

# Pastor recently featured in Texas newspaper

By Bill Martin  
Rockdale Reporter

Editor's note: The following article was written by Bill Martin, reporter for the Rockdale Reporter, Rockdale, Texas.

Humble – When it comes time for coaches to exit the sidelines, a large portion of them go into the insurance business – so often, that it is a running joke in the profession.

Warren Cico also chose to enter the insurance business, but in a different capacity – he provides insurance for sure. Insurance for the soul.

It was a simple case of moniker makeover. Coach Cico becomes pastor Cico.

The former Rockdale coach, who influenced a generation of Tiger athletes as part of the state championship football and track teams coaching staff from 1973 through 1977, seemingly vanished into thin air, while pursuing jobs in the northern part of the country.

Cico, now 66, is currently the pastor at the United Methodist Church in St. Francis, Kansas – population 1,200.

How he transformed from coach to pastor became his own personal travelogue of the Midwest.

After graduating from the University of Texas in 1970, Cico grabbed up his first job coincidentally in Taylor, Texas, making him one of the few

coaches who has coached at both Taylor and Rockdale.

An Angleton, Texas, native, he returned home the next year to join the staff of the Wildcats new head coach, Fred Johnson.

Johnson had been an assistant at Angleton when Cico was in high school. Two years later, Johnson brought the young Cico with him to Rockdale, along with Lew Simmonds and Dick Weigand.

Cico, then 26, taught at the junior high, while coaching most of the freshman teams in all sports and lending a hand at the varsity level, especially hitting the road on Friday nights, scouting the Tigers' next football opponent.

Cico played a vital role in the Tigers' state champion football and track championships in 1978-77, especially track, which is his passion.

While Johnson lasted until 1980, Cico exited Rockdale in 1977 and took a job in Belle Fourche, S.D., where he stayed for 12 years as defensive coordinator and head track coach.

"After winning state, there was too much pressure," he said of his reason for leaving. "You could tell things were about to change"

He added another state champion to his resume when Belle Fourche captured a title in 1983, like Rockdale, the one and only in school history.

### The calling

It was while he was in Belle Fourche (200 miles west of state capitol Pierre, near the Wyoming border) where his life's direction took a different road.

There was no Presbyterian church in Belle Fourche, so Cico began attending a Methodist church there where he became involved in church activities.

The pastor there, Gary Ray, who Cico calls a "shirt tail relative," asked him to do the service one Sunday while he went home to New York for the Christmas holidays.

"I told him I can't preach, I've never preached before," Cico said.

"You don't have to, I've got videos to show and all you have to do is read everything else," Gary Ray said.

Ray talked him into it and he began filling in for him more and more while he served other area churches.

He began taking lay speaking classes and became a certified lay speaker.

People began insisting that he missed his calling.

"I would say I haven't missed my calling, I've got the best of both worlds, I get to work with kids five days a week and then on Sunday, be an example for them and sometimes share the good news on Sunday. I loved it."

His personal life had changed as well, marrying the school's band

teacher, Sheila, in 1981.

They were blessed with a girl, Aaron, in 1982, and then twins, Emily and Brent followed in 1985.

The Cico's decided they wanted to raise their growing family in a smaller place (Belle Fourche had a population of 3,000) so he began applying for jobs "all over the place."

They landed in Lewellen, Neb., a town with a population of 225, located in the panhandle.

The school played six-man and had seven players on the football team. In 1993, Lewellen played for a state championship but lost.

On Dec. 4, 1990, a near-tragic event unfolded that would change his life forever.

He and the three kids had been over in Oshkosh, about 12 miles away, while he refereed a basketball game.

On the way home, a drunk driver slammed into their car head on.

Cico was not injured nor were the twins, Emily and Brett in the back seat. He had to bust the window to escape the car. He got Emily and Brett out safely, but in the front seat, eight-year-old Aaron did not respond and her face was covered in blood.

She had her seat belt on, but her shoulder strap was behind her.

The upper part of body of her body collided with the dashboard

and broke most of the bones in her face.

Three college kids passing by witnessed the wreck and gave them a ride to the hospital back in Oshkosh.

"When I took her in my arms, I was thinking, 'What can I do, what can I do?' Then I realized, I haven't prayed, I haven't prayed."

At the hospital, doctors told him that because she had broken most of the bones in her face and had a skull fracture, that she would most likely have brain damage.

After extensive surgery to repair her face, doctors told Cico there was no skull fracture, no brain damage. She'd be OK.

"That's when I decided that God had been talking to me. That's when I decided that I would go into the ministry."

"I've got to tell everyone what God had done for Aaron. That girl is a miracle. She was healed by God."

Cico still wanted to make sure there was truly a calling. He retreated to Fort Robinson, a park area in the Northwest corner of Nebraska, for four days of soul searching.

All he took was a fishing pole. With just grasshoppers as bait, he caught one fish a day, just one.

"That's all I needed. I was being provided for."

He entered St. Paul's School of Theology near Kansas City and



WARREN CICO in 1977

after graduating, got an internship at St. Stephen's in Kansas City.

Before landing at his current calling in St. Francis, he also made stops in Cumberland, Iowa, Copeland, and Bennington.

### Nowadays

Still in great shape, Cico runs everyday and his diligence has earned him a place at the Senior Olympics in Cleveland in July in the 800- and 1500-meter runs.

Cico still has connection to Texas. His mother lives in Cleveland and his sister in Humble, and he was recently in the state for a visit.

Following that, he was headed out to another mission trip - this time to Chadron, Neb.

"I love being in the ministry and working with young people. I like serving people."



WARREN CICO, in St. Francis, works closely with the Community Garden and with children who are wanting to help in the gardens.

## FOURTH

### Continued from Page 1

Everyone who participated received a prize but, those adults watching and those who had helped kids get ready for the parade were also winners. It was rewarding as well as fun (and a little hot).

### Horseshoe throwing contest

Empire Motel owners, Ted McCoy and Renee Coltharp, sponsored a horseshoe throwing contest which started at 8 a.m. when it was a little cooler. Winners of the contest were Ed Zuege, first; Randy Dinkel, second; Jeff Paulsen, third; Kenny Criswell, fourth; and Rory Curmode, fifth.

### Sing-a-long

The patriotic sing-a-long was held at the Old Country Church west of the Cheyenne County

Museum. Led by Althea Lebow, the little church was busting with songs and enthusiasm.

### Museum

At the museum following the sing-a-long, there were refreshments and cake. People stopped by the check out the museum displays and enjoy refreshments.

### Wrap up

Over all, said Rodney Neitzel, it was a great turnout and very successful.

This was the second year that the fireworks display was held. Rodney and Roger Neitzel and John and Anita Amack planned the display and entertainment last year but a burn ban stopped the display. This year, the fireworks were enjoyed only days before another burn ban was established



on July 8. The fireworks were held over to this year but they were not completely paid for.

Donations came pouring in at the last minute and we had enough money to pay for the fireworks and a little left to start the next year's display, Rodney said. We couldn't have put on the great display of fireworks if it had not been for the donations.

Having a Bawl

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American Profile Hometown Content 7/7/2013

ACROSS

- Not quite right
- Africa's largest city
- Mega-proportioned
- Classic Milton Bradley card game
- Nasty-smelling
- Toothpaste-endorsing org.
- Real pity
- An LBJ dog
- French capital, in song
- Bogart's sleuth
- Peloponnesian War side
- Calendar box
- Send out
- Natives of Lima or Toledo
- Nursery arrival
- Guilty one, in copspeak
- "Yum!"
- Droopy tree
- Stale from overuse
- "Hear no \_\_\_ ..."
- Run-of-the-mill
- Dinosaur, e.g.
- Bank take-back
- The limit, in a saying
- Mind teaser
- Online message to RSVP to
- Cisco Kid, to Pancho
- '59 Caddy feature
- Jerusalem prayer site
- Drink with a head
- Tupelo's favorite son
- Lint-trapping navel
- Fourposter, e.g.
- Driving hazard, in winter
- Adlai's running mate in 1956

DOWN

- \_\_\_ de Triomphe
- Cover with graffiti, e.g.
- Hardly hospitable
- Play Double Dutch, e.g.
- Beethoven opus
- Job for Perry Mason
- Had a yen
- Portfolio part, for short
- Lens holder
- Works of Shelley
- Grand \_\_\_ (island near Florida)
- Cry of triumph
- Egg, for one
- The "G" of GTO
- Fenced-in area
- \_\_\_ up (absorb)
- "That was close!"
- Suffix with zillion
- Respond to a knock
- Abominable Snowman
- Christmas gift giver, informally
- Popeye's gal Olive
- FBI worker: Abbr.
- Org. that might meet at a school
- Bearded bloom
- Disappointments
- Roman poet banished by Augustus
- Executor's concern
- Washington and \_\_\_ University
- Assembly-ready
- Speak badly of
- Put in one's two cents
- Pub crawler
- Limerick's land, literally
- Toe, in tot-speak
- Certain Ivy Leaguer
- She sheep
- Niagara's veil
- The whole shebang
- "\_\_\_ Got a Secret"
- Doodlebug's prey
- Lay it on thick
- "\_\_\_ Miz"

See how we've further advanced the quality of care for our region during the

## Open House of the Completed Phase 2B of Our Facility Master Plan

Friday, July 19 | 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The science of healing continually changes and Community Hospital is staying right in step. See for yourself by taking a tour of the medical service areas included in the recently completed Phase 2B of our Facility Master Plan.

You'll tour Community Hospital's new Infusion Center where six more chemotherapy bays have been added for space and comfort. Patients needing shots or lab work are also served in this relaxing area. You'll also tour:

- Our expanded imaging center
- Respiratory service area
- Sleep Center
- Emergency department
- Chapel

Hospital personnel are looking forward to being your guides and refreshments will be served.

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