

MINISTER

from page 6 A

serving as minister of music and education. The pastor, Kenneth Hodges, was told that Johnson was not eligible for rehire at the Hamshire church and that there had been serious problems.

Beverly Martin who has chaired the personnel committee for First Baptist in Hamshire for more than three years, said, "Everything the personnel committee and the church did was done looking toward redemption and not revenge. We did not want to see anyone hurt any more than had been."

The pastor of the church, Joe Constantine, who has been the leader of this ministry for some 15 years, issued a statement that said, "When Mrs. Hargraves approached us with her allegations, we immediately began to investigate the matter. When confronted with the allegations, Mr. Johnson took the opportunity presented to him and chose to resign

immediately. He stated to us that Mrs. Hargraves was innocent in the matter. At Mrs. Hargraves' request, we did not make the reason for his resignation known to the church at large. Any further action was then and is now at Mrs. Hargraves' discretion. She remains an employee of First Baptist Church in good standing and we continue to pray for all concerned."

Reed Burgess, chair of the deacon board and a member of First Baptist in Hamshire for 58 years, said that when he was first informed of the allegation he was surprised and disappointed. Burgess has served on the deacon board for more four decades and has witnessed God's blessings on the ministry. He said, "The entire matter became one of concern for this ministry. I knew it would affect everyone involved, the victim, our church, the perpetrator's family and the perpetrator. I realize

that in today's society, we are confronted with many different things and we must take steps to protect the ministry in the future. We did everything we could do, everything we knew to do, and yet, there is pain. The one thing I trust is that perhaps this incident can serve as a warning to all other pastors and church leaders. Not only should we pray about hiring new employees, we must utilize every resource in checking on their backgrounds."

It was suggested to the pastor at First Baptist Church in Winnie by a third party to call The Examiner and discuss the hiring of Bernie Johnson. The pastor's comment was, "I will not be calling anyone, they can call me." Multiple calls went unanswered and a message left at the church was not returned at press time.

Brenda Cannon Stancil can be reached at 409-832-1400, ext. #227 or at bstancil@theexaminer.com.

The Phillip Mayeux Agency
would like to welcome

Gene Schulz

ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY
1550 CORNERSTONE COURT
BEAUMONT, TX 77706

(409) 899-3999

24-HOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE



Allstate.
You're in good hands

EMAIL: geneschulz@allstate.com

Willy Ray's

Bar-B-Q Co.

Reader's
Choice
Award
Winning
BBQ

Sandwich Trays • Veggie Trays
Fruit Trays • Meat Trays

Smoked Meats
by the pound or 1/2 pound
Great for Snacks at Home

One of Texas Monthly's
Top 50 BBQ in Texas

Beach/Lake Outings • Birthdays • Weddings
Family Reunions • Company Picnics

We deliver to your business!

BEAUMONT • 145 I-10 N • 409-832-7770 • www.willyraysbbq.com

New Hospital.

Since the day you found out you were pregnant, you've been dreaming of holding your baby for the first time, counting his fingers and toes, and hearing your mom say, "He's got your nose."

We know how important it is that your birth experience be special. So, we've thought of everything...spacious, private suites with gliding rockers, sleeper couches so dad can stay close by, a state-of-the-art infant security system and a neonatal intensive care unit for newborns with special needs.

It's not every day you bring new life into the world, and we want those first moments with your new baby to be as perfect as you do.



Hwy 69 @ Jimmy Johnson Boulevard
Port Arthur 409.724.SETX (7389)

www.medicalcentersetexas.com

New Life.

