

Around the State: Wayland team joins sports ministry and missions in Alaska

July 16, 2025

In the tiny village of Ninilchik, Alaska—where the road ends and Cook Inlet begins—Wayland Baptist University students, **Donnie Brown** and **Marcos Hinojos Jr.**, brought more than sports skills and service projects this summer. They brought joy, encouragement and the hope of the gospel. Led by Brown, director of spiritual life, and Hinojos, offensive line coach for Pioneers football, the team partnered with Alaska Missions to host a weeklong sports camp for local children in one of the state's most remote communities. The camp combined afternoon sessions of football and basketball drills with spiritual moments. Eight children responded by placing their faith in Christ. Alaska Missions is following up with those students, connecting them with local churches to foster discipleship and growth. Wayland students experienced their own spiritual transformation through the week. Wayland has a long-standing partnership with Alaska Missions, led by **Brenda Crim**.



At the Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, Linda Livingstone and Elijah Brown sign a memorandum of understand to establish the BWA Program and Center at Baylor University's Truett Seminary. (Courtesy Photo)

At the 23rd Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, Australia, Baptist World Alliance General Secretary **Elijah Brown** and Baylor University President **Linda Livingstone** signed a memorandum of understanding committing to deepening their relationship and “serve together in a shared call to pursue the mission of God out of our Baptist identity both for the church and for the world.” For the past year, the BWA and Baylor have worked together to develop the BWA Center, which will offer clergy and lay leaders training in global Baptist history, polity, beliefs, leadership, evangelism and integral mission. Housed in Baylor University's Truett Seminary, the center will offer academic and scholarly education, research, support and practical engagement to educate and support leaders in the global Baptist movement. The BWA received initial gifts totaling \$4.5 million to launch the program, including investment by Baylor University, the Truett Dean's Excellence Fund and a \$2.5 million lead donation from **Susan and Lee Bush** to establish the Lampsato Endowed Chair of Baptist World Missional Engagement—the first endowed chair in the world focused on studying the

BWA as a global movement and seeking to empower the BWA family with additional training and preparation.

Hardin-Simmons University has earned multiple honors from Colleges of Distinction, a national resource for guidance counselors, parents, students, and hundreds of colleges and universities across the United States. For the 11th consecutive year, HSU has been named a College of Distinction—an honor that highlights universities demonstrating excellence in undergraduate education through engaged students, excellent teaching, vibrant campus life and strong student outcomes. HSU is one of only five universities in Texas recognized this year as an Affordable College of Distinction, reflecting the university's deep commitment to making Christ-centered education both accessible and attainable.

Stark College and Seminary hosted historian and author **Beth Allison Barr** of Baylor University on [The Stark Difference Podcast](#) to speak on calling, ministry and her newest book, *Becoming the Pastor's Wife*.

Texans on Mission continues to respond to disaster response needs in the Hill Country after devastating flooding on July 4. The organization has established a webpage specific to this relief. Visit [the page](#) to make donations, volunteer to help with relief efforts or request assistance.