

UPDATES FROM THE HILL  
**TIGER PRIDE**  
EAST TEXAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY





## ETBU Confers 167 Graduates During Spring Commencement

East Texas Baptist University held its Spring 2019 Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 11 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. ETBU President J. Blair Blackburn presided over the ceremonies as 156 students received undergraduate degrees and 11 received graduate degrees, for a total of 167 graduates.

“Graduates, we prayed over you before you enrolled, we prayed with you through your educational journey, and now we pray that God will take you to make a bold imprint on this world,” Dr. Blackburn said. “Your journey in the pursuit, discovery, and application of God’s truths does not end on this Hill. It is our prayer that our graduates, who are fully equipped and empowered, use their intellectual and spiritual gifts to transform the world for the glory of God.”

Dr. Ben G. Raimer (ETBU Alumni 1969) provided the keynote address to the graduates of Christian Studies, Communication and Performing Arts, Nursing, and Professional Studies at the morning ceremony. Over the past three decades, Dr. Raimer has held numerous academic and administrative positions at University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB). He also serves as President of the Texas Pediatric Association, Diplomat of the American Board of Pediatrics, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. For his service to God and humanity throughout his career, Dr. Raimer received the Honorary Doctor of Science. In his charge to graduates, Dr. Raimer challenged students to become all they can for God’s purpose.

Reid Adams, a Bachelor of Science graduate in Athletic Training, received the President’s Award for being the best representation of a Christian leader, scholar, and servant. Reid served as the Student Body President, a representative of the Tennis Team in Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), Resident Assistant (RA) for two years, and freshman residence hall mentor. Throughout his time with Tiger Athletics, Reid has led a Bible study for the Tiger Tennis Team. Actively involved as a member of New Beginnings Baptist Church, Adams also volunteers at Hallsville Elementary School in the Physical Education department.

At the service, Chair of the Department of History and Political Science Sandy Hoover was recognized for his excellence in service, scholarship, teaching, and integration of faith and learning with the Professor with Distinction Award. Dr. Hoover also serves as the Chair of Faculty Senate at ETBU and Pastor at Athey Baptist Church in Harleton, Texas.

Dr. Hoover was described as a faculty member who, “goes out of his way to accommodate the needs of our students and works diligently to help them succeed. All of his students love him dearly, and they participate happily whenever he takes them to local community development projects. Sandy is not only an excellent teacher, researcher, pastor, and community leader, he is also one of the finest persons you would ever happen to meet. He is kind, generous, and humorous.”

The afternoon ceremony speaker, Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas Executive Director and Treasurer Tamiko C. Jones, presented a charge to the graduates of the Schools of Business, Education, Humanities, and Natural and Social Sciences. Jones began her career with Motorola, Inc. after graduating from North Carolina A&T State University with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering. Once she completed her M.B.A. at U.D., Jones progressed through various positions with Motorola and Nokia Siemens Networks. Jones encouraged the graduating seniors to trust God’s plan for their lives.

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## **Get to Know Alumna Zane Gruzina ('09)**

Zane Gruzina is used to juggling multiple projects at one time. After graduating from ETBU as an international student, Zane went on to earn her Master of Business Administration and Juris Doctor. According to Zane, it was the specialized attention she received at ETBU that laid the groundwork for her future success.

"ETBU laid a great foundation for me academically," Zane said. "With the smaller class sizes and more focused professor attention, I was able to excel, and prepare for my MBA studies at Texas A&M as well as my law school education at the South Texas College of Law."

While she was a business student at ETBU, Zane made the most of her time on the Hill. She was a member of the Lady Tiger Soccer Team, was Miss ETBU 2008, and was involved in several campus ministries. Today, Zane serves as the program manager for projects at Schlumberger.

"When I graduated from ETBU, I didn't have a clear vision for where I would like to be, but I always knew I wanted to be in the business world. The Lord opened up specific doors for me to be at Schlumberger, and I know I am exactly where God wants me to be at this time in my life."

In addition to her education, Zane's greatest takeaway from her time on the Hill is the friendships she formed.

"I received an incredible education at ETBU, but nothing compares to meeting my two best friends," Zane said. "Ten years have passed since we graduated, and we still make the effort to see each other and keep in touch even though we live on different continents. It's wonderful to see how friendships can last through the years when Christ is at the center of it all."

In Zane's spare time, she volunteers for Talsi Christian School Foundation in her home country of Latvia and is actively involved in her home church, Houston's First Baptist Church.



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**SAM B. HALL**  
MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION  
A PATRIOTIC CONCERT  
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**Join Us For a Special Concert in Honor of  
Sam B. Hall, Jr.**

You are invited to celebrate Memorial Day with the East Texas Baptist University Family. The East Texas Symphonic Band will perform a Patriotic Concert at the Historic Harrison

County Courthouse in Downtown Marshall on Monday, May 27 from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Bring your friends and family to remember the life of The Honorable Sam B. Hall, Jr. and honor the legacy of Armed Forces Veterans, who sacrificed their lives in U.S. military service.

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## Spotlight on Scholarships: Landin Brown

A Christ-centered education would not be as accessible and affordable for students at ETBU if it were not for student scholarship support. Because of the generosity of ETBU alumni and donors, students like senior Kinesiology major Landin Brown have the opportunity to learn, grow, and be mentored here on the Hill.

"Because of a donor's kindness to a stranger, I have the opportunity to be here right now," Landin said. "I met my best friends here and have grown academically and spiritually during my time on campus. None of that would have been possible without a donor's financial support. Knowing that someone has sacrificed financially for me to be at ETBU is a great responsibility that I do not take lightly."

If you are interested in learning how to contribute to student scholarships, please email [advancement@etbu.edu](mailto:advancement@etbu.edu).

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## ETBU is Coming to a City Near You

Throughout this summer, alumni, donors, and incoming Fall 2019 Tigers will have the opportunity to meet ETBU President J. Blair Blackburn, Vice President for Advancement Scott Bryant, and other ETBU leaders. Dr. Blackburn will provide a report on University progress and will share the vision for the future of East Texas Baptist. Make reservations

to join us for an evening of fellowship and a complimentary dinner with other alumni of East Texas Baptist.

**Monday, June 17 in Texarkana, Texas at [Silvermoon on Broad](#)**

**Sunday, June 23 in Tyler at [Jalapeno Tree](#)**

**Monday, June 24 in Houston at [Champion Forest Baptist Church - Champions Campus](#)**

**Tuesday, June 25 in Beaumont at [Cafe del Rio](#)**

**Sunday, June 30 in Dallas at [Mi Cocina](#)**

**Monday, July 1 in Fort Worth at [Joe T. Garcia's](#)**

All of the rallies will be 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Call 903.923.2071 to reserve your space or click the button below to register.

## Rally Registration

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## ETBU in the News

### ETBU Honors Local Law Enforcement

East Texas Baptist celebrated the 2019 National Police Week by hosting the annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Luncheon on Tuesday, May 14 to honor all of the public servants that serve the Marshall community, Harrison County, and surrounding region. [Read more.](#)



### ETBU School of Nursing Grand Opening

East Texas Baptist University invited the community to celebrate with them on Saturday, May 4 as they debuted the University's newest facility, the ETBU School of Nursing at the Marshall Grand in downtown Marshall. [Read more.](#)



## ETBU Softball Wins Ninth ASC Title, Advances to 13th NCAA Regional Playoffs

The ETBU Softball Team earned its ninth American Southwest Conference Tournament championship on Saturday, May 4. This is the first time in program history that ETBU won the tournament championship at Taylor Field. [Read more.](#)



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## Graduating Seniors Receive Class Rings

ETBU honored 150 graduating seniors with an official ETBU Class Ring during the 2019 Ring Blessing on Monday, April 15 in Baker Chapel of the Ornelas Spiritual Life Center. Initiated in December of 2018, the ceremony celebrates the accomplishments of students and connects generations of alumni. [Read more.](#)



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Stay in touch and share your news with your ETBU Family. Send your career accomplishments and family updates to [alumni@etbu.edu](mailto:alumni@etbu.edu) or click [here](#) to update your information.

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