

Bill Hardage

Bill Hardage served Wayland Baptist University for nearly 40 years in offices ranging from track and field coach to executive vice president before his untimely death in a plane crash in 2006. A graduate of Wayland, he was also at various times chairman of the physical education department, director of special services, director of external programs, director of student services, director of advancement, vice chancellor, vice president of academics, and provost.

Billy Dean Hardage was born in 1943 in Clovis, New Mexico, grew up in the Panhandle town of Lazbuddie, and graduated from high school there in 1961. He first came to Plainview in 1963, transferring from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene to run for Wayland's new track and field program. After earning his degree in 1965, he moved to Lubbock to coach football and track at Coronado High School. He later became assistant track coach and physical education instructor at Texas Tech, where he received his master's degree in education.

Hardage returned to Plainview in 1966 and served as Wayland's track and field coach and assistant professor of physical education for five years before taking a two-year break to earn his doctorate in education at East Texas State University. He came back to Wayland in 1973 to chair the physical education department and coach track before moving into administrative roles. Fellow administrators lauded his impeccable work ethic and love for the university.

In 1979 Dr. Hardage became Wayland's director of special services, taking the reins of the four existing external campuses, nurturing them to success, and eventually helping expand them to a total of 13 campuses in six states and the African nation of Kenya.

Dr. Hardage was also active in the community. He served as president of the Plainview Chamber of Commerce and was a member of the Lions Club. An accomplished pilot, he spent many years shuttling officials to graduation ceremonies at external campuses or to other locations on Wayland business. He co-owned High Plains Aviation with his son Tim, helped organize the Plainview Fly-In, and belonged to the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

A member of the first class of the Wayland Athletic Hall of Honor, Dr. Hardage was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Lifetime Leadership Award by the Association of Former Students. An endowed scholarship bears his name and the auditorium at the Anchorage, Alaska campus is named in his honor.

He is survived by his wife, Nell Rackley Mayfield. He had two children, two stepchildren, four grandchildren, and six step-grandchildren.

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