

FAMOUS FOLKS

NOTABLE WACOANS

- Chip & Joanna Gaines, who shot to stardom with their HGTV series “Fixer Upper” are proud to call Waco home. In 2018, the couple announced they would come back to TV with their own network – The Magnolia Network.
- Musician Jules Bledsoe who made “Ol’ Man River” famous with his rendition in *Show Boat*
- Wild and crazy comedian Steve Martin
- World War II hero Doris “Dorie” Miller. Miller was portrayed by Cuba Gooding, Jr. in the Movie Pearl Harbor. Miller was the first African American to be awarded the Navy Cross.
- Peri Gilpin, who played Roz on the sitcom “Frazier.”
- Actress Jennifer Love Hewitt, star of the hit series *Criminal Minds*, *The Client List*, and *Ghost Whisperer*, and who played in movies such as *House Arrest* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*
- Shannon Elizabeth, who starred in *American Pie*, *Scary Movie* and *13 Ghosts*, was born in Houston but was raised in Waco.
- Hollywood costume designer Travis Banton was born in Waco. He designed costumes for 118 movies from the 1940s through the 1960s, including *Cleopatra*, *The Mark of Zorro*, and *Lover Come Back*.
- Tom Wilson (Thomas Blanchard Wilson, Jr.) record producer best known for his work in the 1960s with Bob Dylan, the Mothers of Invention, Simon & Garfunkel, and the Velvet Underground.
- Pat Green, a country singer who has had many Grammy nominations along with a *Billboard* top five album, was born in San Antonio, but grew up in Waco and wrote a song about “George’s Bar” in Waco.
- Pop stars Ashlee and Jessica Simpson spent much of their childhood in Waco with their grandmother, a Waco resident.
- New York *Times* syndicated columnist & noted pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton
- Philanthropist and author Madison Cooper who wrote *Sironia, Texas*, which at 1,731 pages was the longest novel published in book form.

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- Waco is the birthplace of more Texas governors than any other city. Waco-born governors include Richard Coke, Pat Neff, Sul Ross, and Ann Richards.
- National Football League stars Robert Griffin III (Heisman Trophy Winner, Washington Redskins, Baltimore Ravens) LaDainian Tomlinson (San Diego Chargers/New York Jets) and Derrick Johnson (Kansas City Chiefs, Oakland Raiders)
- Dave Campbell, founder and publisher of *Texas Football* magazine, a must have magazine for football fans. He has been honored by the State History Museum as a Texas Legend, named a Distinguished Alumnus by Baylor University. Campbell is a Bellmead native.
- Robert Fulghum, author of nine books, including *Everything I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* and *What on Earth Have I Done?*
- Heloise (Ponce Kia Marchelle Heloise Cruse Evans) of *Hints from Heloise*.
- Waco artist Kermit Oliver, the only U.S. artist to design for Hermés in Paris, though born in Refugio, settled in Waco where he worked at a local post office.
- John Baugh, founder of Sysco, one of the largest corporations in the U.S. hails from Bellmead.
- James Brown, film and television star; appeared as Lieutenant Ripley "Rip" Masters in 166 episodes of ABC's *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin* (1954–1959) and later as detective Harry McSween on CBS's *Dallas*, was born in Desdemona and grew up in Waco.
- Thomas Harris, author of *The Silence of the Lambs*, was a student at Baylor University, and covered the police beat for the *Waco Tribune-Herald*.
- Hank Thompson, was born in Waco and is a country music singer who was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame and Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.
- Hallie Earle (1880–1963) First licensed female physician in Waco, 1902 M.S. from Baylor, only female graduate of 1907 Baylor University Medical School in Dallas.
- Cliff Bartosh, former left-handed relief pitcher in Major League Baseball who played for the Cleveland Indians and Chicago Cubs is from the City of West.
- Scott Podsednik, Major League Baseball outfielder who played in the 2005 World Series championship Chicago White Sox team hails from West. Country music newcomer Holly Tucker, who made the top 6 in season 4 of *The Voice* is a Wacoan.
- Also on Team Blake on *The Voice*, in March 2021, local musician Aaron Konzelman who

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regularly performs in central Texas with his wife, Amanda, as Union Revival.

- Texas Guinan was a Hollywood actress from 1917 to 1933. She was active in vaudeville and theater and was in many movies (often as the gun-toting heroin silent westerns, more than a match for any man). She also had a successful career as a hostess in night clubs and speakeasies in New York City.
- Kevin Reynolds, director (Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, The Count of MonteCristo, Waterworld), writer (Red Dawn, Fandango) was born and raised in Waco. He is the son of former Baylor president Herbert H. Reynolds.
- Ted Nugent, guitarist, along with his wife Shemane and son Rocco Nugent, live in Waco.
- Leon Jaworski, who prosecuted Nazi war criminals during the Nuremberg trials and then was the special prosecutor during the Watergate scandal, was born and raised in Waco.
- Robert W. McCollum (1925–2010), virologist who made important discoveries regarding the spread of polio, hepatitis, and mononucleosis.
- Billy Joe Shaver, country songwriter ("Honky Tonk Heroes") and singer ("Old ~~Cunk~~ of Coal"), called Waco home.
- You Tube's The Waco Dudes.
- You Tube and Instagram regular, Tyler Anderson with Tyler's Reel Fishing.

NOTABLE BAYLOR BEARS

- Screenwriter and director John Lee Hancock (with works including *The Blind Side*, nominated for the 2009 Academy Award for Best Picture)
- Screenwriter Derek Haas (with works including *3:10 to Yuma* and *Wanted*, both nominated for multiple Academy Awards)
- Emmy-winning actress Angela Kinsey (the character of Angela Martin in NBC's *The Office*)
- Emmy-nominated actress Allison Tolman of the TV series *Fargo* and movie *The Gift*
- Jeff Dunham, award-winning ventriloquist and comedian
- Actor John Bostic, known for *22 Jump Street*, attended Baylor on a presidential scholarship.

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- Willie Nelson – country music star and winner of six Grammys, was born in nearby Abbott, TX and attended Baylor but did not receive a degree.
- *The Silence of the Lambs* author Thomas Harris majored in English and covered the police beat for the Waco Tribune-Herald
- *People Magazine* co-founder Hal C. Wingo got his start in publishing at *Life* magazine after graduating from Baylor.
- *The Weather Channel* CFO Jerry Elliott
- American Airlines CEO Thomas W. Horton
- Oracle Corporation CEO Mark Hurd
- Federal Bureau of Investigation director William S. Sessions
- WNBA player Brittney Griner was a 3-time All American and an AP Player of the Year at Baylor
- Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, and MLB pitcher, manager, and coach Ted Lyons
- Trey Wingo, Co-host of ESPN's SportsCenter
- Baylor counts more Texas governors among its alumni than any other university - Lawrence Sullivan Ross – served from 1887–1891, Pat Morris Neff – served from 1921–1925 (later served as President of Baylor from 1932 to 1947), Price Daniel – served from 1957–1963, Mark White – served from 1983–1987, Ann Richards – served from 1991–1995.
- Walter Abercrombie - NFL running back for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles
- Mike Singletary – NFL Hall of Famer and Senior Advisor to NFL Football Operations
- Benjamin Becker – German professional player (defeated Andre Agassi in Agassi's final match in the 2006 U.S. Open)
- Michael Johnson – Winner of five Olympic gold medals and nine-time world champion
- Jeremy Wariner – Winner of gold medals at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece for the individual 400 meter and the 4x400 meter
- Darold Williamson – Winner of a gold medal at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens,

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Greece in the 4x400 meter relay

- Reggie Witherspoon – Winner of a gold medal at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing for the 4x400 meter along with teammate Jeremy Wariner.
- Shawn Tolleson – MLB pitcher for the Texas Rangers
- WWII Medal of Honor Recipients John Riley Kane and Andrew Jackson “Jack” Lummus, Jr.
- Gary Keller – co-founder of Keller Williams Realty International
- Drayton McLane, Jr. – Chairman of McLane Group, former CEO of the Houston Astros, and naming donor for Baylor’s McLane Stadium
- Ray Perryman – Founder & CEO of The Perryman Group; nominated for the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics
- Dame Marjorie Scardino – the first woman on Twitter’s Board of Directors
- Bob Simpson – co-chairman of the Texas Rangers MLB team
- Gordon Teal – developer of the first silicon transistor
- Anh “Joseph” Cao – the first Vietnamese American elected to Congress.
- Rand Paul – US Senator for Kentucky and 2016 US presidential candidate
- Michael Brandt – co-author of the movies *3:10 to Yuma* and *2 Fast, 2 Furious*
- Jess Cagle – editor of *People Magazine*
- Grammy winning trumpet player Phil Driscoll.
- Chip & Joanna Gaines – Stars of HGTV’s *Fixer Upper* and *Magnolia Network*.
- Chet Garner – creative producer & host of PBS’s Emmy winning show *The Daytripper*.
- Green Bay Packers Cornerback Demetri Goodson
- 201 Heisman Trophy winner and 2012 NFL Rookie of the year, Robert Griffin III
- Dennis Lindsey – General Manager of the Utah Jazz



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- Bryce Petty – quarterback for the New York Jets
- New York Mets pitcher Logan Verret
- Terrance Williams – wide receiver for the Dallas Cowboys
- Sophia Young – All-Star forward for the San Antonio Spurs
- Kendall Wright – wide receiver for the Tennessee Titans
- You Tube sensations Brooklyn and Bailey McKnight.