

## Creating math champions

Dr. Bev Harris spent decades preparing math educators

From the 1978 Mozarkian: Dr. Bev Harris, right, is pictured with John Bryant, left, and John Smashey, center, all faculty members in SBU Department of Mathematics. Bryant and Smashey were Harris' students at SBU before returning to SBU to teach. The trio taught together for 23 years before Harris retired in 1989.

BY CHARLOTTE HIGHSMITH MARSCH '97

During nearly four decades in the college classroom, Dr. Bev Harris championed the cause of educating math educators in Missouri, leaving behind a legacy that continues through his students, who are teaching at high schools and universities across the country, preparing future generations of math educators.

"At one time, before the state colleges really got with it as far as math education is concerned, I was the leading math educator in the state of Missouri," he said. "I was putting more students in high schools to teach mathematics and more students in graduate schools to pursue graduate school mathematics than any college in the state.

"The thing I'm most proud of from having taught at SBU, at least from an academic standpoint, is that over 50 of my former students have at least a master's degree in pure mathematics. That's better than one a year. I taught 37 years at Southwest."

Harris encouraged and inspired his students to study pure mathematics and to be educators.

"I remember when I first went into his office my freshman year," said Dr. Bob

Glasgow, professor of mathematics at SBU, who was one of Harris' students and joined the mathematics faculty in 1989. "I had just made my decision to be a math teacher and was still very unsure of myself. By the time I left Bev's office, I had a four-year plan and was starting to think about graduate school after graduation. That's the way Bev advised. He was encouraging while giving you strong nudges to do more than you thought you were capable of doing."

Even students who weren't math majors remember his caring and helpful demeanor.

"He was very interested in the students," said Elizabeth Pace '59, one of his many students. "He is just generally interested in people and was always helpful."

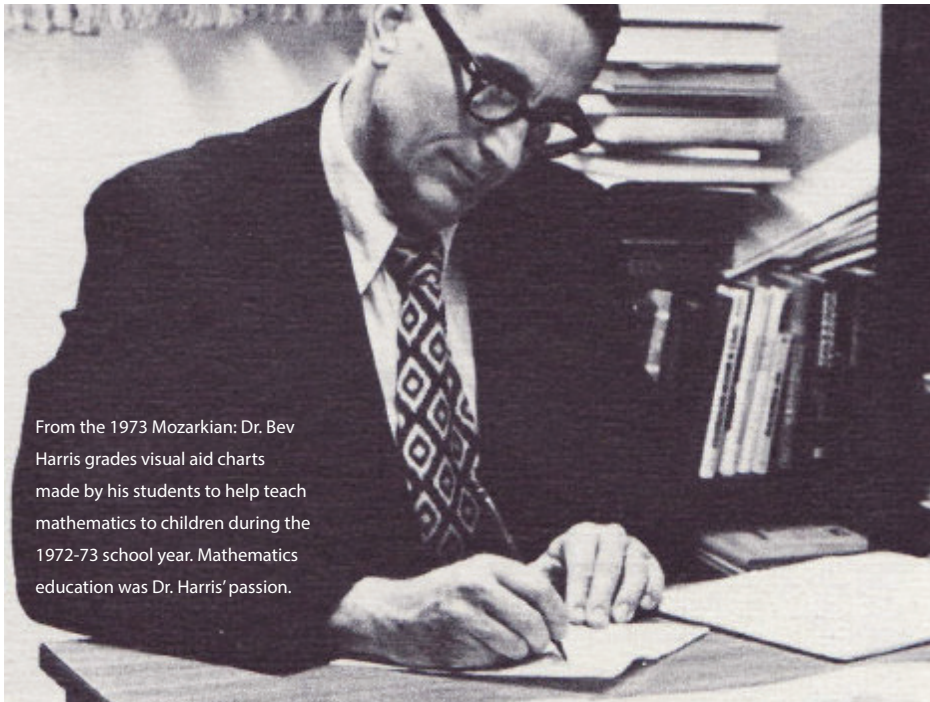
As an SWBC graduate, he was very familiar with the college when he was offered a job. Attending Southwest Baptist College after graduating from high school was not optional for Harris, whose family moved to Bolivar in January 1943, during the middle of World War II, because his

**"I felt like the Lord called me to teach at SBU, just like he calls ministers."**

*-Dr. Bev Harris*



continued on page 2



From the 1973 Mozarkian: Dr. Bev Harris grades visual aid charts made by his students to help teach mathematics to children during the 1972-73 school year. Mathematics education was Dr. Harris' passion.

mother wanted all of her children to attend SWBC. Harris said the family left behind a nice farm in the Kansas City area of Jackson County, Mo., to move to Bolivar so he and his siblings could live at home while attending SWBC.

He started college during the summer of 1945 but was then drafted into the U.S. Army in January 1946. He served as a Regimental Control Sergeant in the Transportation Corps for one year, being discharged according to the newly enacted college clause that limited service to one year for anyone who was drafted out of college. He returned to SWBC for the spring and summer semesters of 1947, graduating that year with an associate of arts degree. He completed a

bachelor of science in education with a major in math and a minor in biology from Southwest Missouri State University in 1949.

Harris taught math and science at Humansville High School in northwestern Polk County for two years before joining the SWBC faculty in 1952 while working on his master's degree in mathematics, which he finished in 1953 at the University of Missouri. While he was teaching at Humansville, Dr. John Dowdy, president of SWBC, told him that if he finished his master's degree he would have a job at SWBC.

"I found out later that my junior college math professor, J.F. Hurst, had requested that I take his place," Harris said. "I've never had to ask for a job in my life."

While teaching at Humansville, he married Zodee, who was the first full-time secretary at Bolivar First Baptist Church. They had three children: Susan, Steven and Joy.

Harris completed his doctorate 10 years after completing his master's degree, about the time SWBC was transitioning from a junior to a senior college. At that time he was one of two professors to have a doctorate, the other being Dr. Jasper Clark, a biology professor. When SWBC became a senior college, Harris was promoted straight from instructor to professor. He later received the title of "Distinguished Professor."

"I felt like the Lord called me to teach at SBU, just like he calls ministers," Harris said. "I felt sure after Dr. Dowdy had invited me to teach that it was God's will for me. When I first came to SBU, I told the Lord, 'Send me students I can help.' Notice I didn't say send me good students; I said send me students I can help. It's kind of like when King Solomon prayed and he said, 'Lord, help me to have the wisdom to guide the Israelites' and not only did he do that, but he gave him wealth besides. So the Lord, when I asked for students I can help, as a bonus he gave me outstanding students."

Harris hired former students John Smashey and John Bryant to teach alongside him, and the trio taught math together at SBU for 23 years until Harris' retirement in 1989. Smashey also has since retired, while Bryant is still on the math faculty and coaches men's and women's tennis, a job for which he was recommended by Harris.

"As the department chair, he arranged

## SBUlife

Magazine of Southwest Baptist University | Volume 99 Issue 2 | USPS 507-500

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SBUlife (USPS 507-500) is published in February, April, July, and November. It is distributed free for alumni, parents and friends of Southwest Baptist University by the Office of Marketing & Communications, 1600 University Ave., Bolivar, MO 65613. Periodical postage paid at Bolivar, Mo., and additional mailing offices.

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my class schedule in the mornings so I could work with tennis," said Bryant, who took an algebra class with Harris in 1960 and returned to teach at SBU in 1966.

Harris hired his replacement, Dr. Kevin Hopkins, who filled the department of mathematics chair position. When Hopkins sent an inquiry letter in 1987 about any possible openings, expressing an interest in teaching at a small, Christian university, Harris decided it might be time to look at early retirement. Hopkins' resumé was impressive, and his references were solid. But there was one line in that letter that really caught Harris' attention: "I know a big school could pay me more money, but money isn't everything."

"I thought, 'BINGO!'" Harris recalls. "I thought the Lord was trying to tell me something. I felt we would never have another opportunity to have a Ph.D. at the head of the department, especially from one of the top math universities in the country. I checked on his credentials, and all the teachers that I talked to said he would be an outstanding candidate not only for our university, but for any university in the U.S. because he is a top student in his class and is very much respected."

For Harris, early retirement meant an

opportunity to do more of the Lord's work, which he already had done for many years through involvement at Southern Hills Baptist Church and First Baptist Church.

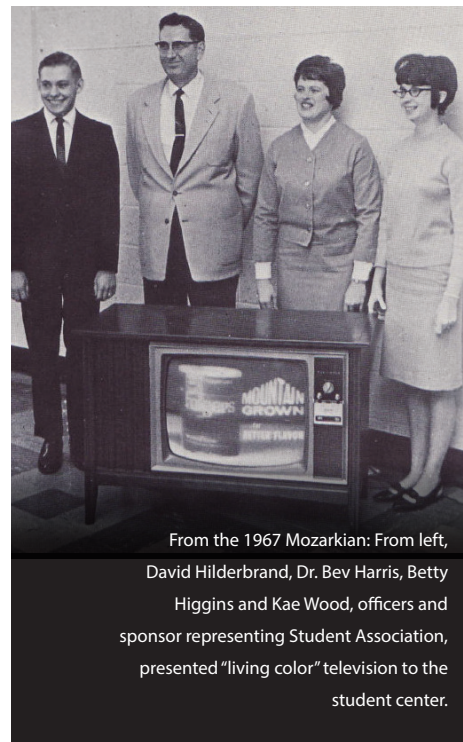
"I prayed, 'Lord, give me something worthwhile to do,'" he said. "So he gave me Polk County Christian Social Ministries with Share Your Christmas. I was one of the leaders for 25 years."

PCCSM was a young ministry, having just started in 1985. Bev served as treasurer for more than 20 years and organized the Share Your Christmas project that now assists more than 600 families annually with donations of food, toys and other items at Christmas.

"I enjoy helping people," Harris told the Bolivar Herald-Free Press in 2009. "It makes tears come to your eyes sometimes when you see a needy family and you'd like to help them but there's just no way in the world to help them. I take that work very seriously."

Also in his retirement, Bev became an avid tennis player, ranking second in the state of Missouri in the 65-year-old age bracket. He was the center on SWBC's basketball team in the fall of 1947, and he was a scorekeeper at SBU men's basketball games for 34 years. Even now, when he is not able to be as active, he enjoys watching sports on TV.

One of his favorite SBU memories is when



From the 1967 Mozarkian: From left, David Hilderbrand, Dr. Bev Harris, Betty Higgins and Kae Wood, officers and sponsor representing Student Association, presented "living color" television to the student center.

he saw the men's tennis team win a national championship in Kansas City.

"Bev was devoted to his students, to the Bolivar community and mostly, to serving our Lord," Bryant said. "He created math champions for years."

## Scholarship fund to honor Dr. Bev Harris' legacy

In recognition of Dr. Bev Harris' contributions to mathematics education during his 37-year tenure as department chair and faculty member in SBU's Department of Mathematics, the Dr. Bev Harris Mathematics Education Scholarship Fund has been established.

Only two people have served as chairman of SBU's Department of Mathematics during the past 62 years. Harris served from 1952-1989, when he hired Dr. Kevin Hopkins to teach and assume the department chair position, allowing Harris to take early retirement. Hopkins is still in that position and, 25 years later, has led efforts to establish the scholarship fund in recognition of Harris' legacy at SBU and in the Bolivar community.

"When I came to SBU, I didn't have any experience to have ideas about how to properly honor Dr. Harris' years of service," Hopkins said. "My mother passed away in September 2013, and I have thought much more about legacy (her legacy and the legacy of others) during the past few months since her passing. Now, even

though it is 25 years after his retirement, seems an appropriate time to establish a scholarship fund that would honor and continue to recognize Dr. Harris' legacy of service to the math department and to the Bolivar community, which he continued to serve faithfully in his retirement until health issues prevented him from continuing that service."

Scholarships will be awarded with priority given to junior or senior level math education majors.

Through the years, many scholarship funds have been established in honor or in memory of SBU professors. Donations can be made to any of these funds through a check mailed to SBU, Att: University Relations, 1600 University Ave., Bolivar MO 65613, or online at [www.SBUniv.edu/give](http://www.SBUniv.edu/give) and click on "Give online." To find out which professors have been honored with scholarship funds, search the list of funds in the "Give online" section of the website or call (417) 328-1804.



Eight juniors competed for the titles of Mr. and Miss Southwest. From left to right: Noah Burton, Arthur Ryan Harmon, Kyle Hollmann, Mr. Southwest Antion McBee, Miss Southwest Lauran Gilstrap, Trinity Griffin, Sarah Doell, Beth Luckel

# McBee and Gilstrap crowned Mr. and Miss Southwest

## Winners used the pageant as an opportunity to share God-given messages

BY REBEKAH WRIGHT '10

Antion McBee, a junior psychology major from St. Louis, and Lauran Gilstrap, a junior social work major from Blue Springs, were crowned Mr. and Miss Southwest Friday, March 7, at Southwest Baptist University.

The tradition of “Miss Southwest” dates back to the 1930s and “Mr. Southwest” was added in 1963. Candidates are from the junior class and nominated by faculty and staff on the basis of character. Eight candidates participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Mr. and Miss Southwest pageant, which consisted of self-made video biographies, talent presentations, and Q&A sessions. The audience voted by text messaging to determine the winners.

“Congratulations to Antion and Lauran on being named Mr. and Miss Southwest! Each is truly deserving of the recognition of the employees of Southwest Baptist University as well as their peers,” said Nathan Penland, director of student activities at SBU. “The Mr. and Miss Southwest pageant has become such a fantastic event at SBU and one that I believe honors the tradition of Mr. and Miss Southwest, which has been in place for more than 50 years,”

Antion exhibited his talent of spoken word by

performing an original work, “Flight Plan.” He said choosing his talent was easy.

“Besides spoken word, my other talent is athletics. But I knew I couldn’t bring a football field on stage,” Antion said.

He wrote “Flight Plan” as a way to share his personal testimony and to share how God has been at work in his life.

“I just wanted to give more people insight on my life and where I’ve come from and what I’ve overcome. I want them to know that stuff doesn’t matter because God has our flight plan.”

While Antion enjoyed the entire experience of participating in the pageant, his favorite part was the question and answer session because it was spontaneous as compared to his scripted video and spoken word performance. “I got to show some of my personality,” Antion said.

Originally, Antion arrived at SBU because he was recruited for the football program but since then SBU has come to mean so much more to him than just athletics.

“Honestly, I came here for football. I never knew this

Scan below to view Antion's and Lauran's performance videos.

Lauran



Antion





place would grow on me and that it would force me to grow as well. SBU has become my home away from home. When I'm home, I miss it here and all the friends I've made."

Although he wasn't previously very familiar with the tradition of Mr. and Miss Southwest, Antion is taking this opportunity seriously.

"At first I didn't really understand what it meant to be Mr. Southwest, but now I do. And I think it's an honor to be selected by my teachers and chosen by my peers as a representation of what it means to be a Bearcat."

Lauran also used her talent presentation time to give testimony to the passions God has given her, although it took her longer to decide what to do for her act. While brainstorming with her friends, someone suggested she paint since that is something she enjoys.

"At first I didn't really go with it because I didn't know what I would paint and my painting skills are limited. But as I thought more about it, I came up with the idea to paint the world – because of missions. I love missions and I wanted my talent not to be directed or revolved around me. I wished for it to point to the Lord," Lauran said.

After some more brainstorming, the ideas fell in place and the end result was an audience captivated as Lauran painted silhouettes of the continents on a large canvas

while her friend, Michaela Green, danced behind the screen.

"The message I was hoping to convey through my performance was, first and foremost, to point to the Lord and give Him glory. As well, I was hoping to convey some desire and encouragement for all believers to go, to be used and to be sent in this world – wherever that is – for the Lord. I want us all to be able to say, 'Here am I, Lord, send me,' all for His glory and His kingdom."

Lauran said she was surprised to have won because everyone did such a great job and are all deserving candidates.

"My favorite part of participating in the pageant was getting to do it with the other contestants," Lauran said. "It was fun getting to know them better and share in the experience with each of them."

While surprised, she is honored by the title of Miss Southwest and the chance to represent SBU.

"Being Miss Southwest means to me that I am striving to be a good student and desiring for the Lord to be seen in me and through my actions. This is what SBU strives to instill in students. The title is very flattering but it certainly doesn't mean I am the one who exemplifies these qualities the best. All the contestants and many other students on this campus strive to

be both good students and representations of Christ."

Like Antion, SBU has become a second home for Lauran and she is most grateful for the relationships she has built during her time here.

"I have made so many wonderful friends because of attending SBU. There have been so many great memories and learning opportunities because of the people I get to surround myself with and I am thankful for each person that has been a part of my life these past three years."





# Concerts for Kay

## Home concert series is therapeutic

BY CHARLOTTE HIGHSMITH MARSCH '97

With Southwest Baptist University music professors Dr. Jeff Waters playing saxophone and his wife, Renee, tickling the ivories, guests at Carl Singer's home near Golden City, Mo., enjoy a musical concert on a Tuesday evening in February. Carl has transformed his living room and kitchen into a 40-seat "auditorium," just as he does the second Tuesday of every month.

The price of admission? A plate of snack food to place on the table in the sunroom, where breads, a chocolate fountain and other treats await the guests during intermission.

Singer, retired SBU Vice President for Development, furnishes his home with seating for about 40 guests each month for musical entertainment and fellowship.

Hosting musical concerts in homes actually is a trend, according to Dr. Renee Waters, but what may be unique about the concerts in the Singers' home, though, is how they started. Sure, Carl would have started the events just to share the cultural experience with friends and neighbors, but his bride of 58 years, Kay, was his inspiration. The friends and neighbors have benefited,

too, from his desire to help Kay enjoy life again after her diagnosis with a serious, rare brain disorder.

"We really had no idea that Carl was part of this extensive network of home concerts," Renee said. "The fact that he has developed this as a means of therapy for his wife makes it all the more special."

When Kay was sent home from the nursing home about two years ago destined to be homebound, Carl was given some wise advice by one of her therapists: "You'd better do something to get her involved in life again."

"She loves music; always has," Carl said. "Music has been a big part of our lives. We can't go out for it now, so I decided to bring it in to her. It started with bringing a couple of neighbors over to play some music, and it just grew."

The event usually draws between 30 and 40 people each month, though one month the count reached 50. Carl also has great interest from professional musical talent, usually having musicians booked at least five months out.

"We are now on the map for Concerts In Your Home tours," Carl told guests at the February event. "I get an

average of four emails a week inquiring about performing. They are on their way from Tulsa to Kansas City, and they are looking for someplace to perform in between."

In addition to professional musicians who provide the "main course," Carl usually arranges for some student musicians to perform a few numbers as a way to encourage them and give them some performance experience.

"Jeff and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the people who come from miles around to attend these events," Renee said. "They've discovered a hidden treasure in rural Missouri: the sheer joy of the shared musical experience. They're making meaningful connections with others each time they attend a concert. It really provides a therapeutic benefit for everyone involved."

Kay enjoys the music, but most importantly, the concerts give her the ability to connect with others.

"It means I get to see people," Kay said. "I get to visit with people I've never met and people I've known a long time."

1994

Sandy (Bain) Sinnett's debut novel, "Hope in the Rain," was released April 22, 2014. In early 2012, while Sandy's husband was deployed to Afghanistan, she began work on her novel during lunch breaks and late nights while caring for her three children and working a full-time job.

Marriages

Amanda (Hoard) Collins '10 and Clayton Collins were married October 5, 2013, at First Baptist Church of Lincoln, Mo.

Future Bearcats



Mark Roberts '97 and Amy (Whatley) Roberts '99 announce the birth of their daughter, Winona Grace Roberts. Grace was born April 20, 2012, and joins her brother Jack, 7 and Ella, 4.

Allison (Davis) '04, MBA '05 and Alex Edgar '05, DPT '09 announce that Ainsley Faith Edgar was born on December 6, 2013. She joins two proud older sisters, Addison and Aria.

In Memory

Berneda Mae "Bernie" (Kollenburn) Johnson '50 of Kansas City, Mo., passed away January 25, 2014. Berneda was a junior high math teacher in the Shawnee Mission School District, a member of Grace Point Baptist Church, and a devoted youth Sunday school teacher.

Let's Keep in Touch!



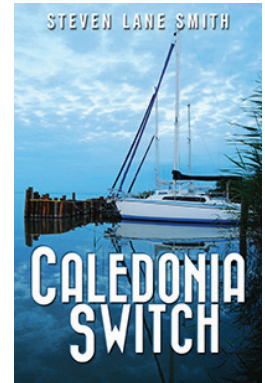
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Please note that alumni updates are published in SBU Life in the order they are received, depending on the space available in each issue. Therefore, it may take several months for Keeping in Touch submissions to be printed. Also, we will be happy to list your weddings and babies, but it is our policy not to list engagements or little expectations.

Smith '66 wins award for best humorous novel

The 2014 Reviewers Choice Best Humorous Novel prize has been awarded to Steven Lane Smith '66 for his novel "Caledonia Switch," which is available at retailers such as amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.

Smith is a former fighter pilot and retired airline captain. He and his wife, Aileen, live in New England. Smith is a graduate of SBU and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He also attended the Louisville School of Law.



Dill chosen 'New Superintendent of the Year'

Scott Dill '08, '11 received the New Superintendent of the Year award from the Missouri Association of School Administrator's Southwest Region. The award is in recognition of outstanding performance in the demonstration of those skills that reflect the best in educational leadership. He is in his second full year as superintendent of Houston, Mo., Schools. Scott graduated from SBU in 2008 with a master's in educational administration and 2011 with an education specialist—superintendency degree. He anticipates graduating in December 2014 with a doctor of education. His wife, Amy, is the elementary principal in Houston, and they have two daughters: Caroline, 13, and Maura, 9.



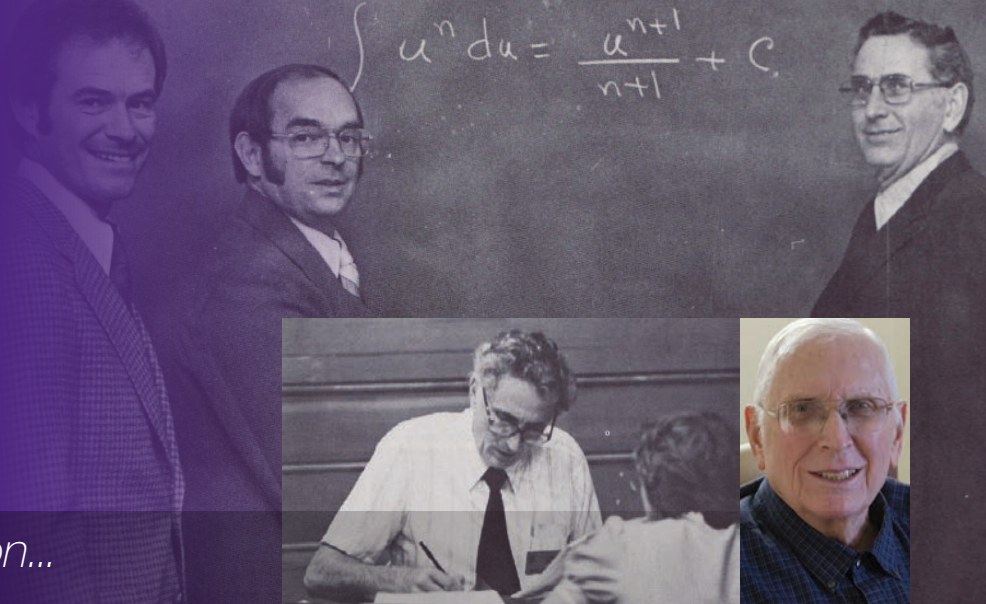
SBU would like your opinion and a few minutes of your time to help improve the effectiveness of SBULife to serve your needs. Some of you have received an invitation via email to respond to this survey. To those who have already responded to the survey, thank you! The Web-based survey is easy to use and takes about 15 minutes to complete and will help to make SBULife even better.

>>>> Take the survey now at <http://tinyurl.com/k9ct67p>

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*Inside this edition...*



## Smart, Llano inducted into SBU Athletics Hall of Fame

The Southwest Baptist University Department of Athletics' 2014 SBU Athletics Hall of Fame Class featured All-American football player, Nick Smart, and two time All-American tennis player, Mario Llano.



**Nick Smart '08, football:** Smart holds NCAA Division II records in receptions in a season (143), receptions per game during a season (13.0), most passes caught by two teammates in a season, and most

passes caught by three teammates in a season. Other honors include: 2007 Football Gazette All-American First Team, 2007 Daktronics All-American Second Team, 2007 Daktronics All-Southwest Region First Team, 2007 All-MIAA First Team, three-time All-MIAA Honorable Mention and four-time Academic All-MIAA.



**Mario Llano '90, men's tennis:** Llano's honors include 1989 & 1990 NCAA All-American, six-time MIAA Individual Champion in singles and doubles, and leading SBU to a final ITA/NCAA ranking of No. 8 in 1989 and No. 4 in 1990.

### Young, Shell are Rex Brown Award winners

The Rex Brown Award is given to one male senior student-athlete and one female senior student-athlete who has exhibited strong Christian character, academic achievement, leadership qualities, and has had a major impact in his or her sport.

**Landon Young, baseball:** Landon Young was an All-MIAA Honorable Mention selection his junior year, is a three-time Academic Honor Roll selection

and earned the MIAA Scholar Athlete Award last season. Young was the 2013 Mr. Southwest and is very involved on campus as a member of SAAC, FCA, Theta Alpha Kappa, Alpha Chi and Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Societies. Young has participated in community service through the SBU Baseball Team as well as co-leading two different mission trips, working with Welcome Week and volunteering at local schools and nursing homes. Young is currently an intern with Freshwater Church and carries a 3.9 GPA.

**Emma Shell, track and field:** Emma Shell is a two-time All-American and three-time national meet qualifier. Shell also earned All-MIAA honors in 2011 and 2012 for both indoor and outdoor track and field. Shell has volunteered at numerous events, including clothing drives, canned food drives, yard clean-ups and blood drives. Shell was named a 2012 Capital One Academic All-American and has been named All-Academic by the USTFCCCA three times.