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# AI Studio Ghibli images takes spirit away from art

## THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Recently, OpenAI released a feature that allows users to generate images from text prompts. One of the most popular trends has been creating images in the style of Studio Ghibli. The Japanese animation studio is known for its spectacular hand-drawn animation. These AI images replicate this style of art, starting a phenomenon that is not only harmful to the environment for its massive energy usage but also undermines the creativity that made Studio Ghibli special in the first place.

On March 31, the ChatGPT-4o model became available to all users for free, bringing Studio Ghibli into the hands of billions worldwide. One of the reasons this tool became popular is that it was a lot more accurate and responsive to user prompts compared to other AI tools. This allowed users to generate images of adult figures and was less likely to reject user prompts for being offensive, creating more open-ended and sometimes offensive creations.

Even the White House joined in the trend as they posted a photo on X, showing an ICE agent arresting

Virginia Basora-Gonzalez, an illegal migrant and fentanyl dealer through the studio Ghibli feature.

Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, posted a Studio Ghibli photo of himself, joking that the high-volume of image generation will melt the OpenAI servers. This skyrocketed the trend's visibility and significantly boosted ChatGPT's user engagement.

What are the pros of image generation from AI?

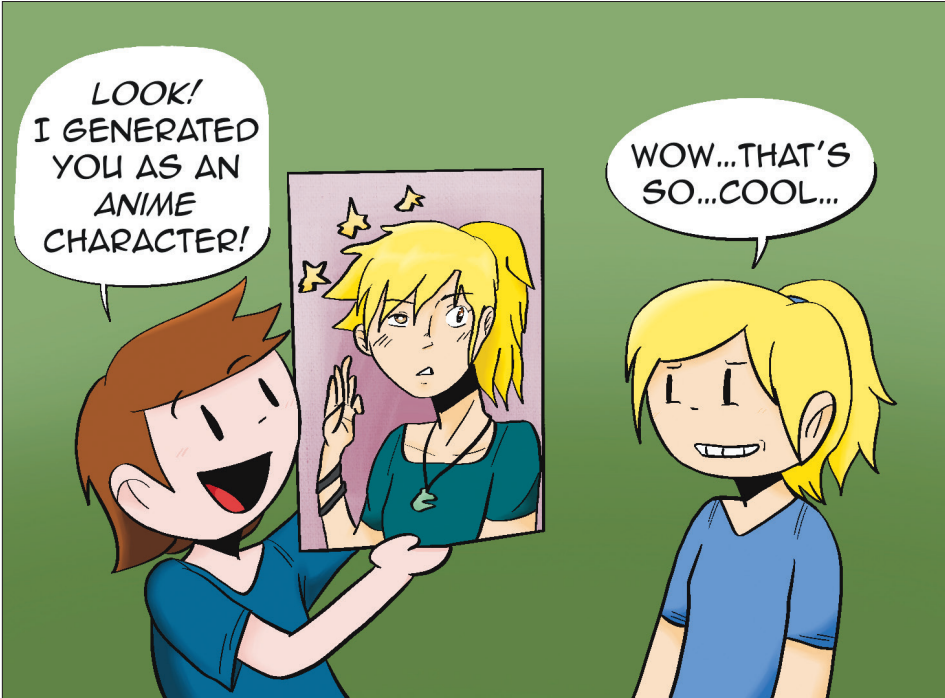
Art can be more widely accessible and applicable in a variety of contexts. It's not a mystery why the Studio Ghibli trend is so popular. People love to see how their lives intertwine with the beautiful, crafted style of Miyazaki, the creator behind Studio Ghibli. For creatives, AI can lead to more ideas, as you don't need to rely solely on your imagination but on visible images prompted by text. AI changes the game with what it means to be an artist, but it begs the question, what are you replicating and not creating? Art has always been accessible — all you need is your imagination. AI makes art easy, giving an end result without the work, talent and dedication.

What are the downsides of

image generation from AI?

First, much of the art that OpenAI is trained on is copyrighted material. Many of the famous hand-drawn works by Studio Ghibli such as "Spirited Away" and "Howl's Moving Castle" are used as training for large language models to replicate, even though they do not own the rights to the works. It is not a good precedent to appropriate work from other creators, even if you think more art will be created through AI. Intellectual property is protected in every field and service; however, for some reason, AI large language models have been able to use intellectual property for their own benefit because it hasn't been properly regulated yet. Many argue that ChatGPT isn't "creating" anything, it is simply plagiarizing it and calling it their own. As Sam Altman defends his product by highlighting its "fair use" under the U.S. Copyright laws, we begin to understand the ethical and moral dilemma involving ChatGPT's use of artist's work without their consent.

However, OpenAI took a step back after receiving backlash for the Studio Ghibli image generations. On April 2, OpenAI started restricting



James Ellis | Cartoonist

Studio Ghibli requests and limited the number of image generations per day for users using the free version. The company stays diligent to not end up with a copyright lawsuit for "fair use," as it rides the line of what is legal.

Secondly, OpenAI is harmful for the environment. Reportedly, in a conversation of 20-50 questions with ChatGPT, 500 ml of water is consumed during the

conversation, making the potential water footprint daunting as the number of users continue to rise. The main contributing factors are the sheer amount of energy required to train large language models and the amount of water needed to cool their systems. Image generation requires significantly more processing power than just a text prompt, highlighting that we need to draw the line

of when image generation is actually useful.

As users should remain mindful of when using such features are appropriate, it is also up to OpenAI to be transparent about its ecological footprint. AI will continue to be more and more prevalent in our daily lives; so, we need to enforce that these companies stay accountable for the environment that we share.

# Show support this Sexual Assault Awareness Month

## KRISTY VOLMERT

Staff Writer



I opened up my curtains the other night and saw the top of Pat Neff glowing teal in the distance. It reminded me of all the ways our community actively cares when it comes to the issue of sexual assault. It's a heavy subject, so seeing awareness is very comforting.

As someone who has been through it, I really appreciate the efforts in spreading awareness, promoting prevention and supporting survivors. As I have grown up, I have become less afraid and more compassionate. Just knowing there are so many others who have been through it and faced the same struggles I did has made me feel less alone and ashamed over the years.

I know it's not easy for anyone to talk about, even for those who haven't been through it. There are a lot of misunderstandings about what it is and is not, how it affects victims in the long run, why it can be so hard to come forward and what can be done to prevent it. I am personally so glad Baylor's Equity, Civil Rights & Title IX Office and other organizations are raising attention to address these things.

I think a lot of people avoid discussion of sexual assault because they are worried they might say the wrong thing or "trigger" somebody. That makes total sense. But it shouldn't be that way. Imagine how much more good could be done if people were less afraid to speak up and stand out.

There's never anything wrong with trying to be a part of something good. It doesn't require a specific set of knowledge or experience, only a good heart. That's why things like Sexual Assault Awareness Month exist — to educate everyone, young and old, on the realities of sexual violence.

I understand, of course, many people who pour into SAAM-related events and

help out awareness campaigns probably have not experienced sexual assault themselves or are close with someone who has. So, seeing how much they dedicate to the matter makes me so happy. It demonstrates that empathy and compassion are not contingent on one's experiences. The more people willing to make a difference, the better.

There are many reasons why these kinds of campaigns exist, and one of those is that sexual assault is astonishingly prevalent — at least more so than most people know it to be.

According to RAINN, there is an average of 463,634 victims of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States, and about every 68 seconds an American is sexually assaulted.

In 2024, the Dordulian Law Group said 81% of women and 43% of men in the United States report experiencing some form of sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime.

As for young adults, particularly college students living on campus, the numbers reported by RAINN show sexual assault is even more common. Male college students (ages 18-24) are 78% more likely than non-students of the same age to be a victim of rape or sexual assault, and female college students (ages 18-24) are three times more likely than women in general to experience sexual violence.

They also report that females between the ages of 16 and 19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of sexual assault.

A research article published by the National Library of Medicine in February 2021 outlined the far-reaching long-term consequences caused by sexual violence.

It explained the stress resulting from this kind of experience can have drastic long-term consequences on overall health because of how interconnected the body and mind are, as emotional stress triggers the body's physical immune response.

"Those who have such experiences are at a greater risk of developing serious diseases than those who have not had to endure such trauma. They are more likely to have medically

unexplained physical symptoms and have a greater need for healthcare than those without such experiences."

The authors of the article expressed a hope that their findings may help provide better, more effective healthcare for survivors of sexual violence.

Most people tend to only associate negative effects that pertain to mental health, such as short-term PTSD or attachment issues. So, it's encouraging to see that information is communicated about how dynamic and complex the long-term effects are.

The NLM research found that women who came forward about their experiences felt immeasurable relief and better emotional well-being after opening up.

The #MeToo movement, which emerged in 2017, brought great attention to the issue of sexual violence in the workplace, particularly in the film industry. As it took off, many people all over the world were encouraged to share their stories, prompting greater attention to the issue and what changes needed to be made. The slogan for the movement was "you are not alone."

“There's never anything wrong with trying to be a part of something good. It doesn't require a specific set of knowledge or experience, only a good heart.”

Although we've come a long way, some people still believe in common misconceptions such as: It doesn't happen to men, coercion is consent, it only includes rape, it always involves physical force and all offenders are purely bad people.

There are also a lot of misunderstandings when it comes to defining the differences between sexual assault, harassment or abuse. From what I understand, sexual harassment pertains to non-physical gestures, and sexual abuse refers to the presence of a significant power imbalance (such as the assault of a minor by an authority figure) and sexual violence is a broader term.

As part of awareness events, it would be extremely beneficial to highlight the differences between these different terminologies, just so we are using them in the right contexts.

I would also like to emphasize how crucial it is for survivors to have a good, supportive community to lean on, confidential access to mental health resources and — best of all in my opinion — opportunities to lean into their faith and spiritual life.

Luckily, Baylor has all of these things. But for me, even before coming here this year, turning to God during the hardest of my struggles helped me immeasurably, and I would never hesitate to encourage a fellow survivor to do the same, no matter where you are and what happened to you.

You are never defined by your past.

I would never expect everyone to fully know and understand what it's like to experience and recover from sexual violence. I don't blame anyone for not knowing what does and does not constitute as sexual assault, especially since that can be a very complicated distinction. And I certainly get how terrifying it can be to speak up and ask for help on behalf of someone else or yourself.

This month, The Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office at Baylor has hosted awareness events and will continue to do so throughout the rest of April. That teal glow I saw illuminating Pat Neff doesn't have to be a one-time thing.

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Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**SWING!** Baylor softball recorded eight hits for the 15th time this season against UTSA on Wednesday at Getterman Stadium.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**CURVEBALL** Freshman pitcher Lexie Warncke pitched three innings, only allowing one hit in the Bears' 9-4 win over ACU Saturday afternoon at Getterman Stadium.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**SLIDIN' IN** Junior shortstop Amber Toven hit a bases-clearing double during the Bears' 9-4 win over ACU Saturday afternoon at Getterman Stadium.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**ON A ROLL** Junior outfielder Brooklyn Carter went a perfect 3-for-3 at the plate during the Bears' 6-0 win over UTSA at Getterman Stadium Wednesday night.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**FULL POWER** Freshman pitcher Lexie Warncke recorded one hit during the 6-0 win over UTSA at Getterman Stadium Wednesday night.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**PEACE!** Senior outfielder Ashlyn Wachtendorf singled to second base, RBI (1-1 BF) in the bottom of the second, bringing the Bears to four runs, in the 6-0 win over UTSA at Getterman Stadium Wednesday night.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**CLEAN HIT** Baylor softball now holds an 11-0 record all-time against ACU.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**BEARS WIN!** Senior infielder Emry McDonough celebrates an RBI during the Bears' 9-4 win over ACU Saturday afternoon at Getterman Stadium.



**KRISTY VOLMERT**  
Staff Writer

Caleb Garcia | Photographer

“Though this is all very interesting, at least to me, this story doesn’t end with the death of Jesus,” he said.

**DR. SPARKY MATTHEWS |  
CLINICAL PROFESSOR IN HONORS**

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# Q&A: Claire Leslie talks Texas, stage fright, faith

OLIVIA TURNER  
Arts & Life Editor

I had the opportunity today to sit down and chat with Forrest Frank opener, Claire Leslie. Here, we talked about the upcoming show, her story, her inspirations and got to asking some sillier questions, too. If you don't already know who this rising Christian pop star is, you're about to. Allow me to present: Claire Leslie.

**Q: So you grew up in San Antonio — what are some of your favorite things about living in Texas?**

**Leslie:** I would say Southern hospitality. I mean, that's kind of what we're what we're all about. Growing up in Texas and having random strangers and grandmas calling me their daughter, or [saying], "bless your heart," or "come over, have some food!" Or even just gentlemen here and opening the doors for us like, "yes, ma'am, no, ma'am" — those are things I love about Texas.

Id also say the Tex-Mex. The food here is incredible. Living in San Antonio and having that authentic Mexican food is something I do not take for granted. I love whenever it's genuine queso and not just cheese dip. Seeing that on a menu always scares me.

And then also just the community here — even just the Christian worship community — we're all very tight-knit. Even here in San Antonio at my church, if we need a bass player, then we can call up the church down the road ... we're all just very family oriented.

**Q: What was little Claire like, and when did she realize she loved music?**

**Leslie:** I was actually terrified to sing in front of people. Especially in front of my family, I always got stage fright. I have memories back when I was in preschool ... having to walk up on stage on Palm Sunday, with the palm trees, and doing that even just in front of people, I was mortified, and my mom would have to stand with me.

But I grew up with my three brothers. Growing up, I always looked up to what my older brother was doing, and he was playing keys at our church, and so he started encouraging me — "Hey, what if we sing together?" So we would cover songs, and I would be able to sing in front of him. But yeah, I didn't start singing until I was 14.

**Q: It's evident through your songs that your relationship with God inspires much of what you sing about. Can you paint a picture of what your faith has looked like throughout your life?**

**Leslie:** I was very blessed to have two amazing parents. My mom and dad love Jesus and are all about loving on everyone, no matter what walk or religion or background or story. So I grew up in a family that was all about going to church on Sundays, and I would go to youth group.

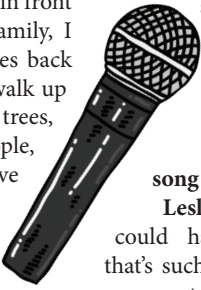
I accepted Jesus in my heart when I was, like, seven or eight years old. But to be honest, it had to do with all my other friends getting baptized. But it wasn't until high school [that] I really started realizing there's a difference between religion and relationship. So I did camps, like Christian family camps, and that's where I really grew in my faith, and I started leading worship when I was 14 — which is crazy — but I haven't stopped since.

And so now I'm 23, and it's a constant journey of figuring out faith and trusting in God. And I definitely get fearful of the future and what's next. Something I deal with a lot is control issues — wanting to control my life



**TRUE COLORS** Claire Leslie is a rising artist making waves in the Christian pop scene. She emphasizes authenticity, faith and fearlessness in songs such as "Passenger Seat," "24/7" and "Original."

Photo courtesy of Spotify



and what's next. But I'm just learning. I'm learning to just trust in Him and have faith and keep my eyes on him, really. So that's where I'm at currently.

**Q: What's the story behind the first song you ever wrote?**

**Leslie:** So something that's like, "Wow, that's such a sweet story!" But my first song I ever wrote was "A Song To All the Boys." And it's funny because I was 14, so what boys am I talking about? But the lyrics are so funny. It was very tongue-in-cheek, like, if you want to talk to me, you need to talk to my dad first. I think one of the lyrics was "yours truly, Claire Leslie," and it was me talking to all the boys saying, "talk to the hand."

The second song is called "Come and Go," and that song was about seasons of life. I had a lot of friendships in high school where I'm like, "Wow, this person's gonna be my friend for life." But then, the next year, we just kind of faded off. And so my mom always said, "People change — just like the seasons; people come and go, and that's a part of life." So that was just about friendships and about the journey of losing people, but then realizing that's a part of life. That's how we grow.

**Q: A theme I've noticed in your music — especially in your song, "Passenger Seat" — is the idea of letting go and letting God take control. Were there any specific moments in your life that led you to write these songs?**

**Leslie:** Well, during college, I started struggling pretty heavily with anxiety and panic attacks ... really bad panic attacks, where I felt like I was trapped, and I couldn't move forward. I felt like, OK, this is it — this is how my life is gonna be, just constantly dealing with these panic attacks and anxiety. It was crippling. I think it had to do with seeing everyone around

me. They had ideas of what they wanted to do with their lives, and they had majors. And for me, I personally didn't know what I was going to study. I [didn't] know what I was going to do after college. And there was just a big, big fear of the future. What does the future hold? Am I going to get married one day? Am I going to graduate college? Am I ever going to move out of my parents' house? What am I going to do for a career?

So during that time, I started really getting into the power of prayer and getting quiet and listening to God and just having my arms open. It was the moment that I started letting go, and I like to use the word "full-sending" it. And He started opening doors, and He started closing doors as well. But during that time, I started taking the passenger seat and letting Him drive, letting Him control. And now, a few years later, I'm still figuring out my life completely. I'm still living with my parents — which I love — but I'm getting to do music full time as a career, and I really do believe that's because that's what the Lord had planned for my life.

**Q: So, are you a passenger princess in real life, or do you like to be behind the wheel?**

**Leslie:** I just did a couple of shows this past weekend with my band, and we took my dad's truck, which we drove around Texas, but I never once drove. So I was the Passenger Seat Princess the whole time!

**Q: Authenticity is something else you emphasize. In a world where it's often hard to be original, what are some ways you stay true to yourself?**

**Leslie:** Honestly, this has been something I've been navigating all throughout my life. Authenticity — that's been a word that I've really been exploring and figuring out, OK, who am I? It was like the moment that I started kind of acknowledging God has a unique, beautiful



calling on each and every one of our lives.

There's something beautiful about that when we all are secure in ourselves — knowing I love nature, I love going on walks, I love hiking. I feel close to God when I'm sitting and letting the sun shine on my face. Or I love writing true, authentic music, and I love singing. So, what is your calling? Ask God, because I promise you, He'll start showing you.

No. 2 is surround yourself with people that lift you up, and I think that is very hard to find. It's a small group, but when you find people that believe in you and honestly want to cheer you on the sidelines, those are the people that you want to have in your corner. And then also another thing, too, is to celebrate other people's victories. That just shows a sense of authenticity.

**Q: If someone's never heard your music before, which song should they start with — and why?**

**Leslie:** The song that comes to mind is "Original." It's all about embracing yourself, embracing who God has created you to be. And it's about navigating like, "Who am I?" and "What do I stand for?" And it's also just a fun, colorful, girly, relatable song.

**Q: If your music were a color, what would it be?**

**Leslie:** Rainbow! Can I say rainbow? Like a rainbow sherbet ice cream.

**Q: Who are some of your favorite artists/bands you've been listening to lately?**

**Leslie:** I have been a massive fan of Joel Houston, who is with Hillsong — his side project called "AMXN Radio." It's like a new path of Christian music that I'm just loving. It's very creative, very raw, poetic. I love what TAYA is doing, Josiah Queen, Forrest Frank. Gio — a Christian rapper. And Justin Bieber. I love Justin.

**Q: What's a music experience that changed your life?**

**Leslie:** A few years ago, I opened for Cory Asbury. We were actually playing in Waco at the Hippodrome, and I remember during my set, I led the song, "Build My Life." And I remember, I looked out into the audience, and the whole room was just singing their hearts out. And it almost was so loud that it was blowing my hair back. And I remember vividly thinking to myself, "This is what I'm called to do." It felt like heaven on earth.

**Q: Who are your dream collaborators, alive, legendary or totally unexpected?**

**Leslie:** Forrest Frank, for sure. Tiffany Hudson. Whitney Houston. Legend. She's mother!

**Q: Which song/songs are you most hyped to perform on the 22nd? Why?**

**Leslie:** I'd say "Passenger Seat." That one is so much fun to play live. I think it's because it's such an upbeat song. You can jump to it, you can clap, you can dance. And it's always so much fun looking out and seeing everyone dancing like no one's watching. We'll have a blast.

**Q: I know you literally just released an EP (congrats, by the way!), but I'm wondering if there's anything else in the works right now?**

**Leslie:** I'm constantly songwriting, so I'm currently writing for an album. So I'll be releasing an album in the fall, but this summer will be full of the super fun, very summery collabs. We're doing a lot of collaborations with other artists we love that are kind of like the next-gen artists. And then I'll be doing a lot of shows this summer, as well.

Catch Claire Leslie in her opening act at Forrest Frank's show at Foster Pavilion. The show is at 7:00 p.m. on April 22. Tickets are available on the Baylor Athletics website.

## Ink that speaks: Baylor tattoos tell stories

JANAY BOYD  
Reporter

For many people, tattoos are more than just permanent ink on skin — they're visual manifestations of memory, identity and growth. Whether inspired by grief, faith, heritage or spontaneity, Baylor students, alumni and staff share the stories behind their body art and the meanings beneath the surface.

### A ROSE FOR REMEMBRANCE, ROOTED IN INK

San Antonio senior Clarisse Merced keeps her mother close in a deeply personal way. Her first tattoo, a rose etched onto the top left of her back, marks the date of her mother's passing.

"Roses were her favorite flower," Merced said. "I wanted my first tattoo to represent something most important to me, which was my mother."

Though the tattoo came with pain, having it done just two weeks after her eighteenth birthday was a milestone — one Merced says reflects the person who shaped her.

"Although I lost her at a young age, this tattoo symbolizes the idea that she will always be with me," she said.

### LINE OF FAITH, ETCHED IN INK

For Canon City, Colo., junior Hope Kolman, her rib tattoo — the phrase "fearfully and wonderfully made" — is spiritual and symbolic.

"I grew up in a town where I looked different from my family and most of the people around me," Kolman said. "There were times I felt out of place, but my parents always reminded me that God made me perfectly."

Placed intentionally on her ribs to echo the biblical creation of woman from man's rib, the tattoo — which is from Psalm 139:14 — serves as both a tribute to her faith and a reminder of her self-worth.

"Back then, it would have been a declaration — almost like I needed the reminder to believe it," she said. "Now, it's more of a truth I walk in."

### A GARDEN, A MOUNTAIN, A LIFE IN INK

Baylor enrollment management coordinator Michelle Anderson did not get her first tattoos until she was 40 — a spontaneous decision which resulted in two small Japanese character tattoos on her ankles.

"I used to be a Japanese language teacher, so I wanted Japanese characters," Anderson said. "I have one that represents being a mother, and then I have the other one that represents being a wife."

Her later tattoos — which are far more intricate — are vivid representations of her personal history. Her left arm is adorned with flowers from a garden she once tended — a visual keepsake of a home she sold. Her right arm, a tribute to Mount Rainier, reflects her deep connection to the Washington landscape she once called home.

"If you are from Western Washington, Mount Rainier is a part of your life," she said.

### MARKED BY MEANING, AWAKENED THROUGH INK

For Baylor alumna Lucy Lusk, her tattoo — a simple flower on her ribs — isn't about the design itself, but what it represents.



Photo courtesy of Clarisse Merced

**TATTED UP** This rose tattoo on the left shoulder of San Antonio senior Clarisse Merced was done in honor of her late mother.

"I struggled a lot as a young child and teenager to feel a sense of independence," Lusk said. "Getting this tattoo felt like my first real 'adult' step."

She was 18 when she got the matching tattoo with a close high school friend, a physical reminder of a formative friendship and the memories they created together. While her style has changed since then, she said the tattoo still holds deep emotional value.

"I appreciate that the design isn't what I would choose now because it reflects who I was," Lusk said. "It represents a time when I thought I was incredibly mature, and even though I can see now that I wasn't, it still marks my emergence into womanhood."

Whether rooted in loss, belief, identity or impulse, tattoos hold stories that grow and shift with the person who bears them. For some, it's a snapshot of who they once were. For others, it's a lasting statement of who they are today.



# Transfer Portal Tracker



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**MAKIN' WAVES** Baylor women's basketball head coach Nicki Collen enters her fifth year with the Bears, forced to add a handful of starters to the roster from the transfer portal.

## WBB stays active, lands Auburn's Yuting Deng

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Editor

Head coach Nicki Collen has Baylor women's basketball on a hot streak in the transfer portal, picking up their fourth commitment of the cycle.

Auburn rising sophomore Yuting Deng, who reportedly held 50 offers when she entered the transfer portal, chose Baylor over the likes of UConn and Notre Dame Sunday night, according to multiple reports. The 6-foot guard joins Oklahoma rising senior forward Kiersten Johnson and North Dakota rising junior forward Kiera Pemberton as April additions.

Deng, a Hunan, China, native averaged 11.8 points and 2.5 rebounds on 38% shooting in 12 games after signing in November and joining the team for conference play. Against stiff competition, she shot 36.5% from long range and recorded a season-best 27 points in an overtime loss against Vanderbilt on Feb. 16.

Deng is the second Auburn transfer to

move to Baylor, joining guard Taliah Scott, who committed on March 31. Deng and Scott both have three years of eligibility remaining. Former Tigers head coach Johnnie Harris joined Collen's staff two weeks ago after a four-year stint leading Auburn.

"Johnnie is, first and foremost, a winner," Collen said. "She is an elite recruiter and — even more importantly — an elite relationship builder. Johnnie has had success at every stop in her career, and her experience as the head coach at Auburn will be a major asset to our staff."

Deng competed with China's U24 and U18 national teams and appeared in multiple FIBA Cups before appearing in college.

The green and gold added Johnson to the roster on Saturday, as she posted a commitment photo in Baylor swag on social media. The 6-foot-4 Duncanville native saw little play across three years with the Sooners. Johnson averaged 2.2 points and 1.9 rebounds on 53.3% shooting in 6.5 minutes per game, the lowest in

her college career.

"KJ will be a great fit in our up-tempo offensive and defensive styles," Collen said. "She is an elite rim-running post player with guard skills that will stretch defenses to the arc. At 6-foot-4, KJ is incredibly long and athletic and can defend multiple positions for us. She is a winner."

Johnson has played in 88 career games, averaging 8.9 minutes per game with a 42.2% shooting percentage.

Pemberton, a 6-foot-1 forward with two years of eligibility remaining, thrived in two seasons with the Fighting Hawks. The Canadian led the team with 16.7 points and 7.2 rebounds in her sophomore season; she scored 20 or more points in six of North Dakota's last seven games.

"When looking for a hidden gem in the portal, we quickly came across an awesome Canadian forward in North Dakota and made her a priority," Collen said. "Kiera's superpowers are her motor and work ethic. She is elite in transition because of her speed and loves to play

downhill to utilize her length."

She is a career 53.4% shooter with a knack for the offensive glass that has led to her being a two-time All-Summit League honoree.

"Kiera has a huge heart for others, and our fans will love the way her joy for the game and for others comes through both on and off the court," Collen said. "Kiera plans to be a firefighter when her playing days are over, and both of her parents are in law enforcement, so public service is in her genes."

Collen and the Bears will stay active in the transfer portal, looking for a true center to fill Aaronette Vonleh's shoes. The transfers join senior forwards Darianna Littlepage-Buggs, Bella Fontleroy and Kyla Abraham; sophomore forward Kayla Nelms; graduate guard Jana Van Gytenbeek and redshirt freshman guard Ines Goryanova.

Senior guard Waiata Jennings is the only player on the 2024-25 roster who hit the transfer portal; she committed to Alabama on Saturday.

## Waco native Powell transfers to BU

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Editor

After a superstar career at Midway High School, Rice forward Caden Powell is headed back to his hometown. The rising senior is the sixth incoming Baylor transfer, he announced Monday afternoon.

The 6-foot-10 big man averaged 10.4 points, 7.2 rebounds and one block per game in his junior season with the Owls. Powell owned the offensive glass, finishing top-50 in the nation averaging 3.1 offensive rebounds per game.

Before his one-year stint at Rice where he was the only Owl to play all 32 games, Powell played his first two seasons of college ball

at Wyoming. He saw action in 28 games off the bench his freshman season, averaging 1.9 points and two rebounds in 8.2 minutes per game.

Powell's relentless effort landed him in the starting lineup in 2023-24. He scored 5.4 points per game to go along with 4.1 rebounds in 31 starts with the Cowboys.

A natural interior scorer, Powell is a career 52.9% shooter. He shot 56.5% from the field a season ago, an eight-point boost from his shooting percentage at Wyoming.

The junior worked his way into foul trouble for most of the 2024-25 season. He picked up three or more fouls in 26 of Rice's 32 games, including fouling out in three contests.

Powell scored double-digits in 16 games, highlighted by a career-high 19 points against No. 18 Memphis in an 84-72 loss on Feb. 26. Against the Tigers, Powell went 5-for-8 from the floor and a season-best 9-for-11 mark at the charity stripe.

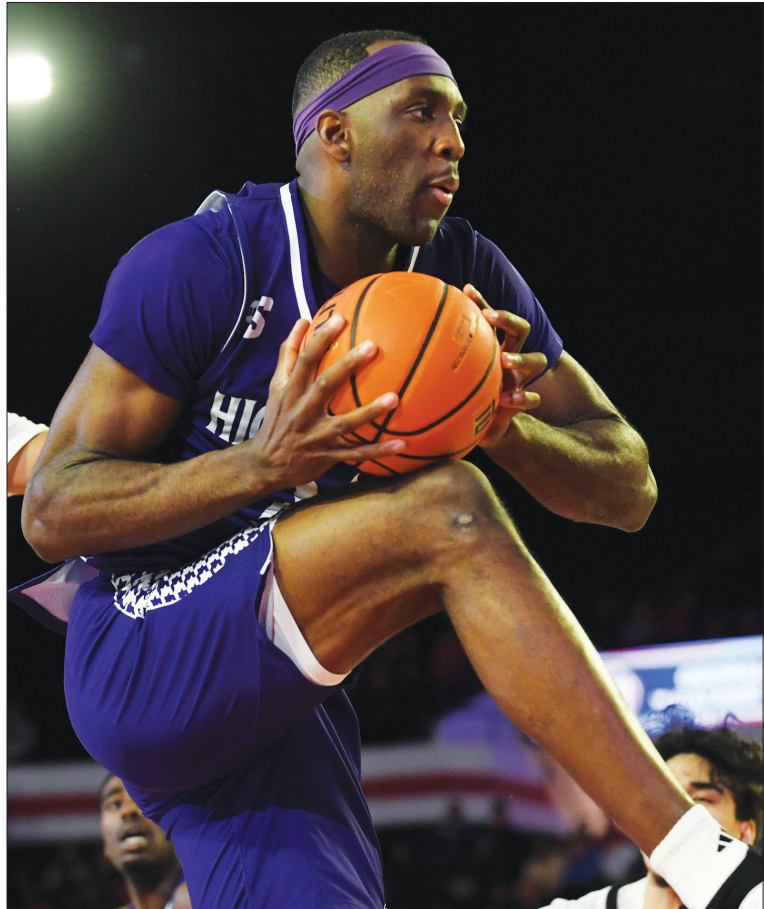
During his Midway career, Powell was a multi-time Super Centex honoree, averaging 17.6 points and 10.8 rebounds as a senior. He has one year of eligibility remaining.

After a year with just one true big man in 2024-25, head coach Scott Drew has added to front court with the additions of Powell and High Point big man Juslin Bodo Bodo to go along with Josh Ojianwuna.



Associated Press

**HOMETOWN HERO** Rice rising senior forward Caden Powell, a Waco native who played high school hoops at Midway, transferred to Baylor Monday afternoon.



Associated Press

**A TRUE BIG** High Point forward Justin Bodo Bodo led the Panthers to their first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance in 2024-25.

## Back-to-back BigSouth DPOY center Juslin Bodo Bodo commits to Baylor

**JACKSON POSEY**  
Sports Writer

High Point big man Juslin Bodo Bodo has committed to Baylor, per multiple reports. The 7-foot, 250-pound big man won back-to-back Big South Defensive Player of the Year honors and led the Panthers to consecutive regular season conference titles for the first time since 2014-16.

"Juslin was just a monster today," High Point head coach Alan Huss said after an overtime win against UNC Asheville in February. "He had eight offensive rebounds in 31 minutes. To convert on those plays so many times, to be able to finish and anchoring our offense with the lob threat that he was and the lob finishes was just tremendous."

A rising junior, Bodo Bodo has two more years of remaining eligibility for the Bears. As a sophomore, he averaged 5.3 points, 8.4 rebounds and 1.4 blocks per

game on 64.3% shooting — all representing slight steps back from his Big South Freshman of the Year campaign as the Panthers continued to stock the roster with talent. Still, his defense anchored the Panthers as they made their first-ever NCAA Tournament game.

High Point, a No. 13 seed, faced stiff competition in the first round — No. 4 Purdue won 75-63. (The Boilermakers wouldn't bow out of the tournament until a two-point loss to Houston in the Sweet 16.) But for a while, it was close.

Just under the 8-minute mark, Bodo Bodo jammed a putback dunk to cut the lead to 59-56. A lob threat with a long wingspan, the sophomore center was able to exert vertical pressure against First Team All-Big 10 big man Trey Kaufman-Renn.

The analytics also say Bodo Bodo played a key role in the Panthers' late comeback attempt, contributing a team-high game score (10.0) and box plus-minus (9.6).

The Yaoundé native continues a recent tradition of Baylor centers from the Cameroonian capital. Former Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year Jonathan Tchamwa Tchatchoua was born there, as was Yanis Ndjonga, who entered the transfer portal two weeks ago.

Bodo Bodo played his high school ball for Southern California Academy. A three-star, he was head coach Alan Huss' only ranked recruit. But between a coaching change, a strong transfer class and a new defensive anchor at center, High Point jumped from 14-17 to 27-9 in Huss' first season as head coach.

Bodo Bodo joins Wyoming guard Obi Agbim, Oregon State forward Michael Rataj and Omaha guard JJ White in Baylor's transfer recruiting class, which led the Big 12 at No. 12 nationally before Bodo Bodo's commitment. He'll be the first Baylor 7-footer to see regular rotation minutes since Jo Acuil in 2017-18.



Sports

# Oregon State transfer brings scoring, length to Baylor

**JACKSON POSEY**  
Sports Writer

For the first time since the pandemic-shortened 2019-20 season, Baylor men's basketball finished with an offense ranked outside the top 100.

Head coach Scott Drew isn't about to let that happen again.

Star freshmen VJ Edgecombe and Robert O. Wright III are headed out the door to the NBA draft and BYU, respectively. Gone are seniors Norchad Omier, Jayden Nunn and Jeremy Roach, as are utilitymen Jalen Celestine and Langston Love. In their stead arrives a wave of transfer portal additions that

look to pick up where Baylor teams prior have left off.

Among other additions, Wyoming's Obi Agbim (17.6 PPG), Oregon State's Michael Rataj (16.9 PPG) and Omaha's JJ White (13.7 PPG) are in line to carry the load for an offense that isn't expected to have any returning minutes available for opening night.

Rataj offers a high-level scoring skillset as a forward, particularly as a mid-range jump shooter. He's quick enough to challenge forwards on the perimeter and strong enough to bully guards inside. His pull-up shooting stroke is silky smooth.

Free throw shooting is widely seen as an indicator

of future 3-point success, but Rataj's indicators have been inverted. Decent freshman-year shooting (37.3% on 1.6 attempts) was offset by an abysmal performance from the line (59.6% on 1.5 attempts). The following year, he lost his 3-point touch (28.8% on 2.0 attempts) but shot a respectable 73.8% from the charity stripe on 2.1 attempts per game.

He finally put it all together in 2024-25. Playing 32.4 minutes per game as the Beavers' unquestioned offensive fulcrum, he shot career-high volume from both locations, finishing at 35.1% from three on 2.9 attempts per game and 78.8% from the line

on 5.0 attempts per game. How well he shoots from behind both lines will determine his offensive effectiveness as he transitions to Big 12 play.

He's not a catch-and-shoot player, by any means. Rataj often heads straight into dribble-drive penetration instead of shooting off the catch or swinging the rock. He has the touch and athleticism to make that work against mid-major competition, but it'll be tougher to pull that off consistently against high-major defenders.

That aggressiveness led to a lot of short jump shots as defenses collapsed around the ball. Rataj held his own against high-caliber

opponents, scoring 20 points against Oregon and 29 against Gonzaga, but the bunny jumpers will be fewer and farther between moving forward.

The term "pure scorer" sometimes evokes images of selfish players who don't try on defense. Here, that couldn't be further from the truth. Rataj plays with high intensity on both ends of the court, scrabbling over loose balls and shooting upcourt in transition. He isn't the most explosive athlete, but he has the touch and body control needed to make the most of impact situations.

Rataj's length offers a high defensive ceiling; his effort

raises the floor. The most important trait, though, is that he can flat-out score. He's Baylor's best frontcourt pull-up shooter in recent memory, and he'll form a dynamic pick-and-roll duo with Agbim. He represents the exact sort of rim-pressuring, 3/4 combo forward the Bears have been missing in recent years.

To maximize his impact, Rataj will need to keep his percentages steady beyond the arc and at the line while increasing spot-up 3-pointer volume. If he can check those boxes effectively, he has the skillset of a high-motor, high-volume scorer with strong defensive potential for the Bears.

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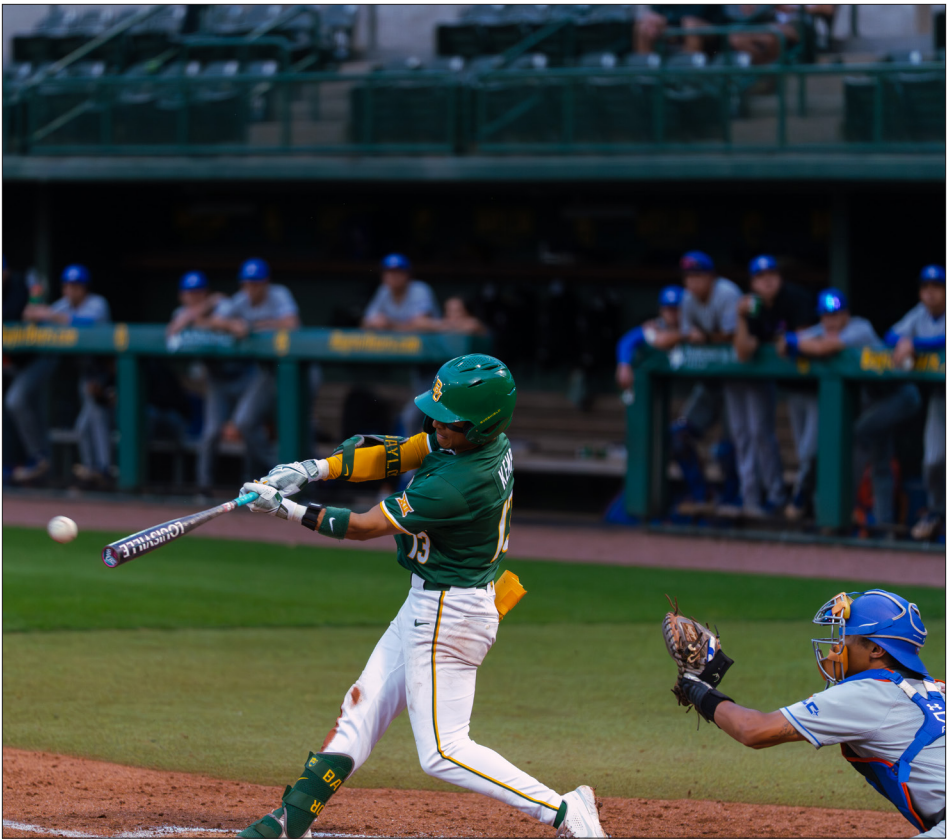
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Associated Press

**FIERCE NEWCOMER** Oregon State forward Michael Rataj (12) shoots over Oregon center Nate Bittle, left, as N'Faly Dante, right, defends during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in Corvallis, Ore., Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023.

# Baseball drops series finale in Lubbock



Brady Harris | Photographer

**UP TO BAT** Senior shortstop Tyriq Kemp hit two RBI doubles in the first two innings during Baylor baseball's 9-8 loss to Texas Tech Sunday afternoon at Rip Griffin Park in Lubbock.

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Editor

Building a 5-0 lead that vanished by the third inning, Baylor baseball failed to win their second Big 12 series of the season, dropping the rubber match against Texas Tech 9-8 Sunday afternoon at Rip Griffin Park in Lubbock.

After an offensive onslaught of 18 runs on Saturday, the Bears (22-13, 6-9 Big 12) didn't miss a step. Redshirt senior right fielder Enzo Apodaca, who finished 2-for-5, singled and slammed a two-run homer in the first two innings. Senior shortstop Tyriq Kemp (3-for-5) added on with two RBI doubles in the first two innings as well. The duo built a 5-0 lead after the top of the second inning.

"[We're] disappointed to not come out of there with a [win]," head coach Mitch Thompson said. "We had our opportunities. It's a tough one to lose. We came out and got after it but couldn't seem to add on."

The Red Raiders (11-21, 7-8 Big 12) erased the lead quickly with five runs of their own by the end of the third. Redshirt sophomore second baseman Travis Sanders and sophomore catcher JJ Kennett pulled the Bears back in front

7-5 with RBIs in the fifth.

In his second start of the season, sophomore left-handed pitcher Mason Green lasted one inning, allowing three runs on three hits before being pulled in the second. Redshirt sophomore right-handed pitcher Lucas Davenport (2-1) earned the loss, allowing five runs on seven hits in three innings.

After Davenport allowed three runs before recording an out in the fifth, right-handers Grayson Murry, Will Glatch and Gabe Craig combined to allow one run across the final four innings.

The green and gold added one more run in the seventh inning, but only recorded one hit in the final two innings and fell 9-8.

"[We] had a few at-bats that kind of got away from us a little bit, but the guys competed hard," Thompson said. "It's a tough ballgame today. It's just one of those things. You're not going to win them all. It's frustrating, it hurts, we wanted to win it, but we just couldn't hold them down enough."

The Bears will be looking to bounce back in action against UT Arlington (13-19, 5-4 WAC) at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Clay Gould Ballpark in Arlington.



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TRANSPORT BILL

from A1

Gregory said the incentive behind the bill stemmed from his correspondence with the Center for Global Engagement, which indicated to him that international students at the university often do not have access to transportation on a regular basis.

“It does cost about \$400 per year to have a bus pass with the Waco Transit System,” he said. “Just international students alone make up about 950 students, so we already knew that there is going to be a need for at least 5% of the student population needing reliable transportation.”

According to Gregory, further data from the Office of Institutional Research revealed that 24% of Baylor students do not have a car registered with the university, which further affirmed the need for universal student access to transportation.

“After evaluating that and then the socioeconomic status of the university, we identified that some barriers to accessing the Waco community or grocery stores could be

either socioeconomic or just not having any vehicle whatsoever,” Gregory said. “That was the heart of the project — eliminating those barriers.”

Yim said the student government’s collaborations with the full range of the university’s departments aims to serve students on a daily basis, which makes the implementation of new bills and acts essential to their success.

“We’re meeting this week with our student government adviser to formulate that plan — how we’re going to roll it out and in what manner — who’s going to be involved and creating a visuals package as well,” he said.

Gregory added that the act will be transformative to students who need greater access to Waco at large.

“It opens up free access to Waco Transit for all students, expanding essential transportation for food access, medical and dental care and for many, simply getting to class,” he said.

INNOVATION

from A1

as a freshman.

“The part that was exciting about UIF was the continuity — the part that it grows with me,” Green said.

And while all four members of the new cohort are united in their commitment to making long-lasting improvements to campus, they’ll be tackling these challenges from different angles.

Green and San Miguel are in the business school, while Uppal is a neuroscience major and McCauley is an apparel design major.

Lewis, one of the sophomore fellows, said this diversity was both something they wanted to see and that it represents their new cohort very well.

“We wanted people who would be ambitious and think big, and not limit themselves on project ideas,” Lewis said.

San Miguel, Green and Uppal have already begun to consider projects to implement, ranging from granting easier access to period products, building relationships with Baylor staff and preserving water on campus.

However, the freshmen won’t be implementing these projects quite yet, as they are still in the training phase. While the sophomore fellows spend this semester continuing to work on their food waste project, the freshmen will largely be working on their applications to officially be accepted into the program by Stanford University next fall.

“In regards to the food waste project, that’s something that [the sophomores] are handling right now,” Huang said. “We want [the freshmen] to focus on their application. But we envision in the future, once they’re accepted as fellows, to jump in on these projects with us as much as we will jump in on projects with them so that we can start doing multiple projects across campus.”

The freshmen can also look forward to a conference at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, which all new fellows from around the world can attend. The founding sophomores returned from this trip on April 6 and hope to see their freshmen cohort making the same trip this time next year.

“It was a really exciting trip,” Friend, a member of the sophomore cohort, said. “I think the greatest takeaway was getting the whole global networking aspect of the trip, getting to speak with individuals from all around the globe ... I think the United States was actually a minority represented at that conference.”

Friend said he and Lewis were also able to present their progress on their food waste project in front of 130 fellows.

As the freshman cohort continues work on their applications for next fall, members of Baylor UIF look forward to continuing their work, and hope to have many more completed projects and presentations in the future.



**NEW COHORT** From left to right, Anaheim, Calif., freshman Naina Uppal; McGregor freshman Chloe McCauley; The Woodlands freshman Alan San Miguel; and McGregor freshman Chloe McCauley make up the newest cohort for Baylor University Innovation Fellows.

HAIR EQUALITY

from A1

for a Baylor CROWN Act came from discussion with San Antonio senior Clarisse Merced, president of Baylor’s natural hair club, ROOTS.

“We talked with ... the ROOTS organization to learn about the experiences that students have had on campus and really across the nation for too many years,” Yim said. “The implicit bias still exists for students based on natural hair and hair texture. And as a faith-based institution, I don’t think there’s a better way for us to signal to the rest of the universities across the nation that this is something we take super seriously.”

Merced, who signed the document on behalf of ROOTS, said although most students won’t be affected by the change, she sees it as an important milestone.

“I know this may not seem like something that’s making an impact, but I’m sure it will make an impact in the future and make

a difference to the students on campus,” Merced said.

Alongside Merced and Yim, two Baylor staff members were also present: Dr. Sharra Hynes, senior associate vice president and dean of students, and Dr. Laura Johnson, associate vice president for equity. Both expressed admiration at Yim and Merced and said the change would take much longer to happen if it weren’t for their commitment.

“I don’t know that that exact language would have been in there had it not been for the good work both of [student government] and the incredible team that I have,” Johnson said.

“At an administrative level, it would take multiple years to create this kind of collaboration,” said Hynes, who will replace Dr. Kevin Jackson as vice president for student life next year. “But when students lead the way, things get done.”



**STYLISH SUPPORT** One initiative ROOTS began was a way to try new hair care products without committing to the full price tag. Through samples and sponsorships, ROOTS seeks to bring high-quality products to its members.

24-25 YEARBOOK

THIS YEAR'S TO-DO'S

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