FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas College Confers Two Honorary Degrees During This Graduation Season

Tyler, Texas – Texas College (TC) is proud to announce the matriculation of more than 100 prospective associate and baccalaureate degree earning graduates for the College’s Class of 2012. In addition to this traditional graduate roster, Texas College will confer Honorary Doctorates for two individuals who are considered to be friends of the College, advocates for social justice, agents of change, and leaders in the community. The recipients are DR. JERRY L. CHRISTIAN, SR. and BISHOP LAWRENCE L. REDDICK, III.

Texas College’s graduation activities will begin Friday, May 4, 2012 in the Gus F. Taylor Gymnasium on TC’s campus with the CLASS OF 2012 FLAG CEREMONY (5:30 p.m.), and the BACCALAUREATE AND COMMUNION SERVICE (6:00 p.m.) where DR. JERRY L. CHRISTIAN, SR. will serve as the Keynote Speaker. These events are free and open to the public and seating is available on a first come, first serve basis. Immediately following the Baccalaureate Service is the GRADUATE BANQUET in the Texas College Dining Hall. Tickets for the banquet are $10 and can be purchase from the Texas College Office of Business and Finance. For more information, call 903.593.8311 ext. 2200. On Saturday, May 5, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. in Tyler’s Caldwell Auditorium, the 2012 COMMENCEMENT EXERCISE will be held. BISHOP LAWRENCE L. REDDICK, III will serve as the Keynote Speaker. This event is free and open to the public.

Recipient of the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree and Baccalaureate Speaker, DR. JERRY L. CHRISTIAN, SR. is the visionary pastor of Kirkwood Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E) Church. A native of Booneville, MS, Dr. Christian is a graduate of the University of Mississippi where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies and Psychology. His graduate work included Psychology studies at Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi. He received the Master of Divinity from Memphis Theological Seminary in 1987 with specialization in Homiletics and Pastoral Counseling. He then earned the Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1994. In addition, Dr. Christian is licensed as a Certified Counselor.

Since 1982, Dr. Christian has pastored and held offices within the CME Church, having served as Chair of the Joint Board of Finance for East Mississippi, West Tennessee, and Dallas Fort Worth Annual Conferences. As president of the Board of Christian Education for the East Mississippi Annual Conference, he set curriculum and educational programs for the conference. He has served as President of the CME Minister's Alliance of the Greater Memphis Area, and a CME Convocation Seminar Instructor. In addition, he was a delegate to the World Methodist Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Dr. Christian is also a member of the General Conference Committee on Episcopacy.

Ever busy, Dr. Christian is the past President of the Greater North Texas CME Minister's Alliance and President of the DFW African-American Pastors Coalition. In addition, he is a member of the Religious Task Force for the Dallas Independent School District, the Episcopacy Committee of the CME Church, Texas Advisory Committee on Religion, the Trustee Board at Texas College, Vice President for the Dallas Faith Coalition advisor to the Mayor's Commission for Minority Community Improvement. In 2007, Dr. Christian was appointed by the Dallas City Council to represent Dallas on the Dallas Area Rapid Transportation (DART) Board of Directors.

Dr. Christian is also gives of himself to the community at large, having been a member of the Advisory Board for the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Program and Child Abuse Task Force of the Prentiss County Department of Public Welfare. He is also a lifetime member of the NAACP and a member of Who's Who in Business and Professions. He currently serves on the Christian Unity Commission, Texas Conference of Churches, and Dean of Leadership Training School for the 8th Episcopal District.

Recipient of the Honorary Doctor of Laws degree and Commencement Speaker, BISHOP LAWRENCE REDDICK, III is the 51st bishop elected in the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church, has been presiding bishop of the First Episcopal District since July 2010. Born June 20, 1952, in Huntsville, Alabama, Bishop Reddick’s spiritual journey began at Phillips CME Church in Huntsville. He is one of seven children of the late Reverend and Mrs. L. L. Reddick, Jr.
A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University of Delaware, Ohio (Bachelor of Arts degree) and Duke Divinity School of Durham, North Carolina (Master of Divinity degree), he has also been conferred the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the United Theological Seminary and Bible College of Monroe, Louisiana, and the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Texas College, Tyler, Texas.

His journey into ordained ministry began in 1966 in Athens, Alabama (Frazier Chapel CME Church), when he was licensed to preach by the Reverend R. E. Brooks. He was ordained deacon in 1968 and ordained elder in 1969 by Bishop E. P. Murchison, and admitted into full connection in 1972 by Bishop C. A. Kirkendoll.

He was elected editor of THE CHRISTIAN INDEX, the Official Publication of the CME Church, in 1982. He was subsequently re-elected editor by the General Conferences of 1986, 1990, and 1994. He was elected bishop on July 1, 1998. Upon his election to the episcopacy in 1998, he was assigned as bishop of the Tenth Episcopal District (including the work in Jamaica, Haiti, Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria). He was assigned in 2002 and 2006 as bishop of the Fifth Episcopal District (which includes the work in Alabama and Florida). In 2010, he was assigned to the First Episcopal District, comprising the Regions in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Jamaica.

Bishop Reddick is chair of the denomination’s Commission on Ritual and Worship, chair of the Committee to Develop a New CME Hymnal, and patron bishop of the Women’s Missionary Council. He is chair of the Trustee Board of Miles College, a member of the Board of Directors of Bread for the World, and a founding member of the Alabama Faith Council (an interfaith gathering of religious leaders across Alabama.)

About Texas College (TC)
Texas College is a historical black college founded in 1894, by a group of CME ministers. Our mission, who continues to embody the principles of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, is to ensure that the student body experiences balanced, intellectual, psychological, social and spiritual development, aimed at enabling them to become active productive members of society where they live and work. (Recast and approved by the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting, April 15, 2011). The College pursues this mission through the core values of academic excellence; integrity; perseverance; social responsibility; tolerance; and community service. TC is led by its 23rd President Dr. Dwight Fennell. To learn more about Texas College log on to www.texascollege.edu.

###