

# *today*

 sagu

Spring 2020



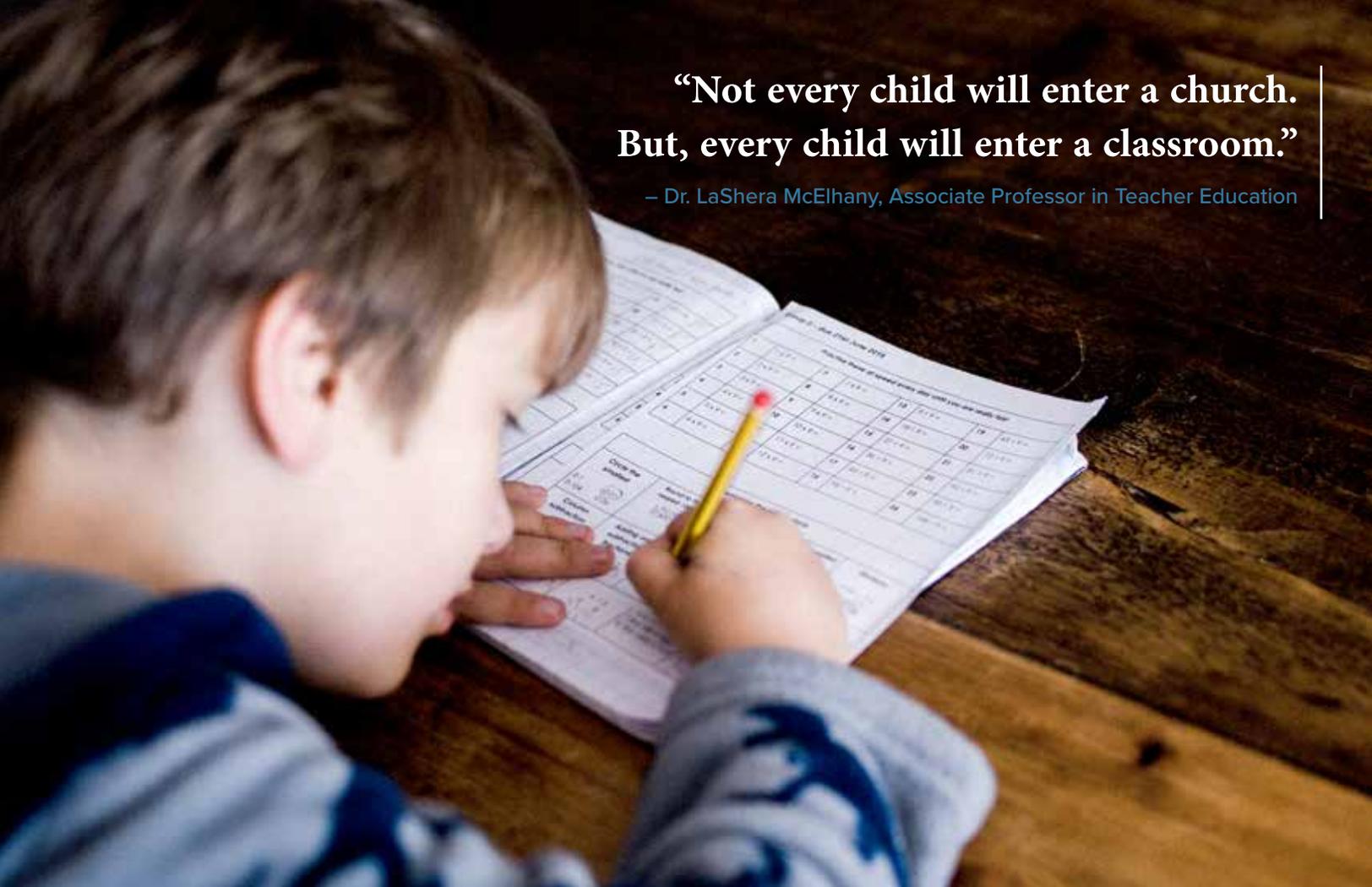
## A LOUD IMPACT

pg 1: SAGU Educators **Launch** Next Gen ►

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**“Not every child will enter a church.  
But, every child will enter a classroom.”**

– Dr. LaShera McElhany, Associate Professor in Teacher Education



## SAGU Educators Launch Next Gen

The next generation relentlessly pursues purpose. They simply want to make a positive difference in the world. We see this reflected in our students with many drawn to fields that offer social benefits including one of our largest programs, Teacher Education.

SAGU is widely known for producing ministers but hundreds of our alumni are teaching in Texas classrooms. Many of whom pair their love for teaching with their heart for missions answering the call to teach overseas.

**“We prepare our education students to serve in public and faith-based classrooms and administrative offices across Texas, America, and around the world!”**

- Dr. Sue Taylor, Dean of SAGU's College of Business and Education

Teachers can empower and equip children to engage the world around them. Our Teacher Ed. alumni also understand that their influence opens a unique door to ministry. Ultimately, every child needs a teacher who exhibits the qualities of the greatest teacher, Jesus.



**KALIE KENDRICK, SENIOR EDUCATION MAJOR**

“I am currently working with English students in West Africa. This opportunity allows me to help students practice their English while also opening the door to conversations about the gospel! My SAGU professors always said that teaching should never be centered around data, but it should always be about the students. My whole reason for being here isn't about teaching English. It's about showing people what the love of Jesus looks like.”



**KENNEDY STOFFER, SENIOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJOR**

“My experience with the SAGU Education department has been incredible. It has prepared me to not only be a great educator, but a great Christian educator that can truly make a difference in the public school classroom. I plan on using my Elementary Education degree to work in a local public school after I graduate in May of 2020.”



SAGU's Education Department

Every year the **Texas Education Agency (TEA)** asks first-year teachers to fill out a survey. One of the questions asked is how prepared they felt for their first year of teaching. **Over 90% of those first-year teachers who graduated from SAGU answered that they felt prepared as a direct result of SAGU's educator prep program.**

"That speaks loudly to me," said Dr. Khristy Strange, Interim Chair for the SAGU Education Department. "I work with some amazing professors who help prepare students for the mission field of education. It's a difficult job but ever so rewarding."

In addition, many of our Teacher Ed. alumni have advanced into administrative roles and become principals. In the city of Waxahachie alone, six school principals are SAGU alumni with more throughout Ellis County and the state.

"We view teacher and administrator preparation as a collective endeavor that gives a solid foundation for our students to achieve their aspirations, be successful in their careers, and make a difference in our rapidly changing society," says Dr. Taylor.

In order to prepare more teachers to serve locally, SAGU launched an Alternative Teacher Certification Program in 2018. The department also redesigned the Education Leadership degree program for both public and Christian schools.

Dr. Strange shares that even bigger plans are on the horizon. With the program's continued growth and committed faculty, we are excited about its impact on the future and the next generation! ■



**DR. BONNY CAIN**  
WAXAHACHIE ISD  
SUPERINTENDENT

"We hire SAGU graduates whenever given the opportunity. We know they are prepared to enter the classroom. SAGU graduates have great communication skills as well as high expectations for students. They show unfailing kindness and compassion to children and adults alike, and each possesses a Christian spirit that causes them to be patient and to live influential, honest lives."

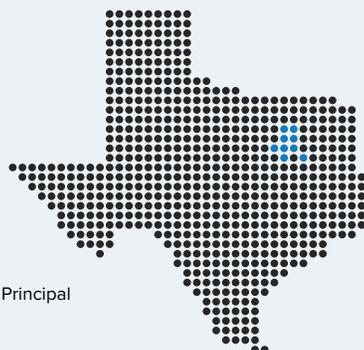


**MICHELLE RICE**  
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL  
OF THE YEAR FOR  
CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS ISD

"I always knew that loving all people is important but it was emphasized more at Southwestern. If I had gone to a state school, I don't know if that would have been emphasized as much. I think those values are what helped shape me to be where I am today."

## SAGU alumni serving as principals in the DFW Metroplex:

- WAXAHACHIE:** **Tonya Harris** - Waxahachie HS Principal  
**Ryan Cavazos** - Howard Junior High Principal  
**Karina White** - Howard Junior High Asst. Principal  
**Karin Polk** - Wilemon Elementary Asst. Principal  
**Lance Bray** - Wedgeworth Elementary Asst. Principal  
**Monika Bray** - Clift Elementary Asst. Principal
- RED OAK:** **Justin Thompson** - Red Oak Middle School Asst. Principal
- ENNIS:** **Daniel Fields** - Ennis ISD Asst. Principal.
- CORSICANA:** **Dallas Horne** - Fannin Elementary Principal
- MCKINNEY:** **Justin James** - McKinney ISD Asst. Principal
- FRISCO:** **Renee Sena** - Independence H.S. Asst. Principal
- MANSFIELD:** **Becky Anthony** - Newman International Academy of Mansfield Principal
- OTHER:** **Alisha Nicolello** - Harvest Christian Academy Asst. Principal  
**James Swearingen** - Upper School Trinity Christian Principal  
**Michelle Rice** - Janet Brenner Hoover Elementary School Principal





## From President Bridges

I believe when passion meets purpose, something remarkable happens. Passionate people – whether born or built – have a gift for seeing their dreams in the distance and will push past barriers to see it come to pass.

Each generation of students at SAGU possess unique qualities and giftings. In my opinion, the current generation, “Gen Z”, may be one of the most driven and passionate generations to date.

I am reminded of a sermon delivered by one of our students in chapel this semester. She shared that her childhood dream was to become a doctor. She was even accepted into the pre-med program for an ivy league school. Yet, she turned it down because God had another purpose for her life.

Many of our students turn down opportunities stemming from the pursuit of their own ambitions to pursue God’s will for their lives. They relentlessly push through cultural barriers and challenges-

some of which I and many members of my generation never had to face. Against all odds, they’re here.

In the same way, SAGU also faces adversity but presses forward because of our greater purpose. Society’s values continue to grow further apart from the standards that we uphold. However, despite a shifting culture, our core values and identity remain intact. We will never lose sight of our mission and I believe that God has honored us for this commitment. As you’ll find in this newsletter, thousands of our students have gone on to impact millions.

### And I believe the best is yet to come.

I am excited to announce a number of initiatives that we will launch this Fall. I believe that these initiatives will help establish sustainable growth for our institution.

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When passion meets God’s purpose, the world can change. Through these exciting new initiatives, our degrees will be more accessible for the next generation of world-changers!

Thank you for your generous support in making these developments a reality. Your charitable donations provide a way for the next generation! Donations can be made at [www.sagu.edu/adoptastudent](http://www.sagu.edu/adoptastudent). ■

 **Academic Scholarships** – A significant increase has been approved positioning us to be more competitive in attracting academically qualified students.

 **Need-based Scholarships** – Additional increase to this critical scholarship area will benefit more families.

 **Ministries Major Scholarship** – Our owning districts have long expressed concern over our ministry majors graduating with excessive debt, preventing them from accepting positions with modest salaries in rural areas, for example. I am thrilled to report these district leaders have committed to funding a new 50% tuition guarantee for ministry majors living in the dorms. After factoring all aid a student is eligible for, the districts have committed to assist in making up the difference up to 50%.



# 2020 GOLF CLASSIC

Monday, April 6 with Guest Speaker, **Trevor Knight**  
Former Oklahoma University, Texas A&M, and Arizona Cardinals Quarterback

For more information, contact [golfclassic@sagu.edu](mailto:golfclassic@sagu.edu) or visit [www.sagu.edu/golfclassic](http://www.sagu.edu/golfclassic)



## AG Districts Create SAGU Church Ministry Degree Scholarship

SAGU's affiliated Assemblies of God Districts are excited to provide a generous scholarship for the University's current and incoming church ministry majors. Starting Fall 2020, all on-campus students pursuing a bachelor's in church ministry can receive 50 to 100 percent off tuition!

"Our church ministry students are passionate about making an impact for the Kingdom of God," says Dr. Kermit Bridges, President of SAGU. "Through this initiative led by the AG Districts, our church ministry degrees will be more accessible and affordable."

**"Church ministry majors can receive the financial support they need to pursue God's call on their lives and we couldn't be more excited to help foster that calling!" - President Bridges**

"We believe this initiative will help provide a way for the next generation of ministers, many of whom prefer a traditional college experience but have been forced to consider non-traditional options due to finances."

Each ministry major can receive from over \$5,000 to \$10,000 per semester in grants and scholarships. The minimum 50 percent off tuition guarantee includes all types of scholarships and grants from all sources. A student's Pell grant, TEG grant, academic scholarship, and all other types of scholarships and grants from SAGU or through the

FAFSA are considered part of the 50 percent guarantee. In addition to the 50 percent off tuition, recipients are still eligible to receive other scholarships and grants allowing them to be awarded up to 100 percent off tuition.

To qualify, a student must be a declared major in one of the fifteen undergraduate church ministry degrees and enrolled full-time as an on-campus student.

In addition, new students must affirm a call to vocational ministry and submit a 500-word essay articulating their calling.

Jeff Francis, SAGU's Senior Director of Financial Aid, believes this initiative can be a crucial deciding factor for students debating whether or not to receive ministerial training and a liberal arts education at SAGU.

"I'm most excited that we are increasing more financial aid towards the students that need it the most," says Francis. "Our goal is to prepare students with a Christ-centered education so that they can go anywhere God calls them to go and do anything God calls them to do. This initiative will help more students be able to receive that education."

Detailed information about the scholarship's qualification process is available in the Financial Aid section of our website. ■



## Business Students Discuss Leadership with John Maxwell

SAGU students met and discussed the principles of leadership with John Maxwell, a number one New York Times bestselling author, coach, and speaker this past November.

"It was an electrifying moment to shake hands with the man behind the words that I have read on book pages for years," said Adrianna Barnes, a senior HR Management major at SAGU.

The select group of SAGU Business students were able to meet Maxwell during the recent Waxahachie Leadership Summit. The summit is a multi-session seminar inviting local leaders to invest in networking partnerships, turn-key business solutions, and transformative learning opportunities. Maxwell was the keynote speaker for the 2nd annual Waxahachie Leadership Summit. Prior to the summit, SAGU students had a full hour to speak with him.

Barnes expressed her appreciation and admiration of Maxwell's ability to integrate his faith and Christian principles into his teachings and consultations. "I learned that one's business truly is their ministry," she said. ■

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2020

## MICHAEL W. SMITH LIVE

Join us for the 2020 Homecoming celebration and experience the musical stylings of Michael W. Smith! Save the date and your seat today. Don't miss out!

Tickets now available:  
[www.sagu.edu/CONCERT](http://www.sagu.edu/CONCERT)



# SAGU Offers New Master of Theological Studies (MTS) Degree

SAGU is excited to announce the new Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree program which begins this Fall.

The 51 credit hour program offers an alternative, streamlined route for those desiring to pursue a Ph.D. in Bible or Theology as opposed to the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree which ranges from 72 to 90 credit hours.

“The M.Div. is a degree purposely broad in its coverage and it contains a substantial practical theology component,” stated Dr. Bruce Rosdahl, SAGU’s Department Chair for Bible and Theology. “The MTS, on the other hand, is focused in the field of one’s doctoral pursuit.”

The MTS has the academic rigor and language requirements needed for most Ph.D. programs in Bible or Theology. It requires two years of biblical language study and the development and successful defense of a thesis. Students can choose

a specialization in either Biblical Studies or Theology.

This degree is widely considered as an ideal option for individuals particularly interested in serving as teaching or resource pastors, part of a preaching team, or university professors.

MTS students will learn how to:

- Interpret and apply Scripture employing responsible hermeneutical principles.
- Explain orthodox Christian theology, including Pentecostal distinctives.
- Translate biblical Hebrew or Greek commensurate with two years of language.

“This degree will further SAGU efforts in preparing individuals to be faithful teachers and expositors of God’s Word; whether that be in the classroom, the pulpit, or the mission-field around the world,” said Dr. Rosdahl. ■



## Student Spotlight: Andrew Carlisle

“I decided against going to college and SAGU after high school and instead, joined the U.S. Army in 2014. In 2017 I had my ‘Jonah in the whale’ moment when I received a DUI (Driving Under the Influence) which led to my departure from the Army. After moving back home, I quickly returned to the bottle and began to drink heavier due to depression. It was during this time of drunkenness that God showed up and made it very clear He was going to deliver me from this addiction and reminded me of my call to SAGU. I surrendered to Him and on May 11th, 2018, I poured all my beer & whiskey down the drain and committed to come to SAGU.

SAGU has since been a tremendous help in my recovery. I was expecting to be looked down upon and judged for my past mistakes, but to God’s glory, everyone has been nothing but supportive and encouraging. I recently celebrated a year and a half free from alcohol and I am thankful that SAGU has been there for me in this journey.”



## SAGU Impresses at NCCAA National Championship

SAGU competed in the NCCAA National Championship in Point Lookout, MO, on November 14, 2019. Coach Covarrubias, Men’s and Women’s Cross Country Head Coach, and his group of runners had another opportunity to showcase their talents and extend their season for another week.

The SAGU Women finished 11th place overall with a total average time of 23:18.24. The SAGU Men finished 6th overall with an average total time of 22:30.85. Zack Hammond finished 1st overall and became the NCCAA National Champion.

◀ **Zack Hammond** and Robert Herrera both qualified for the NAIA National Championships in Vancouver, Washington, this past November. ■



# SHARE *your* NOTE

[www.sagu.edu/mynote](http://www.sagu.edu/mynote)

All notes are published online at [sagu.edu/alumninotes](http://sagu.edu/alumninotes). Your submission may be featured in the printed Summer issue of SAGU Today.



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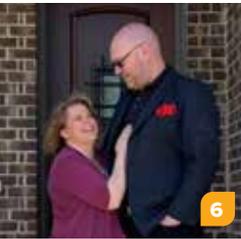
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## CELEBRATIONS

**1 Jon Catron (1992-1994, 2016-2018)** recently took on an assignment from the General AG Superintendent, Doug Clay, to lead an initiative across the fellowship to motivate the church back to a greater level of Bible engagement. His wife, Kim, also a SAGU grad, is now a team lead for the Bible Engagement Project.

**2 Lorele Vanzant (1953-1955)** is a family therapist and has had her own private practice for thirty-nine years. She specializes in marriage and trauma counseling from her office in Plano, Texas.

**3 Heather Tipps (2007-2011)** and her husband, David, got married on April 12, 2014. He works at SAGU as an IT Specialist. She owns a music-and-art school in Waxahachie called En Route Academy of the Arts, where she also teaches music.

**4 Dallas Mora (2005-2008)** serves as the Online Community pastor for The Healing Place in Shreveport, Louisiana. He and his wife, Celeste, started a unique ministry called Geek Devotions in which they are able to take “geeky pop culture items” and create weekly devotionals on YouTube.

**5 Ben Fenton (2011, 2013-2016)** is serving as a Digital Multimedia Journalist in Tyler, Texas. He went on to receive his Master’s in Communication since graduating from SAGU and got married to his wonderful wife in 2017. They are expecting their first child in May of 2020!

**6 Ryan McElhany (1998-2001)** became the Director of Marketing for Life School in August of 2019. His wife, LaShera McElhany, Ph.D., works as an Associate Professor in the Teacher Education Department at SAGU and provides professional development, training and consulting.

**7 Brian Armas (1997-1998)** and his wife, Kara, live on a farm in Arkansas and love the joys of simple living after meeting one another on SAGU’s campus 22 years ago.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Heather Francis (1977-2019)** Heather Francis, age 42, surrounded by family in her home, left behind her earthly body and entered into the presence of Jesus in November of 2019. Heather was a loving wife to Jeff Francis and mother of five incredible children. Heather served as Assistant Dean for our Registrar’s office for many years but she is most remembered for her loving and joyful spirit that touched the lives of so many.

**John Ray Broxson (1932-2019)** John Broxson went home to be with the Lord this past December after a fulfilling life of service. John is survived by his wife of 65 years, Christina C. Broxson, Rick Strange and four children-Silvia, John, Chery, and Bart. His accomplishments at SAGU were many. He was President of the Foreign Mission Assn; Member ‘53, ‘54 Harvester Quartet; Class Speaker of ‘54 Graduating Class. He went on to become an international AG Evangelist and Pastor. Upon the death of his father in 1959, he was appointed Sheriff and later as Commissioner of Santa Rosa County. He went on to serve as a member of the House of Representatives and in the Senate for the state of Florida.

**Dr. John J. Wagliardo (1934-2020)** Dr. John J. Wagliardo passed away this January at the age of 85 years old. Dr. Wagliardo graduated from Southwestern in 1954 and has always been a firm believer and supporter of our mission. In lieu of flowers at the funeral, the Wagliardo family even requested donations to be made to the “Dr. John and Pastor Leora Wagliardo Scholarship” to further support the next generation of SAGU students.

**Sarah Palser (1934-2019)** Sarah Kelley Palser passed away this past November at her home with her family by her side. She leaves behind her loving husband of 64 years, Edgar Palser; her daughter, Kelley Ann Haskins & husband, Jimmy Haskins. Sarah was well-known for her intelligence and servant’s heart. Her compassion and unique abilities led her to the field of social work where she touched the lives of many.

Update your  
contact information!

[www.sagu.edu/alumni](http://www.sagu.edu/alumni)



# Spring 2020 chapel highlights

- 1** **MARISSA FRANCIS, current SAGU student,** spoke about the pain and grief of living in the in-between. She discussed the power of opening up to God even when we are afraid, and encouraged other students to have the bravery to act when God calls for it.
- 2** **DR. JEFF MAGRUDER, SAGU Professor,** presented a case for Christianity and its validity in opposition of atheists and critics today.
- 3** **DR. BRYAN JARRETT, Lead Pastor of Northplace Church,** encouraged students to step into the leadership roles God has called them to.
- 4** **ROBERT MADU, SAGU alumnus,** gave a powerful word of encouragement to keep moving through life with faith. "That is the point of life – you're supposed to be changing. You've been stuck and God wants to get your attention to raise you up."
- 5** **BEN ANDREWS, AG District Youth Director of Arkansas,** dared students to sacrifice what they think they want for what God wants for them.
- 6** **DR. MIKE CLARENSAU, Dean of Bible and Theology,** shared the story of his father and the way it influences his relationship with God. He emboldened us to not feel discouraged in our defeats because we have a Father that has already won our battles.
- 7** **PRESIDENT BRIDGES presented Missionary MOLLY WYATT her diploma during Missions Connection week.** Molly was unable to receive her diploma during Commencement, so President Bridges recreated the experience for her in chapel!
- 8** **AMY FARLEY, AGWM Missionary, and our students interceded for missionaries around the world during Missions Connection Week.**
- 9** **VERONICA GUERRERO, current SAGU student,** shared her testimony on overcoming "toxic" faith. She demonstrated how destructive it is to follow leaders with a misrepresentation of the gospel and encouraged students to have a healthy relationship with God.





1200 Sycamore Waxahachie, TX 75165



## **NEW!** SAGU Alumni Association Membership

SAGU alumni are already a part of the association. But through a membership, you can support SAGU financially while receiving exclusive perks and alumni opportunities.

### **Members have the chance to receive:**

- An alumni shirt ▶
- Tickets to the Homecoming Concert with Michael W. Smith ★ (see pg. 4)
- and more!

Visit [www.sagu.edu/AlumniMember](http://www.sagu.edu/AlumniMember)

