished.

As with all new things, they are grounded in the deeds of the past, including the faithfulness of God and the faithfulness of his people who have gone before us. We remember great teachers and leaders like Doris Warren and so many others throughout the 60-plus

years of our history. We stand on their shoulders, and we continue to experience the faithfulness of God to make all things new, to allow us to be part of his ongoing work, his refreshing of this fallen world by his gracious acts of restoration in Christ. We are blessed to be part of that work.

Thank you for the many ways—by prayer, word of mouth, financial contributions, and influence—that you allow all of us to be part of God's work in this world. We believe a university like HBU is more important now than ever before.

*Robert B. Sloan*

  @DrRobertBSloan

# Core Convictions of HBU

- Pillar I:** God, the Creator of a Good and Knowable World
- Pillar II:** A Plan of Restoration
- Pillar III:** The Importance of Human Agency
- Pillar IV:** A Renewed People
- Pillar V:** A Mandate to Understand the World
- Pillar VI:** Learning and Teaching as Discipleship
- Pillar VII:** Life, Marriage, Gender, and Humanness
- Pillar VIII:** Governmental Institutions
- Pillar IX:** The Christian University
- Pillar X:** The Mystery of Unity in Christ

Houston Baptist University has a history of affirming these particular ways of thinking and living, which we hereby describe as Ten Pillars. These convictions are an essential part of the traditional beliefs and commitments of the University. They are set forth here to bring to mind the ten physical pillars that are now iconic on our campus and thus represent the durable historical and theological commitments that undergird our practices and enable us to translate our worldview, Preamble, and mission into academic programs, curricular structures, and habits of the mind and heart. HBU confesses and takes shelter under these Ten Pillars.

*Unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees  
September 21, 2021*

## Our Mission

The mission of Houston Baptist University is to provide a learning experience that instills in students a passion for academic, spiritual, and professional excellence as a result of our central confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord."

*Unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees  
February 24, 2009*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**6** *Celebrating Firsts*

**8** *Houston's First  
Cyber Engineers*

**10** *Engineering Minds*

**12** *A Healing Mission*

**14** *Bringing Apologetics Out of the Ivory Tower*

**16** *HBU Graduate Student Enjoying Poppin' Success*

**18** *Making an Impact  
through Film*

**20** *First BA-to-MDiv Program Graduate*

**25** *HBU 2021-2022 Piper Professor*

**32** *Rita Tauer: Reflecting  
on My Journey at HBU*

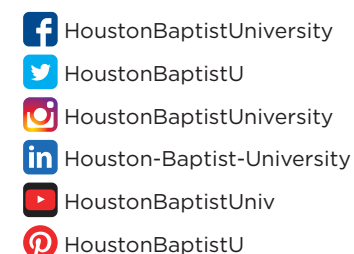
**32** *Athletics*

**38** *Alum-A-Grams*

**42** *In Memoriam: Dr. Doris Warren*

## ONLINE

HBU.edu  
HBUOnline.com  
HBU.edu/Alumni



## ADDRESS UPDATE?

To update your address  
or unsubscribe, please call  
281-649-3413 or email  
Advancement@HBU.edu

The Pillars is the news magazine  
of Houston Baptist University and  
is published in print and online.

## EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Pillars  
Houston Baptist University  
7502 Fondren Road  
Houston, Texas 77074

**Main:** 281.649.3000

**Undergraduate Admissions:**  
281.649.3211

**Graduate Admissions:**  
281.649.3269

**Alumni:** 281.649.3413

**Update your address and  
subscription preferences at  
HBU.edu/PillarsMail.**

Dr. Jerry Johnston, *Editor*  
Clay Porter, *Senior Director*  
Chris Lyons, *Design*  
Diane Tezeno, *Writer*  
Michael Tims, *Photographer*  
Michael Taylor, *Video Editor*  
Jared Jones, *Video Editor*  
Olatokunbor Prather,  
*Social Media Specialist*

## CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Stanley Napper  
Ritamarie C. Tauer  
Athletics Department

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

*President*  
Dr. Robert B. Sloan

*VP for Innovation  
and Strategic Marketing*  
Dr. Jerry Johnston

*Director for Athletics*  
Steve Moniaci

*Chief Financial Officer/  
Chief Operating Officer*  
Sandy Mooney

*VP for Online/Digital Learning*  
Dr. Steve Peterson

*VP for Advancement  
and University Relations*  
Sharon Saunders

*Provost and Vice President  
for Academic Affairs*  
Dr. Stanley Napper

*VP for Enrollment Management*  
Dr. James Steen

# Celebrating Firsts!

## Celebrating the Achievements of Outstanding Students and Alums

*In this issue, we are celebrating a selection of outstanding Houston Baptist University (HBU) Class of 2022 graduates who have landed their first jobs and alums who are making a difference in their early careers. These HBU graduates represent a diverse cross-section of programs, including engineering, nursing, education, Christian ministry, film and entrepreneurship, and are poised to make an impact using the knowledge and skillsets obtained in their academic studies at HBU. We congratulate each graduate for their outstanding academic achievements, the dedication and perseverance that led to successful completion of their college degrees, and for the doors of opportunity that have swung open for them.*

**H**ouston Baptist University (HBU) President Robert Sloan congratulated spring graduates of the Class of 2022 for their dedication and persistence in crossing the finish line in achieving their academic goals. Families and friends gathered on Friday, May 13, at HBU's Husky Stadium for an outdoor commencement ceremony to mark the occasion.

"It is a privilege for us to be a part of this process, this pilgrimage that they have gone through, and to be able to celebrate with them on this occasion," Dr.

Sloan told attendees.

The commencement ceremony included the third largest graduating class in HBU's history with 461 graduates, bringing the number of students who have received degrees since HBU's first commencement in 1967 to a total of 24,570 graduates, shared HBU Provost Dr. Stanley Napper.

Several graduates achieved a number of notable firsts as diplomas were handed out to the first graduating class of seniors from the College of Science and Engineering, the first graduate students receiving

Doctor of Education, EDd, degrees in Executive Leadership in Mental Health and Human Services from the College of Education & Behavioral Sciences and the first student to complete the BA to MDiv program in the School of Christian Thought. The ceremony also featured the largest graduating classes from the School of Christian Thought and the College of Arts and Humanities.

"It fills me with great pride to see our students meet their academic goals. I am confident that our graduates have been given a toolbox to make a big impact in their fields and be leaders in the name of Christ," said HBU Director of Academic Records Jean Tarrats.

The Class of 2022 was also the 2nd largest graduating class from the College of Science and Engineering; 4th largest graduating class from the Archie W. Dunham College of Business; 5th largest graduating class from the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences; and the 10th largest graduating class from the School of Nursing and Allied Health.

## Highlights of the notable firsts and milestones of the Spring Class of 2022:

First class of engineering students from the College of Science & Engineering to graduate

First cohort of graduate students to earn Doctor of Education, EDd, degrees in Executive Leadership in Mental Health and Human Services from the College of Education & Behavioral Sciences

First student to complete the 5 Year BA-to-MDiv program in the School of Christian Thought

Largest graduating class from the School of Christian Thought

Largest graduating class from the College of Arts and Humanities

### In Addition:

Awarded more degrees in the 2021-2022 academic year (including summer '21, fall '21, and spring '22) than in any other academic year with a total of 974 degrees awarded.

**We extend congratulations to each member of the Class of 2022.**

# HOUSTON'S FIRST CYBER ENGINEERS

*"We will arise and build."*

By Dr. Stanley A. Napper,  
Provost and Founding Dean of Engineering

*"It's an exciting time for the College of Science and Engineering (COSE) as we recognize our first engineering graduates and honor God's provision and abundance on our college. The engineering majors now make up one-third of the COSE student body, which represents significant growth for a program that is just four years old. We have a long-standing tradition of preparing students for success in industry, research labs and professional health careers. COSE will continue to build upon these strengths and expand professional opportunities for all COSE majors that they may impact their future communities and spheres of work for the Kingdom of God."*

- Dr. Katie Evans, Dean of College of Science and Engineering

## THE LAUNCH

In May of 2015, HBU President Robert Sloan formed an Engineering Advisory Board to study the needs in the Houston metro area for a new college of engineering. This group recommended that HBU proceed with creating a program in cyber engineering as a first step.

Dr. Stanley Napper joined HBU in 2017 to become the founding dean, and on Sept. 19, 2017, the HBU Board of Trustees approved the establishment of the College of Engineering. The mission of the College is to educate and train engineers who will utilize God-given resources and God-given talents to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and serve humanity by making the world healthier, more productive and more secure. This mission is impactful, unique and critically needed.



## THE HBU ENGINEERING PROGRAMS PROVIDE:

- the ONLY BS degree program in cybersecurity in Houston,
- the ONLY engineering-based cybersecurity degree program in Houston,
- Unique integration of STEM + IT + Faith,
- Unique integration of project-based learning and industry engagement, and
- Unique integration of cybersecurity, mobility, IoT, data analytics, and project management

## THE FIRST GRADUATES

With the graduation of the first 11 graduates on May 13, 2022, HBU is on its way to fulfilling its distinct mission. These graduates demonstrated extraordinary foresight in choosing new degree programs, and extraordinary persistence in navigating the challenges of a rigorous curriculum, demonstrated through a series of increasingly complex projects.

In their first year, each student built a robot, a computer, a Smart Factory (two sensors and three control devices) and an open-ended design project. The freshman year projects for this group included a smart deadbolt (the "Live" Bolt), a smart football helmet to detect possible head injuries, a photosensitive window shade and a smart lock. By the time

this group of graduates completed their senior capstone design projects, they were able to design and build a dashboard to publicly report crimes for Crime Stoppers of Houston, a vintage arcade video game (for the engineering students club), a smart firefighter monitoring and tracking system and a campus delivery robot.

These graduates completed internships in large corporations, small companies, campus units and through extracurricular learning. Many of these students undertook an immersive cybersecurity "bootcamp" at HBU, sponsored by the University's Houston Cyber Education Center and its corporate partner Cybint (currently ThriveDX).

These students won interstate cybersecurity competitions through the National Cyber League, and through AFCEA, originally known as the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association, in San Antonio, Texas.

Graduates have been offered jobs in large organizations (e.g., Chevron, NASA, Excelsys), and small businesses, or plan to work independently in the gig economy.

## GRATITUDE

When the program began, the projected need for faculty and staff, for laboratory facilities and equipment, and for growth in capacity, was \$2.3 million. The Lord God provided all of the resources needed and met needs we had not even anticipated. As of May 2022, the college has received over \$6.9 million. We are especially grateful to the Cullen Trust for Higher Education

(\$2.5 million), the William Stamps Farish Foundation (\$750,000), the M.D. Anderson Foundation (\$300,000), the Fondren Foundation (\$250,000), and the SIM Houston Chapter (\$100,000). We are grateful to Holly Frost and Kathaleen Wall who provided over \$3 million in scholarship funds given directly to students in science and engineering, since 2019. In addition, HBU was awarded \$3 million over five years (2019-2024) from U.S. Department of Education (Title V funding) met additional laboratory needs and provided support for success in STEM degree programs.

We are grateful for the gift of \$20 million from Jim and Sherry Smith to launch the campaign for a new and renovated Science, Engineering, and Nursing building. This lead gift towards a projected \$50 million need, has stimulated other gifts that enable the University to be above 60 percent of the overall campaign goal.

The first 11 graduates of HBU's engineering programs might be called "Houston's First Cyber Engineers." Nehemiah might be called the world's first cyber engineer. Facing outsider threats, insider threats, fake news, "business e-mail compromise" and other analogous cyber threats, he required every worker to carry a weapon in one hand and a tool in the other, seeking God for security and for resources.

As Nehemiah said (Neh. 2:20), "The God of heaven will grant us success; and we will arise and build."

# Engineering Minds

## Nicholas Belbas '22

### Bachelor of Science in Cyber Engineering Cybersecurity Defense Analyst, Chevron, August 2022

Nicholas Belbas has been exposed to the field of engineering for as long as he can remember. Born to parents who were both professional engineers, his mother, a mechanical engineer for NASA and BP and his father, a chemical engineer for Cognis and BASF, it was no surprise that he chose to pursue a degree in the engineering field.

A Class of 2022 spring graduate, Nicholas was among the first cohort of students to graduate from HBU's College of Science and Engineering (COSE) which opened its doors in 2018 under the leadership of founding dean of engineering and now, HBU Provost, Dr. Stanley Napper.

Not only a top student in HBU's cyber engineering program, Nicholas' entrepreneurial pursuits and community service also earned him the 2020 Stewart Morris Scholar Award presented by the Texas Business Hall of Fame. The award is funded by Houston business leader and HBU founding father, Stewart Morris, former Chairman of Stewart Title Company and Chairman Emeritus of Stewart Information

International, who is also a 1995 Texas Business Hall of Fame inductee.

A homeschooled student throughout his life, Nicholas participated in FIRST Robotics, a mentor-based program that teaches science, engineering and technology, and honed his analytical and technical skills. As lead programmer, he and team members took top awards in numerous robotics competitions.

"I did competitive robotics for 8 years all the way until I graduated from high school, and the teams I was on made it to World Invitationals twice and the World Championship three times," shared Nicholas.

With a singular focus on his goals, Nicholas began working as an intern in a robotics and sensor platform development role in the NASA Johnson Space Center's Crew and Thermal Systems Division in 2016. He later attended a cybersecurity camp at a local college, led by an instructor who would later become a professor at HBU, which sparked his interest in the field of cybersecurity. The opening of HBU's College of Science and Engineering in 2018 would provide him with an opportunity to explore his interests.

"My sister had been attending HBU since 2015, so we were getting the Pillars Magazine to our house, and

my dad was flipping through the magazine when he saw a page advertising the new College of Engineering at HBU," said Nicholas.

Nicholas attended an open house for new engineering students and was given an overview of the engineering programs by Dean Stanley Napper and was impressed.

"The fact that a Christian university offered an engineering program, was in Houston, and gave good scholarships for high ACT scores, all seemed like it was the perfect match for what I had been trying to find," said Nicholas.

The smaller class sizes and Christian environment, where spiritual values were taught, were also appealing qualities that led Nicholas to enroll in the College's cyber engineering program.

"One thing I liked about HBU from the start is that the classes are much smaller than you might find at other universities. Some people might not like that, but it gives you the option to work more closely with your professors and get to know them. Also, the professors get to focus more on each student and help them understand the content," said Nicholas.

In the program, he and fellow students had the

opportunity to tour the Medical Center's Cyber Defense Center and Chevron's Pipeline Monitoring Center and also took part in hands-on projects through the National Cyber League. When not studying, he worked as a teaching assistant for various engineering classes and also helped students with their coursework after work hours.

Understanding the importance of networking, Nicholas took part in job fairs hosted on campus and valued HBU's smaller size which enabled him to leave a memorable impression with companies. Through one of those fairs, Nicholas met representatives from Chevron and was interviewed and later offered an internship.

"I got the internship and was invited back for a second internship in 2021, and now I have a full-time job with them that I will be starting in August," shared Nicholas.

He has accepted a position as a cybersecurity defense analyst at Chevron and will be using the knowledge gained in his cyber engineering classes and internships in his new role.

Nicholas encourages students interested in pursuing an engineering degree to consider HBU and apply as soon as possible. Once enrolled, he encourages students to not hesitate to ask questions on concepts they don't understand, watch YouTube videos on various cybersecurity conventions and stay informed on news in the industry.

His long-term goal is to start his own cyber security solutions firm in Texas.

# A Healing Mission

## Courtney Alexandria Tennant '22

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing  
UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Thoracic/  
Cardiac Intermediate Medical Unit**

Courtney Alexandria Tennant was born in Canada and came to Texas in 2019 to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. She completed her prerequisites at Lone Star College-CyFair scoring in the 99% percentile on the Test of Essential Academic Skills and enrolled in the School of Nursing and Allied Health at Houston Baptist University (HBU).

A stellar student throughout her undergraduate studies, Alexandria (her preferred name) was one of program's top students, earning a 4.0 grade point average with Dean's list recognition each semester. She served in the Nursing Student Association as the PALS chair where she helped mentor incoming students through the academic challenges of nursing school. While at HBU, she was inducted into Alpha Chi, a national college honors society, and Sigma Theta Tau, an international honors society of nursing and the second-largest nursing organization worldwide. She also was awarded the Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship, the Provost Scholarship and the John S. Dunn Scholarship.

Alexandria credits her mother for overcoming the challenges of being a single mother and instilling the value of a good education in her children.

"I got to see her build herself up from someone on welfare to someone that worked her way up a company to an exceptionally high-achieving female engineer. She worked towards her engineering degree at a time when a few hours away from her college in 1989, a mass shooter shot and killed 14 women studying engineering at a university in Montreal. This was known as the Ecole Polytechnique massacre, an anti-feminist attack against women in STEM fields. Despite this, she did not budge on her dreams for a higher education in STEM," shared Alexandria.

Because of her mother's dedication and hard work,

Alexandria has achieved her dream of obtaining a degree in nursing and has accepted a position working at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in the Texas Medical Center where she will serve patients in the Thoracic/Cardiac Intermediate Medical Unit and also participate in ongoing cancer research.

"That is the kind of role model I grew up admiring every day. I am proud to continue that legacy and overcome barriers to achieve all I can," said the recent HBU Class of 2022 graduate.

Alexandria felt welcomed at HBU as an international student. She credits Shannon Bedo, HBU Director of International and Veteran Student Services for her support through the process of completing the international nursing student application that enabled her to attend HBU.

"She was always just a call away and very empathetic towards the overwhelming paperwork for an international nursing student applicant. She helped smooth the process and make it feel manageable. The nursing department was also much more familiar with welcoming international students than other schools I applied to. This built my confidence that I was going to attend a school that was happy to have me a part of their pack," said Alexandria.

As an international student, it was very difficult to find an affordable education and also receive the best nursing education and experience she could obtain, shared Alexandria.

"HBU was the most affordable option because they did not distinguish between a student's residency for tuition. This was such a blessing to me to not only find an affordable institution to pursue a nursing career, but for that school to also have a prestigious reputation in the community," she said.


The Canadian native recalls a point when she thought that she would not be able to complete her education because of her inability to continue paying for tuition, but God intervened.

"There was a point when I was going to have to go back to Canada because I could no longer afford the tuition, but God quickly provided, and I was blessed with additional scholarships that allowed me to complete my education at HBU. I wasn't eligible for many scholarships at other schools because I was an international student, but because I choose a school that focused on a student's story and their campus and church involvement, I was blessed to continue my education with the John S. Dunn Scholarship. I couldn't help but think of Proverbs 3:5-6 and rejoice in the gift. Every time I thought all I worked for would fall apart, His plan prevailed," said Alexandria.

For nursing students who are following in her footsteps, she offers words of encouragement and support.

"It will be challenging and difficult, but the fact you were accepted into the program shows you have the dedication and strength to make it through. Many students enter nursing schools having received straight A's on every exam—only to find that's rarely the case in nursing school. Give yourself grace for that transition and understand that it is the type of person you are not your grades that makes you a good nurse," she said.

Her future plans are to complete her master's degree to expand her knowledge of the nursing industry.

A close-up portrait of Cameron McAllister, a young man with dark, wavy hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark grey button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

# Bringing Apologetics Out of the Ivory Tower

## Cameron McAllister '18

### Master of Arts in Apologetics Online Co-Founder of “Thinking Out Loud”

Cameron McAllister was the exact kind of student faculty members were seeking when the Master of Arts in Apologetics (MAA) Online degree was launched in 2013. Living in Atlanta with his wife and children, Cameron enrolled in the program through HBU’s Pampell Online Division.

Dr. Philip Tallon, Dean of HBU’s School of Christian Thought, describes Cameron as “a bright and hardworking student” and “gifted writer” who was one of the top students in the MAA online program. “He could never have made it to Houston to study with us, but thanks to online learning we got to have two wonderful years with Cameron.”

Graduating with a degree in philosophy & religion from Toccoa Falls College, Cameron credits his father’s impactful footprint in ministry for inspiring him to pursue a graduate degree in apologetics.

“I’m a third culture kid, born on the mission field in Vienna, Austria. Our family moved to the States in 1998. My dad, Stuart McAllister, has worked at the intersection of evangelism and apologetics for over 30 years, and his life and work is ultimately what inspired me to pursue apologetics at a graduate level,” said Cameron. “My dad has had the most profound impact on my life and ministry.”

The father/son duo chronicled the intergenerational faith dynamics of their own household in “Faith That Lasts: A Father and Son on Cultivating Lifelong Belief.” A former staff writer for Christ & Pop Culture, Cameron’s writings have also been featured in Christianity Today, Relevant Magazine, Think Christian, and Fathom Magazine.

He was drawn to pursue his online apologetics degree at HBU because of the program’s emphasis on the imagination, shares Cameron.

“Frontline apologists often have a reputation for being cerebral and insular, devoting much of their time to questions that only apologists and academics find interesting. HBU offers a more well-rounded approach, one that takes into account the challenge of talking to people in the regular circumstances of their lives. By focusing on the imagination—a bridge between the head and the heart—these professors help to make intellectual conversation interesting,” said the 2018 HBU graduate.

The mission of HBU’s Master of Arts in Apologetics online program is to develop students who are capable of serving their community and the Church successfully in a variety of vocations, including academic, parachurch, and ecclesiastical professions.

Since obtaining his MAA degree, Cameron has been busy establishing his own footprint in ministry as co-founder of “Thinking Out Loud,” a non-profit organization that aims to bridge the gap between discipleship and apologetics.

“We’re a non-profit dedicated to moving apologetics out of the ivory tower and into your living room. Our vision is to see ordinary Christians advance the credibility of Christ. To that end, we offer training for fellow Christians and local churches on how to bring hope to an increasingly jaded culture,” shared Cameron.

As a part of his nonprofit, Cameron also produces a podcast, “Thinking Out Loud: Look for the Lightbulb,” where he, and co-host, Nathan Rittenhouse, talk about current events and Christian hope in twice-weekly episodes, covering a wide-range of topics from “Faithfulness in a Fickle Culture” to “Evil in the Age of Google” to “Why Are Christians Deconstructing Their Faith?”

“The podcast is widely distributed and he speaks frequently on college campuses,” commends Tallon, who is co-writing a book with Cameron on theology and horror films.

As he ministers to students on various college campuses through his nonprofit, Cameron believes that “we’ve moved from an era when students wanted to know about your beliefs to one in which they want to know who you are.”

“In this sense, the stakes are higher. Arguments alone won’t be sufficient. Strong communicators and TED-talkers are a dime a dozen. Students need to see that we’ve set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts and it will be that transformation that piques their curiosity,” he shares.

His advice to prospective students thinking of enrolling in HBU’s Master of Arts in Apologetics Online program is “to learn about the epistemic value of the imagination,” an answer he admits may run the risk of sounding a bit abstract.

“In our modern world, we often associate the imagination with fantasy or extraordinary creativity. Though it includes both of those things, the imagination is simply part of how we make sense of the world and if we fail to take this into account, our arguments will ring hollow for many people. As you’ll learn in the program, this is part of what makes C.S. Lewis so compelling. Even when he’s not giving you wonderful stories, his arguments always arrive in the garb of vivid imagery and this is part of what gives him such force and clarity. As an instructive exercise, take a highlighter and underline all of the imagery in Mere Christianity and you’ll get the picture,” said Cameron.

# HBU Graduate Student Enjoying Poppin' Success

**Nicole Johnson,  
Fall 2022 Graduate**

**Master of Science in Management and Entrepreneurship, HBU Pampell Online Division  
Co-owner, Poppin' Party Concessions & Rentals, LLC**

Nicole Johnson remembers “the time is now” moment of reflection that led her to apply for the Houston Baptist University (HBU) Master of Science in Management and Entrepreneurship (MSME) program through HBU's Pampell Online Division. An educator, entrepreneur, wife and mother, Johnson was looking for a program with a business focus that would accommodate her family, work and business commitments, and HBU's online master's program fulfilled her needs.

“I selected HBU because I wanted a different experience from my prior educational background,” said Johnson. “I previously attended a private career-focused institution where I gained my bachelor's degree and wanted to experience a business focus that would aid in the success of my entrepreneurial endeavors,” she shared.

Johnson began the online master's degree program in the Fall of 2021 and describes HBU as the ideal environment to gain the tools and real-world knowledge to enhance her business, Poppin' Party Concessions, LLC.

The business began as a project in an entrepreneurship capstone course required for graduation from a former educational institution that Johnson attended.

“I created the project with no intention of furthering it, until my professor, at that time, believed it could be a lucrative venture and suggested I move forward with it. I took heed and began pop-up tent selling at fairs, carnivals, and farmer's markets. The tent became a hassle, so my husband and I purchased a trailer that we converted into a concessions mobile food unit, and here

we are, Poppin' Party Concessions,” said Johnson.

The business caters to the nostalgia and bliss of some of childhood's favorite snacks including cotton candy, funnel cakes, popcorn, shaved ice, nachos, hot dogs, and fountain drinks that speak to everyone's inner child.

“Close your eyes and picture a giant neon trailer parked in your neighborhood with fun tunes, waving banners, and life-size snacks for selfies and the perfect photo opt before you pick up your food - this is the vision,” said Johnson.

HBU Professor Dr. Christine Galib describes Johnson as one of the online master's program's top students. “Nicole is a very thorough and communicative student. Her ability to give constructive and detailed feedback on her peers' work speaks volumes about her critical and curious mind. Her business, Poppin' Party Concessions and Rentals is such a great idea based on a need. It has been an absolute joy to work with and learn from Nicole throughout our classes,” said Dr. Galib.

Johnson is enjoying the success of her growing business but also is focused on a higher calling - providing employment opportunities to young people with special needs inspired by her 5-year-old daughter who was diagnosed with a rare condition at birth.

“I was watching a TV show episode that interviewed a young gentleman with special needs who had found it challenging to find work, due to his disability. In

that moment, I knew I wanted to cater a portion of my hiring process to helping special needs youth and young adults alike,” shared Johnson.

The enterprising business owner began researching labor laws for young adults to learn how her business could be the change that young people with disabilities needed.

“Allowing youth to learn work ethics and life-skills has been the pinnacle of how PPCR enjoys impacting the community,” said Johnson.

Her encouragement to prospective students thinking of applying for HBU's MSME online degree program is to “do it.” “You will gain so much knowledge from the tools you will learn that you can apply to your endeavors or other businesses if you desire to be an asset to those around you,” said Johnson.

Johnson will complete her master's degree in the fall 2022 semester. Her plans for the future are to secure a brick-and-mortar location that will allow her to expand her business to offer in-house concessions rentals, product demos and space for events and parties. She also envisions launching a second venture, “Happy Farms,” a farm to educate and empower individuals with special needs.

Her ultimate goal in all of her endeavors is found in Acts 20:35: “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

# Making an Impact through Film

## Alfredo Ruiz '22

**Bachelor of Fine Arts in Cinematic Arts  
Working on crew of his first feature film,  
“Do Not Harm” written by HBU Asst. Professor  
Christopher Hartwell**

HBU Associate Professor Joshua Sikora describes Alfredo Ruiz as “one of the finest students” in HBU’s Cinema & New Media Arts program. The recent Class of 2022 graduate produced a short film entitled, “Father,” that is now premiering at numerous film festivals. The film follows an insecure young artist who contends with his feelings of inadequacy and his ego as he prepares for the death of his father who is also an artist.

The film has won numerous awards, including “Best Narrative Short” in London’s Infinity Film Festival and the “Gold Remi Award” in the WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival.

“Father,” my senior project film, has been so rewarding to me in my academic career. This project was born out of a love for art but also my own questions about the meaning and purpose of creating art. I wrote the screenplay for this short film in the Spring of 2018 during a screenwriting class. When I finished writing it, I left the project alone for about two years until I revisited it and decided to bring it to life. With the help of several professors, I began pre-production in the Spring of 2021 and began production in the summer,” said Alfredo.

The multifaceted HBU cinematic arts graduate has worked as a writer, director and cinematographer on several projects, earning credits for his work on “Whole Art,” a documentary short, “The Call,” a dramatic comedy short, two short films, “Negotiationship” and “Ice Cream Shop Girls,” “Leave Your Body at the Door,” a horror

short film and a TV series called “Planet Poetica.” He has been hired to work on his first feature film, “Do Not Harm,” about an overworked pandemic nurse who tries to cover up a tragic mistake that took a patient’s life and the circumstances that bring him face to face with the patient’s father, written by HBU Asst. Professor Christopher Hartwell.

Surprisingly, the path to a career in filmmaking was not clear cut for Alfredo who began his academic career pursuing a degree in art therapy at HBU, the only school in Texas offering the degree program at that time. A childhood love for the arts and storytelling would be the driving forces that would lead him to change majors and begin pursuing a degree in cinematic arts.

The son of immigrant parents, his family moved to the U.S. from Mexico more than two decades ago. Growing up his parents and members of his family instilled in him a love for the arts from plays to paintings to music. Also fascinated by technology and graphic design, the combination of interests eventually led Alfredo onto the path of filmmaking.

“Looking back, I now see that while I did not own a camera, I was making movies in my head all along. It is clear that my childhood was one full of art, but at such a young age it did not cross my mind that this could be my career,” said Alfredo. “I can see that this passion for storytelling and specifically through film has been something that has been stirring in me since I was just a boy.”

After graduating from Houston’s Deer Park High School, Alfredo recalls wanting to go to a large university far away from home to “start a new life,” but describes it as “funny how God turns things around.”

“I quickly realized how much of a blessing it is to attend a small private university where one can grow close to their peers and their professors and mentors. The class sizes were not overwhelming and I felt that I could freely interact in the lectures,” said Alfredo.

He values the time he spent in HBU’s cinematic arts program and the opportunities the program afforded him to learn from professors who were not only teachers, but mentors and industry professionals. He also had opportunities to work on outside projects and attend weekly film screenings and special events.

“My professors in the cinematic arts program have without a doubt had the biggest impact on my life. They have not only shown me what it looks like to be good filmmakers, but good friends, family members, church members and well-rounded individuals. I aspire to be like them one day. They have been of great inspiration as storytellers and people of faith. Their love for art and life has continued to stir up the passion in me from childhood to create,” said Alfredo.

He encourages students looking to pursue careers in filmmaking to consider HBU. He describes the University

as a place that has challenged him and helped him to become a better storyteller and filmmaker as well as a place where “you will be surrounded by great friends and mentors who are thoughtful and caring” and “other creative individuals who are also believers.”

“When I look back, I am aware of God’s work in my life leading me here to HBU to study filmmaking. I was not always certain of what I wanted to do with my life, much less the school that I wanted to attend, but I can truthfully say that these past couple of years here have been some of the best ones of my life yet – shaping the person that I am today,” said Alfredo.

Alfredo plans to work as a cinematographer, screenwriter or teacher and hopes to have completed several independent short films and have them accepted in notable film festivals. He also plans to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting at HBU.

“All in all, I am keeping my heart open for what and where the Lord is leading me as I have learned that He has better plans for me. I am hopeful for where He is taking me and the people that I will meet along the way,” said Alfredo.

# First Graduate of 5-Year BA-to-MDiv Program

## Osbaldo Valdes '22

### Bachelor of Arts in Christianity and Master of Divinity Degree

It has been a privilege and a great opportunity being able to study the past five years under such an amazing faculty, alongside a great student body and in a great environment like HBU. Being a first-generation student brought many challenges, but also new experiences, from learning about financial aid, to choosing classes for the semester. However, HBU was there to provide all the support and guidance I needed. There are no words to describe how honored I feel to be the first graduate of the BA-to-MDiv program.

In high school, I began wondering and asking questions about church history, theology, biblical languages and

other subjects related to the Christian faith. However, I did not have the resources nor the guidance necessary to answer many of my questions until I came to HBU. Never did I imagine that I would learn some of the biblical languages, much less, read the Bible in Greek and Hebrew, but life is full of surprises. I am forever indebted to my language professors for the hours they invested in teaching and instilling in me a love for the biblical languages. I am grateful to all my theology, Bible and church history professors who tolerated my never-ending questions, had lunch with me, provided insight into ministry, and exemplified what it looked like to be a student of the Bible. Beyond the facts they lectured about, I am grateful for the skills they taught,

the resources they provided me, and the friendships that were made from our time together.

Moreover, I am thankful for the community that surrounded me and supported me throughout this journey. Baptist Student Ministries, KALEO, Covenant Fellows and Life Tree Ministries, were amazing communities where I got to better experience HBU's hospitality, where I was able to serve the community surrounding HBU, where I was able to develop great friendships, and where I was able to grow and mature as a Christian. I am also grateful for HBU Football's Head Coach, Victor Shealy, and the organization as whole, for allowing me to work as an equipment manager, and eventually, work as the head equipment manager for the team throughout my time here at HBU. Because of HBU Football, I was able

to finish my degrees, as well as have the opportunity to travel and further develop my pride for our HBU Huskies.

Now that my time here at HBU has come to an end, it is a bittersweet time for me. I will still be in Houston serving my church at Cornerstone OPC as a pastoral intern while also seeking to be ordained under the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and hope to continue serving the Hispanic community and surrounding communities here in Houston. The skills I have developed, the knowledge I have learned in the BA-to-MDiv program, the friendships I have made, and the experiences I have undergone, will contribute towards my service in ministry. Once again, I am grateful for the faculty, the student body and my family that made this all possible. Dawgs Up!

# First-Generation Students on Their Journeys



**Dane Wee-Tom '22**  
School of Nursing & Allied Health  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

I am an international, first-generation student from Jamaica. I have over 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry, with five years in a management capacity. While working in hospitality, I have developed a deep level of understanding and care for people. As such, it has made me examine myself to understand where my endearing personality and passion for service can be utilized for something much bigger than myself which led me to pursue my first love - nursing.

Nursing school has been the hardest thing that I have done thus far, I would not be able to do it without the support of my family and friends. Now that I have attained my BSN, I would like to work in the intensive care unit and then return to school to become an acute care nurse practitioner.

During my time at HBU, I was a member of Alpha Chi Honors Society and Sigma Theta Tau. I served as Director of Professionalism and Co-Chair of the Nursing Student Organization from Jan. 2022 to May 2022 and Director of Membership and Points and Co-Chair from Jan. 2021 – Dec. 2021.



**Karen Rivera '22**  
College of Arts & Humanities  
Bachelor of Arts in Spanish

I was born and raised in Houston and graduated from Spring Woods High School in 2019. As a first-generation student and the oldest of five in my family, I was very lost when looking for what universities to apply for. When I found out about Houston Baptist University, I thought it was a perfect fit as I loved the small campus and the Christ-centered education.

In my time here at HBU I have been a part of Young Life and Baptist Student Ministries as a small group participant, a flute player in the Husky Band, and TRIO Student Support Services, a federally funded program that provides academic and professional support for underrepresented students. Being in TRIO these past two years has been a blessing as I have been able to grow as a leader, all thanks to the constant support and encouragement of the TRIO staff. Since my time at HBU I have made the Dean's List for two years, and now I serve

as the Lead TRIO Academic Peer Coach.

As a Spanish major, not only have I been able to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of my own culture, but I have been able to learn and be exposed to other Hispanic cultures. With my major, it is my goal to bridge the language barrier many people face in the Spanish-speaking community. I firmly believe that the classes I have taken here at HBU will equip me with the necessary knowledge needed to excel in my future career.

**Yoel Gonzalez '22**  
School of Nursing & Allied Health  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

As a first-generation college student, I am proud that I am the first in my family to become a nurse. I am natively from Cuba, and Spanish is my first language. I come from a humble background and a strong-knit family and also am a person who values family, friendship and loyalty. I have faced many adversities and hardships in my past, but have been able to overcome all of them to continue to achieve my goals, thank God.

I received the President's Scholarship and was a member of the local and National Nursing Student Association.

During my time at HBU, I was also a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. I was recognized on the Dean's List multiple semesters, volunteered in the community and helped with the Houston Food Bank. I am thankful for the foundation I received from Houston Baptist University in guiding me on the path to becoming the best professional nurse version of myself.



# HBU Alum Making a Difference in the Classroom



**T**wo years after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with ESL from Houston Baptist University (HBU), Darby Isereau is making a difference in the lives of her students. She was recently named "Campus Teacher of the Year" at Cottonwood Elementary in the Cleveland Independent School District.

From live butterflies in her classroom to an entire hallway dedicated to her student's work, Isereau has a special talent for finding something important to each child that she can connect with and celebrate.

A 2020 graduate of HBU, Isereau believes in identifying her students' unique capabilities and allowing them to achieve success on their own terms.

"Good teaching has to include differentiation because every child is capable of learning and achieving great things, but they have to do that in their own way and in their own time. There is never a dull moment and I never know what is going to happen next. That is why I am hoping to loop up with my students next year. They are all so amazing and I know we can continue to progress together," said Isereau.

The HBU alum discovered her calling for teaching after going on a mission trip to Haiti in 2016 and recognizing that students needed someone to advocate for them and also teach them to advocate for themselves.

She lives by the mantra of "progress over perfection." "I feel like this defines me as an educator because nobody is going to be perfect all day, every day, however each day everyone can make progress towards something greater," said Isereau.

Cleveland ISD administrators believe that the phrase, 'teaching is a work of heart' describes Isereau's passion for teaching and love for her students.

"Isereau is an incredible teacher who will positively impact hundreds of students and their families over the length of her career. We are proud that she calls Cleveland ISD her home," read a press release statement on the Cottonwood Elementary teacher's being named "Campus Teacher of the Year."

She values the years she spent studying at HBU and the support that she received from professors.

"I chose HBU because I felt I needed the small class size. I wanted my professors to know me and ensure that I wasn't just another student. I loved the amount of support that my education professors gave and for continuing to support me after I was no longer their student. My professors taught me early on how to connect with students, how to advocate for them, and how to make sure all of their needs were being met," shared Isereau.

The most fulfilling aspect of her studies at HBU was the time spent in the field at various elementary schools. "It was amazing being able to apply all of what I learned with students and gave me the opportunity to find my own style," said Isereau.

While at HBU, she led a mission trip to Haiti through BSM and Go Now Missions, an organization that engages college students to follow Christ and transform the world through evangelism, discipleship, missions, leadership and church life and completed two other missions trips to Haiti. She also was a member of Alpha Chi Honor Society and Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society.

Inspired by her students and HBU Assistant Professor Dr. Alaniz, Isereau recently added a special education certification to her credentials so she can better serve all students in her classroom. Her plans in the future are to pursue a master's degree to gain new skills to engage and support her students.

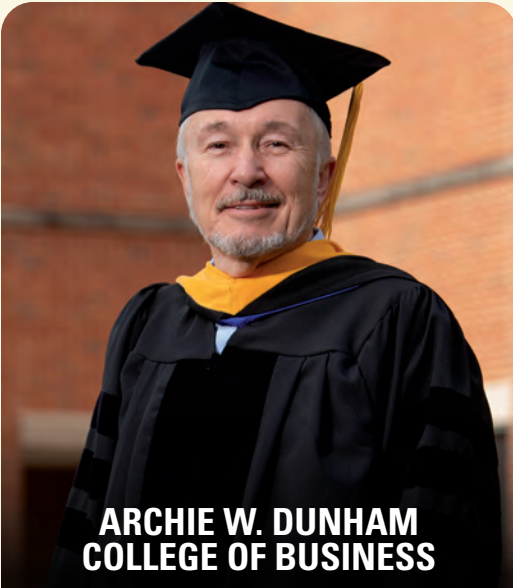


## Congratulations to Dr. Saul Trevino 2021-2022 HBU Piper Professor

**D**r. Saul Trevino, Associate Professor of Chemistry, is passionate about teaching and the science of learning. This passion stems from his intense desire to help his students succeed not only in chemistry courses but in all of their college courses. In the last four years, Dr. Trevino has presented at seven conferences related to post-secondary and chemical education and has co-authored a peer-reviewed paper on retrieval practice. His presentation topics included equity in the classroom, characteristics of approachable teachers, retrieval practice, teaching students how to learn, reciprocal tutoring, integrating faith and learning and interdisciplinary professional development. At HBU, Dr. Trevino has initiated collaborative learning groups for faculty centered on the scholarship of teaching and learning, including a Faculty Learning Community based on Dr. Sandra McGuire's book "Teach Students How to Learn." After reading this book and implementing

McGuire's intervention with his students, Dr. Trevino saw significant impacts on his students' metacognitive learning skills and success in General Chemistry. To build upon these promising results, Dr. Trevino led the interdisciplinary Faculty Learning Community in a study of the book and developed professional development workshops that help HBU faculty from diverse disciplines adopt metacognitive strategies in their teaching. This metacognition movement inspired faculty to lead the development and implementation of HBU's new campus-wide Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled "Mission: Metacognition." He has mentored 12 students in undergraduate research and is the faculty advisor for two student organizations, the American Chemical Society and the Navigators. Dr. Trevino also regularly forms and/or participates in groups that read and discuss books on a wide range of topics, and he looks forward to future learning journeys with faculty and students.

# HBU Celebrates 2021-2022 Piper Professor Nominees



**ARCHIE W. DUNHAM**  
**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

**DR. YURI YATSENKO** is an internationally-recognized expert in modeling and optimization of economic, industrial, and environmental processes, technological change and operations research. He published nine books and more than 200 papers in top-ranked scientific journals. Dr. Yatsenko earned his MS and PhD from Kiev State University (Ukraine) and a Doctor of Science degree from the USSR Academy of Sciences (Moscow). During his career, he was a professor at science, technology and business schools in Ukraine, Poland, Canada and the U.S. From 1997-2002, he held senior positions in data analytics and operations research at international companies in the U.S. and Canada. Since 2002, Dr. Yatsenko has been a business professor at Houston Baptist University (HBU) teaching information systems, data analytics, business mathematics, statistics, economics and international business. At HBU, he played an active role in developing new undergraduate and graduate programs and courses in quantitative methods and international business, managed college accreditation by SACS and ACBSP, served on various university committees, obtained and accomplished a NATO research grant, organized international student trips and wrote textbooks. Professor Yatsenko has been engaged in a successful long-term research collaboration with scholars from leading universities in the U.S., France, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Ukraine, Japan and Kazakhstan. He presented plenary and sectional talks at more than 50 international and national scientific meetings and conferences. He has also given numerous lectures for faculty and students at universities in the U.S. and abroad. As a prolific researcher, Professor Yatsenko is highly active and visible on the web: see his accounts in Google Scholar, Web of Science, ResearchGate, Scopus, ORCID and Academia.



**SCHOOL OF**  
**CHRISTIAN THOUGHT**

**DR. PHILIP TALLON** is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary and the University of Saint Andrews. He is the author of "The Poetics of Evil" (Oxford, 2012) and "The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith" (Seedbed, 2016) among other books. His essay "The Argument from Beauty and Play" appeared in "Two Dozen (or so) Arguments for God" (Oxford, 2018). He frequently writes and presents on the intersection between theology and the arts - his favorite topic. His film reviews can frequently be found in The Christian Research Journal. Prior to joining HBU, Dr. Tallon worked in campus and church ministry. He currently serves as the chair for the Theology and Popular Culture section of the Wesleyan Theological Society. Dr. Tallon came to HBU 7 years ago as the Chair of the Apologetics Department. Dr. Tallon served as Chair of this vibrant department, and as an Instructor in the Honors College, until his appointment as Dean of the School of Christian Thought in March of 2021. Dr. Tallon helped to launch HBU's first online program, the MA in Apologetics. He built classes and trained faculty, new to online, how to teach effectively in this new format. Dr. Tallon has also helped to launch remote-synchronous teaching at HBU through the construction of a prototype distance teaching room. As an Honors Instructor, Dr. Tallon particularly enjoyed mentoring his students, over 30 of whom have now graduated from HBU.



**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION &**  
**BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

**DR. DARBY HAWLEY**, Associate Professor of Psychology, has been teaching at HBU for 9 years. She enjoys teaching both residually and online in areas of behavioral neuroscience, pharmacology, cognition, scientific writing and research development. Since beginning her career at HBU, Dr. Hawley has had numerous publications and presentations at the international and local levels. Her research interests center on effective coping strategies for chronic stress that promote the integrity of the brain. Dr. Hawley enjoys serving on dissertation and master's thesis committees at HBU and offering APA writing workshops. She currently serves as the Program Coordinator for the Master of Arts in Psychology program, as well as the new Accelerated MAP program. Dr. Hawley is heavily involved in student success, with a passion for student advising, Freshman Year Seminar and Psi Chi. She was also one of the pioneering professors who began course development for online learning at HBU. In the classroom, she continuously brings innovative ideas to inspire and challenge students. In all of her courses, she is able to present complex subjects in an engaging, understanding, and relevant manner. As a result of her love for teaching, she was named one of Houston's top psychology professors. Her courses are designed for students to learn how to ask thoughtful questions, critique the information that they are exposed to, sharpen their problem-solving skills, and be able to effectively and respectfully communicate their opinions. Her teaching goals are to increase the impact and saliency of course content, while being salt and light for her students.



**SCHOOL OF**  
**FINE ARTS**

**MS. TIFFANY BERGERON** is the Chair of the Department of Visual Arts and the Program Coordinator for the Graduate MFA Studio Art program and BA/BFA Studio Art programs. Her teaching experiences include courses in Art History, Art Education and Studio Art including Life Drawing, Design, Experimental Painting, Color Theory and Printmaking for undergraduate and graduate students for the College of Arts and Humanities. Bergeron has been a Clinical Supervisor and Intern Supervisor for the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, designed all the online courses for the Department of Visual Arts, created an Art History Online Certificate for students and created the first interdepartmental degree in Graphic Design in conjunction with the Department of CNMA and Creative Writing. She holds a Master of Liberal Arts degree with a focus in Art History, a terminal MFA Studio Art degree specializing in Printmaking from Houston Baptist University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Sam Houston University in Painting. This year The Museum of Biblical Art in Dallas, Texas has selected her work entitled, "The Barred Owl," (2021, mixed media painting, 30" x 24") for their permanent collection. Bergeron has been invited to feature one of her paintings in the Ground Zero 360 exhibit which includes artwork from 50 world-renowned artists that explores their experiences of the events of 9/11 in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the terror attacks. Tiffany Bergeron's mixed media painting "The Nest," is part of this exhibit on display at the Museum of Biblical Arts in Dallas, Texas, and will remain part of the Ground Zero 360's permanent art collection which will travel nationally and internationally.



**COLLEGE OF ARTS**  
**AND HUMANITIES**

**DR. JEREMY NEILL**, Associate Professor of Philosophy, joined the HBU faculty in 2011. His teaching specialties include business ethics, medical ethics and political philosophy. Dr. Neill regularly receives high teaching marks and has been nominated for the Opal Goolsby Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. Neill became a teacher out of his love for students and his desire to reach young people for Christ and His Kingdom. An academic advisor for the Athletics Department, Dr. Neill is also the Program Coordinator for the Interdisciplinary Studies degree, a program which has graduated over 400 students since its inception at HBU in 2014. Among Dr. Neill's publications are over 25 articles for peer-reviewed journals, edited books, and popular publications. A longtime German speaker, Dr. Neill has translated several academic articles from German into English. Scholarly publications for which he has written include Faith and Philosophy, Philosophia Christi, Res Publica, and Philosophy and Social Criticism. His popular contributions have appeared in The Federalist, The Notre Dame Review of Books, Ethika Politica, Public Discourse and other venues. Dr. Neill's writings have covered topics as diverse as faith and politics, racial reconciliation, Christian sexual teachings, the 'New Atheism' and the life of Christian virtue. Dr. Neill regularly speaks at colloquia and conferences, having delivered over 50 academic presentations in recent years around Texas and the United States. Nothing makes him happier than to promote the Christian letters among his students, in academia, the church, and the culture, more generally.



**SCHOOL OF NURSING**  
**& ALLIED HEALTH**

**DR. SHONTA BELL** joined the faculty of HBU's School of Nursing and Allied Health in 2012 where she teaches across all academic nursing programs, including traditional BSN, RN-BSN and MSN. She has since been promoted to Associate Professor and holds the position of Department Chair for the School of Nursing. Dr. Bell brings with her 30 years of nursing experience which extends from caring for patients at the bedside to various leadership positions, and now, academia. She brings a broad background in nursing to her role as an educator. Dr. Bell received her PhD from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston where her research focus was mental health of adolescents. Her Naturalistic Inquiry exploration of school nurses' experiences working with adolescents who self-harm was extremely timely and her findings are important, with implications on the local, state, and national levels. Dr. Bell is committed to raising awareness of mental illness not only with adolescents but across the lifespan through service to HBU and in the community. Dr. Bell is a dedicated nurse and educator who believes that all roles in life should be approached with zest and commitment. She is truly one who role models (to students and colleagues) the program's core values: honor, integrity, glorification of God, humility, excellence and respect.

# Reflecting on My Journey

By Ritamarie C. Tauer,  
CPA, MACCT, SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

**A**s I anticipate my retirement, I find myself asking "Did I impact lives while at HBU?" I certainly pray I have.

Many of our alumni, and I count myself among them, are in promising careers and I believe their HBU education has provided them with the courage and wisdom to impact their world for God and good.

I feel very fortunate to have had many careers here at HBU and each, in its own way, has allowed me the ability to continue to grow in my career and in my faith. Houston Baptist University is a very special place, for so many reasons. My home for most of my time at HBU was the College of Business and Economics, now the Archie W. Dunham College of Business. In 1983, I enrolled in the Master of Accountancy Program; a program that totally changed my career trajectory. I had an undergraduate degree in Home Economics – Early Childhood Education and had always planned on a related career. I made certain assumptions about the HBU education I was about to receive with absolutely no basis, however, my assumptions proved true. I believe God's hand was definitely guiding me and I would learn the whys later. While in my program

I encountered the very best, most caring faculty I had known since my elementary education. My success in the program was important to my faculty and that success meant I would become an ethical, knowledgeable accountant who was non-wavering in my faith. I learned accounting was a good deal more than debits and credits and a good deal more than solely serving the shareholder. HBU faculty were also instrumental in my placement in a top public accounting firm after graduation as well as preparing me to sit for the CPA exam. My passing the exam was a tribute to my faculty (and some tutoring from my Dad). It should be noted when I graduated with my Master of Accountancy in 1985, my graduation brought the total number of HBU graduates to 3,860. The May 2022 graduation brought the total number of graduates to 24,570. We are having an impact, one student at a time.

I believe each of us has a responsibility to take precious care of our faith, our family and our mind, and in that order. I was taught early in life that one day, I would be held accountable for the care I took of each of the three.

After the birth of my second son, I decided the pace of public accounting was too intrusive on my family, and I

Rita Tauer presented with a certificate conferring emeritus status from Dr. Robert Sloan (right) and Dr. Stanley Napper (left).



enjoyed the wonderful role of a stay-at-home mom. After just one year, HBU stepped back into my life. I was invited to teach Intermediate Accounting; the one course that gave me the most grief in my own degree plan. Although terrified at the thought of walking into a classroom, I was honored to be invited and knew I had already witnessed what the responsibilities of an HBU faculty included, I hoped I would be able to live up to what I had enjoyed first-hand. The College of Business and Economics was supportive of my desire to be at home with my children while affording me the opportunity to have a career in academia. My schedule was flexible and my children and husband enjoyed many activities on the HBU campus over the years. Still today, HBU is a huge advocate of reaching out to her alumni to teach, mentor, and consult - who better to continue the legacy!

I remained a faculty member until June 2014 and during that time, I was honored to assume various additional responsibilities, which provided me exposure to graduate students, and afforded me leadership opportunities. I served as director of MBA Programs, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and interim dean of the College of Business and Economics; those were some of my

most memorable experiences. I thoroughly enjoyed the responsibility, and the relationships I built with the College faculty have become lifelong friendships. HBU is blessed with many faculty and staff who have 25-plus years of service; that speaks volumes for their love of their career and of HBU. In the spring of 2018, I had the privilege of seeing my son, Charley, teach his first course at HBU in the College of Business as an adjunct faculty member, what a special treat.

I have been fortunate to serve in positions where I have had the opportunity to influence the lives of students as well as faculty, and I pray I have had a positive influence on their lives and their faith.

In 2009, I had the privilege of working with our HBU Athletics leadership to prepare the

certification report for NCAA Division I membership. This was my first introduction to compliance and it served as another example of HBU always seeking what is best for our students. The return to NCAA Division I status has brought HBU athletics the recognition and exposure it so deserves.

For a brief interlude beginning June 2008, for 18 months, I had the special treat of launching and serving as the dean of the brand new College of Continuing Studies.



Charley Tauer, Rita Tauer, Thomas Tauer



MBA trip to Greece in Spring 2005

This was genuinely a lot of fun. The first class offered was Dancing with OUR Stars and those in attendance included President and Mrs. Sloan, several Board of Trustees members, faculty, staff and HBU friends. The HBU family is always supportive of everything "HBU."

I began serving in my current role as Associate Provost for Academic Operations in June 2010. Prominent in these duties is serving as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Accreditation Liaison. As such, I have the pleasure of working across the campus, including both academic and administrative departments to ensure compliance with the Principles of Accreditation. Most recently, this December, HBU was reaffirmed for another 10 years allowing us to impact yet more young lives with a faith-infused education.

As part of our annual assessment for SACSCOC, each year for the last twelve years, we assessed the progress of the University's Vision as so beautifully articulated in The Ten Pillars Faith & Reason in a Great City. What a treat to see the University's Vision come to life as we successfully accomplished goal after goal. We earned approval for NCAA Division I membership; launched

the new College of Engineering (now the College of Science and Engineering); created The Honors College; launched the Pinky Pampell Online Division; successfully completed a \$135.5 million dollar campaign; launched the creation of a new liberal arts core curriculum and created a Classics Department; constructed The Sadie & Doug

Hodo Residence College; added 27 new graduate degrees and 26 new undergraduate degrees, including launching our first doctoral program; the Doctor of Education in Executive Educational Leadership allowing HBU to move to the next level and become a comprehensive university; to mention just a few. We have since added three additional doctorates to our portfolio of graduate studies and I am confident the deans have plans for more. Dr. Sloan and other

University leaders are now preparing for the new Ten Pillars Vision, which will carry the University through 2030 and only the Good Lord knows what comes after that!

I have been genuinely blessed to be able to be a part of HBU's amazing growth over the last 35 years.

Ritamarie C. Tauer, CPA, MACCT Associate Provost, Academic Operations.



"Dancing with Our Stars"



## HBU Welcomes New Development Officer in Office of Advancement

**H**ouston Baptist University (HBU) welcomes Aaron Diehl in the role of Development Officer in the Office of Advancement and University Relations. An HBU alumnus, Diehl earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 2006 and brings proven management and

administrative skills to the position.

Prior to joining HBU, Diehl honed his skills in various management, financial and procurement roles for manufacturing companies in the oilfield services industry, including Vulcan Industrial and Black Horse LLC.

"Aaron's talents and his commitment to HBU will be an asset to our advancement as we launch The Ten Pillars 2030 and move forward with our capital campaign and strategic initiatives," said Sharon Saunders, Vice President of Advancement and University

Relations. "As a former Chair of the HBU Alumni Association Board of Directors, he has a heart for his alma mater and will be a valuable member of our team."

Passionate about HBU's mission and the University's role in the city and world, Diehl is excited to join forces in advancing the mission by growing relationships and connecting people with opportunity.

"To be able to come back to my alma mater in this capacity and help grow the University during these exciting times means so much to me. Dawgs up!" said Diehl.

He and his wife, Stephanie, a 2008 HBU alumna, established an endowed scholarship at HBU benefiting undergraduate students pursuing degrees in education. Besides HBU, Diehl's passions include exploring with his family, cheering on the Houston Astros, supporting the Arsenal Football Club and keeping up with all things Houston. He and his wife have two daughters, Elle and Kate.

## "The Living Word" shares daily readings on the history, influence and impact of the Bible



Dr. Diana Severance, Director of the Dunham Bible Museum, is showcasing her book entitled, "The Living Word," a collection of 366 daily readings that reflect on the power and impact of the Bible in history. Dr. Severance wrote about 30 stories on the Bible's history that were originally to be featured in short radio spots, an idea proposed by HBU President Edward D. Hodo to draw visitors to the Dunham Bible Museum that was not realized.

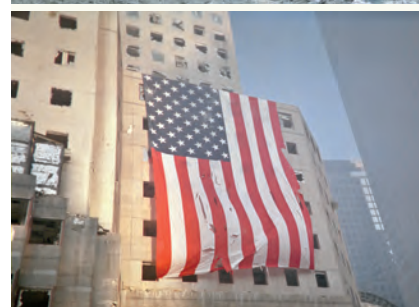
After writing "Her-Story," a collection of daily readings on the history of Christian women, Severance thought that a similar collection of daily readings on the Bible's history might be of interest and pulled out what she had written for Dr. Hodo and expanded them into 366 readings on the Bible's history, influence and impact. The readings are basically arranged chronologically, from the first through the 21st centuries. Each reading is followed by a Bible verse about the Word of God, which can also become a personal prayer, so that the living Word of God molds and shapes our lives to His honor and glory.

shares Severance in the book's introduction.

Through these daily readings, the book highlights the story of the Bible across time—its challenges, triumphs and its dynamic power and preservation against all odds. The stories and insights in these collected readings will inform, inspire and invite reflection. But most important, it will encourage readers to engage God's Word in new and interesting ways.

Leland Ryken, Professor of English Emeritus for Wheaton College describes "The Living Word" as "without doubt the most complete and amazing collection of information about the Bible and its influence in print." He adds that "The entries cover such an amazing variety that the book becomes a page turner, as we can barely wait to see what the next entry will place before us. The book is a triumph of unobtrusive scholarship and research."

The book is available on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and other online book retailers, and also at HBU's Dunham Bible Museum.



## 9/11 Remembrance Exhibit

**T**he terror attacks of September 11, 2001 changed the world and society in which we all live. The Ground Zero 360 Remembrance Exhibition features artwork from world-renowned artists, photographs by Nicola McClean, and personal artifacts of police officers and firefighters who lost their lives to convey the devastating toll of terrorism that words fail to adequately express.

The Ground Zero 360 Remembrance exhibition provides the opportunity for the generation born since 2001 to learn and understand what happened during those fateful days. Most importantly, it will provide the opportunity for people in the City of Houston to remember the

innocent people who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

The Remembrance Art Exhibit will open to the public at Houston Baptist University on September 10 and run through January 2023. On the morning of September 11, 2022, Houston Baptist University will host a worship service at Belin Chapel in remembrance of the victims of September 11th, followed by a memorial ceremony to honor the families of first responders who perished at the World Trade Center, Houston area emergency personnel, and Houston area military service members who assisted with the rescue and recovery efforts on the day of the attacks.



When Kaitlin Smith made the decision to make the long journey from Hawaii to HBU to join the track & field team, she thought she would be competing in more than one event during her time as a Husky, not realizing she would be competing in five events in one day or seven across two days, let alone becoming the school's first-ever female track & field All-American by the end of her collegiate career.



# Kaitlin Smith Makes Her Mark at HBU

When Kaitlin Smith made the decision to make the long journey from Hawaii to HBU to join the track & field team, she thought she would be competing in more than one event during her time as a Husky, not realizing she would be competing in five events in one day or seven across two days, let alone becoming the school's first-ever female track & field All-American by the end of her collegiate career.

In high school in Wailuku, Hawaii, Smith ran hurdles and did the long jump and triple jump. When it came to recruitment for college, she was told that pitching herself as a "multis" athlete would make her more valuable to college coaches.

"I thought being a multis athlete meant just more than one event," said Smith. "So I thought, 'Well, I can do that. I hurdled and jumped in high school so I'm good.' Then I get here and all of a sudden I have to learn to throw the shot put. I'm thinking, 'Are you kidding?'"

Despite having to learn a number of new events while also taking on the challenge of a college education, Smith has grown into one of the most decorated athletes in the university's history. She is a two-time All-American, an Academic All-America selection, Southland Conference Athlete of the Year, SLC Student-Athlete of the Year, and HBU's first three-time Jan Edds Female Athlete of the Year, just to name a few.

Smith spent her first couple of years on campus getting the hang of all that the pentathlon and heptathlon entailed.

"My first two years were pretty rough but then, I guess I got the hang of it pretty quickly," she said. "Total mistake, honestly, but it worked out for the best."

As she got the hang of new events like the shot put, javelin, 200-meter dash and the 800 meters, she was also learning how to deal with the rigors of the multis. In the USA, high school athletes are not allowed to compete in multis like their international counterparts are.

During those first two seasons, Smith drew inspiration from Grace McKenzie, a multis athlete from fellow SLC member McNeese. McKenzie was a standout student-athlete for the Cowgirls who would win a conference title in the pentathlon or heptathlon while also competing in open events, sometimes even earning additional medals on top of her multis achievements.

"I originally had this impression that I was in multis because I wasn't really good at one thing but could be above average at like seven different things. Then, one year at conference indoors I saw Grace (McKenzie) do the pentathlon and then everything in the open events," she added. "So I thought, well, if she could be good at all five events then I could, too. Seeing what she was doing is what kicked me into the next gear to work harder."

If evidence is needed of her ability to be excel in multiple events, Smith currently owns the program record in six different events.

Smith credits a strong summer dedicated to making big

gains in the weight room following her sophomore year with also helping to propel her to the top of the podium at the SLC indoor championships in the pentathlon in 2020, just before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The following year, she again won the pentathlon at the conference meet and missed out on qualifying for the NCAA Indoor Championships by a total of three points, a miniscule amount when it comes to the pentathlon.

In the 2021 outdoor season, Smith became HBU's first NCAA Outdoor Championship qualifier, heading into the heptathlon with the 22nd-best mark in the nation. She went on to place 13th and solidify her place as a second team All-American, the program's first. Smith also took the next step in indoor competition this past winter, making it a three-peat in the pentathlon at the SLC Indoor Championships and earning her spot at nationals. She placed 12th, picking up All-American honor number two.

In addition to her athletic excellence, Smith has been stellar in the classroom. She's already earned a bachelor of science in kinesiology and a master of science in sports management and is working toward a master of education in higher education. To top it off, she owns a perfect 4.0 grade point average for her collegiate career and earned Second Team Academic All-America honors in 2021.

Smith competed in the NCAA Outdoor Championships in the heptathlon held in Eugene, Ore. from June 8-11.

## SPRING AWARDS



**JAN EDDS FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**  
Kaitlin Smith – Track & Field

**ROBBIE ROBERTSON MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**  
Darius Lee – Men's Basketball

**FRANCES CURTIS & MILDRED BOONE SPIRIT AWARD**  
Daylin Metoyer

**GALDINO LUCERO SERVICE AWARD**  
Mariel Pena-Sanchez

**VARSITY ATHLETE ACADEMIC AWARD**  
Kristen Kley Meyer – Beach Volleyball  
Danielle Okeke – Beach Volleyball  
Zara Richardson – Track & Field  
Alison Stanfill – Beach Volleyball  
Sarah Venker – Softball

**SOUTHLAND ALL-CONFERENCE**  
Darius Lee – Men's Basketball  
Donna Finnie – Women's Basketball (Coach of the Year)  
Timia Jefferson – Women's Basketball (Player of the Year)  
Kennedy Wilson – Women's Basketball  
Julija Vujakovic – Women's Basketball  
Marilyn Nzoiwu – Women's Basketball (All-Defensive Team)  
Abbey Reinard – Beach Volleyball (Freshman of the Year)  
Shelby O'Neal/Gabi Axelrod – Beach Volleyball  
Kristen Kley Meyer/Lindsay Harris – Beach Volleyball  
Elise Parel – Women's Golf  
Lou Rousselot – Women's Golf  
Jackie Nguyen – Women's Golf  
Ben Caton – Men's Golf  
Caitlyn Brockway – Softball  
Shelby Echols – Softball  
Sarah Venker – Softball  
Haylie Savage – Softball  
Lyndie Swanson – Softball  
Andrew Reitmeyer – Baseball  
Austin Roccaforte – Baseball  
Jake Miller – Baseball



# Women’s Basketball Program Reaches New Heights

The HBU women's basketball team reached new levels of success in the 2021-22 season. For the first time in program history, they finished the season with the best record in the Southland Conference and became the first sport on campus to win a regular season title since HBU joined the Southland. Their participation in the Women's National Invitational Tournament (WNIT) was the first time the women's team has played NCAA postseason basketball in program history.

HBU was well represented in All-Conference voting and postseason awards from the Conference. Head Coach Donna Finnie was named Southland Coach of the Year while junior guard Timia Jefferson earned Player of the Year laurels. A full list of award recipients is listed below.

**Tough Non-Conference Schedule**

With such a tough non-conference schedule, the Huskies lost six of their first nine games to open their season with several narrow losses against the likes of TCU, New Mexico, Grand Canyon and Montana. The women's Southland Conference Preseason Tournament was canceled due to COVID just ahead of the start of the conference schedule, but the Huskies still felt they had a productive non-conference schedule that prepared them for the rigors of the SLC slate despite a 4-7 record.

**Dominating the Southland**

As it turned out, they were in a great place. There was no better team when conference play rolled around than the Huskies. HBU opened up Southland play in style when they scored a season-high 82 points on the road against the McNeese Cowgirls, led by Jefferson and N'Denasija Collins with 28 and 17 points respectively. Collins finished the game with a double-double and pulled in a career high 14 rebounds.

After starting the conference schedule with a pair of road wins, the Huskies dropped their first SLC game of the season at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. The Huskies then went on a tear to close out the regular season, winning 10 of their last 11 games, including avenging their loss to the Islanders. After trailing by 15 going into halftime, the Huskies outscored the Islanders 37-18 in the second half to win by four. That late season push helped cement HBU as the top seed in the conference tournament and a home win over McNeese to close the regular season saw the Huskies cutting down the nets and celebrating a championships.

As the top seed, the Huskies got a bye all the way through until the semifinals of the tournament. Unfortunately for HBU, they came up against a red-hot fifth-seeded UIW Cardinals team that had a Cinderella run through the tournament, taking home the crown.

**Postseason Play**

For the first time in program history, the Huskies were invited to participate in the WNIT. Their first round matchup was in Toledo, Ohio against the Toledo Rockets.

HBU opened that WNIT game cold from the field, shooting just 3-of-14 in the first quarter with Toledo jumping ahead 26-11. The Rockets also took early command of the boards, leading the category 18-5 in the quarter, but HBU countered with a 8-0 run to start the second quarter and got back in the fight, trailing by just seven points at halftime.

After again trailing by double-figures, the Huskies cut their deficit to just two but the Rockets, who would eventually fall in the quarterfinals of the WNIT, were able to hold off the Huskies and finish with a 61-51 victory.

**Award Winners**

Along with Finnie and Jefferson's awards, assistant coach Becca Allison was recognized by the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches as the Division I Assistant Coach of the Year. Guards Julija Vujakovic and Kennedy Wilson were named Second Team All-Conference while center Marilyn Nzoiwu was named to the All-Defense Team.

For the eighth time in the last nine years, the women's basketball program was named to the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Top-25 GPA list, earning a 3.621 GPA for the 22nd-highest average in the country.

At the conclusion of the season, Jefferson and Vujakovic were named the Southland Conference All-Academic First Team while Abbey Sutherland, Nzoiwu, and Wilson were named Second Team.

The Huskies will look to build on this season's successes, returning all five starters and the majority of the bench unit from last season along with the additions new recruits and transfers.



# HBU Unveils Plaque in Memory of Roger Willhite

HBU softball unveiled a plaque memorializing long-time assistant coach Roger Willhite, who passed away at the age of 76 on Memorial Day in 2021. The plaque will be permanently displayed at Husky Field.

Willhite served as head coach and Mary-Ellen Hall's assistant coach for 28 years, helping the Huskies to 767 wins and numerous post-season appearances. HBU finished the 2021 season strong and qualified for the Southland Conference Tournament for the first time since 2014.

During his tenure, HBU won nine Red River Athletic Conference Championships, made nine NAIA national tournament appearances and won the 2011 Great West Conference Championship. The National Fast Pitches Coaches Association honored Willhite as the "Assistant Coach of the Year" in 2016 and he and Hall were named the "Coaching Staff of the Year" in 1999 and 2005.

An Oklahoma native, Willhite lettered in baseball and tennis at Del City High School, before attending Central State University and the University of Oklahoma. Last year, he joined his daughter, former softball player Rachelle Willhite, in the HBU Sports Hall of Honor.





HBU President Robert Sloan with HBU Board of Trustees



Dr. Chris Hammons speaks to attendees



Stewart Morris, Jr., Dr. Chris Hammons



Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr.



Dr. Robert Sloan, Kristi Cooper, Executive Director, The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation

## HBU Marks Construction Milestone with Centennial Bell Signing Ceremony

The signing of a replica of the Centennial Bell marked a construction milestone for The Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty, a five-building complex that includes a main building modeled after Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Houston Baptist University (HBU) President Robert Sloan joined HBU Founding Father Dr. Stewart Morris, Sr. and family members, a representative of The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, HBU Board of Trustees, special guests, faculty and staff for a signing ceremony on Wednesday, June 1, to celebrate the final phase of construction on the main building. Dr. Christopher Hammons, Director of the Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty, shared highlights of the journey that inspired the building's construction and expressed appreciation

to the Morris family for making the complex a reality.

"The building stands as an outward and visible sign of our commitment as a University to teach our nation's founding principles and the Morris family's generosity and shared vision have made that possible today," said Dr. Hammons.

Dr. Sloan offered a prayer of dedication during the ceremony which included expressions of thanks to The Joella and Stewart Morris Foundation for the generous donations that enabled the project to come to fruition as well as the McNair Foundation and other donors. At the close of the ceremony, guests and attendees were invited to sign the replica of the Centennial Bell to mark the occasion.

The Morris Family Center for Law & Liberty is slated to open in mid-September.

## HUSKY PUPS



Caitlyn '15 and Preston Stanley '15 gave birth to **James Walker Stanley** on May 6.



Mackenzie '20 and Cody Moncure '17 welcomed their first child, **Cooper Garrett Moncure** on April 26.



**Amelia Porter '18** and her husband, Zachary, welcomed their second child **Opal Lorraine Porter** (right) on March 1. **Lydia Martin '13**, who is Amelia's sister, and her husband Shane also had their son 3 days later, **John Carl Martin** (left).



**Patience Primes '21** gave birth to **Peyton Primes** in December of 2021.



## The Office of Alumni Relations is excited to announce the creation of the Husky Pups club!

Husky Pups is a special club just for your children and grandchildren. Your kids will grow up surrounded by the same Husky community and spirit you grew to love as an HBU student or University friend. Give your favorite future Husky Pup an experience of a lifetime with fun events, traditions and benefits for ages 0-12!



For more information, email [basquezmb@HBU.edu](mailto:basquezmb@HBU.edu).

1970s

**Dr. Rhonda Goodman '75** was awarded the International Audrey Hepburn Awards for Contributions to the Health and Welfare of Children.

1980s

**Ronald Pizzini '85** is the Director of IS Enterprise Systems at Texas Children's Health Plan.

**Kimberly (Benson) Barker '86** is a Registered Nurse for Memorial Hermann Hospital.

**Rhonda Richter '88** is the Infection Control Nurse at HCA West Houston Medical Center and recently achieved Certification in Infection Control.

1990s

**Susan Zylicz '93** is the Vice President for Transplant Services at Houston Methodist Hospital.

**Joy (Johnston) Hebert M.Ed. '94** is retiring after 35 years of teaching.

**Carrie Hogue-Townes '96** is the Owner and Physical Therapist at The Rock Physical Therapy.

**Leslie Tripp Holland '96** is the Sr. Director of Marketing and Communication for the Alzheimer's Association GA Chapter.

**Lisa Augspurger '98** is a Teacher for Harmony School District.

**Andrea (Rodriguez) Dulany '99** is the Executive Director for Trees of Hope.

**Beatrice Garner '99** is a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate for HopeWorks Counseling.

**Marshall Heins '99** is the Senior Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration and Chief Financial/Business Officer for Houston Community College.

**Kel Vaughan '99** is the Pastor for Seaside Church.

2000s

**Melinda (Butt) Hatten '02** was promoted to Athletic Training Program Manager for the Walt Disney World Resort.

**Kristen Brid '03** published her new book *"The Night She Went Missing."*

**Astrud Leyva '03** is a Rheumatologist at Houston Methodist Willowbrook.

**Melissa Linton '04** is a Social Studies Teacher for Katy ISD.

**Derrick Owens '07** is the Senior Proposal and Business Development Manager at Siemens Government Technologies.

**Dr. Mordecai '08 and Daphne '10 Brownlee** are the President and First Lady of Community College of Aurora.

2010s

**Zulma (Blanco) Flores '11** received "Teacher of the Year" at Martin Elementary in Alief ISD and is a finalist in the District.

**Michelle (Adams) Alderfer '12** is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History Teacher at the John Cooper School.

**Angela Rojas '12** is a Teacher for Pasadena ISD.

**Maricruz Vasquez '13** is the Call Center Director at Freedom Solar, LLC.

**Garrett Sellars '14** is a Tactical Flight Officer and Co-Pilot for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**Taylor (Suarez) Mateja '16** is the Assistant Director of Alumni Relations at the University of St. Thomas.

**Guadalupe Rios, Jr. '16** is an Administrator for the City of Dallas.

**Dr. Pablo Siboldi M.A. '16, M.Ed. '18, Ph.D. '21** is the Assistant Principal for an elementary school in Aldine.

**Kerlin Sabogal '17** is an author and the president and founder of a nonprofit that helps students across Texas and internationally.

**Dayron Perez '18** is the Nurse Manager for the IMU & RAU at Memorial Hermann Katy.

2020s

**Kimberly (Harrell) Celestine '20** is a School Nurse for HISD.

**Ja'Lynn Manson '20** was promoted to Senior Undergraduate Admissions Counselor here at HBU.

**Bryan Johnson '21** is a Pastor and Church Planter at the Pillar of Grace Church Houston.

**Devony Malone '21** was promoted to Lead Sterile Manufacturing Operator at Empower Pharmacy.

**Megan Rickert '21** is a Registered Nurse at Ben Taub Hospital.



**Janet (Watson) Crews '70** went to be with the Lord on April 12, 2022.



**Kerry Roper '70** went home to be with the Lord on July 21, 2021. He was reunited with his bride, Vicki who passed away 2 days prior.



**Dorothy "Dot" Williams Elford '75** went home to be with the Lord on December 18, 2021. She was loved by so many, her classmates, her EDPi sisters, her friends and co-workers, and many others.



**James Davis '77** passed away on March 29, 2022.



**Carlos Cortez '86** passed away peacefully on June 28, 2021.



**Patty Thompson '87** went to be with the Lord on March 29, 2022.



**Israel De Los Santos '99** passed away on November 29, 2021.



**Linda (Cardwell) Richardson '03** went to be with the Lord on April 13, 2022.



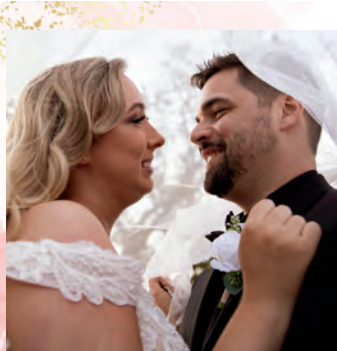
**Sylvia Rachford**, formally the Director of Graduate Admissions at HBU, passed away on April 13, 2022.



**Hellen Hamilton** formally President's Advisor at HBU, passed away on April 16, 2022.



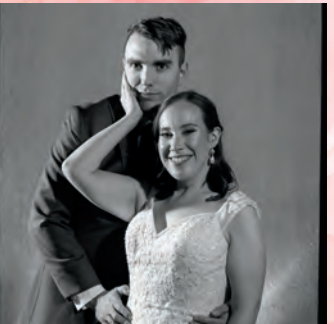
Let us hear from you! You are encouraged to submit your news items about yourself — promotions, marriages, births, travels and other bits of news — HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTOS WELCOME. Contact: [HBU.edu/AlumniUpdate](https://www.hbu.edu/AlumniUpdate)



**Jesse (Wright) O'Donovan '21** married Joseph O'Donovan on November 18, 2021.



**Monica (Perez) '20 and Jonathan Bernard '20** got married on January 8, 2022



**Alexis (Shelly) '12 and Jacob Rawley '17** got married on February 25, 2022.



## HBU Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Mary Ann Belin

**H**ouston Baptist University (HBU) celebrates the life and legacy of Mary Ann Belin who passed away on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, at the age of 92. Mrs. Belin and her late husband, Dr. Bruce Belin, Jr., were faithful and generous supporters of HBU throughout the years. Mrs. Belin was a longtime member and past president of The Guild from 1999-2000 and was named the 2013 Silver Tea Honoree in recognition of her many efforts in support of The Guild. She also served as an Advisory Trustee on HBU's Board of Trustees and participated in numerous campus organizations, including the American Museum Society.

"Mary Ann Belin's passing marks the loss of one of HBU's greatest pillars of strength and support. She joins her husband Bruce in the presence of Christ, and we mourn her departure. But we rejoice in her memory and the legacy of service that this generous, creative and entrepreneurial woman of faith has left all who knew her," said HBU President Robert Sloan.

Mary Ann Belin and her husband left an indelible imprint on the University through their generous support, including the creation of the Mary Ann Belin Endowed Academic Scholarship which has assisted students financially since 1981. Many important landmarks on the HBU campus, like the Hinton Center, are erect now due to the Belin's hard work and support. The couple was honored with the "Hallmark Alumni Award" in 2012. Mrs. Belin had a heart for

service and was the recipient of the Spirit of Excellence Gala's "President's Award" in 2016. Several landmarks on the HBU campus are named in the Belin's honor, including The Belin Chapel and Recital Hall. The couple joined forces with the Hamill Foundation to fit the chancel windows in Belin Chapel with stained glass designed by the renowned artists of Willet Hauser Architectural Glass, who designed stained glass for the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston.

She honored her husband's legacy and memory with a generous donation that funded the construction of Belin Tower and Belin Drive the connector road at the main entryway to the HBU campus. She leaves behind two children, Laurie Mahlmann and Greg Belin, six grandchildren and a host of friends to celebrate her life and legacy.

In lieu of customary remembrances, the family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions in Mary Ann's name be directed to Second Baptist Church, 6400 Woodway Drive, Houston, Texas, 77057; Houston Baptist University, 7502 Fondren Road, Houston, Texas, 77074; or to the Star of Hope Mission, 4848 Loop Central Drive, Suite 500, Houston, Texas 77081-2211. Please visit Mary Ann's online memorial tribute where fond memories and words of comfort and condolence may be shared electronically with her family.



## A Special Tribute to Isaac Simpson

By Candace Desrosiers

**T**o know our friend, mentor, professor and colleague, Isaac Simpson, was to love him, and you knew he reciprocated that love by the nickname he called across a campus setting in his booming voice to get your attention. If you were in a pinch with campus technology, he was your phone-a-friend! His laugh was infectious and his friendship was loyal.

"His love for students and faculty was ingrained in the work he did here at HBU," said Sandy Mooney, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer.

After a lengthy battle with cancer, Isaac passed away on Nov. 6, 2020. Shortly thereafter came requests from many for a way to honor him with a tribute on campus. Given his more than 35 years of service to HBU in the area of technology, a solar-powered Wi-Fi Smart Bench with USB and wireless charging ports became the clear choice. More than 50 donors stepped up to fund the memorial.

"This is a very thoughtful and fitting memorial to Isaac – not only because he loved technology and would have

loved putting it together – but because it is something for everyone," said Clay Porter, Senior Director, Media Technology.

On March 28, bench donors, family, friends, colleagues and students gathered on campus for the dedication. Located between the Morris Cultural Arts Center and the Hodo Residence College, the bench is on a well-traveled path that will serve our students, employees and visitors well.

"We are thankful to the Lord for his life. The text on the bench from Philippians 1:3, 'I thank my God for every remembrance of you.' I can't think of a better text to associate with Isaac; we thank the Lord for his life, his witness and all of his work," said Dr. Robert Sloan, President.

Closing out the dedication, Isaac's wife, Dorothy Simpson, asked that everyone save a little space in their heart to remember Isaac. Done. His mark on individuals and the University is indelible.

Candace Desrosiers or as Isaac called me: CanDANCE Defrosters.





## HBU Honors the Life & Legacy of Dr. Doris C. Warren

**H**ouston Baptist University (HBU) celebrates the life and legacy of Dr. Doris C. Warren, the longest-tenured Dean of HBU's College of Science and Mathematics (COSM) who passed away on May 22, 2022. She earned a bachelor's and master's degree in chemistry from Baylor University and earned a doctorate in analytical chemistry from the University of Houston.

"Doris Warren is one of the truly iconic figures in the history of HBU. Her high academic standards, commitment to students, and generous faith have been hallmarks of her 53 years of service. She will be greatly missed, but we remain inspired by her example, touched by the memories of her care for students and colleagues, and comforted by the clear testimony of her faith in Christ," said Dr. Robert Sloan, HBU President.

In her years of service to HBU, she was committed to excellent scholarship and ongoing learning in her field. She served in numerous roles, beginning as a part-time chemistry instructor for the, then, Houston Baptist

College, and continuing in a range of roles at HBU from assistant professor to full professor before being chosen in a national search to serve as the Dean of the COSM in 1997. She was lauded as a "treasure-trove of history at HBU," and as an administrator who knew "how to get things done" and offered "sensible wise advice."

She was a champion for her students, securing a National Science Foundation Grant for scientific instrumentation, and a Robert A. Welch Foundation Grant that provided more than \$750,000 for the Chemistry Department, in all securing more than one million dollars for her program. In 1991, she was recognized as the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation's Piper Professor for superior teaching at the college level in the state of Texas. The HBU Alumni Board of Directors created an endowed scholarship in Dr. Warren's honor and in 2019 she was awarded the rank of "Distinguished Professor." In addition to her scholarly accolades, Dr. Warren was a strong woman of faith who sought God's sustenance through weekly worship.

# HUSKIES GIVEBIG

**August 31 & September 1**

Family Weekend  
& **HOMECOMING**



# SAVE THE DATE



**October 14-15, 2022**