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## Alumnus Donates \$1 Million to SHSU Baseball

Houston entrepreneur and philanthropist Don Sanders has donated \$1 million to establish an endowment fund to enhance the baseball program at Sam Houston State University, Sanders's alma mater.

Sanders is founder and chairman of the investment firm Sanders Morris Harris. He is a former owner of the Houston Sports Association and the Houston Astros Baseball Club and currently, along with Nolan Ryan, is co-owner of Ryan-Sanders Baseball. Ryan-Sanders Baseball owns the Astros' Class AAA Round Rock Express and Class AA Corpus Christi Hooks.

Sanders is a leading figure in Houston in a variety of civic, corporate and financial enterprises. His board affiliations include the Nolan Ryan Foundation, the DePelchin Children's Center, and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

He was also the founder and chairman of the Houston Police Foundation and was a member of the University of Houston System Board of Regents and Houston Police Pension System. In 2001, he was named Houston Interfaith Charities' "Sportsman of the Year."

"This generous gift from Don Sanders will benefit the Bearkat baseball program for evermore," said SHSU President Jim Gaertner. "It will also perpetuate the name of one of our most distinguished alumni."

The university recently received word that the Texas State University System Board of Regents had approved the naming of SHSU's one-year-old baseball stadium in honor of Sanders.

"The new baseball facility is an outstanding recruiting tool," new SHSU head baseball coach Mark Johnson said. "The new stadium was one of the first things that attracted me to the Sam Houston State job."

"When we were looking into naming the baseball field, we had several criteria in mind," Johnson said.

"We wanted the person to be an alumnus of Sam Houston State, we wanted someone who was interested and involved in baseball, and we wanted someone with integrity, credibility and strong character to reflect what we want to do here for our baseball program," he said. "Mr. Sanders was a perfect fit."

The stadium opened on Feb. 11, 2006.

The \$5.5 million facility is located east of the Bowers Stadium football facility and includes not only the stadium, but also spacious dressing areas, indoor hitting cages, lights, and coaches' offices. It is the newest baseball complex in the Southland Conference.

"The new complex is a first class facility that will enable our programs to recruit quality student-athletes and provide an excellent atmosphere to watch college baseball," SHSU director of athletics Bobby Williams said.



**Don Sanders throws a pitch at the beginning of a Bearkat baseball game last year as his granddaughter looks on.**

"The facility upgrade was long overdue and can compete with any of the top baseball programs in the nation."

Last year, Sam Houston State attracted record crowds to the 1,463 seat facility including a capacity audience for a 9-8 victory over the Rice Owls, at the time the No. 1 ranked baseball team in the nation.

More than 20 UIL high school baseball playoff games were held in the new stadium as well.

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Please send comments, corrections, news tips to [Today@Sam.edu](mailto:Today@Sam.edu).

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