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## **NET Health Announces Our 2021 W.T. “Doc” Ballard Award Recipients**

Thursday, June 24, 2021 – Tyler, Texas

The Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health) is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2021 W. T. “Doc” Ballard Award for Excellence in Public Health, our highest accolade for outstanding service contributing significantly to the enhancement of public health.

“Doc” Ballard, a registered professional engineer for the Texas Department of Health and mentor to NET Health, was a leader in protecting the health of the public. His expertise and administrative skills ensured the environmental controls crucial to the quality and safety of public drinking water and public food service, proper disposal of waste, and the monitoring of radiation.

Judges for the selection of the annual “Doc” Ballard Award include two members from NET Health’s Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer of NET Health, the NET Health Director of Environmental Health, one representative from the Texas Department of State Health Services Region 4/5 North and one representative from the Smith County AgriLife Extension Office.



NET Health recognizes Smith County Judge Nathaniel Moran, Tyler Mayor Don Warren, former Tyler Mayor Martin Heines, and Ben and Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy at the University of Texas at Tyler as co-recipients of the 2021 “Doc” Ballard Award for Excellence in Public Health.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, our world changed. NET Health, the City of Tyler, and Smith County established a Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC) led by Smith County Judge Nathaniel Moran and then Tyler Mayor Martin Heines.

The EOC established a centralized command and control facility that coordinated Smith County’s emergency response at a strategic level during the pandemic. More than 80 people representing numerous stakeholders called-in daily or drove to Tyler Fire Station 1 with the goal of limiting the spread of COVID-19.

The Smith County EOC ensured first responders and medical staff had the proper funding, resources, and facilities available to fight the pandemic in Tyler and Smith County.

In November 2020, newly elected Mayor Don Warren succeeded Mayor Heines in joint leadership of the EOC during the vaccine rollout.

The leadership of these elected officials during such an unprecedented public health crisis has been essential for coordinating life-saving support systems while maintaining clear communication with the residents of Smith County.



The Ben and Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy (FCOP) was established in 2013 and was conceived to alleviate the emerging shortage of pharmacists in East Texas. The FCOP enrolled its pioneer class in the fall of 2015 with a vision and mission to serve the public health of East Texas.



Three days after the national pandemic emergency was declared, the FCOP worked with NET Health to develop the region’s first COVID-19 call center that became an advanced pharmacy practice experience and has continuously adapted its efforts according to the changing community needs through collaborations with Brookshire Grocery Company and with UT Health East Texas.

Since March 2020, FCOP has dedicated over 4000 hours to COVID-19 relief efforts. By leveraging its relationship with community stakeholders, the Ben and Maytee Fisch School of Pharmacy has demonstrated a significant impact on our East Texas community’s public health and wellness.

### **About the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health)**

NET Health serves a vital function through our Departments of Immunizations, Tuberculosis Control, Laboratory Services, Vital Statistics, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Disease Surveillance, Environmental Health, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) & Community Outreach.

The mission of NET Health is to promote health, prevent illness and protect our community.

Visit us at [MyNETHealth.org](http://MyNETHealth.org). [“Like” us on Facebook](#) and [“Follow” us on Instagram](#).



**Members of the Ballard Family pictured with Judge Moran and Mayor Warren.**