

Weldon Davis, Vivian Bennett Are HHS Distinguished Alums

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to Hart, they lived in a converted railroad box car, located where the HGG building now is. Later, a room and a windmill were added. Weldon said, "We lived there a year."

Harvey worked for Hill and Bradley General Mercantile, owned by the late Homer Hill and Jack Bradley. (The store was located at the intersection of FM145 and TX194. There is a building there now, which has housed Bob's Farm Supply, Tole Auto Parts and Rah-Rah.) Harvey did the outside work at the Mercantile, pumping gas, changing flats and oil, and whatever was required.

In 1948, he rented a half section of dry land northeast of Hart from Homer Hill. Weldon recalls as a 12-year old boy, he drove a tractor. Harvey continued to work at the Mercantile for two more years. He then rented more land and began farming full time.

After attending Wellman public school (in Terry County), Weldon enrolled at Hart ISD, graduating in 1954. While in high school, he played basketball, adding that the best athlete in HHS at the time was Jerry Phillips. Being tall, he said he fed the ball to Jerry and he usually scored. He recalls the Longhorns beat Muleshoe twice, by the same score.

And, Weldon liked to sing, something he continues to do intermittently. He is known for his bass voice and being a part of the Singing Farmers. While performing with the Singing Farmers, Weldon said they sang in 300 different places from 1980 to 2002.

Singing Farmers members were Preston Upshaw, Leslie Davis, Freddie Upshaw and Weldon, with Weldon's late wife, Gaylia, being the pianist and coordinator, assisted by Preston's wife, Laverne.

The Upshaws now live in Ransom Canyon. They were members of First Baptist Church of Hart, joining Weldon

and Gaylia (and others) in providing music for church services, weddings and funerals. Leslie is Weldon's son, and Freddie is Preston's nephew.

Weldon said he has sung from an early age, recalling singing with his mother, who sang while she washed dishes, cooked, hoed cotton, etc. At age 6, he was asked to sing for a church service at First Baptist Church in Hart, where his family attended. He remains a member of the church, where he serves as a deacon. His father also was a deacon. He recalls that first song he sang in church, "Footsteps of Jesus."

After making a little money hand-pulling cotton, he bought a Gibson guitar from Mary L. Spence music store in Plainview. The guitar has since been traded for another guitar. He still owns a Gibson. He recalls that Miss Spence was interested in young people's musical skills, and invited him to join other young folks in broadcasting for KVOP, a Plainview radio station. They went to her house on Tuesday nights and performed. There he met Jimmy Dean and some of Ernest Tubb's musicians. He did this for three years. He had become a fan of Hank Williams, Sr.'s music, often mimicking the legendary country-western performer, who died in 1953 at age 29. Weldon was often referred to as "Hank" in those days.

Weldon was interested in pursuing a music career, but was discouraged in doing this by his father, who pointed out the caousing lifestyle of many country-western musicians. Weldon sang in the International Choir at then Wayland Baptist College in Plainview, which he attended for two semesters.

Meanwhile, Weldon had fallen in love with Gaylia Anderson, also of Hart. He decided he didn't want to return to college, but came home to farm and get married. He recalls that Gaylia began playing the

organ at church when she was 14, and the two were asked to perform for funerals at the church. They married on July 10, 1955, at First Baptist Church. Gaylia continued to play the organ at church; she died in 2009.

The couple has four children: Leslie Davis of Hart, who is a truck driver; Vivian Davis Bennett, married to Mark, and she is a teacher at Tulia; Jennifer Davis Pinkston (husband is Ira, and is a music minister) of Albuquerque, NM, where she is a teacher, substitute pianist at church and plays the keyboard for their Church's praise team; and Julie Davis Reimund of Laredo, where she is a stay-at-home mom, and her husband John teaches low brass at a magnet school. Julie is pianist for First Baptist Church in Laredo.

Weldon's four children have given him 14 grandchildren, and he has 12 great-grandchildren. Leslie's children are Mandy, Chris, Ashley and Michelle; Vivian has Travis, Stacey and John Mark; Jennifer's two daughters are Joy and Melody; and Julie has Luke, Ethan, Tyler, Amber and Conner.

Weldon later married Tommie McCormick, who had served as Hart's postmaster for eight years. She and her late husband Jay lived here until she retired from the U.S. Postal Service, and they returned to Dickens in 2006. He died in March of that year. They had two sons, Philip and Justin. Philip and his family live in Spur, and he works for Caprock Telephone Co-op. Justin and his family live at White River Lake, where he is in charge of pumping water to member-cities. Philip and his wife have triplet sons, Garrett, Wyatt and Wylie. Justin and his wife have two daughters, Bailey and Kylie.

Weldon is farm manager for the 9,000-acre Tyline Perry Trust, located in Castro and Swisher Counties, and he also farms. He said that he got this job in 1992, and there

were 13 tenant farmers; now there are six.

He helped to form the Texas Corn Growers organization, which started in the 1980s, with prodding from the late Carl King of Dimmitt, who served as president for many years. The organization is now located in Lubbock County. Weldon was elected chairman of the Food Corn Division of the organization. He served a three-year term on the U.S. Grains Council, traveling to the nation's capital a few times.

He also serves as president of the Hart of the Plains Pump & Irrigation, Inc. board of directors, which originally was formed by some area farmers, including his late father.

Weldon had always lived in the country, except for living in a dorm at college. He and Tommie made the move a few years ago from their home east of Hart to the house built by Weldon's parents when they moved to Hart from the farm. They both are active in First Baptist Church, where they each teach Sunday School.

Vivian Bennett (continued from Page 1)

city, directing at theatre camp. She also directs a major fall production at Tulia High School, as well as several smaller ones throughout the year.

Awards that she has received include being selected as the American Legion, Tulia chapter, Teacher of the Year in 2007, was the recipient of the 2011 UIL Sponsor of the Year, and she was recognized at the 2012 State One-Act Meet.

She enjoys spending time with her family and seeing the successes of her students.

Vivian says that she is so honored to be selected a Distinguished Alum and wants to thank the Hart Student Council, advisor Mark Castillo and the committee for this honor.

Honors Committee (continued from Page 1)

this committee to help determine the most appropriate way to recognize these individuals. This committee will meet for the first time around the middle of October.

If you are interested in joining the committee or can provide information about past individual, teams, or playoffs teams from football and basketball, please contact the superintendent's office at (806) 938-2143.



**Come On Out To The Football Game And
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Enjoy the halftime festivities!**

**Ed Harris
Lumber Co.**