

May 2021

Retirement of Dr. Mel Hailey

Page 1 of 4



The Department of Political Science & Criminal Justice announces the retirement of Dr. Mel Hailey. This is a significant milestone in the development and history of the Department and its efforts toward public service. A reception will be planned this fall semester in his honor.

Dr. Hailey has been a professional educator since 1974 with classroom experience at the high school and university level. He retires as a long-standing Professor in the Department, where he served as Chairman for 25. Prior to moving to ACU he was the Social Studies chairperson at Cooper High School. Dr. Hailey has been an advocate of law related education materials in the classroom, and has served as a scholar/consultant to the Law Related Education unit of the State Bar of Texas. He was also a part of a team of scholars and educators who held Hatton W. Sumners Institutes on the Founding Documents across the state of Texas. He was a Member and Chair of the Pre-Law Advisors National Council and President and Vice President of the Southwest Association of Pre-Law Advisors. Active membership in Christians in Political Science was also a hallmark of his time in academia.

Community Involvement was cherished by Dr. Hailey and his list of community and church work is long. It includes Meals on Wheels (a route shared for 35 years with Dr. David Dillman); Meals on Wheels Board of Directors; Founding Board Member, President, and Vice-President for Habitat for Humanity; Board of Directors and Chair of the NOAH Project; United Way Investments Committee; Friends of the ACU Library Board President; Board of Directors for Eastern Little League; Congressional District Coordinator—We the People; Congressional District Coordinator—Project Citizen; and Co-director of the Regional Citizen Bee Contest. Dr. Hailey also served for years as an elder at University Church of Christ.

Dr. Hailey participated widely in University and Departmental service over his four-plus decades at ACU. He was University Pre-Law Advisor (1994-2020), and Founding director of the Jack Pope Fellows Program (1998-2008). He was on the Faculty Senate (serving also as Senate Chair), and three times served on the University Academic Council. Dr. Hailey was chapter sponsor of Pi Sigma Alpha and Founding chapter sponsor of International Justice Mission, and Chair of the Law Scholarship Committee. He was a member of the CCU Semester Abroad Selection Committee, University Faculty Development Committee, Campus Life Committee, Disciplinary Review Committee, CAS Tenure and Promotion Committee and a CAS Dean Search Committee. He also was a member of the ACU Centennial Task Force for Academic Programs, and the Strategic Solution Team.

Many of the honors earned by Dr. Hailey are listed below. Among those that are especially distinctive are his being selected as ACU Teacher of the Year, and being awarded the 2015 Dean Gerald Wilson Award for Excellence in Pre-Law Advising (an award given annually to just one pre-law advisor in the country). Hailey served as pre-law advisor for the university for hundred of students—they gained admission into law school each year at a rate exceeding 90%, and political science students at a sterling 99% clip. Finally, Dr. Hailey was selected as the first recipient of the Judge Ted Poe Endowed Chair of Political Science & Criminal Justice, a unique honor at Abilene Christian and established by his friend from their time at ACC together.

He was awarded: 1986 ALPS Pal Award; 1989 Meals on Wheels Caring Plus Award; 1989 National Endowment for the Humanities Research Award; 1990 Faculty of the Year—College of Liberal and Fine Arts; 1991 ACU Teach of the Year; 1992 Habitat for Humanity Leadership Award; 1994 Liberty Bell Award by the Abilene Young Lawyers Association; 1995 Students' Association Special Recognition Award; 2002 College of Arts and Sciences Student Mentoring Award; 2004 Arete Award from the Abilene Chamber of Commerce's Education Council; 2005 Honorary Leon Jaworski Award for Teaching Excellence in Law Focused Education; 2014 College of Arts and Sciences Faith Integration Award; 2015 Dean Gerald Lee Wilson Award for Excellence in Pre-Law Advising by the Pre-Law Advisors National Council; 2017 College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Award; and the 2019 Judge Ted Poe Endowed Chair of Political Science & Criminal Justice.

Dr. Hailey earned his Ph.D. from Texas Tech University (1988), the M.A. also from Texas Tech (1973), and his B.A. from Abilene Christian University (1970). The Department is planning a reception for this fall semester, and we look forward to Dr. Hailey's continuing to teach several courses online in the near future—he was an early adopter of online learning. Please be watching for news of Dr. Hailey's reception event.

Welcome Chief Ellis

Jason Ellis ('98), a lieutenant with the Frisco Police Department, has accepted the position as ACU's Chief of Police. Ellis will begin in July. In addition to a criminal justice degree from ACU, he also earned a master's degree in dispute resolution from Southern Methodist University. Ellis worked with the Frisco Police Department for most of his 23 years in law enforcement, including more than 16 of those years in management and leadership roles.



Welcome to ACU!



Pat Sublett and his daughter Karen Sublett Mitchell ('86 POLS) were recent guests in the Department. They are standing in front of the plaque that records the 31 students the Sublett Scholarship has assisted! Pat and his wife Joann, long-time residents of Gordon, Texas, created the student scholarship in honor of their daughters who attended Abilene Christian. Pat has served as school board member, city council member and as Mayor of Gordon, and Karen is the United States District Clerk for the Northern District of Texas.

May 2021 Graduates

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Remington Agnew  | Sofia Ramirez Luque |
| Meagan DeMonbren | Makalya Mabry       |
| Adriana Garza    | LJ McConnell        |
| Jason Gibson     | McKenzie McPherson  |
| Beau Hancock     | Cole Palka          |
| Kage Hendrix     | Princes Payan       |
| Paul Hiepler     | Noah Pruitt         |
| Madison Jury     | Jonathan Ratliff    |
| James Kesner     | Cody Sargeant       |
| Cameron Lamm     | JD Schwiethale      |
| Shaden Lopez     | Kamron Taylor       |
| Jeanna Lowe      |                     |

University Scholar

Noah Pruitt was selected by the Department faculty as the 2021 University Scholar.



**Student News**

Emma Jaax will be a legislative intern for Texas State Rep. Kyle Biedermann (District 73) during May, followed as an assistant in the Accounting Department for Wayne Wright LLP in San Antonio.

Connor Fischelli will work this summer in the Abilene District Office for Congressman Jodey Arrington.

**Jack Pope Fellows**

In March, ACU graduate and President of the ACU student body in 1984-85, the Honorable Robert Pitman, spoke to the Jack Pope Fellows. Judge Pitman has served as a United States Magistrate Judge in Austin, the United States Attorney for the Western District of Texas, and is currently the United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas. Judge Pitman’s zoom presentation gave the Pope Fellows a tour of the federal criminal justice system and provided helpful career advice.

**Alumni News**

Abbey Moses ('17) was accepted into the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies to pursue a Master of Arts in International Relations in Fall 2021. Abbey was a Fulbright Scholar in 2018 in Indonesia.

Mackenzie Sanderson ('18) spoke on the ACU campus on April 22, telling students how to prepare for Fulbright scholarships and other major scholarship opportunities. Mackenzie did her Fulbright in Germany, and graduated from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at UT Austin in May.

**Debate Success during 20-21 School Year**

The ACU Debate Team finished the 2020-2021 season April 9-11 with the IPDA National Championship Tournament. The tournament hosted more competitors from across the country than any previous year, from 26 states, with 325 competitors. Among the 62 participating schools were Florida State, Ithaca College, Belmont, Louisiana Tech, SMU, Mississippi State, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, University of Central Arkansas, and Valdosta State. ACU’s Sheila Ritchie was named as IPDA Coach of the Year.

In Novice, Josh Danaher (CJ) won Double Octofinalist (top 32). In JV, Nathan Marshall (POLS) - Octofinalist (top 16). In Team, Emma Jaax (POLS minor), Quarterfinalists (top 8), and Emma won 2nd place team speaker.

At the IPDA National Championship Tournament, Season-Long Awards were given. Out of 1,018 competitors, students from our Department finished:

- 3rd Place JV Debater—Emma Jaax
- 6th Place JV Debater—Nathan Marshall
- 2nd Place JV Speaker—Emma Jaax

**Graduation Honors**

Congratulations to the following students for awards they won at Commencement!

**Valedictorian Award (4.0 GPA)**

- Paul Hiepler
- McKenzie McPherson
- Noah Pruitt

**Mr. ACU**

- Paul Hiepler

**Scholarship Awards for 2021-2022**

**Gary and Nancy Thompson Scholarship**

Bryan Briones  
Ashley Gonzalez  
Joshua Loughren  
Nathan Marshall  
Ailin Ortega  
Jose Rodriguez  
JD Schlageter

**Trent and Nell Meaders Scholarship**

Alli Dimmitt  
Elizabeth Holland

**Pat and Joann Sublett Scholarship**

Adriana Garza

**Judge Ted Poe Scholarship**

Connor Fischelli  
Elizabeth Holland  
Caegan Long  
Preston Miller  
Ailin Ortega  
Rachel Williams

**B.F. Sisk Scholarship**

Carter Snead

**Wendling Scholarship**

Brandi Dempsey  
Jake Pritchard

**David Rickard Scholarship**

Ailin Ortega  
Rachel Williams