

# Link

THE MAGAZINE OF  
HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY  
FALL 2024



# A WARM WELCOME

The HPU family helps new students  
join the campus community

## GREETINGS FROM DR. CORY HINES '97, HPU PRESIDENT



With the end of the fall semester, I am enjoying the opportunity to look back over the past few months and all the ways God has shown His faithfulness to Howard Payne University. With each student who sets foot on our campus, God brings a wealth of talent and potential. I am

thankful He entrusts those students to us to nurture and cultivate, equipping them for the next chapters in their life stories as envisioned by their Author.

God loves good stories. The Bible, with its epic sagas, action, adventure, and poetry, tells just some of God's stories throughout time eternal. And He's still in the business of writing those stories today.

Through this magazine, we've had the privilege of capturing some of the stories God is writing through the lives of His people at Howard Payne University. In the pages that follow, you'll read about students, personnel, and alumni who are working to impact God's Kingdom for His glory.

You'll also read a brief timeline of HPU throughout its 135-year history. The story of HPU has been one of God's provision, grace, and unfailing love. I hope you'll feel, like I do, that the university has a very bright future indeed.

Blessings to each of you,

Cory Hines, Ph.D.  
President

DR. HINES PHOTO BY HEATHER NIX; OLD MAIN TOWER PHOTO BY REBEKAH STERLING '18

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## HPU names Dr. Mary Agboola as coordinator of new Office of Graduate Studies

Howard Payne University recently named Dr. Mary Agboola as the new coordinator of graduate studies and special projects in academic affairs. Dr. Agboola will oversee HPU's newly created Office of Graduate Studies. This office offers a consolidated contact point for HPU's four graduate programs.

Dr. Jill Heupel, associate vice president for academic affairs, is excited about Dr. Agboola's new role and the impact it will have on HPU's ability to serve graduate students.

"Establishing a unified Office of Graduate Studies under Dr. Mary Agboola's leadership significantly enhances our graduate programs by strengthening both recruitment and retention efforts," said Dr. Heupel. "Dr. Agboola will collaborate with the graduate program directors and deans to drive continuous improvement, facilitate the development of new graduate programs, streamline enrollment processes, facilitate recruitment efforts and foster a cohesive and dynamic academic experience for all

**"Establishing a unified Office of Graduate Studies under Dr. Mary Agboola's leadership significantly enhances our graduate programs by strengthening both recruitment and retention efforts."**

**- Dr. Jill Heupel, associate vice president for academic affairs**



**HPU names Dr. Mary Agboola as coordinator of graduate studies and special projects in academic affairs.**

graduate students."

Previously, Dr. Agboola was an associate professor of economics at Dar Al Uloom University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where she served for nine years. She holds a Master of Science degree and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in economics from Eastern Mediterranean University in Northern Cyprus. Dr. Agboola and her husband, Dr. Philips Agboola, a professor of engineering at HPU, have two children. In her free time, she enjoys traveling and historical sightseeing.

"My goal is to work toward an increase in student enrollment and ensure that our graduate programs attract students who are seeking Christ-centered advanced knowledge," she said.

HPU offers four graduate programs: Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Education in Sport and Wellness Leadership (SWELL), Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry (MATM) and Master of Arts in Youth and Family Ministry (MAYFM). All of these programs prioritize a Christ-centered education, personalized learning, affordability, flexible learning and mentorship. The MBA and SWELL programs are fully remote, while the MATM and MAYFM programs are offered in a hybrid format.

"The Office of Graduate Studies at HPU promotes a nurturing learning environment centered on Christian values and mentorship for graduate students," said Dr. Agboola. "Graduate studies at HPU provide students with the necessary leadership skills to advance their careers."

Applications are currently being accepted for all of the university's graduate programs. For more information, visit [hputx.edu/gradstudies](http://hputx.edu/gradstudies) or contact the Office of Graduate Studies at [graduatestudies@hputx.edu](mailto:graduatestudies@hputx.edu).

PHOTO BY BEN SARTAIN '23

## HPU receives \$3 million grant to support Hispanic and underserved students

HPU will receive a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education over the next five years as a part of the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) program. This grant, which is the largest in university history, will be used to assist Hispanic and underserved students through a variety of programs. The DHSI program, built on the four pillars of bridge, success, connection and completion, is an initiative that focuses on creating environments that support students and families of Hispanic backgrounds.

"This grant is a tremendous opportunity for HPU that will provide long-term impact for our students," said Dr. Cory Hines '97, university president. "We are thrilled to be able to serve our Hispanic students in new ways and provide valuable resources for them to succeed in their educational pursuits. During opening session this fall, our staff and faculty prayed together that we would receive the grant, knowing the importance and the high impact it would have for HPU students. We are grateful to the Lord for this answer to prayer. This is yet another indication of God's favor and blessing on our institution."

The HPU program, named "Centro de Exito" or Center for [Student] Success, will impact all areas of the HPU campus, including enrollment, academics, career services and more.

Funds from the grant will be used to support the new Dr. Diann Rozell Huber Center for Student Success (CSS) at HPU, which includes academic coaching, peer tutoring, learning assistance services, academic testing, academic

advising and mentoring. Three HPU faculty members recently obtained academic coaching certification from the Association of Coaching and Tutoring Professionals to provide services to students. Programs will be targeted to support Hispanic and underserved students through the CSS, with emphasis on first- and second-year experiences.

Additionally, HPU will develop a Summer Bridge Program to assist incoming students with tools to succeed before they begin college. Career service programs will be developed for undergraduate and graduate students. Funds will also be used for faculty and staff professional development, software updates and campus renovations.

"This grant provides momentum to further the emphasis on student success that has been initiated on campus," said Dr. Donnie Auvenshine '75, vice president for academic affairs. "Throughout the implementation of the grant, we look forward to an increase in enrollment and retention, increased graduation rates and a higher sense of belonging among students across campus."

HPU was named a Hispanic Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education in 2022. Currently, more than 25 percent of the student body is Hispanic. The designation allows HPU to expand financial aid options and support for Hispanic students, including grants such as the DHSI. The HPU funding request consisted of a 56-page application submitted in June 2023, in partnership with Marygrove Consulting, to the Department of Education.

## HPU begins renovations on Veda Hodge Hall

HPU recently began renovations on Veda Hodge Hall, the female residence hall on campus. The renovation project is estimated to cost a total of \$4 million and includes new bathrooms, featuring a bathtub in each suite, fresh paint and new flooring.

This year, \$2 million in renovations are taking place on the east wing of the building. Residents occupy the west wing of the building while the renovations take place. Then, the remaining \$2 million of the project will be completed on the other side of the building during the 2025-2026 academic year. This is the second set of recent updates to Veda Hodge Hall, following renovations to the lobby, completed in 2020.

Named for the late Dr. Veda Hodge, an alumna, trustee and benefactor, the facility was built in 1955 and has been in continuous use on campus for 69 years.

The Veda Hodge Hall renovation is part of an ongoing

effort to transform campus spaces to enhance the student experience at HPU. Last summer, Jennings Hall, one of the male residence halls, underwent renovations to the bathrooms. Updates were also recently made to Thomas Taylor Hall, the other male residence hall. Additionally, extensive renovations took place in all three buildings of the Newbury Place Apartments, on-campus residence facilities for upperclassmen. Over the past five years, more than \$16 million has been invested into renovations across campus and to athletic facilities.

For information on giving opportunities at HPU, visit [hputx.edu/give](http://hputx.edu/give) or contact the Office of Advancement at 325-649-8048.



# HPU celebrates Homecoming 2024 weekend

Howard Payne University recently welcomed alumni and other guests to the campus for Homecoming, which included Yellow Jacket Preview and Family Weekend. More than 1,000 students, alumni and friends enjoyed weekend events including the Homecoming parade, the HPU Family Picnic, the Alumni Choir Concert, Cobbler on the Campus, the Homecoming pep rally and more.

The 2024 Homecoming Court was announced during halftime at the football game. Named Homecoming Queen and King were Regan Noel, a business marketing major from Crosby, and Jack Shackelford, a finance major from Midlothian. The titles of Homecoming Princess and Prince went to Hannah Noel, a business management major from Crosby, and Blaine Onick, an accounting major from Rockport.

Also honored were this year's Homecoming honorees: Lauren Browning '10, Outstanding Young Graduate; Rev. Robert Cuellar, Dr. José Rivas Distinguished Service Award; Steve '77 and Carla '77 Evans, JAM Faithful Servant Award;

Loretta Houston '74, Coming Home Queen; Wilbert Rogers '75, Medal of Service; Kathy Strawn '70, Distinguished Alumna; and Dr. Joe Young, Grand Marshal.

"It was a blessing to see the campus filled with the HPU family during Homecoming weekend," said Dr. Kalie Lowrie '06, associate vice president for communications and alumni engagement. "We were able to honor several outstanding alumni, welcome prospective students and reconnect with many friends and family. We want to express special appreciation to our sponsors and our volunteers for helping make Homecoming a success."

**Visit [hputx.edu/homecoming](http://hputx.edu/homecoming) for updates on Homecoming 2025.**



1. Homecoming guests enjoyed Cobbler on the Campus. 2. HPU's Homecoming Court were (from left to right) Queen Regan Noel, King Jack Shackelford, Princess Hannah Noel and Prince Blaine Onick. 3. Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president, is pictured with honorees (from left) Lauren Browning '10, Loretta Houston '74, Dr. Joe Young, Steve '77 and Carla '77 Evans, Wilbert Rogers '75, Kathy Strawn '70 and Rev. Robert Cuellar. 4. The Mabee University Center was the site of Homecoming registration and numerous events. 5. HPU's Department of Theatre and Department of Spanish and Hispanic Studies presented "Hispanic Tales." 6. The Alumni Choir Concert was presented in Mims Auditorium. 7. Fraternity Delta Epsilon Omega participated in the Homecoming parade. 8. Tim '85 and Sharon Whetstone enjoyed the weekend's festivities.



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PHOTOS BY THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

# HPU alumna Brandi Parrish '96 receives Texas Baptists' 2024 B.E.S.T. Award

Howard Payne University alumna Brandi Parrish '96 was recently named by Texas Baptists as one of nine recipients of the Baptist Educators Serving Texans (B.E.S.T.) Award for 2024. Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president, presented the award to Parrish during a worship service at her church, Pursuit Church in Kilgore, on Sunday, October 13.

The B.E.S.T. Award is coordinated by Texas Baptists' Office of Cooperative Program Ministry and annually recognizes Christian educators who live out their faith among their students and their alma maters. The award recipients are alumni who represent one of the nine Texas Baptist universities, serve in faculty or administrative roles in the Texas public school system and are members of a church supportive of Texas Baptists.

Parrish teaches high school English in Kilgore and leads the student ministry at Pursuit Church. During her time at HPU, God gave her a passion for outreach and service, which is foundational for her life in ministry.

"Brandi is so deserving of this recognition for her commitment to education and ministry," said Dr. Hines. "She is an outstanding alumna and we, at HPU, are proud to see her service recognized in this way."

Parrish and her husband, Kelly, who is a 1997 graduate of HPU, have four children: Zachary, Noah, Joshua and Anna Faith. Their son, Joshua, is currently a freshman at HPU. The Parrishes returned to Texas in 2022 after serving



**Brandi Parrish '96 received the Texas Baptists' Baptist Educators Serving Texans (B.E.S.T.) Award for 2024 at Pursuit Church in Kilgore. The award was presented to her by Dr. Cory Hines '97, HPU president.**

as church planters in Colorado with the North American Mission Board. They planted four churches while serving there and recently launched Pursuit Church in Kilgore.

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 hpusports.com

**DO YOU KNOW A STUDENT WHO WOULD BE A GREAT FIT AT HPU?**

**LET US KNOW!**



Scan the QR code or visit [hputx.edu/referastudent](https://hputx.edu/referastudent) to help send someone on a life-changing journey through HPU!

DR. GIL PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ADRIAN GIL; DR. FERGUSON PHOTO BY BEN SARTAIN '23  
 PHOTO BY MELINDA HINES

## HPU El Paso Center Highlights



**By Dr. Adrian Gil, assistant vice president for the El Paso Center**

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) **Accreditation Review Committee** paid a visit to our HPU El Paso Center this past spring, before heading to visit the main campus for several more days. The summary of these visits is that HPU received zero findings with its compliance certification. Sting 'em!

In the weeks following the SACSCOC visit, **Dr. Cory Hines '97**, president, and **Dr. Dale Meinecke '98**, vice president for advancement, paid a visit to our El Paso Center. Their time with staff and donors was both informative and supportive. An organizational realignment was announced, resulting in new oversight for the center, and donors agreed to additional support for scholarships for local students.

To then cap the spring semester, the center celebrated with a **Graduate Recognition Ceremony**. Our summer 2023, fall 2023 and spring 2024 graduates were as follows: BAAS - Beatriz Munoz, Arturo Senclair, Fadi Carlos

Melendez, Samuel Lee and Maria Wright; MBA - Jesus Zaragoza and Mark Johnston; and MATM - Adam Drake, Damone Hopewell, Victoria Maldonado, Robert Wesley Phillips and Susan Zaragoza. Way to go, graduates; we are very proud of you! Thank you also to Dr. Rusty Wheelington, professor of Christian studies, for providing the message to the graduates as part of our beautiful ceremony.

Lastly, we would like to recognize the **2024-25 recipients of scholarships and assistance** solely available to students attending the HPU El Paso Center. Manuel Saenz received the Bertha R. Valle Annual Scholarship. Victor Alvarez, Carlyn Cloud, Jacob Gonzalez and Julie Stojack received the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation Scholarship. Arturo Soto-Rios received the Dr. Joe T. Poe Christian Studies Annual Scholarship. Omar Rivera received assistance from the Jeremiah 29:11 Fund. The Alicia Franco Scholarship will be awarded for the spring semester. Lastly, Sophia Cataudella, Valerie Cruz, Samantha Molina and Barbara White received the GECU Foundation Scholarship. Thank you very much to our generous supporters - and way to go, El Paso Center students!

## HPU New Braunfels Center Highlights



**By Dr. Cynthia Ferguson, assistant vice president for the New Braunfels Center**

The New Braunfels Center is delighted to celebrate the accomplishments of **four 2024 graduates**. Graduating in fall 2024 are Daniel (Danny) Pape (BAAS, General Studies) and Kirsten Carreon (BAAS, Business Administration). Our summer 2024 graduates are Jinny de los Santos (BAAS, Criminal Justice) and Aaron Heatherly (BAAS, Christian Studies [Composite Concentration]). We are so proud of their dedication to their education over the years and pray for them. The School of Christian Studies welcomed two NB Center graduates into the **Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry program** - Aaron Heatherly and Daniel (Danny) Pape! The School of Business welcomed Greg Pelton into the **Master of Business Administration program**.

This fall, the New Braunfels Center continues to focus on community service by offering **two informational sessions** to assist families in transitioning from high school to higher education. On October 22, Karen LaQuey, director of financial aid, presented "FAFSA Simplified" for area high school (public, private) and homeschool families. On November 18, Megan Proctor, assistant

director of admissions and transfer admission counselor, provided a valuable session titled "College How-Tos from a Homeschool Mom turned University Admission Counselor" for area home-school families.

During the week of September 23-27, Helena MacCrossan, admission counselor, and I alternately covered **eight college fairs** in the Central Texas area. This year, Carolyn '78 and Pat (Patrick) '80 Webb, Jacket Alums in Ministry Ambassadors (JAMA), joined me at the college fair hosted by The Christian School at Castle Hills. It was fabulous having alumni speak to students about the "HPU Experience." In addition to these college fairs, the HPU NB Center is now recruiting transfer students twice monthly at the Alamo Colleges' Northeast Lakeview campuses in Universal City and New Braunfels.

The New Braunfels Center's expanded academic offerings now include **psychology (BA/BS) and an Associate of Health Science degree**, which were added to align with our region's continual growth in the health-care industries and health-related services.

**Civic engagement** represents a commitment to a community, and this summer the Republican Club of Comal County selected HPU to establish a \$1,000 educational scholarship for civically engaged students pursuing degrees through the New Braunfels Center. Thank you!

# CELEBRATING 135 YEARS OF HPU

The story of Howard Payne University began in 1889 when, prompted by Rev. Noah T. Byars and Dr. John D. Robnett, the Pecan Valley Baptist Association elected to establish a Baptist college in Brown County. They named the college after the first major benefactor, Edward Howard Payne.



1889

The decision is made to establish a college in Brown County.



1890

The first day of classes takes place.



1891

Old Main, Howard Payne College's primary building, is completed.



1895

The first degree is given to J.D. Robnett Jr., son of Dr. John D. Robnett.



1903

HPC begins intercollegiate athletics.



1913

"Yellow Jackets" becomes the official HPC nickname.



1922

L.J. Mims Auditorium opens.



1953

Daniel Baker College consolidates with HPC.



1962

The Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom is established.



1974

HPC becomes Howard Payne University.



1978

The J. Howard Hodge Memorial Bell Towers are constructed.



1991

HPU opens its El Paso extension center.



1996

The newly redesigned Yellow Jacket Mascot is named "Buzzsaw."



2001

Old Main Tower is constructed in memory of HPU's first building.



2013

HPU opens its New Braunfels extension center.



2022

The Newbury Family Welcome Center opens as HPU's "front door."



2023

The renovated Douglas MacArthur Academy of Freedom reopens.



Today

The newest Yellow Jacket decides to attend HPU!

## Why Woody '80 and Miki (Mieth) '80 Martin faithfully give back to the school they love

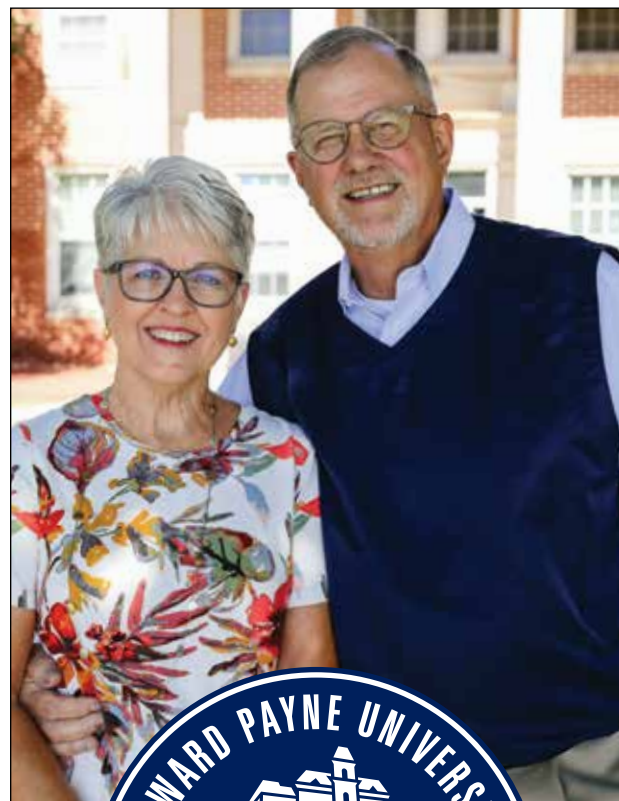
By Dr. Kalie Lowrie '06

Woody '80 and Miki (Mieth) '80 Martin have been connected with Howard Payne University for more than four decades. You can often find them at an HPU athletic or alumni event in conversations with others about what God is doing at HPU. They have seen God move in their lives and the lives of many they know through HPU, which is why the couple continues to faithfully invest in their beloved alma mater.

When Miki was in eighth grade in Seminole her next-door neighbors had a son who was playing football at Howard Payne. They invited Miki to come to Brownwood to watch a game. She had never heard of HPU before, but she knew from the moment she stepped on campus that this was where she was supposed to go to college.

When she came to HPU her freshman year, Miki was interested in a band scholarship but ended up trying out for the new volleyball team that had just started one year before. She made the team and started as a setter all four years of college. After her first year at the university, she was on a mission trip to Peru and had been praying about whether she should return to HPU. She woke up in the middle of the night and had an overwhelming confirmation that she was supposed to go back to HPU. She went to her parents and shared with them that she knew God wanted her to be at Howard Payne.

Woody had a friend from his hometown of Athens who came to play football at Howard Payne. After seeing his friend enjoy the school, Woody decided the next semester to transfer from the junior college where he was playing football to come to HPU. While football was what brought Woody



to HPU, getting involved in Jackets for Jesus and being disciplined by friends were what kept him at the school.

"I came for football but it was because of the people I met who loved me and poured into me that I stayed," he said.

Woody and Miki were education majors and met each other in Dr. Merlin Morrow's Foundation of Physical Education class in the fall of 1977. Dr. Morrow was a wonderful mentor for both of them as they pursued their degrees. Woody and Miki went to Homecoming together that fall and were married in the summer of 1980.

After graduating, Woody took his first coaching job at Rosebud-Lot High School and Miki began teaching. A few years later, they moved to Dallas and began teaching at First Baptist Academy. During that time, the couple had two children – Ben '04 and Sarah.

During those years, they faced several difficult challenges but God was always present in their lives. Their church family and parents in their school encouraged them greatly.

"Even though we had tough times, God has been faithful and continues to teach us," Miki said. "Christian leaders in our lives were so impactful. My dad and his ministry – just seeing these strong Christian leaders throughout my lifetime and our married life was such a blessing. That's why Howard Payne is important to us. We must have Christian leaders in this world."

One day in 1988, Dr. Don Newbury '61, who was then HPU's president, called and asked if they could come back to Howard Payne. There was a resident director position open at Taylor Hall, Woody would be able to help coach football and

Miki could coach the volleyball team. The experience also gave Woody the opportunity to drive back and forth to Stephenville to take master's classes. The Martins loved the year at Howard Payne and the opportunity to pour into students. Their children also loved living on campus, eating in the Veda Hodge Hall cafeteria and spending time with students.

They then moved to Groesbeck for a new opportunity. Throughout the rest of their career in education, Woody and Miki served in several other communities. Woody went on to serve in administrative roles and Miki faithfully taught wherever they lived. They were also always involved in church and ministry.

Many years ago, Woody was struck by a story from Dr. Newbury about his faithfulness to give back to Howard Payne every month from the time he graduated in the 1960s. Even if it was \$5, he was faithful to give. That spirit of generosity was something Woody wanted his family to continue and, when they were able, the Martins began giving back to their alma mater.

"It's in our DNA to have a heart for and to do missions at Howard Payne," said Woody. "I feel like when I give here, some student who doesn't know about Jesus is going to be introduced to Him. The Holy Spirit gets to do His work. Some kid like me who already knew Him but needs to grow in his faith will be disciplined. There's a mission field here that is huge. We are about Kingdom work."

Now in retirement, the Martins remain active in a variety of roles such as volunteering with the International Commission to do evangelistic work around the world. Miki serves on the HPU Alumni Association Board of Directors and Woody serves on the Glen Rose School Board. They fill a lot of their time supporting their three grandsons in school and athletic events around the state.

Woody has also started the HPU Former Players Association to encourage former classmates and student-athletes to reengage with the Jackets. At the beginning of each school year, he fires up the grill and smokes barbeque for more than 200 student-athletes as they move back on campus.

"There were times in our life when we made it month to month," Miki said. "Now that we do have more than we need, we can look back and remember. When God gives us opportunities to give, then we see that this is why God has given us what He has – to use it for His Kingdom and to be faithful to whatever He says to do." ■

To find out more about the Howard Payne University Alumni Association and related activities, please visit [hputx.edu/alumni](http://hputx.edu/alumni).

## KEEP HER COLORS EVER FLOATING



Join the annual Gold and Blue Alumni Alliance for \$50 and band together with other HPU graduates in continuing to offer life-transforming education at HPU.

From your gift, \$25 will support the Alumni Association and \$25 will be given to the fund of your choice.

Member benefits for 2024-2025:

- Alumni car decal
- Free gift at a regional alumni event
- HPU rate at Best Western Plus (\$134 a night) in Brownwood
- 10% alumni discount at the Stinger Store
- Free admission to the Homecoming Picnic (\$10 value)
- 10% discount at Beadel Dining Hall and Fambrough's café



To join today, scan the QR code or visit [hputx.edu/goldandblue](http://hputx.edu/goldandblue).

PHOTO BY REBEKAH STERLING '18

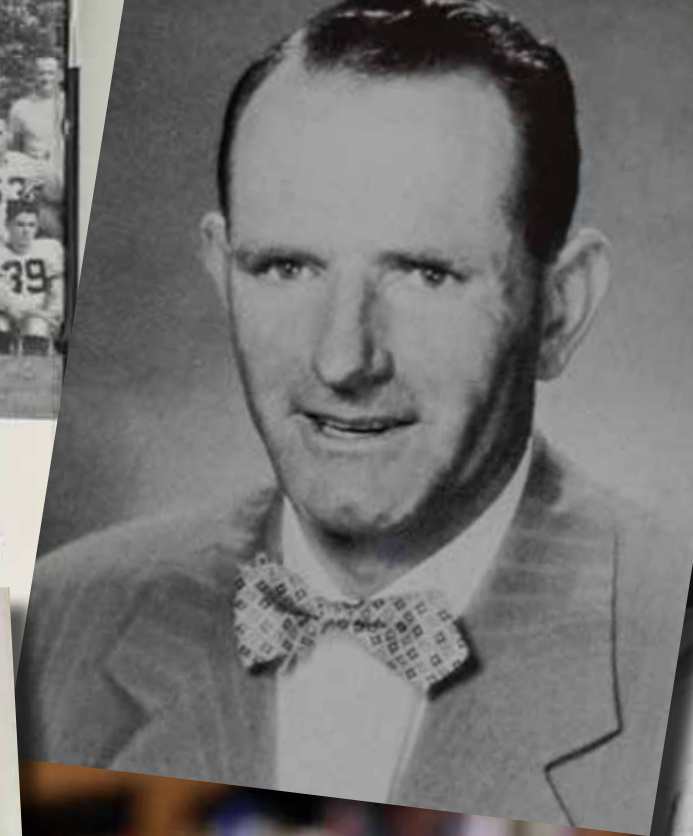
# HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY ARTIFACTS

**DATE** : 1954 (70th Anniversary in 2024)

**TYPE** : Conference Champions, Football



## Texas Conference Champions



by **Dr. Robert Mangrum, professor of history and government and university historian**



This year's Homecoming marked the 70th anniversary of the HPC 1954 Texas Conference Football championship season. Pictured are images of Coach Guy Gardner and the team from the 1954 and 1955 *Lasso* yearbooks as well as a photo of the 1954 championship trophy.

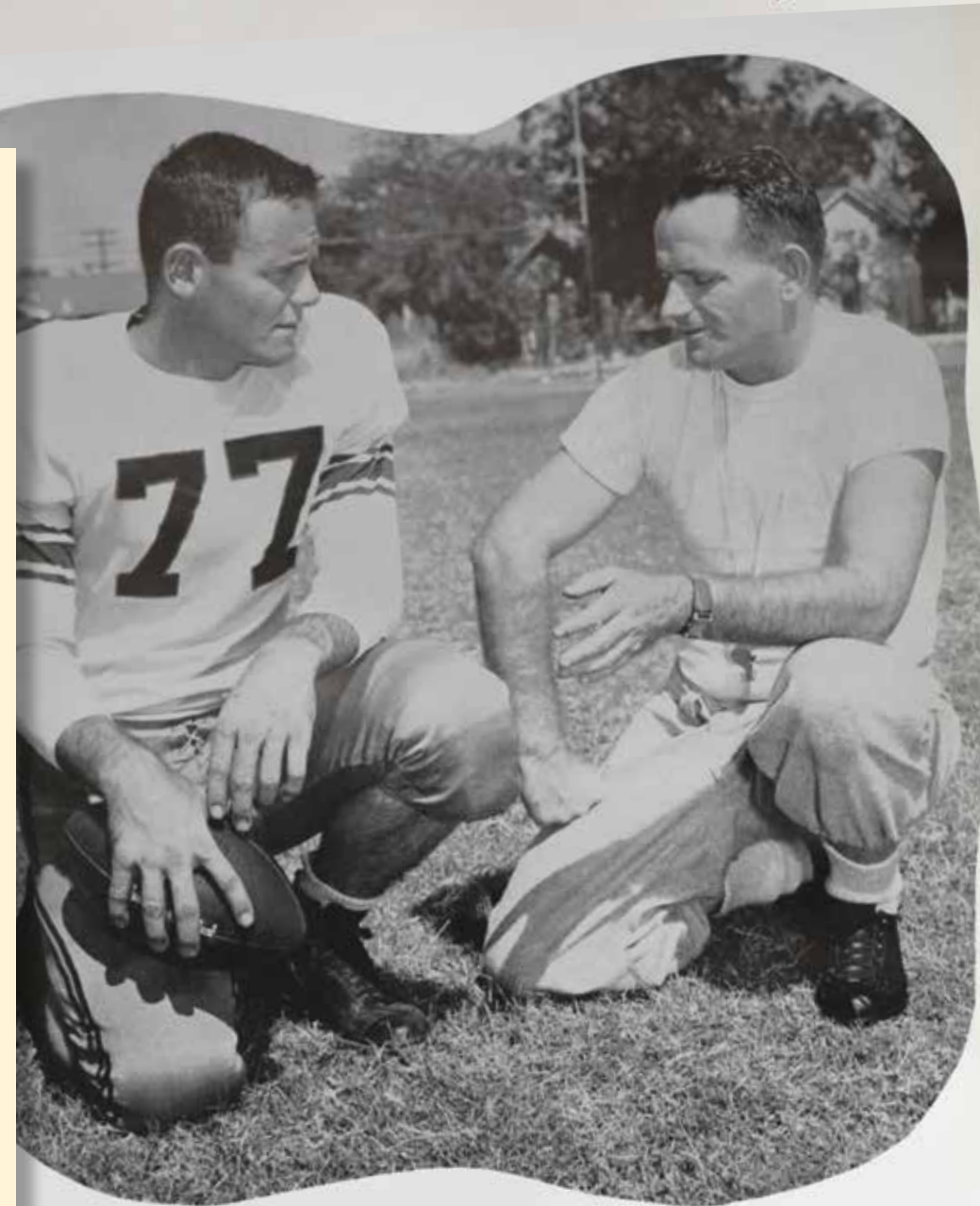
When HPC's football camp began, Joe James, 200-pound senior from Spur, was elected season captain with the co-captain being appointed by the coaches before each game. James was a two-year letterman and also served as captain his junior year. Considered a main bulwark of HPC's line, Joe was also a candidate for Little All-American honors. Other standouts included Jerry Millsapps, junior from Lamesa, at quarterback; Curtis Cozby, sophomore fullback from De Leon; Doug Johnson, junior halfback from Cisco; Charles Grimland, junior end from Spur; Louis Holt, sophomore end from Brownwood; and Harold Garms, junior end from Andrews.

The squad, led by Guy Gardner, athletic director and head football coach, was coming off a dismal 3-6 campaign in 1953. In the 1954 season, however, the Jackets went 9-1, earning the championship and a slate of individual awards.

The football season featured wins over the Cowboys of McNeese State in Lake Charles, Louisiana (by a score of 38-7); the Sam Houston State Bearkats (13-7); the Southwest Texas State Bobcats (28-13); the Aggies of New Mexico A&M in Las Cruces (34-7); the Tarpons of the University of Corpus Christi (53-7); the Greyhounds of Eastern New Mexico (33-0); the McMurry Indians (13-6) at HPC's Homecoming; the Sul Ross Lobos (20-2); and the Abilene Christian College Wildcats (26-13). The only loss was against the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs (13-7).

The postseason honors garnered by this team were phenomenal. Joe James was elected to the second Little All-American team. He was the only Texan appearing on the list. HPC placed five on the All-Texas Conference team: James, Jack Browning, Robert Beal, Louis Holt and Jerry Millsapps. In addition, five were placed on the second team: Kenneth Thompson, Leland Maples, Robert Jackson, Doug Johnson and Dave Smith. Head Coach Gardner was voted the conference Outstanding Coach of the Year.

**Dr. Robert Mangrum published an account of HPU's history titled *For Howard Payne My All: 125 Years of Christian Higher Education and Service, 1889-2015*.** The book, which took 17 years to write, celebrates the university's history since its founding in 1889 and is available for \$30 on DVD or USB flash drive. Contact Dr. Mangrum (rmangrum@hputx.edu) for details. All proceeds from the book's sales support an academic scholarship at HPU.



Captain Joe James and Coach Guy B. Gardner talk over the season's record. Coach Gardner was selected as the Texas Conference Coach of the Year. During his second year as head coach of the Yellowjackets, Coach Gardner took a sophomore-laden squad and produced the conference champions. This was Joe's second year to captain the team. He has proved himself a capable leader as well as a proefficient football player. James was on the Little All-American second team, NAIA All-American, All-Texas College Eleven, All-Texas Conference for two years, Williamsoms Mid-Bracket All-American, and was selected to represent Howard Payne in Who's Who in American Colleges.





The Walker Memorial Library provides access to more than 600,000 print and electronic books and more than 100 research databases. In addition to offering students comfortable study spaces designed to suit both collaborative and quiet learning styles, the library is home to the Dr. Diann Rozell Huber Center for Student Success, the Treasure Room and the Heart of Texas Literature Center.

CAMPUS  
CLOSE-UP

# Walker Memorial Library



PHOTOS BY REBEKAH STERLING '18

The Walker Memorial Library was named in honor of J.A. and Mary Elizabeth Walker. J.A. served as a Howard Payne trustee for 45 years and was a generous friend of the college. His financial support through the years helped guarantee the future of HPU.

Since its opening in 1952, the library has played a key role in the academic life of HPU students, providing important resources for study and research.

The library has continued to evolve over the years to best suit the needs of current students through additions and updates such as modern technology and many electronic resources.

In 2023, HPU completed the Dr. Diann Rozell Huber Center for Student Success, located on the second floor. The center provides students with academic coaching, tutoring and more.

To contribute toward ongoing improvements of HPU's facilities, visit [hputx.edu/give](http://hputx.edu/give).

# WRONG BOX, RIGHT CHOICE

God used misdirected test scores to lead  
Henry Batson '97 to HPU

by Ben Sartain '23

For Pastor Henry H. Batson III '97, Howard Payne University wasn't the school he thought it was. In fact, as a senior in high school he'd never even heard of HPU – but that wouldn't keep the university from changing his life.

In his college search process, he accidentally checked the box for his SAT test scores to go to HPU instead of another university that he'd meant to select. This resulted in Batson receiving an unexpected call from his HPU admission counselor, Calvin Franklin, who built a relationship with Batson.

"I set up my visit," Batson said, "and my parents and I all loved Howard Payne."

Batson, founding pastor of Faith Fellowship Church in Red Oak, put his faith in Christ at a young age and accepted a call to ministry at 18, preaching his first sermon just a few weeks before coming to HPU.

As a student, he majored in business, while also taking many Bible classes. He didn't expect to work full time in ministry and chose a business major for its versatility. Looking back, he's thankful for how his business skills were developed at HPU.

"There's certainly a business side of the church that is almost as important as the spiritual side," he said. "The gospel being preached is more important, but if you don't handle the business there won't be a place for the gospel."

Outside of the classroom, one of Batson's major campus activities was his leadership in the Baptist Student Ministry. Dr. Don Newbury '61, HPU president at the time, approached Batson about creating more opportunities for African American students to get involved on campus. Batson shared a proposal with Dr. Newbury to create a

gospel choir. While Batson isn't a singer, his managerial and relational skills were critical in helping this group connect with service opportunities as they traveled all over Texas performing in churches and sharing HPU promotional materials, as well as through on-campus performances held to engage current students.

Another critical component of Batson's student experience was his local church involvement. As a freshman, he connected with Brownwood's Mount Zion Baptist Church.

"It was love at first sight," he said. "I immediately fell in love with the people, which is, I think, how you ought to feel when you go to church."

He served with Mount Zion as youth pastor all four years that he attended HPU and, after he'd been working with the church for a while, was also given assistant pastor responsibilities. Dr. Kelvin Kelley, lead pastor of Mount Zion at the time, took on a pivotal mentorship role in Batson's life.

"Dr. Kelley was one of the most influential people in my ministry," he said. "He's a friend to this day."

During his student years, Batson also met his future wife, Melonye (Williams) Batson. They were introduced by her brother, an HPU football player. She's had a major role in her husband's ministry.

After graduation, he spent a few months working in business but soon realized that God was calling him to work in full-time ministry. He began serving as youth pastor at Dallas' Friendship-West Baptist Church (FWBC) in 1998 as he pursued his Master of Divinity degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. During his time at FWBC, Batson also started the church's college ministry.



**"I'M SO GLAD  
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Henry Batson serves as the senior pastor of Faith Fellowship Church in Red Oak.

After 18 years serving at FWBC, Batson took a sabbatical, during which he felt a strong urging from the Lord to start a church. He shared this with his wife on a vacation the following week.

"I told Melonye, 'God told me to start a church,'" Batson said. "And she said, 'Great! Are we leaving when we get back?' She was 100% on board, and I couldn't have done it without her."

In 2016, the Batsons founded Faith Fellowship Church. Since opening its doors, the church has seen steady growth and had frequent baptisms.

Many of Batson's business skills have not only been essential to leading Faith Fellowship but also to his other leadership roles, which have included Red Oak Chamber of Commerce

president, chaplain for the Red Oak Police Department and president of the Texas Baptists African American Fellowship of Churches. Melonye Batson currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Red Oak Chamber of Commerce.

In 2022, Batson returned to HPU to preach a chapel message, which he had last done as an HPU student.

"It was really cool to be on that stage again," he said, "and I was excited to see the upgrades to campus."

Returning to campus gave Batson an opportunity to reflect on how God led him to HPU and, through HPU, prepared him for over three decades of ministry to date.

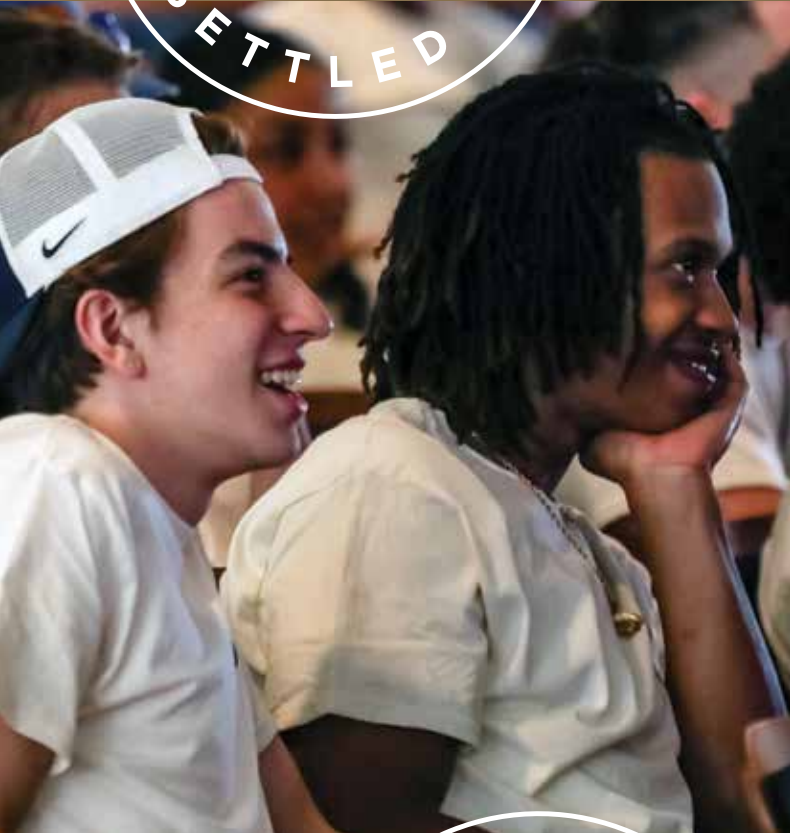
"I'd never heard of Howard Payne," said Batson. "I just checked the wrong box. But I'm so glad that I came to this university – it's one of the better decisions I've made in my life." ■

PHOTO BY BEN SARTAIN '23



**The HPU family helps  
new students join  
the campus community**

# A WARM WELCOME



**Story by Coby Sauce, MBA '14 • Photos by Rebekah Sterling '18,  
Ben Sartain '23, Julia Catlett '21 and Kyle Mize**





**D**uring her three-hour drive to the Howard Payne University campus on the morning of move-in day, Cate Gramling of Rowlett didn't experience the same nervousness she had felt in the weeks leading up to the big event in August.

"I was just really excited to meet people and take the first step in having a life out here," she says.

For others, the feelings of excitement were tempered with nerves.

"I hadn't cried any of the other days before, but I did the morning of move-in

day when I had to say goodbye to my dad," says Iza Harrison of Priddy. "But I've made so many friends in the weeks since then. Campus life is great!"

Whether new students feel excited or nervous or a combination of both, HPU offers a full slate of welcome activities through a weekend-long event called Jacket Journey, which introduces students to each other, to upperclassmen leaders and to the campus and local community that will become their home for the next four years.

Move-in day allows new students the opportunity to find a sense of belonging on the HPU campus. As the new Yellow Jackets

and their parents arrive at HPU's residence halls, they are greeted by volunteers comprised of HPU personnel and returning students. Volunteers help to unload belongings and pass out water bottles while incoming students get settled.

A highlight of that afternoon is the Chime In ceremony, in which new students enter through the Wilson Gate on Center Avenue, officially marking their arrival as HPU students. As seniors, the students will "Chime Out," signifying the end of their time on campus.

Following Chime In, students say goodbye to their parents and spend their first

evening on campus. Before they retire to the residence halls, they enjoy a picnic dinner at the home of Dr. Cory '97 and Mrs. Melinda Hines, HPU's president and first lady.

"The best part of my first week at Howard Payne was definitely the cookout at the Hines' home," says Cate. "It felt like I met the most people there and met lots of faculty who I see often now."

Jacket Journey additionally included small-group activities, a church fair attended by representatives of 13 local churches, a business fair, outdoor games, a campus worship service and a street party during which campus organizations highlighted



the many ways students may choose to get involved.

Bo Barrett, a transfer student from Palestine, says he enjoyed the Jacket Journey events.

“I am really enjoying life on campus,” he says. “I attended Jacket Journey and think it was a cool event. Getting to meet people and get familiar with the campus during those days was a really helpful way to start out the year.”

Iza says Jacket Journey was her favorite part of her first week on campus.

“I do recommend it for other students as well because it is a really great way to meet

new people who are in the same boat as you,” she says.

Thanks to residence life and Jacket Journey, when students start their first week of classes they’ve already had opportunities to make friends and build community.

“Classes are going amazing right now,” says Bo. “I love going to class and getting to hear the discussions, even if I’m not the one doing the talking. I love getting to hear other people’s input and thoughts.”

Events hosted by dozens of campus organizations continue to provide outlets for students to get involved throughout the year. One of the university’s oldest traditions,

Daze of Payne, is an optional relationship-building event during which students don blue-and-gold beanies and participate in a week of fun and games designed to demonstrate school spirit.

The three students mentioned have all found ways to make the most of their first year as HPU Yellow Jackets – Iza through band and cheerleading; Cate through the Baptist Student Ministry, intramural sports and the Women to Women mentoring program; and Bo through the Delta Epsilon Omega social organization. Even more than that, they’ve discovered the peace that comes with the assurance that God has

them where He wants them.

“I visited two other schools before choosing to attend HPU, but neither felt like the right fit for some reason,” says Bo. “When I visited Howard Payne, there was something that made it feel like the right place for me, and I fully believe that it is.”

Cate says attending HPU is a decision that has been reaffirmed every day since.

“I’ve had so much peace since I’ve arrived on campus,” she says. “I can really see the Lord’s hand in the opportunities I’ve had, and the people here have loved me well. It really makes me feel like I made the right decision in choosing to come here.” ■



## Faculty members Chuck, Tricia and Kenan '02 Boland serve students together at HPU

# Family values

**By Kyle Mize**

**Pictured above, from left: Longtime HPU faculty member Chuck Boland shares a laugh with Tricia, his wife, and Kenan, their daughter. All three teach at HPU.**

Many families can boast of having strong ties to Howard Payne University, but few can claim the distinction of having the husband, the wife and a daughter all serving as faculty members at the same time.

“I would say it’s Boland power,” said Chuck Boland, laughing, “but Tricia and Kenan are good. I like to think I’m good in a different way, but they’re *good*. The three of us teach in different areas, but it’s a combination of qualities and expectations. Howard Payne understood that they’re getting good people, and the fact that we have the same last name is just coincidence.”

Chuck serves as professor of accounting and department chair, while Tricia, his wife, is an adjunct faculty member in the School of Education. Their daughter, Kenan '02, serves as assistant professor of government and Moot Court sponsor.

While Chuck is a native of Georgia, Tricia was born at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where the two met during

their senior year of high school at the Marine Corps base. (“Our parents were military, so we grew up a lot of places,” Tricia said.) She went on to college at Chowan University in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, while Chuck moved to Oxford, Mississippi, to enroll at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), where his older brother and sister had attended.

Chuck and Tricia, who celebrated 50 years of marriage in November, married after she completed her second year at Chowan. Tricia started at Ole Miss in the spring of 1975, and Chuck graduated in the summer of 1975 with his bachelor’s degree. He was honored as an accounting student with membership in Beta Alpha Psi.

While Tricia still had a year left of coursework toward her degree, Chuck stayed at the university to earn a master’s degree. They finished school there and welcomed their first child – a son, Chris, who would graduate from HPU in 2002.

Though Chuck has spent nearly five decades as a faculty

member in accounting – with honors including lifetime membership in the Sigma Beta Delta International Business Honor Society – neither accounting nor teaching figured into his plans early in life.

“That was never a thought,” Chuck said. “I didn’t know what an accountant was until I got to college, but Ole Miss is a big supplier of accountants to accounting firms.”

Chuck had interviews with a few firms but decided to pursue the master’s degree while awaiting the right opportunity, which arrived in the form of a call from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri.

“Southwest somehow found out about me, and asked if I’d be interested,” he remembered. “I didn’t have anything else to do! So we moved out there, and it took about three weeks until I realized that this is what I want to do.”

What did he discover in those three weeks?

“It’s your classroom,” he said. “You’re in charge. You have

PHOTO BY KYLE MIZE

**“Someone can’t learn from you if they don’t trust you and if they can’t feel like you have some empathy or love for them ... that’s what we do. Our family is that way.” – Tricia Boland**

schedule flexibility. You get to work with young people who may be appreciative of what you know. I was teaching stuff I liked, and they appreciated it. I’m a CPA, and I do the work, but I really enjoy teaching it.”

Chuck taught at Southwest Baptist for five years. Their daughter, Kenan, was born during the family’s last year there.

Looking for a new opportunity, in the summer of 1981 the young family made the trek from Bolivar to Brownwood, where Chuck interviewed for a position teaching accounting at Howard Payne University. While Chuck was at his interview at HPU, Tricia, with Chris and Kenan in tow, stopped by the Brownwood ISD office to learn where their young son might start kindergarten – and was offered a job on the spot.

“While I was sitting there with the two kids,” Tricia remembered, “I heard a man say, ‘The eighth-grade math teacher we hired won’t be here, so we need an eighth-grade math teacher quick!’ I said, ‘I’m an eighth-grade math teacher – I taught last year in Missouri.’ He said, ‘You’re hired!’ I had a job before Chuck!”

For Tricia, her drive to teach started much earlier in life than her husband’s did.

“I think I’ve always been teaching, from the time I got out of the womb,” she said, laughing. “I’d teach my five brothers and my sister wherever we lived, and I used to teach swimming. When babysitting I’d always teach the kids, instead of just watching them. That’s what the mothers liked.”

Tricia earned a degree in chemistry because she wanted to teach science, but the high school where she did her student teaching needed a math teacher. Tricia was hired with the idea that she would move to science when a position in that subject became available, though the Bolands moved to Texas before that happened.

“When we came here, they needed an eighth-grade math teacher,” Tricia continued. “When I met the superintendent, back in 1981, the deal was that when there was a chemistry opening, I could take that – but the chemistry teacher who was here never left!”

Tricia taught math at Brownwood Middle School from 1981 to 1998, during which she was twice honored as Middle School Teacher of the Year. In May 1998, she earned a Master

of Education degree in curriculum and instruction from Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth and then taught at Brownwood High School until she retired in 2008.

“She uses the word ‘retired’ loosely when it comes to herself,” Kenan said, laughing.

Tricia’s post-retirement career includes tenures as the director of the Christian Women’s Job Corps and a substitute teacher at Zephyr High School.

“No one had ever let me teach science, and that’s my degree subject,” she said. “Four years later, Zephyr needed a science teacher.”

Tricia finally had a science post, where she taught a variety of science subjects for four years before joining the faculty at HPU as an adjunct in education, teaching elementary science and secondary methods. She enjoys training future teachers.

“I feel like I’m investing in them,” she said, “not just their teaching lives, but all of their students.”

Kenan graduated from Brownwood High School and, after a year at The University of Texas, she came to HPU where she earned her bachelor’s degree in history. She found the Academy honors program to be a good fit that prepared her for law school.

“I had wanted to be a lawyer since I was around eight years old,” she said. “I used to read Nancy Drew books. I didn’t want to be a detective but her dad was a lawyer, and so I thought that would be pretty cool.”

After graduating from Baylor Law School and passing the bar exam, she ultimately decided against pursuing a career as a lawyer. However, she returned to HPU in 2009 for the education preparation program and student-taught at Brownwood High School. In the meantime, she had also found work at

**“We’re student oriented.”  
– Chuck Boland**

the ARK Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Shelter in Brownwood, where she was offered a full-time job.

“I was using some of the legal stuff because I was a legal advocate, working with women trying to get protective orders in divorces,” she said. “I went down that route for a couple of years. It was really rewarding. It was a lot of hard work, but I was helping people – and that’s something all three of us are into.”

She did that for several years until she and her husband, Phil Tobias, welcomed their daughter, Akira. Having a daughter and working with children through the experience with the ARK drew her back to teaching. She decided to earn a master’s degree in history from Pace University, through a program geared toward teaching upper-level history.

“I love history – that’s my favorite area – but I like teaching government and law,” she said. “It’s a lot of fun.”

A position opened at Brownwood Middle School, teaching eighth-grade history and social studies. After four years at BMS, she moved up to the high school for a similar role and additionally took on debate and UIL academics. She began serving as an adjunct faculty member at HPU in 2009. In 2022, she returned to HPU’s Guy D. Newman Honors Academy as a full-time faculty member. Accolades she has earned include a 2023-2024 Excellence in Teaching Award from HPU and the 2002 Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award from Brownwood High School.

“I tell people it’s so much more fun to work with kids than to work with adults all day,” Kenan said. “Kids make mistakes and will frustrate you, but they’re still learning. There’s something about it that doesn’t get you as frustrated as it can with others. It’s a real gift to get to do that.”

Before the Academy building’s reopening in 2023, the three Bolands taught on the same hall upstairs in HPU’s Newman Hall.

“We had class across from each other,” Tricia recalled. “We’d leave our doors open and we could hear each other.”

Outside the classroom, Chuck has a distinguished track record of officiating games for area high school teams. He joined the local chapter of sports officials in 1981 and called football and basketball games for 40 years.

“I never knew what was on TV on Friday nights until the spring,” he says, “because I was always busy with games.”

Ever the teacher, Tricia made practical use of the time Chuck was away on Friday nights.

“I started working at the alternative school in Brownwood on Friday nights from 5:00 to 9:00,” Tricia said. “I was always the only math teacher. When I’d walk in, the kids would say, ‘I get her first!’ Kenan started doing that too. Those were our Friday nights – as if we hadn’t had enough school during the week!”

**“We like to learn things.”  
– Kenan Boland**

Though Chuck no longer officiates area games, he serves as HPU’s faculty athletic representative (FAR) as he has for many years. If sports-related issues arise that affect the university’s student-athletes or faculty, he is the liaison between the faculty and the athletic department. He also keeps the books for HPU basketball and volleyball.

“It’s nice to be part of it,” he said. “I know the officials and I like to watch the players. Kenan does the clock now.”

The start of the fall 2024 semester marked Chuck’s 52nd year spent on a college campus, with 42 of those years as a faculty member at HPU.

“Being around the kids keeps you young,” he said. “I’m a teacher – that’s what I do. I’ve enjoyed it here. I don’t know if I’ve left a mark, but I’d like to think students who had me weren’t disappointed.”

Though each Boland took a different route to a teaching career than the other two, they see certain aspects they share as educators.

“We’re student oriented,” Chuck said. “I like to think that if the students will listen and try it, I can explain exactly what they need to do. I give them things to practice, because that’s the thing about accounting – it’s repetitive. It gives you a better understanding of things, and since it’s from a financial standpoint it’s valuable.”

“We like to learn things,” Kenan added. “I think it’s fun to learn stuff, so trying to get others excited is what I try to do with history and government. Those are a lot more interesting than many people want to give them credit for. They just need someone to get them excited about it. And that learning transfers to anything, if you’re just interested.”

For Tricia, relationships serve as the foundation for successful teaching.

“Teaching is about more than just knowing the subject area,” she said. “Someone can’t learn from you if they don’t trust you and if they can’t feel like you have some empathy or love for them. There’s an emotional bond. I think that in all three of us, that’s what we do. Our family is a lot that way. To bring the three of us here, that’s just the Holy Spirit working in our lives. We later say, ‘How remarkable,’ but there’s nothing remarkable about it. We just serve a remarkable God.” ■



*Twins* AND  
TEAMMATES

HOW SENIORS HANNAH AND REGAN NOEL  
FOUND A DEEPER FRIENDSHIP AT HPU

BY JULIA CATLETT '21



As Regan and Hannah Noel, twins from Crosby, were searching for a college to attend, they knew they wanted a place that was Christ-centered, had strong academics and would allow them to play soccer. The sisters had never heard of Howard Payne University until Brandon Badgeley '09, head women's soccer coach, reached out to the two of them. After visiting campus, they knew Howard Payne had what they were looking for.

In high school, Regan and Hannah didn't always play sports together. They were on the swim team, but Regan was a member longer than Hannah. They played soccer, but not always at the same time. Additionally, they were both members of the track team. When they graduated high school, they knew they wanted to play soccer together.

This season, they are both captains on the HPU women's soccer team, which has given them a unique role. Learning how to navigate relationships and lead the team is a very rewarding experience for both.

"I love being a part of our soccer team," said Hannah. "It's a great environment."

Hannah and Regan have learned how to love and lead their teammates in many different circumstances, whether everything is great and they are winning, or tensions are high due to a loss.

"Being a captain has helped both of us be a safe space for the girls on our team," said Hannah.

Along with playing on the soccer team, Regan and Hannah are involved in other organizations across campus. Both are



TWINS REGAN AND HANNAH ENJOY BEING A PART OF THE HPU COMMUNITY. THE TWO WERE NAMED THE 2024 HOMECOMING QUEEN AND PRINCESS, RESPECTIVELY.

**"BEING AT HPU HAS HELPED US GROW A LOT CLOSER AND BECOME EVEN BETTER FRIENDS."**

PHOTOS BY JULIA CAILETT '21

involved in HPU's Student Activities Council (SAC), through which they help plan events on campus. Their service in the organization has brought them into contact with students across the spectrum of university life as well as strengthened friendships with their fellow SAC members.

"I've gotten to know the members of SAC on a deeper level," said Hannah. "We've become friends and are all comfortable with each other."

Regan is also a resident assistant (RA) in Veda Hodge Hall. It wasn't something she thought of doing, but Dr. Nate Penland, vice president for student experience, asked her if she was interested.

"I realized that it would be a good opportunity for me to do something outside of my comfort zone," said Regan.

Regan remembered her first RA, Megan Froese '24, and how she made everyone around her feel welcome and comfortable.

"She was amazing," said Regan. "I remember thinking that I wanted to be like her someday."

Regan is grateful for her experience as an RA and hopes to impact her residents the same way Megan impacted her.

Regan and Hannah are grateful for the community they've found at Howard Payne. At HPU they've been able to establish meaningful friendships they know will last a lifetime.

"We've been able to surround ourselves with really great people," said Regan. "Some of our friends have helped shape us into the people we are today, and we are really grateful for them."

This year, Regan and Hannah were nominated for Homecoming Queen and Princess by their peers and voted on by the student body. The twins participated in the Homecoming parade, riding on floats with other nominees. During the football game's halftime festivities, the announcement was made that both had won.

One of their favorite things about HPU is the ability to experience college together. Learning how to be independent but remain friends was a challenge at first, but the process has strengthened their relationship.

"Being at HPU has helped us grow a lot closer and become even better friends," said Hannah.

Hannah is majoring in business management and Regan is majoring in business marketing. After they graduate, they plan on opening a coffee shop together.

Throughout their time at HPU, Regan and Hannah have been presented with many opportunities to serve others and grow spiritually. They know that each interaction they've had with faculty, staff and fellow students – as well as each other – has helped them grow to become more like Jesus. ■



# STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT: PEYTON LOWE

By Abram Choate '98 and M.Ed. '17,  
assistant director of athletics for athletic  
communications

Peyton Lowe was on teams that only lost three football games in four years at Texas 3A classification power Gunter High School, just north of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

As the 3A Defensive Player of the Year for the state of Texas in 2020, Lowe has been a huge element of Howard Payne's success over the past five seasons.

Finishing his fifth season as a Yellow Jacket, Lowe is now the all-time starts and games-play leader in HPU football history. He has started and played in 44 consecutive games from 2020-2024 (five seasons).

A five-time all-conference selection at linebacker, Lowe has 153 total career tackles, 10.5 sacks, four forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries after his final season as a Yellow Jacket.

Peyton is the son of Josh and Brandi Lowe of Gunter and has one older brother, Zach.

**Tell me about the process of choosing Howard Payne and what kind of connection made you choose to come to Howard Payne. PL:**

I had walk-on spots at smaller D1s, but I was primarily looking for a less expensive college to attend. I also had a connection with Dr. Hunter Sims [HPU's athletic director] whose father was the head football coach at Gunter many years ago. My mom attended HPU for two semesters and I had a lot of encouragement to attend HPU from my high school head coach.

**Coming from a very successful program at Gunter High School, how has the experience been here at HPU? PL:**

Coming from a high school where I was only a part of three losses in four years and then losing three games of my first five games at HPU was definitely different, but I trusted the coaching staff. There's always a process to everything. I knew coming in that Howard Payne wasn't the most successful program, but being able to be a part of the transition to what we are now is something that I'm very proud of.

**What has been your favorite memory on the football field at HPU? PL:**

For me would probably be my pick-six (interception ran back for a touchdown) against East Texas Baptist my freshman year. We were playing them in Marshall, and that was the first time that we had beaten them in a while.

**What do you like most about Howard Payne away from football? PL:**

The connection you can make with your professors. Having class sizes that aren't overwhelmingly big, they're able to provide a lot of help for you whenever need be.

**Do you have a connection with or have you had a favorite professor at HPU? PL:**

Scott Eddy [assistant professor of mathematics]. The reason I like him so much is we have a similar thinking when it comes to math. We're both very outside-the-box kind of guys. I feel like I can relate to him very well, and I've had him for a lot of classes.

**Majoring in mathematics, what are your plans for the future? PL:**

Right now, potentially getting a tryout for the Tulsa Oilers of the IFL (Indoor Football League). If that doesn't work out, then becoming a high school football coach and a math teacher.

**Did you have any major influences that played a factor in your choosing education and coaching? PL:**

My high school head coach was a big factor of my wanting to be a coach. There were many others who had a big influence on me all through high school. Once I got to college, having that extra person to lean on is important. The role that coaches play in young kids' lives means a lot.

**What would you tell a prospective student-athlete who's considering Howard Payne as his or her choice for college? PL:**

Howard Payne is a great choice for athletics. At Howard Payne athletes are not treated as a number. A lot of schools will over-recruit just to say they had a large recruiting class, but at Howard Payne they really value everyone they recruit. What makes that so special is they will take the time and extra effort to develop you in your craft and truly push you to be the best you're capable of being. ■

*"[At HPU] they will take the time and extra effort to develop you in your craft and truly push you to be the best you're capable of being."*



PHOTO BY REBEKAH STERLING '18



My story of coming to Howard Payne was definitely out of the ordinary. I was born in Burma, which is a country about 8,000 miles away in Southeast Asia, but moved to the United States when I was five. By God's sovereign plan, I have called Brownwood home for the past year. If you had told me my senior year of high school that I would be at Howard Payne, I would have questioned you, but reflecting on the education and the ministries I have experienced, I am constantly in awe of where I have been placed.

When looking for a college to attend, the typical state school just did not sit right with me. I was set on attending a college closer to home in Garland, but I was not able to find the kind of aid I was searching for. At that same time, Howard Payne consistently reached out and raised opportunities for me to find success. Though it wasn't my first choice, it ended up being the only university I personally visited with family. I believe the Lord has called me into the field of ministry and there was always a familiar tug in my heart to seek a Christian-oriented program in higher education. That is why I chose HPU.

Early on, I was well aware HPU's typical class size wasn't

in the hundreds or even forties, yet the fear of being a number or being unknown was present in my mind. I have always been one to build relationships, yet I knew even at HPU that could potentially be difficult. Fortunately, I came to realize that is not the case. I have met some of my closest friends, made lifelong-worthy relationships and have been in roles full of opportunities for connections. As a result, I have been reminded I get the chance to wake up in gratitude of the Lord's providence.

At Howard Payne, I am not only challenged in my academics, but I am challenged in my faith regularly. In classes and roles in the last year and a half, professors and other leaders have invited me through their teachings on how their specific courses intertwine with my walk with Christ. From English Composition to my work-study job, I am taught about service and stewardship through the materials I learn.

As a Christian education major, I get to witness firsthand what that looks like. This fall semester, I am enrolled in Elementary Greek under Dr. Gary Gramling, dean of the School of Christian Studies. While this is a required course

for my major, it has taught me to go deeper in my Bible reading and it has provided me a clearer understanding of how Jesus taught during his ministry. This has encouraged me to seek a new perspective in how I approach my faith.

On campus, I serve as a resident assistant under Jacob Lehrer, resident director for Thomas Taylor Hall and the Newbury Place Apartments. I also work for Erin McGibeny, coordinator of university events, and Wes Carroll, director of university events. These positions have given me purpose in serving my classmates and the school through event preparation. I get to work with friends and build relationships with those I never would have known otherwise.

I am also a member of Delta Epsilon Omega, a local fraternity. Being a part of this group has given me a place to belong, and I am reminded daily that I have a group of brothers who are willing and able to be there for me.

In my short time at HPU, I have experienced daily what building and committing to relationships looks like. Through my classmates and my professors, I am reminded that I am more than a number – I am a student who is known and loved. Through my experiences, I can't help but find gratitude for Howard Payne University. Sing her praises due! This is what I love about HPU. ■

PHOTOS BY THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

"AT HOWARD PAYNE, I AM NOT ONLY CHALLENGED IN MY ACADEMICS, BUT I AM CHALLENGED IN MY FAITH REGULARLY."

Howard Payne University sadly lost the following alumni and other members of the HPU family between the dates of April 1, 2024, and October 15, 2024. To notify HPU of the passing of individuals with connections to the university, please email [development@hputx.edu](mailto:development@hputx.edu).

## HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI/ FORMER STUDENTS

**Sydna (Davis) Arbuckle,**  
September 2, 2024  
**Peggy N. (Gates) Arp,**  
May 15, 2024  
**Leigh A. (Lewis) Barr '72,**  
April 25, 2024  
**Stephen G. Bodine '65,**  
August 28, 2024  
**James C. "Jim" Caldwell '81,**  
September 14, 2024  
**Mary Janelle (Parks) Cobb  
'61,** June 29, 2024  
**Dr. Bill W. Coffman '58,**  
August 6, 2024  
**Nina B. (Kohn) Cox '91,**  
September 5, 2024  
**Jo E. Denton '61,**  
October 8, 2024  
**Eugene F. "Gene"  
Fleming '59,** August 9, 2024  
**Brianna M. "Bri"  
Frazier-Ethridge '04,**  
May 7, 2024  
**Cleta A. (Mattiza) Garms '54,  
M.Ed. '69,** August 10, 2024  
(Former DBC student)  
**John H. Gayle '61,**  
May 28, 2024  
**Joe T. Gibson Jr. '60,**  
October 11, 2024  
**Kenneth E. Hammonds '77,**  
June 7, 2024  
**Dr. Karolyn L. Hardaway '73,**  
April 7, 2024  
**Joseph M. "Joe" Haynes '91,**  
October 11, 2024  
**Tonya E. (Fedora)  
Horner '68,** August 27, 2024  
(Retired faculty/staff  
member)  
**Donald "Don"  
Huckaby '55,** July 9, 2024  
**Violet D. (Cox)  
Hutcheson '59,**  
June 15, 2024  
**Pamela K. "Pam"  
Jeanes '74,** April 15, 2024  
**Lewis W. Johnson Jr. '63,**  
August 5, 2024  
**Max E. Jones '70,**  
August 10, 2024  
**Paula D. Jones '85,**  
September 29, 2024  
**Mona J. "Chick" (Anderson)  
Jordan, M.Ed. '71,**  
October 6, 2024  
**Patricia J. Barnett (Cloud)  
King-Boto,** April 11, 2024  
(Former member of the  
Alumni Association Board  
of Directors)  
**Bobby O. Leach '58,**  
April 11, 2024  
**Bobby C. Lee '77,**  
October 6, 2024  
**Elice Lee '93,** May 12, 2024  
**Jack E. Lee '55,** April 7, 2024  
**Vireta C. (Feril)  
Lockridge '64,**  
August 15, 2024  
**Clara (Blackwell) Marshall,**  
October 5, 2024  
**Bob R. Maxcey,** June 13, 2024  
**Janet M. (Snow) Monteith,**  
April 23, 2024  
**Gwendolyn V. (Rusler)  
Moreland '61,** April 29, 2024  
**Sammy L. "Sam"  
Nichols '64,** July 18, 2024  
**Gloria E. Painter '50,**  
May 15, 2024  
**Linda D. (Furry) Payne '84,**  
July 17, 2024  
**Mildred M. (Wiley)  
Plummer '51,**  
August 18, 2024

**Linda F. (Henneke)  
Potmesil '64,** April 12, 2024  
**James L. Pruett,**  
October 4, 2024  
**Stephen E. Rabon,**  
September 16, 2024  
**Melvin C. "Mel" Russell '59,**  
October 10, 2024  
**Daniel R. San Miguel '05,**  
October 2, 2024  
**Willard Gus  
Schuhmann Jr. '57,**  
April 21, 2024  
**Ruby N. (Limmer)  
Schuman '64,**  
September 3, 2024  
**Fay D. (Leach) Smith '46,**  
August 23, 2024  
**Rebecca A. "Becky" (Todd)  
Smith '97,** April 14, 2024  
**Cindy A. (Estopinal)  
Spurger '70,**  
October 1, 2024  
(Former member of the  
Alumni Association Board  
of Directors)  
**Sherry A. (Colin) Tunnell '73,**  
April 7, 2024 (Former  
member of the Alumni  
Association Board of  
Directors)  
**Morris S. Tyson Sr. '64,**  
October 2, 2024  
**Darrel L. Walker '63,**  
July 19, 2024  
**Maxie E. (Turner) Walls '53,**  
October 13, 2024  
**Rose M. Walthall '53,**  
June 24, 2024  
**Bonnie (Schroeder)  
Weikel '75,** July 14, 2024  
**Jolly A. (Allen)  
Willingham '78,**  
July 14, 2024

**Edward C. "Ed" Wilson '63,**  
April 30, 2024  
**Veta C. (Deaver) Young '91,**  
April 1, 2024 (Former  
faculty/staff member)

## DANIEL BAKER COLLEGE ALUMNI

**Billy Z. Baker,** April 26, 2024

## ADDITIONAL HPU FACULTY, STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

**Dr. Robert E. "Bob"  
Bicknell,** April 20, 2024  
(Retired faculty/staff  
member)  
**Patsy A. "Pat" (Miers)  
Cavitt,** April 25, 2024  
**Walter L. Gooding,**  
June 26, 2024 (Former  
Board of Trustees member)  
**Lucy L. Harkey,**  
August 18, 2024 (Former  
member of the Guy D.  
Newman Honors Academy  
Board of Directors)  
**Diorah M. "Dee" Owens,**  
May 24, 2024  
**Gwendolyn L. "Gwen"  
(Bond) Owens,**  
June 28, 2024  
**Tyrone "Ty" Robinson,**  
June 7, 2024 (Faculty/staff  
member)



*High above old Bayou's waters, out on Center's heights*

*Stands our noble Alma Mater, towering in her might*

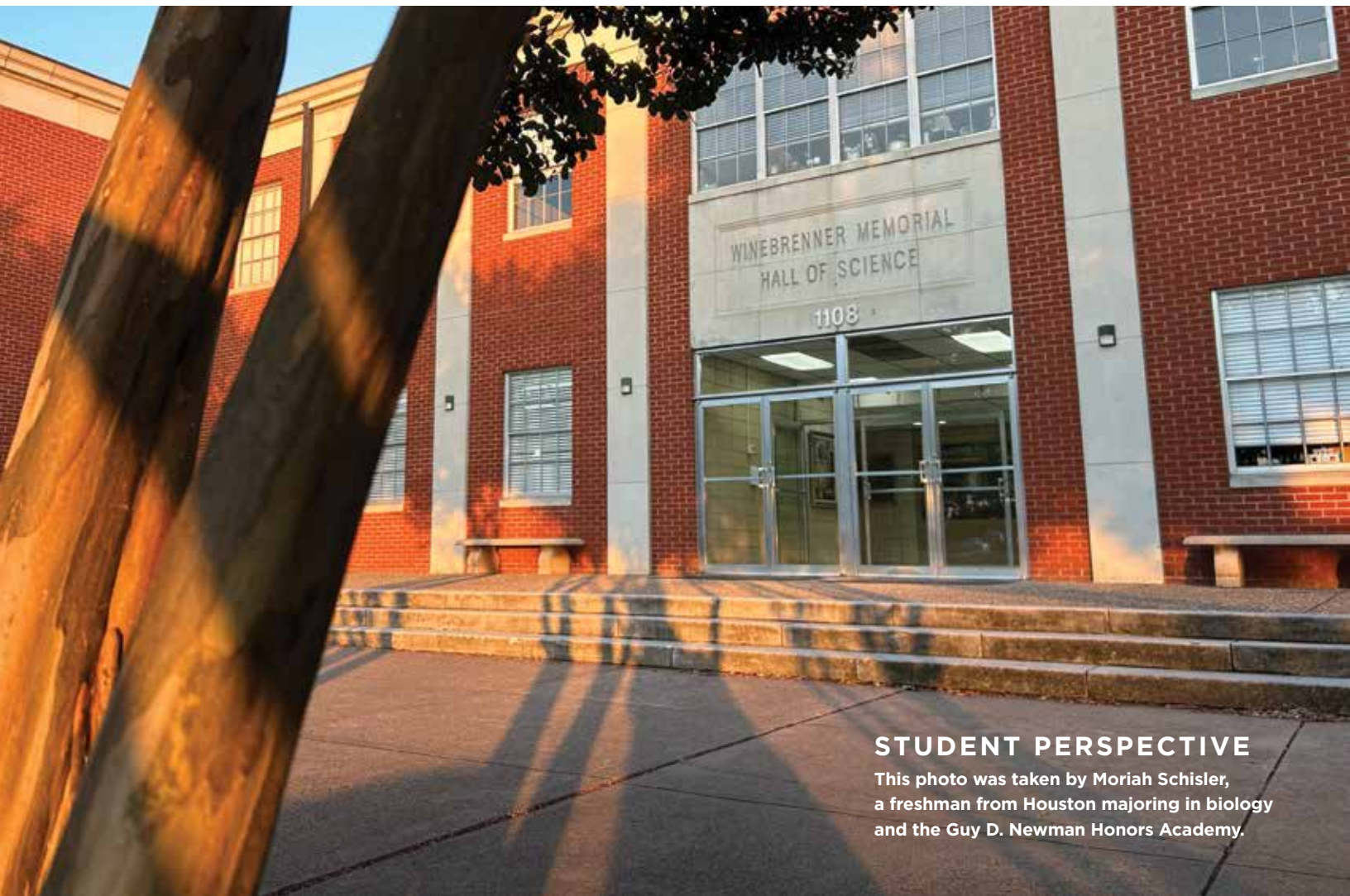
*Keep her colors ever floating, sing her praises due*

*Hail to thee our Alma Mater, hail the Gold and Blue*

PHOTO BY REBEKAH STERLING '18



P.O. Box 2369  
Brownwood, Texas 76804



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

This photo was taken by Moriah Schisler, a freshman from Houston majoring in biology and the Guy D. Newman Honors Academy.