

# ERVIN, HOYT CROWNED MR. AND MISS SOUTHWEST

BOLIVAR, Mo. — Tennessee Ervin, a finance major from Festus, and Ky'Lee Hoyt, an elementary education major from Lebanon, won the titles of Mr. and Miss Southwest at the annual pageant on Friday, March 5, at Southwest Baptist University.

Eight candidates were nominated by SBU faculty and staff and voted upon by the student body for the purpose of selecting a pair of students to represent the Bearcat family for the next year.



This year's candidates were Hannah Gibbs of Harrisonville, Mo.; Ky'Lee Hoyt of Lebanon, Mo.; Corynn Knight of Bolivar, Mo.; Elysia Burgos of Edmond, Okla.; Tyler Burnett of Wildwood, Mo.; Tennessee Ervin of Festus, Mo.; Tyler Eads of Monett, Mo.; and Nathaniel Dascher of Highlandville, Mo.

The pageant featured introductory videos and a talent presentation by each candidate, followed by a round of online voting to determine the top four candidates, who then participated in question-and-answer sessions. A final round of voting determined the winners.

During the talent competition, Ervin accompanied himself on piano as he sang, "Second Time Around," by Quinn XCII.

"I've been playing piano and music since I was a kid," Ervin said. "I may not be pursuing a degree or future in it, but I enjoy doing it so I thought it would be a good choice for a talent. Plus, it was a chance to play on a piano that is way nicer than anything I've played on before."

Ervin, who plans to begin a career as a financial planner back home after graduation, was honored to be named Mr. Southwest.

"I remember coming in during Bearcat Days before my freshman year and seeing it during my visit, as well as seeing some awesome guys come through and be named Mr. Southwest with Parker Hall and Chance Bedell," Ervin said. "So, to be given the opportunity to represent the school in this event was an awesome opportunity.

"It's a great way to represent the school. I get to interact with people just as much as ever now but with a better ability to represent the school and try and shine God's love and light through this. Mr. Southwest has given the opportunity to me to show love to people and make good connections with those around me in hopes to build

them up.”

Hoyt’s inspiration for her talent portion came from her friends and their obsession with playing “Just Dance.”

“At first, I stressed about the talent portion because I don’t really have any stage-worthy talents,” Hoyt said. “Once my group of friends and I started thinking, we knew the only option was to perform a ‘Just Dance’ mashup. This even provided the opportunity for some of my very best friends to be on stage with me, which brought me so much comfort and joy.”

Hoyt, who plans to teach first grade in the Bolivar area and eventually, become a principal, said she was blessed to be nominated and voted Miss Southwest.

“Knowing my professors saw me as someone who represents SBU, filled me with joy and so much gratitude,” Hoyt said. “Having the nomination come from the professors I look up to each and every day, truly left me speechless.

“Not only did my professors see me fit for the nomination, but the community of SBU saw me fit to represent SBU. With this title I get to represent SBU, the place I call home and cherish with my heart. I am so thankful and excited for this upcoming year. I have gained so many things while attending SBU, and will continue to see the growth for years.”

The beginnings of the “Miss Southwest” pageant date back to the 1930s, with “Mr. Southwest” being added in 1963. The pageant, which was organized by the students of SBU’s University Activities Council, was one of the keynote happenings of Bearcat Hangout, an online visit event for students considering attending SBU.

The pageant is available via livestream at: [www.SBUniv.info/MMSW21](http://www.SBUniv.info/MMSW21). For more information, contact Director of Student Leadership and Engagement, Dr. Nathan Penland at (417) 328-1828 or [npenland@SBUniv.edu](mailto:npenland@SBUniv.edu).

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PHOTO: 2021 Mr. and Miss Southwest – Tennessee Ervin and Ky’Lee Hoyt.

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