Around the State: DBU soccer player baptized on campus

January 13, 2026

Dallas Baptist University students, coaches, and friends were on campus to witness the baptism of Women's Soccer goalkeeper, **Sam Jones**. This was a time when they watched a servant leader follow through in faith, leaving her old self behind, and resting in the knowledge God has control of her future. Looking back on her baptism, Sam describes how this was one of the most humbling and joyful experiences of her life. Being surrounded by her coaches, family, and teammates as she took this step in her faith made her feel deeply loved and supported. "I felt completely covered in love—God's love and the love of the community he placed around me," Jones said.

Baylor University announced the largest gift in the Baylor Baseball program's history—a gift from Magnolia, the Waco-based and nationally recognized lifestyle company founded by Baylor alumni **Chip and Joanna Gaines**. The gift will name Magnolia Field at Baylor Ballpark and support the program's anticipated capital projects. The Gaineses, who are also Baylor grads, rose to national prominence through their home-renovation projects, building Magnolia into a multi-platform, global brand, and launching Magnolia Network following the success of their HGTV series "Fixer Upper."

Wayland Baptist University is launching a new digital and financial literacy initiative aimed at expanding educational and workforce opportunities for students in rural communities through collaboration with the NASDAQ Market Lab. The initiative, "*Empowering Students with Digital and Financial Skills for Workforce and Community Advancement*," will be introduced during a public event at 5 p.m., Jan. 29, in the Nunn Business

Building on Wayland's Plainview campus. Guests are asked to RSVP by Jan. 22 by calling 806-291-1037 or emailing easterb@wbu.edu.

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor is excited to announce registration is now open for the spring 2026 semester at the UMHB Arts Academy. Participants of all ages and skill levels in music, theatre, and dance are invited. Classes include instrumental and vocal lessons, musical theatre, dance, and early childhood groups. With expert instructors, supportive programs, and a welcoming environment, the UMHB Arts Academy is a place to build confidence and learn new skills.

Paul T. Sloan, associate professor of early Christianity and chair of the Department of Theology in the School of Christian Thought at Houston Christian University, was named the 2025–26 winner in the biblical studies category of the *Christianity Today* Book Awards for his book *Jesus and the Law of Moses: The Gospels and the Restoration of Israel within First-Century Judaism*.