

FOCUS

FALL 2016

ALUMNI MAGAZINE of OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY

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FOCUS is produced semiannually by the Communications and Alumni departments for alumni, parents, and friends of Oklahoma City University.

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ON THE COVER

ALL THINGS ANALYZED

An OCU institute hires students and performs economic analysis for real clients—to rave reviews from graduates' employers and the clients themselves.

PAGE 7

Cover and above: Oklahoma City City Manager Jim Couch (at right on cover) works regularly with Russell Evans, executive director of OCU's Agee Economic Research and Policy Institute. Evans often speaks at City Council meetings in City Hall, shown above and on the cover. Couch received an Honorary Doctor of Public Administration from OCU this year for his outstanding civic accomplishments. Photos by Josh Robinson

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The Ann Lacy School of American Dance and Entertainment, at left, and the Wanda L. Bass School of Music, at right, rank among the top schools in the country, according to OnStage. Photos by Katy Rush and Wendy Mutz

Rising Rankings

OUR 2016-17 ACADEMIC YEAR is off to a strong start at Oklahoma City University. We have seen enrollment gains in multiple academic areas, entering the year at 106 percent of our budgeted headcount.

The Kramer School of Nursing welcomed 166 new undergraduate students this semester and has a total enrollment of more than 500 students, which is expected to set a school record for fall net revenue. The school also began its BSN and RN-to-BSN programs at Duncan Regional Hospital last month with 27 students.

The University continues to climb in national rankings. The Ann Lacy School of American Dance and Entertainment recently was ranked No. 2 in the country for BFA programs by OnStage, a media outlet devoted to covering performing arts news and trends. The same media outlet named OCU's Bass School of Music the second best in the nation among graduate musical theatre programs. These rankings placed OCU second only to Juilliard and New York University, respectively, and pay tribute to the thriving performing arts instruction taking place on our campus.

U.S. News and World Report again ranked OCU among the best in the nation. The list, released in September, ranked OCU No. 23 in the Best Regional Universities in the West category. In the *U.S. News* 2017 rankings, OCU is one of only two schools in Oklahoma on the West Regional Universities "A+ Schools for B Students" list, is ranked No. 13 for "Best Regional Universities for Veterans" in the West—up seven places from last year—and is on the "Most International Students" list.

Building on Success

These rankings are strong indicators of our current successes, but we also must carefully plan where our University is headed. To that end, I have formed a strategic planning steering committee to develop a shared vision for the university. Co-chaired by Interim Provost Kent Buchanan and Chief Financial Officer Catherine Maninger, the committee recently began the strategic planning process, designed to point the University's assets toward achievable goals that reflect the future needs of our diverse stakeholders.

We are seeking participation from alumni, faculty, staff, students, and all University stakeholders. You can learn more or volunteer to serve on a strategic planning working group by visiting okcu.edu/strategic-planning.

Jan and I hope you will take the opportunity to connect with us, whether through our strategic planning website, on our social media channels, or in person. We have many exciting events and performances coming up that you will see in this issue or that you can find online at okcu.edu.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Robert Stokely".



@oklahomacityuniversity

Friends regularly interact with Oklahoma City University on social media. Following are samples of reviews of OCU on Facebook, used with permission.

Just dropped my freshman off. My third college doing this. By far the most impressive convocation. President Henry gave a brilliant and inspiring speech. Jo [Rowan] and John [Bedford] who head the Dance Department and school are energetic and hold every value you'd want to see your child exposed to. So refreshing to hear Christianity expressed at a University. GO STARS!!

TERI KNEER-BROKAMP



Students begin their OCU experience at matriculation. Photo by Josh Robinson

I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing and can safely say I enjoyed every minute of my time at OCU. I always felt safe on campus, made lifelong friends, and felt very connected with my nursing instructors. Most importantly, I was very prepared to go out and become part of the proud profession of nursing.

LINDSAY KELLEY (BSN '01)

Absolutely wonderful school; small size helps create a tight-knit community on campus. ... The admissions process was easy, and financial aid was very helpful in making coming here possible. Faculty and staff across campus are very understanding and make it their priority to ensure your success while you're here. I feel assured every day that I made the right choice attending OCU.

EVAN JUEDEMAN (Business Administration Sophomore)

As an international student being so far away from home, it was stressful and scary to begin college in a new place, although since arriving at OCU, I haven't felt more at home! ... The professors are very involved in your learning and do everything they can to help! Also, the Athletics Department is very successful, with many All-American honors and national champions! I am very proud to be a Star.

SARA MOORE (Early Childhood Education Senior)

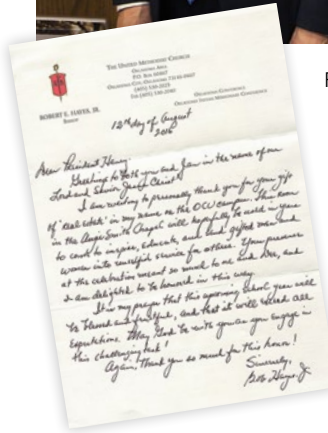


President's Post

Hundreds of letters come across President Robert Henry's desk every semester. Following are excerpts of what friends of the University have to say.



From left, President Robert Henry, Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr., and Elaine Robinson, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the St. Paul School of Theology. Photo by Rod Jones



Editor's note: OCU dedicated the Bishop Robert E. Hayes Room in the Bishop W. Angie Smith Chapel during the annual Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church conference on campus. Hayes retired as bishop of the conference after 12 years of service.

DEAR PRESIDENT HENRY:

Greetings to both you and Jan in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I am writing to personally thank you for your gift of "real estate" in my name on the OCU campus. This room in the Bishop W. Angie Smith Chapel will hopefully be used in years to come to inspire, educate, and send gifted men and women into unselfish service for others. Your presence at the celebration meant so much to me and Dee, and I am delighted to be honored in this way.

It is my prayer that this upcoming school year will be blessed and fruitful, and that it will exceed all expectations. May God be with you as you engage in this challenging task!

Again, thank you so much for this honor!

Sincerely,

BOB HAYES JR.



Visual arts students paint a reading mural at Gatewood Elementary in Oklahoma City. Photo by Mike Wimmer

Painting Their Futures

A class from the School of Visual Arts painted murals at two metro schools.

The Gatewood Elementary library mural is designed to foster and promote the appreciation and adventure of reading. The Edmond Memorial High School mural is intended to reinforce the importance of art in education.

Oklahoma City University Artist in Residence Mike Wimmer said the class is a first-time offering to take advantage of the wave of popularity for murals and art in public spaces in Oklahoma City over the past few years. The object of the class is to teach students the proper professional business aspects of the commission process, permit process, and actual physical painting process.

OCU students set up a photo shoot using Gatewood students as models. A proposal followed that included price structure, materials costs, and a presentation of what the image would look like in its finished form.

Preparing for Careers in Opera

Music professor Jan McDaniel spent his fifth summer as vocal coach and coach coordinator with the Taos Opera Institute in New Mexico. Five students from the Bass School of Music were among the 32 students selected for participation in this year's institute. The Bass School of Music had the most singers participating of all the universities represented. The program, in its ninth season, was created to assist emerging singers in preparing for operatic careers.

Fraternity Reaches Benchmarks for Excellence

OCU's Theta-Psi received the Founders' Award of Chapter Excellence at the Kappa Sigma Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida. The award recognizes outstanding chapter management, achievement, and program development in all areas of operation. It is the 12th time the OCU chapter has received the award.

Presidential Politics, College Edition

OCU mass communications major Jamison Keefover was selected as a College Debate 2016 delegate. Keefover will be a key part of a national, student-led conversation around the significant issues that resonate with younger voters.

College Debate 2016 will draw on technology and social media to generate discussions of issues important to students, and to bring those issues to the attention of the moderators of the Presidential Debates this fall.



"The Giver" won several awards at the Region VI Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival, including for costume design, makeup, scenic design, and lighting. Photo by Brian Cardinale-Powell

Distinguished Designs

School of Theatre Design and Production students and professors received awards during the Region VI Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival in San Angelo, Texas.

Students Julianna Reese, Jaime Dimas, Bradley Taylor, and Jamie Lunsford were honored. Reese received awards for both costume and makeup design in "The Giver." Dimas accepted two awards for scenic design in "The Giver." Taylor received a lighting design award for "The Giver," and Lunsford was honored for stage management of "The Magic Flute."

Reese and Dimas were selected to travel to Washington, D.C., on an expenses-paid trip to participate in the national festival at the Kennedy Center in April. They will participate in master classes with artists from across the nation and the theatre community in Washington, D.C. Their designs for the TheatreOCU production of "The Giver" were selected from more than 150 design, technology and management entries at the regional festival.

Twelve students exhibited their design and production work from OCU theatre, opera, and musical productions and received feedback from faculty and industry professionals from outside of the region. They attended workshops and plays brought to the festival from other colleges and universities in the region.



Left: Malcom Scott, flanked by attorneys Christina Green and Josh Lee, speaks at a press conference after being exonerated. **Right:** De'Marchoe Carpenter hugs his family after being released from prison. Photos provided by OCU School of Law

First Exonerations for Oklahoma Innocence Project

The Oklahoma Innocence Project at Oklahoma City University School of Law achieved exonerations for Malcolm Scott and De'Marchoe Carpenter. The pair was released from prison in May after serving more than 20 years for a murder they didn't commit. These are the first exonerations for the Project, which took this case in 2011 after receiving letters from both Scott and Carpenter.

Scott and Carpenter were convicted of Karen Summers' murder, which occurred in September 1994. The teens were sentenced to life in prison, despite Tulsa police finding the gun and car used in the drive-by shooting in the possession of Michael Wilson hours after the crime. On Jan. 7, 2014, just two days before his execution for another murder, Wilson confessed first to the Project and again in the execution chamber that he was actually the trigger-man and that Scott and Carpenter were not in the car with him.

OCU Humanities Center Appoints New Director

FILM INSTITUTE NAMED IN RECOGNITION OF FORMER DIRECTOR

Oklahoma City University has announced a new director for its Center for Interpersonal Studies through Film & Literature. Tracy Floreani, English Department chairwoman and professor, will replace Harbour Winn, who retired from the University this summer after nearly 24 years of service.

The center's OCU Film Institute has been renamed the Harbour Winn OCU Film Institute as a tribute to the contributions he has made to OCU and to the Oklahoma City community.

Among its many programs, the Center for Interpersonal Studies through Film & Literature hosts a presentation by a distinguished poet each year, develops an annual documentary film series each spring, maintains an archive collection of videos and DVDs, submits grants each semester to hold the Let's Talk About It book discussion series, and collaborates with other campus and metropolitan organizations to support and encourage different groups to work together on creative projects. It was established in 1997.

"Taking on the directorship of the Center for Interpersonal Studies allows me to expand my work in public humanities—something I'm very much invested in," Floreani said. "The center has been a great cultural resource for this campus and community, and I look forward to continuing that work and finding new



Harbour Winn



Tracy Floreani

audiences for our film series and literary events."

Floreani joined OCU in 2010 after 10 years of teaching at Baker University in Kansas. She specializes in post-World War II American literature and cultural studies and in race and ethnicity. She is author of "Fifties Ethnicities: The Ethnic

Novel and Mass Culture at Midcentury" (SUNY Press) and is working on a biography of Fanny McConnell Ellison, a project that grew out of her leadership in Oklahoma City's celebration of novelist Ralph Ellison's centenary.

Winn taught at OCU from 1976 to 1980 before becoming a full-time Montessori teacher. He returned to the University in 1997.

He has contributed articles for dozens of journals and papers, mostly on topics of literature, poetry, and film. He was a faculty sponsor on student trips around the world, including Central America, Mexico, and Australia; and helped organize several humanities conferences in Oklahoma.

Winn was awarded the State Public Humanities Award from the Oklahoma Humanities Council in 2013 and was named a DaVinci Fellow by the DaVinci Institute in 2012.

OCU Named Oklahoma's 'Hidden Gem' College

A college search platform named Oklahoma City University as the state's Hidden Gem institution for the second year in a row.

College Raptor Inc. defines Hidden Gems as high-caliber colleges and universities that receive fewer than 5,000 applicants per year but have a total enrollment of greater than 1,000. Each institution also received an overall ranking of quality based on academic and outcome data, including graduation rate, selectivity, student-to-faculty ratio, and other factors.

The announcement is meant to call attention to institutions that may be overlooked by many students but stand out in terms of academic rigor and student success.

"There are many great colleges across the country," said Tyler Hakes, director of marketing at College Raptor. "In some cases, you have colleges ranked in the top 150 or 200 schools in the nation, but they receive relatively few applicants simply because they don't have the brand name of other institutions."



Montessori education program Director Charlotte Wood-Wilson demonstrates an activity in the program's new learning space. Photo by Rod Jones



The OCU School of Law's downtown grand opening in spring 2015.

OCU School of Law Earns Historic Preservation Recognition

Oklahoma City University School of Law was selected to receive the 2016 State Historic Preservation Officer's Citation of Merit. The award was presented to the law school and its contractor, Frankfurt Short Bruza architecture and engineering firm, during the annual Statewide Preservation Conference in June. Anderson & House Inc. served as the commercial contractor.

The University bought the former Central High School building at 800 N. Harvey Ave. in December 2012 and renovated it in time for classes to begin in spring 2015. The building was designed by architect Solomon Andrew Layton, who also designed the Oklahoma State Capitol and the Skirvin Hilton Hotel.

The historic Gothic-style building was constructed in 1910 and is on the National Register of Historic Buildings. It has approximately 177,000 square feet.

"This magnificent building came to our attention and then ignited our imagination," said law school Dean Valerie K. Couch. "In this historic place located in the heart of the city, we are able to build new and dynamic connections with the legal, governmental, and business communities and contribute to the momentum of our great and growing city."

The Citation of Merit is awarded annually to individuals, organizations, agencies, and firms that have contributed to preserving Oklahoma's heritage.

Montessori Program Celebrates 50 Years at OCU

Oklahoma City University's Montessori education program celebrated its 50th year with a conference in June. The conference included demonstrations of Montessori instructional techniques by guest teachers from across the country, including a hands-on clay demonstration by a teacher from the Chicago area and a music composition session by a teacher from Colorado.

The conference also honored the OCU program's founder, Margaret Loeffler, and one of its most influential leaders, Dorothy Pape.

OCU's Montessori Teacher Education Program started during the 1963-64 school year and was accredited in 1966. The program integrates contemporary thinking in early childhood education with the insights and methodologies of Dr. Maria Montessori, a physician and educator whose views of children's development and strategies for learning have been implemented in cultures around the world for more than 80 years.

Charlotte Wood-Wilson, director of the OCU program, estimates that nearly 500 students have earned their master of education degrees in Montessori from OCU. She said the program has several notable alumni in the field including former American Montessori Society presidents, school leaders, and book authors, thanks to the efforts of program founders Loeffler and Pape.

"We're one of the oldest programs in the country, and our graduates have helped pioneer many of the tools and practices used in early childhood education," Wood-Wilson said.

Four Receive Honorary Doctorates

Oklahoma City University awarded four honorary degrees and conferred bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees on more than 800 students in May.

During the undergraduate ceremony, the University bestowed honorary degrees to Bob Blackburn, Oklahoma Historical Society executive director; James Couch, city manager of the City of Oklahoma City; Jerry Vannatta, clinical professor of medical humanities and medical director of the OCU Physician Assistant Program; and Bart Conner, businessman and Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics. The University presented the Servant Leader Award to Gerald and Jane Jayroe Gamble.



Student-athletes Sam Henry and Erick Meza and roommates Callie Dewees and Onnika Hanson participate in Better Together Day. Photos by Hannah Lampi Hiller

OCU Names New CFO

Oklahoma City University has appointed Catherine Maninger as vice president for business operations and chief financial officer.

Maninger began serving as the University's interim CFO in January while a national search was conducted for the position. She joined the OCU staff as controller in 2015.

"Catherine brings strong corporate and non-profit experience to this position, along with a record of excellence in strategic planning, budgeting, and customer service," said OCU President Robert Henry.

Maninger spent three years as CFO at St. Gregory's University, and her previous experience includes such positions as finance director at Epworth Villa and process excellence manager at the American Cancer Society.

Trustee Martha Burger served as the head of the CFO search committee.



Catherine Maninger

Interfaith Event Wins National Award

The Interfaith Youth Core, a national movement for interfaith cooperation through the building of religious pluralism, selected OCU's recent Better Together celebration for a national award.

OCU junior Melaina Riley will receive the honor from the IFYC and will speak at the fall conference for her work as the "Better Together Day" coordinator.

The honor was awarded to the campus that held the most impressive program for Better Together Day, creating space for people of different religious and non-religious backgrounds to come together around the theme of interfaith literacy. OCU was chosen as the recipient for its week-long activities.

Centering on the campus' Love Not Hate Day, the week focused on faith and non-faith-based traditions and the importance of co-existence. "We are spreading awareness, we are accepting and open-minded, but we also want to go deeper than that and understand what more we can do," Riley said.

History Professor Honored for Library Contributions

In recognition of National Library Week, Oklahoma City University's Dulaney-Browne Library honored a longtime history professor who has provided new books for nearly three decades.

Larry Cobb, a history professor at OCU since 1981, was given the Library Supporter award for his 27 years of financial support for the purchase of new books on history. In that time, Cobb's contributions have totaled about \$23,000 for more than 1,400 titles since 1989.

Library Director Victoria Swinney said Cobb's support has reached hundreds of student patrons over the years. Each book purchased from his donations is based on his recommendation.

"Dr. Cobb has shown his passion for history and his enthusiasm to teach through his generous gifts," Swinney said. "His donations have made it possible to order almost double the number of history books than what the library budget could cover alone."

Cobb teaches world history, U.S. history since 1877, and warfare and popular culture. He also teaches for OCU in Singapore, offering a course he designed in 1989 titled "America, Economics, Geopolitics, and the Future."



Nancy Ellis



Bill Shdeed



Jim Brown



David Thompson

OCU Hall of Honor to Welcome New Inductees

Oklahoma City University's Meinders School of Business honored four business and community leaders during the 30th annual Oklahoma Commerce & Industry Hall of Honor luncheon in October.

The 2016 inductees were Nancy Ellis with the Lifetime Achievement Award, William (Bill) Shdeed with the Outstanding Achievement Award, Jim Brown with the Chairman's Award, and David Thompson with the President's Award.

Ellis is a founding member of the Heritage Trust privately owned bank and investment management company, where she served as chairman until 2004. Ellis currently serves as co-manager of KNABCO LLC. She is an organizer and former board member of Metro Bank of Oklahoma City, N.A.

Shdeed is a private investor and local real estate developer. He is a member of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma County bar associations. Shdeed was inducted into the state Higher Education Hall of Fame in 2010.

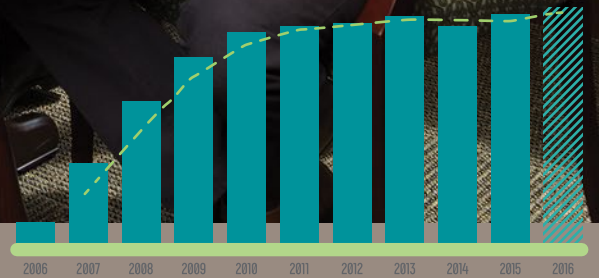
Brown is president and CEO of 7-Eleven Stores in Oklahoma City, a family-owned chain of convenience stores and neighborhood shopping centers that employs 1,400 central Oklahomans in retail stores, a bakery, a commissary, and distribution center.

Thompson is president and CEO of InvesTrust, N.A., and CEO of InvesTrust Wealth Management, LLC. Prior to joining InvesTrust in 2012, Thompson was president of OPUBCO Communications Group and publisher of *The Oklahoman*, the state's largest newspaper.

The Oklahoma Commerce & Industry Hall of Honor luncheon benefits the Meinders School of Business scholarship program.



Crunching Numbers



Economic Research Institute Offers Real Work Experience

BY ROD JONES

What was once a tucked-away storage room on the top floor of a new building has become the center of some of the University’s most intriguing research—the many, various ties between decisions and economic outcomes, consumer behavior and how it affects the labor market, not just in theory but in cold, hard numbers. The things that have the biggest effect on people’s day-to-day lives are the things being researched in the Steven C. Agee Economic Research and Policy Institute.

The research projects aren’t only intended to fulfill scholarly obligations. They also generate revenue for scholarships, provide students with real-world employment and work experience, and solve problems for clients including businesses, governments, and non-profit organizations.

Russell Evans, the ERPI executive director, cited the student work experience as perhaps the center’s most valuable offering.

“We have a 100 percent employment success rate. Every student that has come through here has either found a job in their field or has been accepted to grad school,” Evans said. “Employers have told us how they normally expect it to take a while for the staff they hire right out of college ... (to) become productive. Students from this program are ready to work as soon as they’re hired. They already have the



Top: Professors Kyle Dean, Russell Evans, Dean Steven Agee, and professor Jacob Dearmon make up the Economic Research and Policy Institute. Photo by Josh Robinson **Bottom:** Evans presents his consumer sentiment study results to his clients from Arvest Bank in August. Photo by Maranda Kitchingham



From left, Brian Dougherty and Nancy Anthony of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation discuss projects with Meinders School of Business Dean Steven Agee. Photo by Josh Robinson

work experience, dedication, and ability to organize their day.”

Evans sees the University’s independence as a competitive advantage.

“Clients appreciate the fact that we don’t concern ourselves with political opinions, and we’re not going to present conclusions just to align with their own opinions,” he said. “We’re providing information that improves the discussion, and they’re free to make their own decisions from there. We’re just as likely to work for a wind farm as an oil and gas company.”

Beginnings

Meinders School of Business Dean Steven Agee made the initial capital outlay to get the center started in 2006 before he became interim dean. Agee saw the room as an ideal place to locate his vision, despite its unfinished condition at the time.

“It didn’t even have ceiling tiles. It was basically a storage room,” Agee said.

The room was soon renovated to include a collection of computer stations, a group discussion area, and an office space at the far end for the director.

Agee ran the institute until he became dean of the school in 2010. He met Evans at a conference regarding Oklahoma legislation. Evans made a presentation about the economic impact the bill could cause.

Agee said he was impressed with the presentation and all the angles Evans took with the topic. He convinced Evans to leave

Stillwater, where he was running a similar program at Oklahoma State University.

Evans said he liked Agee’s offer and the opportunity to be closer to major companies and government organizations.

The research center became “much more than I dreamed it would be,” Agee said. “They’re doing complex impact reports, economic analysis, regional forecasting, and policy analysis. Their list of work is amazing.”

Evans recruited his economist friend professor Kyle Dean to help with the institute. He and Dean started a consulting firm called Economic Impact Group in 2005. Dean specializes in regional economic modeling, cost-benefit analysis, impact analysis, and fiscal analysis.

How it Works

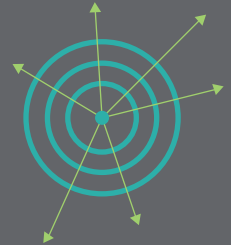
Last year, the institute split into three areas of specialization: The Center for Economic Forecasting and Policy Analysis led by Evans, the Center for Native American and Urban Studies led by Dean, and the Center for Data Analytics led by professor Jacob Dearmon.

ERPI hires students of different disciplines—not just economics—to operate as a fully functioning business. Evans said it helps to have a marketing major on staff, along with an accounting major to help with the bookwork and billing, for instance.

During the fall and spring semesters, the institute has three to five students on

WORKING WITH ERPI

1 Establish scope: Take the client’s question and translate it into a study game plan.



2 Develop details: Set fees and plot a timeline.



3 Data collection



4 Analyze and review



5 Present results to the client



staff. Students apply for the jobs and are expected to fulfill their work obligations on time and with the same quality as at any other consulting firm. The students present their own work to the clients after the project is complete.

ERPI gets many of its clients through word of mouth. Evans, Agee, and Dean make several presentations each year, many of which are cited in news stories on television, on the radio, and in print. Through their work prior to and at OCU, they've developed a good reputation among Oklahoma's most important business leaders.

One of Evans' recurring clients is the City of Oklahoma City. He is often a guest at City Council meetings, where he provides economic forecasts on a regular basis.

"Russell provides city leaders with intelligent, data-driven insight into the influences that affect Oklahoma City's economy," said City Manager Jim Couch. "I marvel at his ability to take complex statistical information and translate it into terms that are relevant to Mayor (Mick) Cornett and City Council with modesty and humor."

One of ERPI's largest projects in terms of scope was a citywide parks study for the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. When residents voted to build a large central park near downtown, the foundation wanted to see how much funding would be required to maintain it before the maintenance budgets at the city's already-existing parks were cut. Brian Dougherty, who handles parks and public spaces initiatives for OCCF, said the information gathered by OCU students was "far more thorough than I expected. They provided so many details about each and every park in the city—some of them we didn't even know existed."

The students were tasked with locating and visiting every park in the city, then recording their conditions, compiling lists of each park's features, and taking photographs. That study was used as the foundation for future studies to help the city plan and maintain its public parks. Even though the report is now a few years old, Dougherty said he still refers to it when he's looking for certain information.

“It was fun working with them, and I feel like we got something really useful.”

—BRIAN DOUGHERTY
Oklahoma City Community Foundation

"I couldn't be more impressed. It was fun working with them, and I really feel like we got something very useful," he added.

Evans said there's room for growth and an unlimited list of project possibilities, a fact that inspires him to continue working in economics.

"It's unbelievable all the different topics you could study in economics. Some are normal things like impact statements, but you can apply economics to so many things in order to improve them," he said.

For example, the Society for Industrial and Commercial Developers approached him to find out which city in the metro area would be the best place to build an industrial park. His firm was tasked with figuring out how long it would take to get building permits, how much it would cost to purchase the land, how efficiently the city planning office works, and all of the other aspects it would take to undergo such a complex project. Some cities prefer retail establishments, some prefer residential housing, and some would rather preserve their land for recreational purposes.

His presentation impressed a client so much that they decided to make a major contribution to the institute.

"When people see the results of our work," Evans said, "they're often moved to help support us."

THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC FORECASTING AND POLICY ANALYSIS provides agnostic, data-driven research that supports the decision-making process of the region's business and policy leaders. Its areas of focus are economic and tax forecasting, policy analysis and regional economic development strategy.

"The growth of the institute is a reflection of the demands of the marketplace and the trust that has developed between our research efforts and local leaders," Evans said. "We look forward to building on this trust with research efforts dedicated to data analytics and regional economic studies."

THE CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN AND URBAN STUDIES provides research to support the growth and understanding of Native American business and industry. The center also works with city and state leaders to develop urban and regional policies that benefit citizens and support growth objectives.

"We are excited to form a center dedicated to the study of Native American and urban economic issues and are eager to build upon the relationships we have formed over the past several years," Dean said. "Having a dedicated center will allow us to sharpen our focus, applying cutting-edge economic research to assist tribes, cities and broader regions as they strive to meet development goals."

THE CENTER FOR DATA ANALYTICS was established to provide insights through customized analytic solutions that are adapted to each client's unique needs. Areas of focus include forecasting, spatial modeling, Monte Carlo analysis, optimization and machine learning.

"We look forward to partnering with businesses and providing the deep analytic skills that are required to operate in today's complex and ever-changing environment," Dearmon said.

NOW STARRING

Nona Lee, JD '95

Law

Nona Lee is in her 17th season as the senior vice president and general counsel for the Arizona Diamondbacks professional baseball team. After graduating from OCU School of Law, she worked in civil litigation in Phoenix until she decided to explore options within the WNBA. She served as associate general counsel for the Phoenix Suns, Arizona Diamondbacks, Phoenix Mercury, and Arizona Rattlers before moving into her position as general counsel for the Diamondbacks seven years ago. "As a former college athlete, the team culture felt like home to me," she said. Service is an important part of her life.

She founded a non-profit, the Phoenix Women's Sports Association, whose mission is to help girls and women find their power through sports. "Sports help girls have the opportunity to play at a higher level and to receive scholarships," she said. "OCU was a great place for me; it was a very comfortable fit."

**Amy Burnette, BA '96**

Dance Performance

Amy Burnette is the director and owner of the Next Step Broadway studio in Jersey City, New Jersey. She worked with the Radio City Rockettes for 11 years following graduation. "Being a Rockette meant I was part of a family of strong women," she said. After 14 years as a professional dancer, she decided to open her own studio for young children in order to give them a firm foundation at a young age. "I actually follow the model set at OCU but on a smaller scale," she said. "My students are learning everything about Broadway from acting and dance to contracts and auditions." She is hoping to open a second location in Michigan soon.

Sharon Lease, BA '65

Education

Sharon Lease is the vice president for academic affairs at Mid-America Christian University in Oklahoma City. She was Miss OCU in 1963. Following graduation, she joined the Peace Corps. "I wanted to do something of meaning for my country," she said. Lease served with the Peace Corps in Malaysia for two and a half years, during which time she met her husband. Upon returning to Oklahoma, she served as the superintendent at Western Heights Public Schools and deputy state superintendent under Sandy Garrett. "OCU was one of the greatest places for me," she said. "I met life-long friends and connected with my professors personally. I was able to become grounded and build confidence. I am proud to be an OCU alum."

**OCU Honors 30 Under 30**

The OCU Alumni Association honored 30 outstanding young alumni during All-Alumni Weekend in April:

- Brittany Attaway, '13, Bachelor of Arts, Mass Communications
- Josh Attaway, '12, Bachelor of Music
- Isaiah Bailey, '14, Bachelor of Music, Vocal Performance
- Christian Cox, '14, Bachelor of Business Administration, Marketing
- Leah Diaz, '11, Bachelor of Science, Entertainment Business
- Alex Enterline, '14, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Acting
- Sarah Fagan, '12, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance
- Elia Folch, '15, Bachelor of Business Administration
- Kim Faure, '10, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance
- Kelsey Griswold, '14, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Acting
- Erika Hebron, '09, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance
- Sasha Hutchings, '11, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance
- Alex Johnson, '15, Bachelor of Science, Entertainment Business
- Amy Leonall, '15, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance
- Krystal Murer, '08, Bachelor of Science, Biology
- April Nelson, '14, Bachelor of Music, Music Theatre
- Alicia Jin Newcom, '13, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance
- Savannah Owen, '12, Bachelor of Science, Kinesiology & Exercise Studies
- Rayshon Payton, '10, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science
- Robert Postotnik, '11, Bachelor of Science, Entertainment Business
- Jeff Poulin, '12, Bachelor of Science, Entertainment Business
- Jessi Riesenber, '11, Bachelor of Science, Dance Management
- Theresa Rowley, '14, Bachelor of Music, Music Theatre
- Tasha Sargent, '10, Bachelor of Arts, Religion
- Lauren Shaffer, '13, Bachelor of Arts, Education & Studio Arts
- Herbert Sim, '10, Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Studies
- Brittany Stanley, '09, Bachelor of Arts, Religious Education
- Vanessa Wright, '11, Bachelor of Science, Nursing
- Emily Yowell, '11, Bachelor of Science, Dance Management
- Meredith Ziegler, '10, Bachelor of Music Education, Vocal Education

2017 ACHIEVERS

See page 41 to nominate under-30 candidates for next year.

Alumnus Hits the PGA Fairway

BY RICH TORTORELLI

Tyrone Van Aswegen may be finding his comfort level as a PGA golfer.

Van Aswegen has shown up at the top of the leaderboard on PGA TOUR events and earned more than \$1.5 million in three years on the world's top professional golf circuit.

Since turning professional and working his way through the Sunshine and the Web.com tours, Van Aswegen has applied the same work ethic that made him a national champion golfer at Oklahoma City University.

He arrived in the United States from Johannesburg, South Africa, as a freshman.

"It's a big adjustment," OCU coach Kyle Blaser said. "He had a family back home that was supportive. His game wasn't ripping and roaring from the start. It was a tough transition."

His homesickness started to vanish as he found confidence in his golf game.

Teammate Ryan Ellis said Van Aswegen's key to success has always been his focus—"truly doing whatever it takes to make the dream happen. He moved around the world at 18, practiced and worked while he was here."

Van Aswegen credited Blaser with helping him through the freshman doldrums.

"It was tough," Van Aswegen told the *Journal Inquirer* of Manchester, Connecticut. "I wasn't expecting to come to America. Guys usually go to Europe from South Africa. ... I decided to go, and the rest is history."

"The people are great," he said, adding Blaser is "still one of my good friends. He really helped me through my freshman year because that was a tough period. Anything worth doing is probably going



Tyrone Van Aswegen competes in the Web.com Tour. He is expected to earn his PGA TOUR card for the fourth consecutive year. Photo by Getty Images

to be really difficult."

Van Aswegen led the Stars to their first national championship in men's golf as a freshman. He finished his OCU career with four team championships. For his efforts, he entered the NAIA Hall of Fame in 2015–16.

After graduating with a business administration degree, Van Aswegen became a pro on the Sunshine Tour in his native South Africa. Two of Van Aswegen's three pro victories came on that tour.

In 2010, Van Aswegen's finish in the PGA TOUR qualifying gained him full-time status on the Web.com Tour, the PGA's developmental tour. In the 2013 Web.com Tour finals, Van Aswegen became the first OCU alum to score his PGA TOUR card. Van Aswegen finished 24th in the finals, which combined players' finishes in the last four tour events of the year.

He earned his card for playing in the Web.com Tour finals three consecutive years. PGA TOUR golfers can snare their cards for the following season by finishing

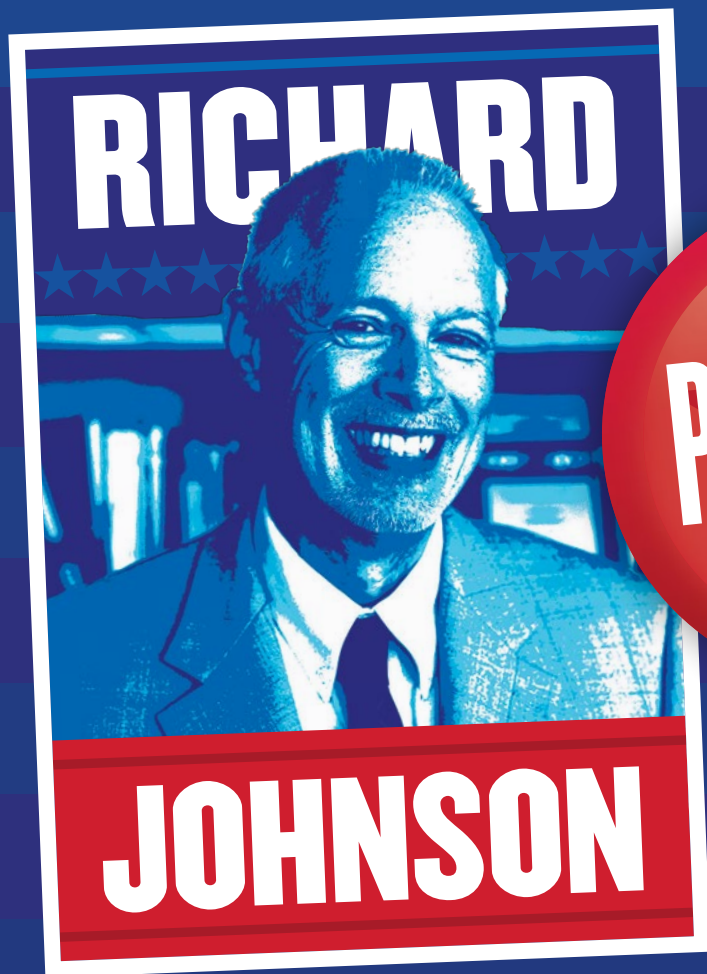
in the top 125 of the FedEx Cup point standings. He has been in the top 125 throughout the season.

He started his 2015–16 PGA season with his career-best performance, tying for third place in the Frys.com Open, held Oct. 15–18 in San Martin, California. Van Aswegen added his second career top-five finish by tying for fifth in the Travelers Championship Aug. 4–7 in Cromwell, Connecticut.

"He's starting to get comfortable," Blaser said. "He's hitting his drive better. When he gets comfortable and confident, he can play with anybody. Tyrone knows he's exactly where he belongs and will be for many years to come on the PGA."

"He should have no doubt that he is one of the best players in the world, and his time to win is soon," Blaser said. "He's had a great year, and I look forward to a strong finish."

Van Aswegen met his wife, Cristin, at OCU when they were freshmen. They have a daughter, Scarlett, and have settled in McKinney, Texas.



POLITICS

IN

ACTION

BY KIM MIZAR
Staff Writer

Richard Johnson has been teaching a unique political science class at Oklahoma City University for 19 years. “Election Seminar: Issues, Candidates, and Outcomes” is an eight-week evening course that gives students an in-depth understanding of campaign processes. It also examines election results and their implications for governing.

Johnson invites local guest speakers such as lobbyists, professors, and political consultants to participate in the class, often during the most heated times of their campaigns. Students discuss both local and national political campaigns, elections, and outcomes, as well as the motivations behind decisions to go into the political arena.

“This class helps students distinguish fact from opinion through free-flowing conversation,” he said. “The students can see biases in themselves they may not have realized were there and become more self-aware and reflective.”

The class also allows students to make connections within the political community that could lead to internships and even employment within their respective fields. Because of OCU’s close proximity to the state Capitol, it’s an ideal environment for students to view the political system in action and interact with key individuals, Johnson said. The class isn’t only for students who are interested in entering the world of politics, but also for those who are interested in learning more about the inner

workings of the political system. “This class is a nice way to promote political literacy,” said Johnson.

Johnson, who earned a Ph.D. from Arizona State University, serves as chairman of the Political Science Department. He has taught at OCU for 14 years. Previously, he worked at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. His research interests include the role of money in politics, political leadership, and legislative behavior. He received the Oklahoma Political Science Association’s Teacher of the Year Award in 1994.

He serves as the sponsor for Pi Sigma Alpha, Young Democrats, and the OCU chapter of the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature.

Past Guest Speakers

Election Seminar Class

- State Rep. Jason Dunnington, District 88
- Pat McFerron, founding partner of SMA Strategies
- Gary Huddleston, lobbyist
- Sean Murphy, state Capitol correspondent for the Associated Press
- Joe Hartman, owner/partner of Skyfire Media

First Class

+ Physician Assistant Students Offer First-Hand Accounts of the Program's Inaugural Year



PA STUDENT

Jamie Rateliff

“

I really felt drawn to being able to be in a position in my career that I could really impact a person's life for the better.”

Background

Rateliff, who played softball for Oklahoma City University during her undergraduate studies, decided to apply to OCU's physician assistant program after taking a clinical decision-making class during her junior year. “Before the class, I honestly didn't even know what a PA was, but the more I learned about it, the more interested I became in pursuing a career as a PA.”

The OCU PA Experience

Rateliff said she enjoys being surrounded by supportive and hard-working faculty and staff. She said the OCU PA curriculum is helping to set students apart in the area of patient care. “In addition to our core courses, we have also had the opportunity to have a course dedicated to medical humanities that will help us be more empathetic when working with patients and really emphasize seeing our patients as people instead of as their disease.”



Top: The first PA class of 36 students in January at the white coat ceremony. Photo by Josh Robinson
Bottom: Dr. Dan McNeill, director of the PA program, and student Jamie Rateliff pose after the ceremony. Photo provided



PA student Melissa Zenner
Photo by Josh Robinson



PA STUDENT

Melissa Zenner

“

I am proud to be a part of the first PA class matriculated at OCU and I believe I am receiving the best PA education in Oklahoma.”

Background

Zenner spent several years working in the oil and gas industry in Oklahoma City and was heavily involved in community engagement. She served as the inaugural president of the Young Professionals for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Oklahoma City, a role that sparked her interest in patients and her desire to acquire the knowledge to help them medically.

The OCU PA Experience

Zenner said she appreciates the opportunity to participate in unique courses during her PA training including medical humanities and business management. “When we leave this program, we will not only have the skill set available to practice medicine in a patient-centered care manner, but we will also have the ability to step into our new positions with a baseline understanding of insurance policies and assist our supervising physician with business and financial decisions. I believe this additional training will set us apart and make us unique as providers.”

New PA Program Fosters Students’ Passions

Editor’s note: Nandini Asnani is a student in the first cohort in Oklahoma City University’s new Physician Assistant program, which started in January.

BY NANDINI ASNANI

I went to college, rather arrogantly, thinking that I would be the top-notch pre-med student I had always dreamt about. But sophomore year, my dream hit a snag. I found myself fundamentally different from the other students in my pre-medical fraternity. Of course we all want to “help people,” but several of their motives seemed entirely flawed. I found myself beginning to panic. This wasn’t what I wanted to do with my life, but what other choice did I have? I was naive in thinking medical school was my only viable option, as the available options—I soon discovered—seemed endless. I was embarrassed all my peers were graduating with professional degrees back in my home country, India, and I was stuck in a dilemma of choosing my true profession in my senior year. I was fortunate to have shadowing experiences and a self-realization that my obsession was with practicing medicine, not with attaining the superior ranking of “doctor.”

Inaugural Class

OCU’s PA program—the second in Oklahoma—presents with a formulated and methodical approach called the “systems-based education.” By using this approach, we are able to focus our



PA student Nandini Asnani. Photo by Josh Robinson

intellectual energies on cardiology, then pulmonology, and so on until all the body’s systems have been covered. In addition to the basic and medical sciences, the program has a specific focus on promoting passion for the medical humanities, paving a path to see medicine across different spectrums and teaching approaches to treating more sensitive issues, such as domestic violence and substance abuse. The education we have received so far has been stellar. My experience with the faculty is unbelievably positive



Left: Families attended students' induction into the PA program. Kunle Folorunso brought his son, Caleb, to the white coat ceremony in January. **Right:** PA students take an oath to live and practice their profession with honor and integrity. Photos by Josh Robinson



for Providing Health Care, Serving Needy

and rewarding. They inspire us with their ambition, character, empathy, and medical knowledge. They have filled us with the zest to be hungry to learn.

Early Involvement

OCU PA students have already embarked upon delivering health care.

It is captivating and motivating to see my 35 peers repeatedly excel with fire and zeal. I would call them a “robust workforce of medical soldiers” out to fill voids in the health care society, and we are privileged to have that opportunity.

My classmate Braden Allred was recently given the opportunity to attend a student health policy fellowship in Washington, D.C., where he will discuss policy changes in PA education and outreach.

My peers have already been actively involved in the Oklahoma Academy of Physician Assistants, and our class president, Meredith Dunn, is proudly representing us as a board member, voting on many matters that aim to improve the profession and allow PAs to continue to make a positive impact in Oklahoma. The organization has provided students with the opportunity to learn more about the profession as a whole, as well as become informed about legislative changes that may take place in the field.

“ **I aspire and am determined to take what I've learned back to India and fight for women's rights, helping women conquer their medical and emotional struggles**

Outreach

The PA program is also reaching out to charities in the community as potential partners that would benefit from a 5K event being organized by the OCU PA Stars. We are focusing on charities that provide services and summer camps to children with complicated illnesses

or disabilities in hopes of helping provide them with positive experiences that will encourage independence, a sense of normalcy, and memories to last a lifetime. A new class of Stars is being refined and polished, shining in their endeavors.

My interest in the PA field only grows greater each day due to my experiences. In the short term, I wish to combine this working knowledge with the intricate world of science by serving at a Veterans Affairs organization and embracing those who have served our country with pride and honor. In the long term, I aspire and am determined to take what I've learned back to India and fight for women's rights, helping women conquer their medical and emotional struggles with issues such as domestic violence, rape, and reproductive health. Every day, the OCU PA program reaffirms these desires and vigorously strengthens my conviction to help others. The constant compassion of a PA is immeasurably dear to my heart!

PHOTOS BY JOSH ROBINSON
Photographer

BY ROD JONES
Editor

SCORE

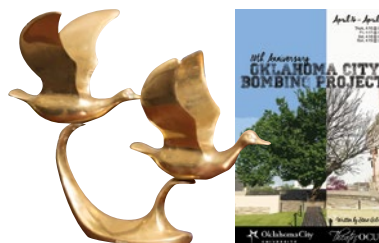


Directing the Scrum

When he's not leading the way for the School of Theatre, Associate Dean Brian Parsons is leading his OKC Crusaders rugby team on the field. Parsons says if it weren't for theater, he would have pursued a professional rugby career. He even played semi-pro after college. Parsons grew up in Portsmouth, England. He studied philosophy but says his passion was drama. His first theater-related job was as associate director at England's oldest working theater, Bristol Old Vic. He went on to teach drama at Shrewsbury, the alma mater of Michael Palin of Monty Python fame, and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where he taught Kit Harrington, who plays Jon Snow in "Game of Thrones." He came to OCU via the University of Southern California, where he directed the undergrad theater directing program.



A self-proclaimed sci-fi and horror movie geek, Parson's favorite movie is "Blade Runner." "I love how they introduced some deep, philosophical themes in the movie," he said. He is looking forward to hosting leading actress Joanna Cassidy on campus next year.



Parsons has an oversized poster signed by the entire cast and crew from the "20th Anniversary Oklahoma City Bombing Project." The crew also presented him with a desktop statue of two geese in flight titled "Leader of the Pack." Parsons helped commission the play and helped compile the information and interviews that were used in the verbatim theatre-style dramatic piece staged last year.



Left: OCU took second in the National Association of College Directors of Athletics Director's Cup NAIA standings for 2015-16. Photo by Rich Tortorelli
Right and below: OCU celebrates winning the 2016 NAIA softball championship. Photos by Scott Gallagher (right) and courtesy NAIA (below)

OCU Takes Ninth National Softball Title

BY RICH TORTORELLI

No. 1-ranked Oklahoma City University captured its ninth national softball championship with a 5-0 triumph over Saint Xavier (Ill.) on June 2 in the NAIA Softball World Series at the Elizabeth & Irving Jensen Softball Complex in Sioux City, Iowa.

Oklahoma City became the fourth NAIA softball champion to weather the losers bracket and win twice on the final day for the title. The Stars (67-3) derailed fifth-ranked Saint Xavier 2-0 earlier on June 2.

The Stars joined OCU's previous national championship squads from 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2007. OCU had finished as national runner-up in 1986, 1993, 1999, 2010, and 2012.

Oklahoma City only had more victories in a single season—69—in 1999. That season, and this year's, both placed OCU on the NAIA's single-season win list. Oklahoma City increased its NAIA-record World Series victories to 120 this summer. Previous NAIA champions to earn victories in both the championship game and the if-necessary game were St. Mary's (Texas) in 1986, Thomas (Ga.) in 2004, and Lubbock Christian (Texas) in 2008.

Phil McSpadden finished his 29th year as OCU coach with 1,545 victories, the most against four-year competition of any college softball coach. McSpadden collected NAIA coach of the year for the ninth time, while he and his assistant coaches took NAIA coaching staff of the year for the fifth time.

Georgia Wall took the NAIA Softball World Series most valuable player award. Wall, a freshman from Marlow, Oklahoma, posted a 6-1 record and pitched 46 innings during the World Series. She led the NAIA in earned run average for the season. In the final game, Wall improved to 28-1 with her 10th shutout of the year.



COACH OF THE YEAR

Phil McSpadden finished his 29th year at OCU with 1,545 victories.

Other World Series MVPs from OCU were Tracey Mosley in 1994, Tammy Braithwaite in 1995, Sonia Ortiz in 2000, Alexandra Boily in 2001, Lindsey Voss in 2002, and Dasha Shembereva in 2007.

Madison Ellis and Jaci Smith grabbed all-tournament honors. Ellis, a junior from Yukon, Oklahoma, smashed a two-run home run for the winning hit in the title game. Ellis staked OCU to a 2-0 second-inning advantage by crushing a 1-1 pitch over the left-field fence with Sha Ingram on base.

In the top of the seventh, Leslie Miller hammered a three-run blast beyond the left-field fence with two out.

Kyndra Holasek extended her OCU and NAIA career-record hit total to 404. In the early game June 2, Holasek made the difference by nailing a double into right field to score Smith. Saint Xavier right fielder Frankie Demack sent the relay throw into the dugout to allow Holasek to also reach home plate on the play.

OCU Triumphs for 10th NAIA Men's Golf Championship

BY RICH TORTORELLI

Oklahoma City University bested the field by eight strokes for its 10th men's golf national championship in the NAIA Championships on May 27 at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois.

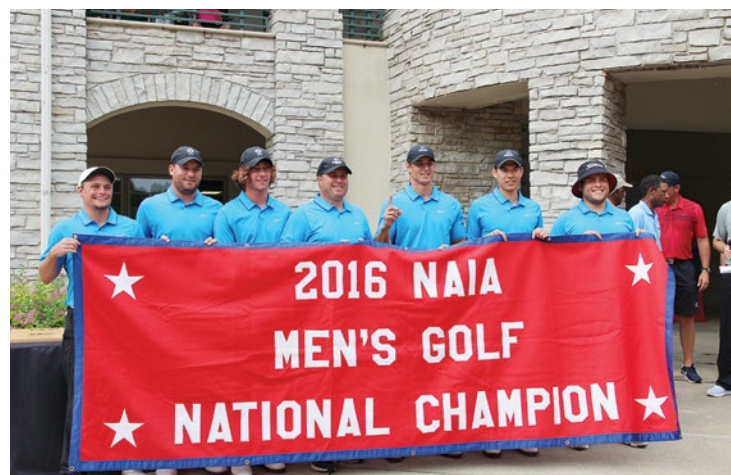
Matthew Cheung led three Stars, taking all-tournament acclaim with his runner-up finish. Third-ranked Oklahoma City posted its best round of the week to finish at 292-297-289-286-1,164.

The Stars overcame British Columbia's seven-shot lead after 54 holes. OCU teamed to make 12 birdies and an eagle on the back nine in the final round.

Oklahoma City owns men's golf national crowns won in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2013, and now, 2016. The Stars captured their 2010 national title at TPC Deere Run.

Oklahoma City coach Kyle Blaser became NAIA coach of the year for the ninth time. Blaser notched tournament victory No. 99 in his 19th season as OCU coach.

Cheung, Anthony Marchesani, and Rupert Kaminski of OCU finished among the top 10 individuals to reel in all-tournament honors. Cheung finished three strokes off the pace set by Texas Wesleyan's David Ravetto. Cheung became a two-time all-tournament performer after finishing tied for seventh in the national tournament as a freshman. Cheung joined Brent Akins as OCU's



OCU celebrates winning the 2016 NAIA men's golf championship. Photo courtesy of NAIA

other national runner-up finisher. Akins took second in 2005.

Marchesani turned in his best national-tournament finish with a tie for fourth place. Kaminski rose from tied for 53rd after the second round to finishing in a tie for ninth.

Jett Johnson nailed an eagle on No. 10 to start his back nine in the last round. Zac Oliver knocked in a birdie on the 10th hole.

OCU Runner-Up in Director's Cup Standings

OCU posted a runner-up finish in the NAIA National Association of College Directors of Athletics Director's Cup standings on the strength of three national championships in 2015-16.

Oklahoma City racked up national titles in men's cross country, men's golf and softball during the academic year. The Stars finished in the top 10 of the Director's Cup standings for the fourth year in a row.

Oklahoma City finished as Director's Cup runner-up for the fourth overall time and second time in three years. With national championships in men's golf and softball a week apart during the spring season, OCU totaled 777 points to finish 75.75 points behind Lindsey Wilson (Ky.). The Stars accumulated points in 12 sports.

Oklahoma City owns 62 national championships in all sports. OCU has won a national crown in each of the past 23 years. Since 1996-97, OCU has posted 15 top-10 finishes and 19 consecutive finishes in the top 13 of the Director's Cup standings.

In the classroom, the Stars compiled a 3.206 combined grade-point average to have a 3.0 GPA for the 14th year in a row.

Points in the Director's Cup standings are awarded based on each institution's finish in up to 12 NAIA-sponsored sports—six men's and six women's. The Sooner Athletic Conference boasted of two institutions among the top five. Wayland Baptist (Texas) finished third in the standings.

Stars Name Agüero Head Coach of Cross Country, Track

OCU elevated Matt Agüero into its men's and women's cross country and track and field head coaching position.

Agüero takes over the teams after Conor Holt left to become the cross country and track and field coach at Northwood (Michigan). Oklahoma City has won the past three NAIA men's cross country championships.

In the past two years, Agüero helped the Stars win two men's cross country national championships, two Sooner Athletic Conference men's cross country titles, and the 2015 SAC women's cross country crown.

With OCU, Agüero has aided in producing numerous men's and women's indoor and outdoor All-Americans and all-conference athletes in both cross country and track, as well as the 2016 indoor national champion distance medley relay team.

Agüero has nine years of experience as a head coach at St. Gregory's and Cameron universities. Agüero has coached 13 individual national champions, 69 all-Americans, 117 national meet qualifiers, and 102 all-conference performers in his coaching career.

Agüero has run two ultra marathons and more than 20 marathons, including the Boston Marathon the past two years. He won the 2005 Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon. He is in the Poteau High School (Oklahoma) athletics hall of fame.



Matt Agüero



OCU won championships in small coed, small team, and hip hop categories in April in Daytona Beach, Fla. Photo provided by OCU Cheerleading

Stars Win Three Titles in College Nationals

BY RICH TORTORELLI

OCU nabbed its third consecutive National Cheerleading Association small coed cheerleading title in addition to a National Dance Alliance small dance team championship and the NDA Division III hip hop title April 8–9 in the NCA/NDA College Nationals in Daytona Beach, Florida.

OCU posted a final score of 92.33 in the NAIA small coed cheer championship, beating Martin Methodist (Tennessee) by 0.70 points.

In the NAIA team dance performance small championship, the

Stars finished with a final score of 8.992, edging Baker (Kansas) by 0.119 points. OCU also received the innovative choreography award. Last year, the Stars placed third behind Midland (Nebraska) and Davenport (Michigan), while Baker took fifth place.

Oklahoma City captured the NDA Hip Hop Division III championship with a 9.397 final score. Mount San Antonio (California) and Midland followed in second and third place, respectively.

Oklahoma City has won 13 NCA/NDA titles and three NAIA cheer and dance titles.

Stars Pick Campbell as Men's Wrestling Coach

OCU has named C.J. Campbell as head men's wrestling coach. Campbell had spent the past two seasons as assistant coach on OCU's staff. During that time, OCU produced six national champions, 26 all-Americans, and a 59-17 dual record.

In 2015-16, the Stars had three all-Americans and finished 13th in the NAIA Championships. OCU won the NAIA Central Qualifying Group Tournament title while going 16-4 in duals.

Prior to coming to OCU, Campbell spent three seasons as Jamestown (North Dakota) head coach and one as assistant. Campbell mentored two NAIA all-Americans, two qualifying group champions, and 16 national qualifiers with the University of Jamestown.

During his college career, Campbell became a two-time all-American for Lindenwood (Missouri).



C.J. Campbell

OCU Wins Distance Medley Relay Title

OCU turned in the best finish in program history by placing sixth in the NAIA Indoor Track and Field Championships, winning the distance medley relay championship March 5 at the David E. Walker Track at Gentry Field.

Andrew Robling, Hunter Swink, Michael Vercoe-Curtis, and Mackenzie Wahpepah-Harris made up the distance medley relay team. That team clocked a time of 10 minutes, 7.60 seconds to beat Sooner Athletic Conference foe Bacone by 4.06 seconds. Swink became a two-time all-American. Wahpepah-Harris nabbed his second track and field all-American accolade.

Stars' Leathers Trains with Team USA

OCU's Becca Leathers contributed to Team USA as training partner to wrestler Haley Augello in the 2016 Olympics. Leathers, from Choctaw, Oklahoma, captured the 123-pound national championship as a freshman in the Women's College Wrestling Association Championships in February at Abe Lemons Arena. She finished 2015-16 at 30-2 against college competition.

Bahreini First Three-Time Marathon Champion in the NAIA



BY RICH TORTORELLI

Arya Bahreini of OCU won his third consecutive NAIA marathon race in May at the 2016 NAIA Men's Track and Field Championships in Gulf Shores, Alabama, becoming the only runner in NAIA history to win three national marathon championships. Seven individuals have two championships.

Bahreini, a senior from Edmond, Oklahoma, finished the 26.2-mile race with a time of two hours, 33 minutes and 39.50 seconds. The finish gave Bahreini his seventh career track all-American award and supplied OCU with 10 points.

In the team standings, the Stars finished in 16th place with 19 points.

The 10,000-meter final brought Bahreini's sixth career track all-American accolade as he placed fourth with a time of 30:47.05.

Arya Bahreini wraps up his third NAIA marathon championship in Gulf Shores, Ala. Photo by Rocky Chen

Stevens New Women's Wrestling Coach

OCU has chosen Matt Stevens as head women's wrestling coach.

Stevens spent the past two seasons as assistant coach. During that time, OCU produced six national champions, 26 all-Americans, and a 59-17 dual record.

In 2015-16, OCU finished runner-up in the Women's College Wrestling Association Championships with three national champions and nine all-Americans. The Stars went 16-5 with a runner-up showing in the NWCA National Duals. OCU owns WCWA championships from 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.



Matt Stevens

Abbott Honored as SAC Athletic Director of the Year

After leading OCU's athletic teams to conference dominance and national prominence, Jim Abbott has been voted by his peers as the Sooner Athletic Conference athletic director of the year.

Abbott will be the league's official nomination for NAIA national athletic director of the year. He has been SAC athletic director of the year in 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2013-14.

Abbott, who completed his 14th season at OCU, administers 21 sports programs with more than 300 student-athletes. In 2015-16, OCU teams won conference championships in men's golf, women's golf, men's cross country, women's cross country, and softball. The Stars won three NAIA titles—bringing their total to 62—in softball, men's golf, and men's cross country.



Jim Abbott

Alum Assists U.S. Runner in Paralympic Games

OCU alum Kyle Wardwell aided U.S. runner Ivonne Marcela Mosquera-Schmidt in the 2016 Paralympic Games Sept. 7-18 in Rio de Janeiro.

Wardwell served as the guide runner for Schmidt, who is blind. Wardwell began training alongside Schmidt in May at Chula Vista, California, and helped her qualify for the Paralympics in the U.S. Paralympic Trials June 30-July 2 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Schmidt was among the Team USA qualifiers announced July 3. The Rio Paralympic Games were anticipated to be the largest ever with about 4,500 athletes with physical impairments from more than 165 countries.

OCU Celebrates Addition to Stars Field

OCU unveiled its newly built soccer locker rooms Aug. 14 as part of an alumni weekend for the men's and women's soccer programs.

The facility, next to the public entrance to Stars Field, houses coaches' offices, a conference/reception area overlooking the field, and locker rooms for both men's and women's teams. Private donations funded the construction.

"It's a big plus for recruiting," Stars coach Brian Harvey said. Player visits could include a tour of the locker rooms with the prospective player's name on a locker and on a shirt.

Tortorelli Named SAC's Top Sports Information Director

The Sooner Athletic Conference chose Rich Tortorelli as the 2016 sports information director of the year. A committee of league administrators selected the winner.

This is the third year for the award, which recognizes hard work and outstanding contributions to the league. Tortorelli will be the conference's nominee for the NAIA national SID award.

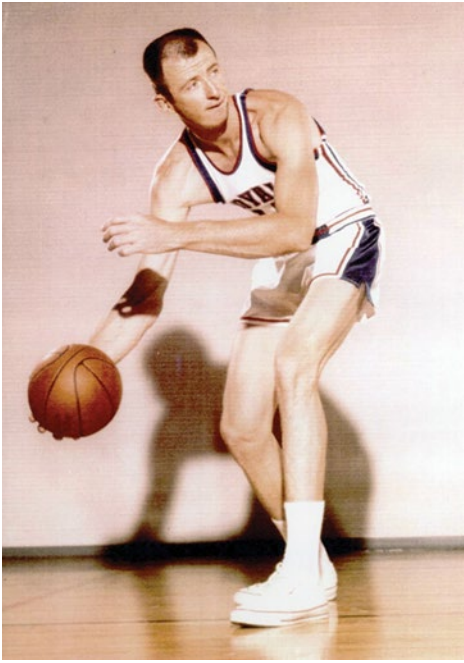
The 2015-16 season was Tortorelli's 11th at OCU, where he directs information and publicity efforts for OCU's 21 varsity intercollegiate athletic programs.

Tortorelli aided in the sports information efforts for the SAC's baseball and softball tournaments, as well as serving as tournament host for one of seven NAIA Softball Championship Opening Round sites.

Many of his assistant sports information directors have gone on to full-time work in strategic communications. Tortorelli also serves as an official scorer for the Oklahoma City Dodgers, the Triple-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers.



Rich Tortorelli



1940s

405 Magazine ran a profile story about **Ed Birchall** (BSB '49), who played Ho Ho the Clown on KOCO-TV's Ho Ho's Cartoon Circus children's show in the 1960s.

1950s

^ The Oklahoman ran a feature story about **Hub Reed** (BA '58) and his playing career under former OCU basketball coach Abe Lemons.

1960s

Jimmy Gilbert (BA '65), retired NASA senior scientist, leads the Miss Madison hydroplane racing team's computer systems, which earned its second consecutive national championship. Gilbert also logged his 100,000th career mile as a runner, making him one of about 75 people to do so, according to *Runner's World Magazine*.

Music alumnus and Delaware state Sen. **Brian J. Bushweller** (BA '69) is leading an arts advocacy effort.

Harley Richardson (MA '69) and former law professor **Colonel William Myers** were awarded French Legion of Honor medals, France's highest distinction.

1970s

Trustee, alumnus, and OCU Physician Assistant Program Medical Director Dr. **Jerry Vannatta** (BA '70) will be inducted into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame during a ceremony in October.

The 25iq blog featured business alumnus and former Microsoft vice president **Mike Maples Sr.** (MBA '72).

Eugene L. Tattini (MBA '75) was appointed to the California Governor's Military Council.

Dr. **Joseph Siano** (BS '76), superintendent of Norman Public Schools, joined the board of directors of the Oklahoma Policy Institute.

Gary Main (BSB '76) was appointed by the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church in Nebraska to serve as the pastor of the Gretna United Methodist Church.

Benjamin Rahming (BSB '76) was appointed managing director of the Bahamas Development Bank.

Lydia Gill-Polley (BA '78) received the Oklahoma Conference of Churches Advocacy Award.

1980s

Susan Powell (BA '81), Miss America 1981, performed at Carnegie Hall. She joined Michael Feinstein as guest soloist for his Zankel Hall series, "Standard Time with Michael Feinstein."

Vicki Robertson Rippetto (JD '84) received a Regents' Alumni Award from the University of Oklahoma.

Patricia (Patti) S. Helton (BA '84) was appointed regional vice chancellor for student affairs at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

✓ Former Miss Oklahoma **Stacey Logan** (BM '85) starred in the comedy "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" in Vero Beach, Florida.

Robert Hahn (MBA '86) was named president of government solutions at LexisNexis' Reed Technology and Information Services subsidiary.

The Obama administration tapped former war pilot Gen. **David Goldfein** (MBA '87) as Air Force chief of staff.

OCU Alumni Relations Director **Cary Pirrong** (BS '87, JD '90) was elected president of the Uptown 23rd District Association. Pirrong was also appointed to the Plaza District Board of Directors.



Stacey Logan (BM '85) played the Hollywood star sister at a dysfunctional family reunion in the absurdist comedy "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike." Photo by Holly Porch, courtesy of Riverside Theatre

Donna J. Jackson (JD '88) was named board chair of the SHINE Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is to teach the importance of community service and giving back.

Texas Master Beekeeper Program member **Jerry Alcorn** (JD '89) gave a presentation to the Trinity Valley Beekeepers Association in Dallas.

1990s

Angela Morrison (JD '90) was named to the executive committee of the American Bar Association.

CLASS NOTES



Enable Midstream Partners, LP announced that energy industry veteran **Ronnie K. Irani** (MBA '90), president and CEO of RKI Energy Resources, was appointed as an independent director to the board of directors of its general partner Enable GP, LLC.

Dave Kurtz (MBA '90) was promoted to managing partner of EnCap Flatrock Midstream.

Kristin Chenoweth (BM '91, MM '93, DHL '13) joined the cast of NBC's latest televised musical, "Hairspray Live!" Chenoweth was also a featured guest on the "Watch What Happens Live" 1,000th episode celebration. Chenoweth presented the show host, Andy Cohen, with the tiara she earned when she became Miss Oklahoma City University.

David W. Lundquist (MBA '92) was named president and chief executive officer of Rome Memorial Hospital in New York.

Owasso attorney **Philip D. Hixon** (MBA '92) was named a shareholder at the law firm of GableGotwals.

Robert Dufter Salama (MBA '93) became a permanent representative of Malawi to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Chris Harrison (BA '93) returned to host the Miss America competition in September.

Joe Wilkins (MBA '93) was named vice president and corporate controller of UPS.

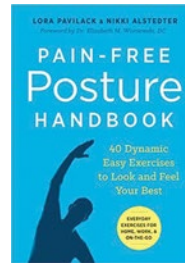
Wesley Healthcare in Kansas named **Allen Poston** (MBA '94) as its new vice president for marketing and public relations.

Rubenstein and Pitts Law Firm, co-owned by **H. Craig Pitts** (JD '94), was the winner of Arvest Bank's 2016 Small Business of the Year Award presented by the Edmond Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mary Beth Foye (MRE '94) joined the St. Stephen's United Methodist Church congregation in Norman as minister of adult Christian education.

Virginia Tech men's basketball head coach **Buzz Williams** (BS '94) agreed to a contract extension that will keep him in Blacksburg through the 2022-23 season.

➤ **Lora Anderson Pavilack** (BS Dance Management '97) co-wrote the recently published book "Pain-Free Posture Handbook."



Jennifer Seal (BA '98) was named president of the Putnam City Schools Foundation.

History alumna **Sandra Flores** (BS '98) was appointed the first program director of the Fresno County Preterm Birth Collective Impact Initiative, a collaborative effort to reduce the number of babies born prematurely in Fresno County.

Nabeel A. Al Mansour (JD '99) was appointed by the Saudi Aramco Board of Directors as general counsel and corporate secretary.

Ali Woerner (BPA '99) was one of three finalists for Oakland County (Michigan) Executive's Elite 40 Under 40 class of 2016. Woerner is a co-founder and co-artistic director of Take Root nonprofit dance company.

Kelli O'Hara (BM '99, DHL '15) was named spokesperson for the Theatre in Our Schools campaign, a program to raise public awareness of the value of theatre education and draw attention to the need for more access to quality programs

for all students. O'Hara will be inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in November.

David Koehn (BME '99), orchestra director at Cimarron Middle School and Edmond Memorial High School, was honored by the Oklahoma Music Educators Association as a 2016 Exemplary Teacher.

Four OCU alumni were listed in *405 Magazine's* Best of the City 2016: **Jan Peery** (BA '99) as Best Humanitarian, **Kyle Dillingham** (BM '02) for Best Musician, **Lance McDaniel** (MLA '07) as Best Filmmaker, and **Spencer Hicks** (MLA '10) as Best Comedian.

2000s

Simone Ward (BA '00) was appointed to lead Hillary Clinton's Florida campaign. Ward had been serving as the national political director for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee for the previous year, the first African-American ever to do so.

Business alumnus **J. Aaron Christopher** (MSA '00) was named Palmer College of Chiropractic's vice chancellor for administration.

◀ **Sarah Coburn** (MM '01), a coloratura soprano, performed a concert of operatic arias with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic.

Lyndy Franklin Smith (BPA '02) and **Jeromy Smith** (BS '02) are co-directors of the Lexington Theatre Company in Kentucky.

Alumnus **Christiaan Osborn** (BME '03) and his mariachi music program at Fillmore Elementary School were the subjects of the cover story in the *Oklahoma Gazette* in January.

Carol Rolke (JD '03) gave a presentation titled "Effectively Managing Your Vendor Management Program" at Cornerstone Credit Union League's 2016 Annual Meeting and Expo.

Law alumna **Michele McElwee** (JD '04) was appointed to a district judge post in Oklahoma County.

Sara Edwards (BPA '04) was in the cast of the Broadway musical "She Loves Me."



Three OCU alumni were named to the *Journal Record's* Achievers Under 40 list: **Andrew Ewbank** (JD '05) of Ewbank, Hennigh & McVay, PLLC; **Jeff Kline** (JD '12) of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission; and **Carrie Sauer** (MA '13), assistant director of annual giving at OCU.

Colby Q. Lindeman (BPA '05) joined the cast of Off-Broadway's song and dance extravaganza "Trip of Love."

Jay Wadley (BM '05) wrote the score to the film "Indignation," which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. A film review in *Variety* magazine praised Wadley's score.

Sasha Hutchings (BPA '11) and **Richard Riaz Yoder** (BPA '06) were part of the Tony Awards ceremony. Hutchings is a member of the "Hamilton" ensemble, which won 11 Tony Awards including Best Musical. Yoder performed as part of the cast of "Shuffle Along," which was also nominated for Best Musical.

Mary Teal (JD '06) received the 2016 Outstanding Accounting Educator Award from the Oklahoma Society of Certified Public Accountants.

Patrick Lavallee (BPA '06) and **Cliff Fogle** (under stage name Clifton Samuels) (BPA '10) were cast as dancers in the recently released Coen brothers motion picture "Hail, Caesar!", starring George Clooney and Channing Tatum.

Nursing alumna **Kristen Mills** (BSN '06) is a new certified lactation consultant at AllianceHealth in Woodward.

Mary Jo (Hope) Silsby (BS '06 and MA '15) was named director of events for the National Basketball Association. Silsby previously worked for the Oklahoma City Thunder.

^ **Bat-Or Kalo** (BM '06) released her second album, "Dear John."

Angela Prock (BM '06) is a co-founder of OKC onstage, which launched in June. The website features more than 45 performing arts companies and focuses on performing arts communication and marketing in the Oklahoma City region.

Alumnus **Erick Worrell** (BA '07) was promoted to vice president of development for the Staplegun advertising firm.

Douglas Nielsen (JD '07) was appointed judge on the 4th District Juvenile Court in Utah.

> *Parade* magazine featured "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" star **Gabrielle Ruiz** (BPA '07) in May.



Vinnie Hogan (BM '08), **Jacob Leighton Burns** (BFA '10), and **Zachary Burns** (BFA '10) premiered their feature-length film, "Electric Nostalgia," at the deadCenter Film Festival.

Kimberley Mlinar Worrell (BS Dance Management '08) was elected vice president for membership of the Oklahoma chapter of Meeting Professionals International.

Alumna **Kady Heard** (BPA Dance Performance '08) was the subject of a Valentine's Day story in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* about how she met her husband.

(**David**) **Joe Bellinger** (BM '08) was appointed chief development officer of Lyric Opera in Kansas City.

✓ **Abby C. Smith** (MM '08) joined the cast of the Broadway-bound "The SpongeBob Musical," set for previews beginning June 7 in Chicago.



> **Rick McKee** (BM '09) was musical composer, producer, director, and orchestrator for the soundtrack for Mako, a new roller coaster at SeaWorld Orlando.

Aaron Brown (BM '09) directed the Baylor Theatre production of "The Pavilion" in Waco, Texas.

Miles Seybert (BSB '09) was promoted to assistant vice president for First United Bank in Lubbock, Texas.

2010s

Savannah Stafford (JD '10) joined the Newmark Grubb Levy Strange Beffort firm as director, global services.

CLASS NOTES



Rick McKee (BM '09) composed the soundtrack for the new SeaWorld Orlando roller coaster Mako.
Photo provided by SeaWorld Orlando

➤ **Brennan Connolly** (MM '10) is part of Duo Percussion, a Canadian ensemble that travels internationally performing and teaching percussion with myriad instruments.



Kimberly Faure (BPA '10) played Gabrielle in a national tour of "Cinderella." The show also featured **Paige Williams** (BPA '09), **Chip Abbott** (BPA '03), and **Ben Lanham** (BPA '13). Faure was cast to play Demeter in the Broadway revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Cats."

Shantelle Turner Harnsberry (BSB '10) was promoted to senior associate of the Stinnett & Associates professional advisory firm.

Carl Hendin (BM '10) completed a national tour of "Nice Work If You Can Get It."

The Nichols Hills City Council selected **S. Shane Pate II** (JD '11) as its city manager.

Nicole Woody (BA '11), **Michaela Hutchison** (BS '12), **Jennifer Page** (2011-13),

and **Brittney Roberts** (BS '13) qualified to compete in the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team Trials in Iowa.

Lori Lusted (MM '11) landed the role of Vi Petty in the touring company of "The Buddy Holly Story." The show will play the U.S. and Canada through July before heading to the United Kingdom.

(Anna) Brooke Culbertson (BFA Acting '11) booked a role on the CBS show "Criminal Minds."

Sasha Hutchings (BPA '11) was a subject in the Broadway musical "Hamilton's" series of portraits taken by photographer Josh Lehrer using his 1839 lens.

The Team USA website ran a feature story about **Kristie Davis** (BS '12) and her quest to make the U.S. Olympic team. Davis, "the most decorated women's freestyle wrestler in American history," hoped to make the team along with her daughter.

Raul Dominguez (BME '12) third-year choral director of Houston's Clear Lake High School, successfully auditioned all five of his ensembles for performances next year at Carnegie Hall.

DeEtta Cravens (BA '12) began her foreign service career this summer by starting her A-100 Foreign Service Officer Orientation Training in Arlington, Virginia.

Drew Feldman (BFA '13), co-artistic director of unMasqued, a nomadic company staging work across the U.S., was selected as a 2016 Directing Fellow of The Drama League Directors Project.

Kelsey Ricks (BA '14) was hired to oversee a children's summer program in the village of Camalote in Belize.

Benjamin Rivera (BPA '14) was choreographer, director, and a dancer for the music video for "Shut Up and Dance."

Darius Wright (BM '14), who is starring in a touring production of "Matilda the Musical," was featured in a cast interview story on Broadway in Chicago's "Page Turner."

Kelsey Griswold (BFA Acting '14) is featured in the new FX series "An American Crime Story: The People vs OJ Simpson." Griswold plays Dominique Brown, Nicole Brown Simpson's sister. Griswold made her television acting debut on TNT last year. She was Miss Oklahoma in 2013 and the second runner-up to Miss America in 2014. She works as an actress and producer in Los Angeles.

Terrance Craft (BA '15) has joined the Northwest OKC Chamber of Commerce as the marketing and communications administrator.

Colin Ferguson (BA '15) earned a full-tuition scholarship with a paid instructional aide position at Washington University in St. Louis. Ferguson will be in the MA Film & Media Studies Program.

Kaley Were (BM '15) is in the ensemble for the North American tour of "The Wizard of Oz."

Erin Langer (English '15) joined the prestigious Columbia University Publishing Course. Langer is pursuing a career in editing.

MaryAnn Dutcher (BA '16) performed in a concert titled "Broadway and Beyond," a fundraiser for the Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Claire Baer (BA '16) directed the 69th production of the Summer Youth Musical production of "Godspell Jr." at First United Methodist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Arden Walker (BM '16) played Dorothy in the Lyric Theatre production of "The Wizard of Oz."

Ann Simmons Alspaugh

DEC. 13, 1934-
SEPT. 20, 2016

Ann Simmons Alspaugh was born in Duncan, Oklahoma, to Marjorie Simmons Alspaugh Gray and Howard Beason Alspaugh. Ann was the mother of three, the grandmother of seven, an executive, a community leader, a patron of the arts, and an engaged philanthropist.



Ann Alspaugh

Education was of essential importance to Ann, as it was something she said no one could take away.

The honorary degree bestowed upon her by OCU in 1986, the long associations with The Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation and the Oklahoma School of Science and Math, and the degrees in law, medicine, and business achieved by

Ellen Jayne Wheeler

AUGUST 12, 1936-JULY 19, 2016

Ellen Jayne, MAT '67, was an alumna and music professor at Oklahoma City University.

Ellen was born in Durant, Oklahoma, to Harold and Edith Maris after her father was hired to work on the WPA project to build the Denison Dam, which created Lake Texoma. The family moved to Texas while Ellen was a baby. She took music lessons, sang, played the piano, and taught herself to play band instruments. She also won the state regionals title in women's doubles tennis.

Ellen graduated from high school as valedictorian in 1954. She earned a full scholarship to attend Texas Western College in El Paso, Texas, and graduated in 1958 as the outstanding woman graduate, with a bachelor's degree in music. Ellen taught vocal music in El Paso Public Schools. In 1960, she accepted a Rotary Fellow scholarship to study lieder, opera, drama, piano, voice, and guitar in Vienna, Austria.

Ellen moved back to the U.S. and joined an opera apprentice program in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She accepted a music teaching position in 1963 in Okeene, Oklahoma, and then moved to Kingfisher, Oklahoma, in 1964. She formed a piano duo with LaDonna Kramer Meinders.

She moved to Oklahoma City and earned a teaching position at OCU while working on a Master of Arts in teaching, which she earned with honors in 1967. She married Joseph Clyde Wheeler. She served in leadership roles at Crown Heights Christian Church, where he was the lead pastor. During the U.S. Bicentennial, Ellen was selected to play piano on stage with LaDonna Meinders at the Kennedy Center, representing Oklahoma.

Ellen earned a Doctorate of Musical Arts in vocal performance in 1987. She started teaching voice again at OCU and then retired in 2001. She continued

HONORING ANN

In 1984, Ann established the Ann Simmons Alspaugh Music Endowed Scholarship. Gifts to the scholarship fund in Ann's memory can be made by visiting okcu.edu/give, by calling (405) 208-7000, or by sending mail to OCU Advancement, 2501 N. Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, OK, 73106.

her children were sources of great pride.

Community leadership defined Ann. She had a servant's heart and used her energies and gifts to make a difference in the lives of others. Service enriched her life and gave her joy, confidence, and happiness. Hence, over the course of her long life, Ann dedicated herself to the enrichment of Oklahoma and the often anonymous care of those in immediate need. In return, the state honored her with induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

Ann understood the impact of the fine arts on the culture of Oklahoma. She collected, she mentored, she gave special support to Native American artists, and she focused her attention most recently on the Oklahoma Contemporary Art Center.

Ann's awards include the Oklahoma City University's Distinguished Service Award in 1984; Honorary Degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from OCU in 1986; 1992 OCU Norick Hulseley Gallery Society Award; the 1993 Distinguished Friend of Oklahoma City University; and many awards from community, state, and nonprofit organizations. She joined the OCU Board of Trustees in 1981.



Left: Wheeler with her husband, J. Clyde Wheeler, in 1989. **Right:** Wheeler as Guinevere in the Lyric Theatre production of Camelot in 1968. Photos provided by Don Wheeler

traveling to Singapore for several more years to teach and continued teaching students at home until the day before she died.

Ellen was a member of several organizations including DAR, PEO, Colonial Dames, Women Descendants of the Ancient & Honorable Artillery Co., Zeta Tau Alpha, Sigma Alpha Iota, KETS, COMTA, NATS, CWF, OCOL, Pianist Club, Magna Charta, Mary Kay, LMC, Girls Scouts, and Lady Godiva.

Donations in honor of Ellen may be made to the Harold and Edith Maris Scholarship Fund at OCU by calling (405) 208-7000.

Charles Gurner Ming

SEPT. 6, 1929 - JULY 9, 2016

Oklahoma City University School of Law alumnus Charles Gurner Ming passed away on July 9, 2016. His bride of almost 62 years, Paula, preceded him in death in June 2016.

Charles was born on Sept. 6, 1929, in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, to Dr. Charles Morris Ming and Gertrude Gurner Ming. He served in the Army at Camp Hood (now Fort Hood), Texas, and graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a B.A. in business administration in 1953.

In 1954, he married Paula Bracken, whom he had met during their teen years in Okmulgee. After five years in Durango and the birth of two children, Elizabeth Ming Cooper and Charles Michael Ming, the family moved back to Oklahoma City.

He completed his J.D. at the OCU School of Law. Ming went on to practice law privately, serve as a municipal judge, teach at the university level, and manage and work in Housing and Urban Development offices in Oklahoma City, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. He was involved with St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, along with Habitat for Humanity and other organizations. He and Paula traversed the country countless times in their RV camper.



Charles Ming

Margaret Loeffler

OCT. 14, 1921-MAY 15, 2016

Margaret "Peggy" Loeffler passed away in Austin, Texas. She grew up in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Peggy finished her BA and MA in childhood education at Oklahoma City University. In 1959, along with Bee Pape, she started a parish preschool at All Souls' Episcopal Church. This later became the Primary Division of Casady School, where Peggy was director for 29 years. The school was founded on Montessori principles, and Peggy was an active advocate for Montessori education at local, national, and international levels throughout her life. She served on the first board of directors for the American Montessori Society in the 1960s and on an early education advisory group for the Johnson White House, and was both a Fulbright Scholar and a visiting researcher at Noam Chomsky's lab at Harvard University. Peggy was instrumental in the creation of the Master's of Education with American Montessori Society Certification degree program at OCU, which became a permanent part of the curriculum in 1966. She later served as the academic director of this program.

Peggy married Walter Loeffler, and they raised three children in Oklahoma City.



Margaret Loeffler

Sandra Sue Pirrong

DEC. 25, 1934-AUG. 1, 2016

Sandra Sue Pirrong, 81, of Miami, Oklahoma, passed away Aug. 1, 2016. Sandra was born on Christmas Day in 1934 to Harold Leonard and Faye Alberta (Givens) Carrico.

Sandra attended college at Oklahoma City University and earned her bachelor's degree. She later attained her master's degree from Pittsburg State University. She was a member of Gamma Phi Beta and was the Oklahoma City University Indian Princess in 1957.

Sandra married Cecil Pirrong on June 12, 1958, in Oklahoma City. She worked for two years in the Oklahoma City School District. After 20 years of teaching at Wyandotte Public Schools, where she was once teacher of the year, she retired. She was very active in her church, the Pilot Club, Ottawa County Retired Educators, and Kappa Kappa Iota, a teacher sorority.

Sandra was preceded in passing by her parents and one brother, H.E. "Gene" Carrico.

Survivors include her husband; children Cecilia Sue Housman and husband Jerry of Miami, Cary M. Pirrong and wife Randa of Oklahoma City, Christina Holland and husband Jay of Mustang; and grandchildren Rachel Thomason, Sara Housman, Rebecca Housman, Case Pirrong, Reese Pirrong, Miranda Uranga and Carter Holland.



Sandra Sue Pirrong

Our Condolences

1930s

Billie O. Shelby ('37)

1940s

Art Cunningham ('46)
Kenneth R. Warren ('49)
John Gavula ('49)
Harold D. Leveridge ('49, '83)

1950s

Billy R. Andis ('51)
Eugene Miller ('52)
Martin D. Lowell ('52)
William T. Lunsford ('53)
Lloyd G. Tankersley ('53)
Richard P. Baldwin ('54)
Rebecca J. Spahn ('55)
John T. Jones ('55)
Roger D. Holloway ('57)
Donald K. Groom ('57)

1960s

Clyde L. Miller ('60)

Margaret H. Loeffler ('63, '68)
Charles G. Ming ('64)
Tom Stephenson ('67)

1970s

Penny N. Norman ('72)
Donald E. Bishop ('75)
Marylu T. Gordon ('75)
Michael E. King ('77)
Elmer C. Schwarz ('78)
Virgil F. Gant ('79)
M. Eileen Echols ('79)

1980s

James J. Farish ('80)
Matthew A. Schumacher ('83)
Mary Menges-Myers ('86)

1990s

Thomas B. Larsen ('99)

2010s

Tracey L. Fields ('10)

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

2015-16



Thousands

of donors
created countless
opportunities for
OCU students in
2015-16, allowing
Stars to shine
brighter

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in 1904, this enterprise of United Methodist higher education has been sustained by donors who realize they are investing in the future by supporting our students. Oklahoma City University is privileged to recognize our donors for the 2015-16 year, and we invite you to join us in honoring them for their generous support of the University. These individuals and organizations are as diverse as the student population they support with their contributions, yet they have a common goal of sustaining a mission which has resulted in thousands of exceptionally equipped servant-leaders for our community and our world.

Our staff has worked carefully to ensure that this list of donors who have made cash gifts of \$1,000 or more between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016, is as accurate as possible. If you know of an error or omission or have questions regarding this information, please call the OCU Office of University Advancement at (405) 208-7000.

COMPLETE LISTING

For a comprehensive list of our overall 2015-16 Honor Roll of Donors, please visit okcu.edu/focus.

♦ Member in memorium ★ OCU employee

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Founders are an exceptional group of donors who have earned a place of distinction through their commitment to Oklahoma City University and their remarkable generosity, which continues to advance the University's mission. Each has made cumulative gifts of \$1 million or more.

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Annual support provides a vital source of institutional momentum, allowing OCU to enhance learning opportunities, provide financial assistance to students, meet emerging needs, and take advantage of new opportunities. The University is pleased to be able to recognize those who have shown exemplary support through their gifts between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

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Decker Family Continues Nourishing OCU Roots

BY ROD JONES

The Melvin Decker Scholarship, benefiting student athletes since the 1980s, may be more accurately called the Decker Family Scholarship.

Although it is now named for the familial patriarch and the person who began family ties with Oklahoma City University, the Deckers have such an extensive and expansive history with the University that it could apply to several different members: Melvin the father, Yvonne the mother, brothers Martin and Michael, or sister Melinda.

The scholarship was originally named for Rev. Martin Baird Decker, the eldest brother. Martin earned his bachelor's degree from OCU in 1973 before attending theology school at Southern Methodist University. He became a minister of St. Paul's UMC in Duncan, Oklahoma. Early in his career, at 29, he was killed in a car wreck during a visit back home. The family started the scholarship in his name, honoring his affinity for OCU athletics.

"He was an extremely big fan of OCU sports," Michael said. "Especially basketball. Dad used to take us to games when we were young. Those were some of our favorite childhood memories."

L. (Leroy) Melvin Decker started the OCU-Decker family tradition when he moved from Henryetta in the late 1930s during the Great Depression. Michael explained that his father was expected to work in the family's foundry operations after high school, but Melvin wanted to go to college. His father let him go on the condition that he would support himself.

Melvin headed west to OCU and thrived in school. During his college career, he was president of the student council, president of the Independent Student Association (the largest group on campus, made up of students who didn't wish to join a Greek organization), vice president of the "O" club (essentially the watchdogs of campus and the male pep club), vice president of the Blue Key national honor fraternity chapter, and a member of the Chapel Committee, among other groups.

Melvin excelled at sports, having earned an athletic scholarship for football. He also played basketball and ran track.

"If it hadn't been for that scholarship, dad would not have been able to go to college," Michael said. "He remembered that all through his life and wanted to give the same opportunity to future students."

Melvin started dating a student who was equally active in campus life. Yvonne (Baird) Decker was chapter president of the Cardinal Key national honorary leadership organization for women, president of the Spanish Club, and a member of the Ron Ohro Ines, a group of exceptional juniors chosen by the senior class (Fun fact: The name comes from the words "senior honor" spelled backwards.).



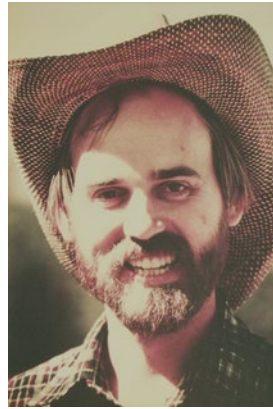
Yvonne and Melvin Decker on their way to their honeymoon. Photo provided

While president, her Beta Alpha Phi sorority won the Award for Highest Scholastic Honors for Sororities and first place in the Scarab Stunt Nite for their efforts during the annual Campus Capers event.

After Melvin graduated from OCU with a business degree, he joined the U.S. Navy to help win World War II. Before heading to officer training, he married his college sweetheart.

After the war, Melvin returned first to Henryetta, for a brief connection to the family business, and then to Oklahoma City, to work as business manager for the trust of former Gov. Martin Trapp. Later, Melvin became one of the original organizers of the Coston-Frankfurt architecture firm (now Frankfort-Short-Bruza Associates) as accountant and business manager. Meanwhile, Yvonne finished her degree in education. After raising their family, Yvonne enjoyed a career as an administrative assistant at Wesley United Methodist Church, St. Anthony Hospital, and OCU.

The Deckers established a home in Heritage Hills to be close to St. Luke's United Methodist Church, where Melvin was a lay leader. They helped establish the Heritage Hills Neighborhood Association/Historical Preservation, Inc. to preserve the area southeast of campus at a time when development threatened to remove some of the city's most significant houses.



Left to right:
Melvin Decker (as pictured in OCU's 1942 yearbook), Yvonne Decker (from the same yearbook), Martin Decker, and Michael Decker. Photos provided

All three of their children attended OCU: Melinda (BA '68), Martin (BA '73), and Michael (BA '75, JD '78).

Melinda recalled her earliest memories on campus, many of which involved basketball games, featuring legendary coach Abe Lemons.

"Daddy would yell instructions from the stands. We were kind of embarrassed at first, but Abe Lemons joked that he should keep doing it because his players were listening to daddy more than him," she said.

The Decker family connections to OCU continued through the 1980s and beyond. Besides Yvonne's work for the OCU chaplain, Michael worked for the law school as assistant dean of admissions. Both Melvin and Michael served as Alumni Board presidents, and the Deckers were named Alumni Family of the Year for the 1988 homecoming.

Following Melvin's passing on April 9, 1989, after several years, Yvonne married Dr. Raymond Pruitt of Oklahoma City, who was a former Goldbug football teammate of Melvin's. Yvonne and Pruitt continued to support OCU athletics as long as health would allow.

Both Michael and Melinda have started donating to the scholarship in hopes of creating an endowment. In addition to individual contributions, Michael established life insurance policies that will benefit the University. Melinda's husband, Robert Fitzgerald, retired as an engineer for Texas Instruments. His company has a matching fund benefit that is helping the scholarship grow even faster.

They find it fulfilling to support the University that provided so many positive things for their family.

"It's so important for us to keep this scholarship going in daddy's name," Melinda said.

The Original 12th Man

Melvin Decker was a great football player. There's little debate about that. Now a member of the OCU Athletics Hall of Fame, he earned a scholarship to play center and linebacker.

But Goldbugs head coach Oswald Doenges recognized another attribute in his player from Henryetta that could fit perfectly into a new scheme he had in mind.

As son Michael Decker explained, Coach Doenges needed someone with high intelligence, leadership qualities, and an ability to make quick decisions in order to make his idea of a "12th man" position work properly. His guy was Melvin.

Michael said Doenges successfully lobbied his idea

to a few other teams to test it out in some actual games. As an extra player on offense, the 12th man was allowed to stand on certain parts of the field, but would not be allowed to participate in the play. The 12th man would have an optimum view of the field in order to call plays for the offense.

"He would stand away from the play, but would have a good view of how the defense was lined up," Michael said. "It's harder to see holes in the defense from a sidelines angle, so Coach Doenges thought it would make the game more exciting if someone from the field could signal plays."

Even though Melvin excelled as a leader in the classroom and as an athlete on the field, perhaps he was better known as the original 12th man—a combination of the two qualities.



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Robert & Jeaneen Naifeh Meditation Garden Endowed Fund
Frances McMillan Oney Endowed Scholarship
Opera Society Founders Endowment
Mark Parker Endowed Scholarship
Margaret Petree Endowed Music Scholarship
Frances W. Preston BMI Endowed Music Scholarship
Nancy Laughbaum Ragsdale Endowed Scholarship
Margaret K. Replogle Endowed Music Scholarship
Royal Sarjent Endowed Scholarship
Michael Schafer Endowed Scholarship
Inez Silberg Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Forest and Gloe Stith Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Watkins-Soloway Music Scholarship
Verle & Lawrence Watson Endowed Music Scholarship
Aleta Winkler Memorial Endowed Music Scholarship
Georgia M. Winton Endowed Scholarship

WIMBERLY SCHOOL OF RELIGION

J. Bart Aldridge Endowment
Mrs. Glen C. Archer Endowed Scholarship
Nova M. Atkins Endowed Religion Scholarship
William & Romaine Bailey Endowed Scholarship
Brian and Julia Bakeman Endowed Scholarship
Barnett-Widener Ministerial Endowed Scholarship
Herbert and Marguerite Barrett Endowed
Religious Scholarship
Herbert & Marguerite Barrett Mission Endowed Scholarship

William J. Bassett Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Jean Frances Beatty Endowed Scholarship in Religion
Ollie & Claude Bell Endowed Professorship in Church History
Bettis, Bussell & Hunt Ministerial Endowed Scholarship
Austin and Marjorie Bizzell Ministry Endowed Scholarship
Frank G. Blackwood Endowed Religious Leadership
Scholarship
Bishop Bruce P. Blake Endowed Scholarship
R. Fisher Blanton Endowed Religious Leadership Scholarship
Fred & Opal Boston Religious Leadership
Endowed Scholarship
Clyde & Evelyn Bowen Endowed Scholarship
Virginia P. Bryant Endowed Religious Scholarship
Edith Carlson Memorial Endowed Scholarship
A.R. Carpenter Endowed Scholarship
Ruby Chase Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Mary Coffey Endowed Scholarship
Nuell C. Crain Endowed Religious Leadership Scholarship
Pearl English Crain Endowed Scholarship
Bessie B. Cunningham Religious Leadership
Endowed Scholarship
Lulu S. Doenges Endowed Scholarship
F. Lahr & Blanche Einsel Endowed Scholarship
Donald & Suzanne Emler Religious Education
Endowed Scholarship
Endowed Chair in Islamic Studies
Bishop & Mrs. Paul V. Galloway Endowed Scholarship
Barbara & J.M. Garrett Religion Leadership
Endowed Scholarship
Joyce & Gordon Goering Endowed Scholarship
William D. Greenshields Memorial Endowed Religious
Leadership Scholarship
Norma Rowe Gunn Endowed Religion Scholarship
Mary Jean Hackler Endowed Religion Scholarship
Vernon V. Harris Endowed Chair in Christian Education
Hyde Endowed Scholarship
Robert Jones Memorial Endowment
Carl Jung Seminar Endowment (Quasi)
Martha Jean Lemon Endowed Lectureship
Martha Jean Lemon Endowed Scholarship
Lester W. & Mary E. Maddox Endowed Scholarship
Leroy Massengale Endowed Scholarship
W.C. & Clarabelle Mathes Endowed Religious Scholarship
Paul W. Milhouse Endowed Religion Professorship
Glen O. Miller Endowed Ministry Scholarship
Retta Miller Religious Leadership Endowed Scholarship
Wit and Carolyn Music Endowed Scholarship
Billy B. Nelson Memorial Religion Endowed Scholarship
Gene Nelson Endowed Scholarship
Gladys Teter Nichols Endowed Scholarship
Oakerhater Endowed Chair
Beverly Osborne Memorial Religious Leadership
Endowed Scholarship
Dana Owen Endowed Scholarship
Ray & Lavell Owen Endowed Scholarship
Harvey L. & Laura M. Parker Methodist Endowed Scholarship
Gertrude M. Patton Endowed Scholarship
F. Warren Pixley Endowed Religious Scholarship

W. Carroll Pope Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Olen D. Presley Endowed Scholarship
Winona Presley Endowed Religion Scholarship
Robert & Emma Price Endowed Scholarship
Roy W. & Jeanne Reed Endowed Scholarship
Margaret K. Replogle Endowed Religion Professorship
Glen Rhodes Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Helen Riddle Church Leadership Endowed Scholarship
Riley Endowed Chair in Religion
Vernon Roberts Endowed Religion Scholarship
Neal & Hazel Rock Memorial Endowed Religion Scholarship
Warren Romberger World Christianity Endowed Scholarship
Maryetta Rowe Endowed Scholarship
Arthur W. and Joi D. Salisbury Scholarship
Don Schooler Memorial Endowed Professorship
Minnie M. Seba Endowed Ministry Scholarship
L.L. Shirley Endowed Scholarship
Alice Sincox Endowed Scholarship
Robert J. Smith Memorial Endowed Religious
Leadership Scholarship
William Elza Smith Endowed Church Music Scholarship
William H. Smith Endowed Scholarship
Russell Stone Endowed Religious Leadership Scholarship
Bettie Ewert Stoneking Endowed Scholarship
Clarence Sutton Religious Leadership Endowed Scholarship
Naomi Thomas Endowed Scholarship
Mackenzie C. Sr. & Thelma Thompson Endowed Scholarship
Claude & Patty Todd Endowed Scholarship
United Methodist Women's Endowed Religious
Leadership Scholarship
Herbert Voth Endowed Religious Leadership Scholarship
Dean Thomas A. Williams Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Wimberly Chapel Endowed Fund
Owen Wimberly Center for Continuing Education
Endowment (Quasi)
Owen & Vivian Wimberly Endowed Professorship
Wimberly Quasi-Endowment
Wimberly Religion and Ethics Endowment
Wimberly Endowed Scholarship
Vivian Wimberly Center Endowment
Wimberly VP University Church Relations Endowment
W.W. Woodworth Endowed Scholarship
Richard K. and Effie D. Wootten Endowed Scholarship

OKLAHOMA UNITED METHODIST GIFTS

Jeannine Gibbens
Jean Hinckley
Tommy Karns
Darren and Kathleen Laptad
David and Paula Severe
Shelby Smith
Rex and Sacra Vaughan

FALL **E V E N T S** 2016



"It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play"

DEC. 2-10
 Burg Theatre
TICKETS: okcu.edu/ticketoffice
 Back by popular demand, this beloved American holiday film classic comes to captivating life as a live 1940s radio broadcast. With the help of an ensemble that brings a few dozen characters to the stage, this uplifting and endearing classic Christmas story is a treat for the whole family.

COOKIES WITH SANTA

4:30-7:30 P.M. DEC. 3
 Student Lounge in the University Center
 Celebrate the season with Santa and cookies before the opening performance of "Home for the Holidays." Children of all ages can decorate cookies and will receive a special OCU gift. Don't forget your camera for pictures with Santa.



Christmas Vespers

8 P.M. DEC. 9 • 4 P.M. DEC. 10
 First Presbyterian Church, 1001 NW 25th St., Oklahoma City
TICKETS: okcu.edu/ticketoffice

Four choirs join forces with the OCU Symphony Orchestra and University Organist Melissa Plamann in a seasonal celebration of scripture reading, poetry and congregational singing of carol favorites.

"Home for the Holidays"

DEC. 8-11
 Kirkpatrick Auditorium
TICKETS: okcu.edu/ticketoffice
 OCU's American Spirit Dance Company returns to the stage with "Home for the Holidays," a riveting Broadway-style holiday extravaganza.



Open Call for Nominations!

The OCU Alumni Association's second annual 30 Under 30 Award will recognize the outstanding accomplishments of young alumni. Each recipient must show exceptional achievement and significant contributions to his or her profession, community/society, or the University. The recipient must exemplify outstanding professional and personal development through traditional channels or innovative approaches. Please submit nominations online at okcu.formstack.com/forms/30_under_30 by Dec. 31, 2016. The winners will be recognized during All-Alumni Weekend in April.



All-Alumni Weekend

APRIL 21-23, 2017



The weekend's events will include the 30 Under 30 Brunch, the Distinguished Alumni Dinner, performances of the Mainstage Musical "Anything Goes," softball games, and more!



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