

Dr. James H. Wayland

Dr. James H. Wayland, the founder of the university that bears his name, was a physician from Missouri with a vision of faith-based education on the Texas High Plains. In 1906 he gave \$10,000 and 25 acres of land to establish a college, and the Staked Plains Baptist Association and the City of Plainview joined in the effort. It opened as Wayland Literary and Technical Institution in 1908, later achieved junior college status, became a four-year institution in 1947, and was named Wayland Baptist University in 1981.

James H. Wayland was born in 1863 in Randolph County, Missouri. He decided to become a physician after he almost lost a foot in an accident at the age of 16. He was trained at the Kentucky School of Medicine and practiced in Fort Worth and the nearby town of Azle before moving to the new town of Plainview in 1888. He became one of the most active doctors within a 100-mile radius, driving a horse-drawn buggy to his calls and using homing pigeons to alert him when a patient was about to give birth. Dr. Wayland, who brought the first X-ray machine to Plainview, also served as physician and surgeon for Santa Fe Railroad employees for 25 years,

Dr. Wayland was known to stay with seriously ill patients for several days when he knew he could not return to their home far from Plainview if a change for the worse occurred. In this way he became a good friend as well as physician to many. When he had done all in his power, he would get on his knees and pray for the patient's recovery "or that the Lord's will be done."

He had trees planted for landmarks on the High Plains and promoted the planting of trees in Plainview, where he and his wife, the former Sarah Tucker, brought up their family of nine children. Their 25-room home at Fifth and Milwaukee, no longer there, was a landmark for many years.

A charter member of the First Baptist Church, Dr. Wayland was a religious and civic leader. He was on the committee that brought the railroad to Plainview in 1907. He also operated a drug store and invested in the construction of several buildings.

His health was seriously affected by the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918. After he recovered, Dr. Wayland and his wife operated the Wayland Hotel, no longer present, at Fifth and Broadway. He died in 1948 at the age of 84. His wife Sarah died in 1955.

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