

WARPED

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Abilene Christian awards fine arts degree to Heston

ABILENE (AP) — As Moses, actor Charlton Heston received the Ten Commandments in the movie by the same title in 1956. His performance in "Ben Hur" earned him an Academy Award for best actor in 1959. This weekend, he got an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Abilene Christian University. ACU president William J. Teague presented the honor during a private dinner Saturday at the Abilene Civic Center, during which Heston read selections from the Old Testament book of Exodus. "Mr. and Mrs. Heston represent the family in American celebrity life in ways consistent with the thrust of the university," Teague said. Heston's wife, Lydia Clarke, received a special certificate of appreciation that read: "No degree of true greatness in this life is achieved without love, support, companionship and abiding confidence." Heston amused the crowd of more than 600 after he clumsily put

his doctoral hood on backward. When the audience began to snicker and ACU board chairman H. Lynn Packer quipped, "That's OK. You can wear it as a bib or a hood," Heston responded, "One thing I should know how to do is wear funny suits." Noting that his wife has the couple's only college degree, he said, "You see before you a deeply uneducated man. For that reason, among others, I'm especially grateful for this honor." Heston began developing a relationship with ACU in 1983 when he was asked to speak at the university. He also viewed that year's homecoming musical, "The Sound of Music." In 1985 his wife, a renowned photographer, exhibited her photographs in ACU's Shore Art Gallery, her only exhibit in Texas to date. The Hestons also attended the school's 1985 musical "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers."

Leaders hope '92 convention will benefit neglected area

HOUSTON (AP) — Civic leaders are hoping some of the glitz they're putting on for the 1992 Republican National Convention will rub off on the decaying South Main strip near the convention site. In 18 months, thousands of visitors will swarm to the Bayou City for the GOP event at the Astrodome. But before they do, business owners and civic leaders hope the national spotlight will provide incentive to revitalize portions of South Main. There's reason to be hopeful. Before the economic summit last July, volunteer crews and city workers cleaned up city parks, demolished buildings, planted flowers, swept streets and cleared vacant lots. Republican leaders are launching plans now to repeat that performance for the GOP convention. "We're willing to do whatever it takes to make it the best convention possible," said Andy Abboud, executive director of the Harris County Republican Party. "If that means we're going to have to go out and clean the streets and pick up garbage, then that's what we'll do." The gritty stretch of South Main that bisects south Houston is speckled with overgrown vacant lots, abandoned, burned-out buildings and cheap motels that draw prostitutes and crack cocaine dealers. The four-lane asphalt street — divided by a ditch and pitted with potholes — lacks curbs, sidewalks, gutters and landscaping. It's a part of town many avoid. Saleh Mouasher, manager of Houston Luxury Limousine and Chauffeur Service, said he will steer clear of the area when he shuttles convention delegates to and from their destinations. "No, we won't go down South Main. We want to give them a good impression of our city," Mouasher told the Houston Chronicle. "If we show them the attractive parts of town, it's a big encouragement for them to come back." Convention visitors will dine, drink and carouse in more appealing sections of town, including the Galleria area or trendy Montrose.

Budget analyst predicts Congress will fund V-22

FORT WORTH (AP) — A troubled tilt-rotor aircraft, unmentioned in the president's defense budget for the second year in a row, will probably win congressional support in the midst of the Gulf War, analysts said. The on-again, off-again V-22 Osprey has been a target of Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, who said the project should be canceled. But intensive lobbying last year secured \$165 million in procurement money from Congress and another \$238 million for development. "I think the V-22 will come back this year," said Natalie Goldring, an analyst for the Defense Budget Project, a Washington research group. "After the Persian Gulf, people will be looking more closely at systems that aid a rapid response to a crisis. Cheney has delayed giving funds to Osprey contractors, Bell Helicopter Textron of Fort Worth and Boeing Helicopters of Ridley Town-

ship, Pa., while working to kill the program. But Rep. Curt Weldon, a Republican from the Philadelphia suburbs, wants funds appropriated for the tilt-rotor craft to be spent soon. "The administration has thought they could be successful in canceling the program — that by dragging this out long enough, the contractors would become convinced that it's not worth keeping their investment in," Weldon told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Rep. Pete Geren, D-Fort Worth, said he is confident that Congress will go along with funding the program for the second year in a row, despite Cheney's belief the project is too costly. Bell and Boeing, meanwhile, have moved ahead with tests on the six V-22 prototypes built so far. The tilt-rotor craft made its first shipboard landing in December, officials said.

Gunman assassinates ex-Contra

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — An official from the Sandinista-controlled security police Sunday promised a full-scale probe into the slaying of former Contra chief Enrique Bermudez, whose death cast doubt on government assurances for the safety of other rebels who laid down their arms.

But a right-wing radio station late Saturday blamed the slaying of Bermudez on Sandinista sympathizers, some of whom cheered the news of the killing.

Officials said they had no suspects and no one immediately claimed responsibility for the killing. Bermudez, 58, was shot outside his car near the downtown Intercontinental Hotel Saturday night. The suspect then fled on foot.

Vice Interior Minister Jose Pallais said it appeared Bermudez was followed, and was shot twice from a distance of five to six feet.

Taxi driver Rene Sanchez said a man looked at the body and said, "This man died by the bullet. He is 380, Enrique Bermudez," then hurried away. Bermudez's nom de guerre was "Comandante 380."

Garcia added that the slaying clouds the government's ability to guarantee the safety of ex-Contras.

Bermudez only months earlier said he feared death at the hands of the Sandinistas.

Right-wing Radio Corporacion, in a Sunday broadcast, blamed the Sandinistas.

Pallais promised an "exhaustive" investigation and called the killing "an attack against the policy of reconciliation by the government of President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro."

The Interior Ministry, responsible for internal security, remains under the control of the Sandinistas, who Mrs. Chamorro's broad coalition defeated a year ago at the polls. Elsa Bermudez said she was taking her husband back to Miami, where he lived for years until returning to Nicaragua last October.

"We're not going to bury him in Nicaragua," she said after identifying the body. "I want to feel tranquil at his tomb, to cry there. I'm not coming here to visit it."

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