

MidlothianNOW

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MARCH 2021



Challenge Accepted

The Tortoise and the Hare race encourages senior fitness

In the Kitchen With Charli Turturro and Claire Flach

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Dr. Martin Hawkins partners with Al Angel in a walking challenge to benefit Southern Bible Institute & College.



Photo by
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CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

— By Angel Morris

A life of steadfast service has made Dr. Martin Hawkins particularly suited for a challenge placed before him. The president of Southern Bible Institute & College is poised to prove that “slow and steady wins the race” is not just a mantra, but a mission. “To celebrate the college’s 95th anniversary, a challenge was given to two of our senior members. Through The Tortoise and the Hare Fundraiser, we will see who has raised the most support and covered the most territory,” 79-year-old Martin explained.

A dedicated walker who has tracked steps for years, Martin joined SBIC Board Member Al Angel, an 81-year-old who completes a yearly marathon, in competing for the most miles. On March 13, the school will commemorate its anniversary and recognize Martin’s goal of reaching 3 million steps. While he aspired to raise \$60,000 for the school, The Tortoise and the Hare race perhaps had a greater purpose: inspiring fitness among seniors. “Our mental, emotional and physical capacities have changed over the years. Sometimes these realities can be discouraging, but we still have to move through these obstacles,” Martin reminded.

One such obstacle for Martin was a diagnosis of diabetes several years ago. “Health issues can be challenging, but we have choices in how we can respond.” He recalled, “My daughter gave me a Fitbit for my birthday, which changed everything. Walking was something that I could do at anytime and anyplace. Thus, my walking became my solution.”

As his passion for walking increased, health issues also began to decrease. “It is about an attitude of never giving up, acknowledging the role of Christ in our lives and, no matter how old you are, continuing to strive to reach your goals.”

Martin had already developed an attitude of perseverance. “I graduated from high school, unable to get accepted in college because my grades just weren’t sufficient. The dream was deferred but not forgotten. I worked and waited five years before I was able to enter college,” Martin recalled. “However, once I started, I stayed in college for the next 20 years.”

Martin first received his associate degree, then a bachelor’s from Rutgers University and a master’s in counseling from Rowan College in New Jersey. In 1980, he received a Master of Theology Degree from Dallas Theological Seminary and later completed a Doctorate of Ministry program from there. “I advise others to assess their dreams, determine which are recurring and then pursue those with passion,” Martin outlined. “Don’t give up even though the dream may seem insurmountable. Take one day at a time and ignore the frustrations!”

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AN ATTITUDE OF
NEVER GIVING UP."





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Upon receiving his master's, Martin became the assistant pastor at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship under Dr. Tony Evans. "I have been inspired by my pastor of 44 years. He enabled me to see how the Word is demonstrated in the everyday lives of people," Martin credited. "He helped me develop in my personal life, in my family life, in my relations with my wife and children and others. He constantly encouraged me to seek the highest academically and to pursue excellence in my faith. We partnered for 30 years in the development of OCBF, and I'm grateful for his leadership."

After 29 years at OCBF, Martin assumed the SBIC presidency in 2005, where he still serves. In August, he passes the torch to Dr. Terrance Ford who will take the school through accreditation completion as well as an aggressive plan for enrollment and campus expansion. "We have dubbed this transition process the Jordan River Project, reflecting on Moses and Joshua. This year will be dedicated to several legacy campaigns, of which The Tortoise and Hare Fundraiser is just one."

The fundraiser is also a personal tribute to Martin's own father. "We had a family with 16 children of which I was the youngest, and we were not wealthy. But my father was a godly man and provided for our family in the best way that he could," Martin remembered. "At 75 years of age, my father walked 3 miles to and from work each day." This was additional motivation for Martin as he reflected on his father's life. "He was physically fit even in his senior years. He depended on the Lord to provide all that our family needed. He taught all of us to do the same, and his influence has been



evident throughout my life.”

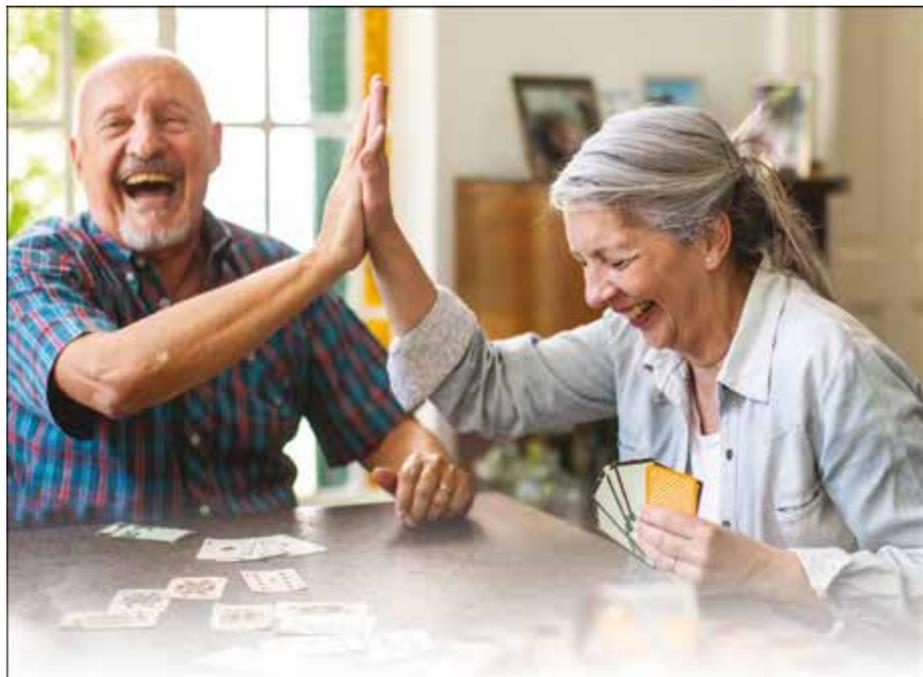
It was 2003 when Martin and his wife, Shirley, decided to move from Dallas to a smaller city. “At that point, Midlothian was the perfect place — a small, country town with lots of space to grow. So, Midlothian became our home,” he explained.

Now an avid Cowboys, Mavs and Rangers fan, Martin admits to loving “almost all kinds of sports. Lately, I have become interested in the game of corn hole. This is a great retirement game, and I am going to become an expert.”

Martin encourages other seniors to find something they love, to establish a daily routine of exercise, to partner with friends and family to get physically fit and not to be discouraged when everything doesn’t go as planned. “Never, never, never quit!” he reiterated.

Father to son, Mark (and daughter-in-law Rosalind), and daughter, Melissa, and grandfather to Maya and Marina, Martin remains dedicated to staying physically and mentally fit beyond The Tortoise and the Hare Fundraiser and throughout retirement. He hopes his story can encourage others to do the same.

“My challenge was underestimating my abilities. Once I understood who I was from a godly perspective, it allowed me to see my life differently. I realized God gave me gifts and abilities that are specifically intended for me,” he said. “This motivated me to pursue college, a career and remain active. It helped me realize I was given the gift of discipleship, leadership and encouragement. I have utilized those gifts to benefit me, but more importantly to help others to reach their potential.” **NOW**



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