

CARILLON PLAYING AGAIN AT SBU



A fundraising effort has Spurgeon Carillon playing once again on Southwest Baptist University's Bolivar campus.

May 2021 graduate Chance Bedell led an effort this school year to raise money for renovations to the Kate Stamper Wilhite Tower, primarily to make the carillon play once again. His dream was to have the carillon play at the end of each commencement ceremony on May 14-15.

After presenting the idea to SBU's administration, the project grew to include additional components:

- A new digital, Wi-Fi-enabled carillon;
- Color-changing LED lighting;
- Frosted glass panels to magnify the cross; and
- A deep cleaning of the exterior.

"The bell tower is an iconic structure on our Bolivar campus that serves as a reminder of our Christ-centered mission," said Interim President Dr. Brad Johnson. "Between Chance's vision to upgrade the carillon and other ideas included in our Campus Master Plan for enhancing the bell tower, the structure will continue to be treasured by Bearcats for generations to come. I am thankful for Chance's leadership in this campus improvement project."

Initial fundraising efforts provided enough money to purchase the carillon. The bell tower was cleaned and new speakers were installed the week of June 21. Faculty and staff enjoyed hearing it play "Amazing Grace" the morning of June 23 and the bell tower now chimes on the hour every day. Further updates, including LED lighting and glass panels around the cross, are planned as fundraising continues.

"Hearing the chimes ring from the bell tower has been better than anything I could have imagined," Bedell said. "I am so thankful for the donors who made this dream a reality and I am also excited to see the reaction of Bearcats when we return in the fall!"

"A renewed sense of joy and purpose wells up in me every time I hear the chimes and I am thankful for all those whose generosity has made this possible," Johnson said.

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