

Flying Queens ruled women's hoops

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PLAINVIEW (ABP)—With most eyes in women's college basketball [trained](#) on Baylor's 6-8 shot-blocking, slam-dunking phenom [Brittney Griner](#), the current *Texas Monthly* carries a [feature](#) about a lesser-known Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated powerhouse that is the winningest women's basketball program in history.

The April 2013 magazine profiles the Wayland Baptist University Flying Queens with a teaser title on the cover "The Greatest College Basketball Team You've Never Heard Of." Between 1953 and 1958, Wayland won 131 straight games and four consecutive national championships, the longest streak in sports history.



Teammates attending reunion at Wayland last year included (back, from left) pilot Mike Hutcherson, Judy Bugher, Carla Lowry, Mona Poff, Alice Barron, Rita Alexander, Oma Gean Capps, Georgia Bryant; (front) Wilda and Harley Redin. The feat was [recognized](#) at a timeout during a Baylor-Kentucky game in November, aired on ESPN2 and with a display at the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tenn., titled "Trailblazers of the

Game.”

As Connecticut closed in on UCLA’s major college record of 88 consecutive wins in 2010, the *New York Times* [noted](#): “Long before Connecticut became a dominant power in women’s basketball, the Flying Queens of Wayland Baptist thrived on innovation, talent and glamour, playing on athletic scholarships, traveling by private planes, warming up with ostentatious drills learned from the Harlem Globetrotters and winning every game for nearly five seasons.”

Named for Hutcherson Air Service, the team sponsor owned by a Wayland graduate that provided transportation for games across the South and Midwest, the Flying Queens remained a national powerhouse through the 1960s.

After President Nixon signed Title IX in 1972 banning universities from discriminating based on gender, Wayland no longer could compete with major universities with large budgets and national recruiting programs.

Still setting records

This season the Queens became [the first](#) women’s basketball program to reach 1,500 victories before finishing 15-16 in the Sooner Athletic Conference in NAIA Division I.

With just 600 students at the time, Wayland Baptist College seemed an unlikely pioneer in women’s athletics. But in 1947, a former Baptist youth pastor president liked the idea of a team of Christian coeds bearing witness in the Amateur Athletic Union.

During the 1940s, at least a hundred women’s basketball teams throughout the United States belonged to the AAU, the governing body for amateur sports, the *Texas Monthly* article reports. Few colleges during the era offered intercollegiate women’s sports, and the games had a big following.

National championship tournaments sold out to crowds of as many as 4,000 spectators. Today the average attendance for NCAA Division I women's basketball games is 1,634.

Thirty players were on the five teams responsible for the 131-game win streak. Half of the 30 were named AAU All-Americans, 12 played on USA national teams and three have been inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. Twenty-three are living.

Coach Harley Redin

Coach Harley Redin, 93, was on hand when the team was honored during top-ranked and defending national-champion Baylor's 85-51 win over sixth-ranked Kentucky Nov. 13.

Redin compiled a 431-66 (.867 winning percentage) record in 18 years he coached for Wayland's women's team. Before that, he coached the men's team, and for two seasons coached both. He is a member of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and is being considered for the Naismith National Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass.

Started in 1908, Wayland today claims more than 1,000 students on the main campus in Plainview, plus 5,800 students on campuses in Amarillo, Lubbock, San Antonio and Wichita Falls, five other states and one in [Kenya](#).

This week, Baylor's Lady Bears beat Florida State 85-47 to advance to the NCAA round of 16 for the fourth year in a row. In her final home game at Baylor, senior Brittney Griner scored 33 points and had a career-high 22 rebounds, setting off a partisan crowd at Waco's Ferrell Center by dunking the basketball three times.