

Border Texan of the Year Announced

Austin, TX – Senator Eddie Lucio (D-Brownsville), Border Texan of the Year (2017) was present with fellow alumni for the announcement of Dr. Guy Bailey, President of UTRGV as Border Texan of the Year for 2019.

UTRGV President Guy Bailey named 2019 Border Texan of the Year*

McALLEN — President Guy Bailey of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on Wednesday was named the 2019 Border Texan of the Year, a prestigious annual recognition that has been awarded to the likes of former Texas Gov. George W. Bush, H-E-B owner Charles C. Butt and late U.S. Rep. Kika De La Garza.

“I’m truly honored and humbled by this award. Five years ago, it was hard to know what to expect,” Bailey said on Wednesday during an announcement at the McAllen Convention Center, which will be the site of a Nov. 21 dinner reception honoring Bailey, who moved to South Texas five years ago for the UTRGV job. He added: “There was great opportunity, but we really didn’t know how it would work out. After coming down here and meeting the people of the Rio Grande Valley, I knew it would work.”

Past recipients John Sharp, the Texas A&M University System chancellor, state Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr. of Brownsville and Janet and Robert Vackar, owners of Bert Ogden Auto Group, were on hand for the announcement.

“This guy knows more about higher education than anyone else in the country,” Sharp said.

Bailey’s receiving of perhaps the most prestigious award in South Texas is a culmination of a quick South Texas welcome after Bailey arrived in 2014, when he was named the first president of UTRGV following tenures as president of the University of Alabama and of Texas Tech University, chancellor of the University of Missouri-Kansas City and provost and executive vice president of the University of Texas San Antonio.

“This is my home,” Bailey said, noting how the university added a medical school recently: “We want to keep our best talent here, and that’s what UTRGV is about.”

Bailey praised Sharp, and Sharp reciprocated, both with jokes about the collegiality between the University of Texas and Texas A&M University Systems on Wednesday.

“Many of you don’t know. I’ll tell you a little secret: he’s been very helpful to UTRGV,” Bailey said of Sharp’s supporting of the UTRGV School of Medicine.

Sharp, speaking before Bailey’s name was revealed as this year’s award recipient, praised Bailey.

“This guy knows more about higher education than anyone else in the country,” Sharp said.

Bailey also thanked “the love of my life,” Val LaMantia Peisen of L&F Distributors, whom he met upon moving to the Valley.

LaMantia Peisen also sits on the Border Texan of the Year selection committee.

* Ferman, Mitchell. "UTRGV President Guy Bailey named 2019 Border Texan of the Year." *The Monitor*, 11 September 2019, <https://www.themonitor.com/2019/09/11/utrgv-president-guy-bailey-named-2019-border-texan-year/>