

# ARTS & SCIENCES



## MAMMOTH FIND

TOM COX (LEFT) AND CARLOS CORDOVA ARE LEADING OSU'S RESEARCH EFFORTS WITH THE HELENA MAMMOTH.





PHOTO / BRIAN PETROTTA

## playbill

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### On the Cover

Tom Cox (left) and Carlos Cordova are leading OSU's research into the Helena mammoth. Photo: Phil Shockley/ University Marketing

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YEAR INDICATES OSU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES GRADUATES.

## FROM THE Dean's Office

**W**elcome, alumni and friends, to the 2014 *Arts & Sciences* magazine. I'll highlight a few achievements here from this past year — but you'll need to visit the college and its faculty to really learn what we've been accomplishing!

Oklahoma and our nation have a critical shortage of science and math teachers, so we are doing our part to help address this shortage. In partnership with the College of Education, A&S has launched OSUTeach with a \$1.45 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Led by Kristen Baum (zoology) and Steve Marks (aviation), OSUTeach provides our science and math graduates the opportunity to simultaneously earn certification in secondary teaching. These students are immersed in classroom teaching opportunities from their freshman year and are professionally mentored by some of the state's top-performing teachers. You can learn more at [OSUTEACH.OKSTATE.EDU](http://OSUTEACH.OKSTATE.EDU). This will put some of our best students on track for a teaching career, and in turn, they will teach science and math to our future Cowboys and Cowgirls.

Our dedication to students was further validated by a second grant from the Hughes Institute. Don French (zoology) will lead project funded by a \$1.5 million grant to provide an undergraduate research track for students in life science majors at Oklahoma State University. This initiative will introduce students to research programs as early as their freshman year, properly preparing them for research, teaching or health-related careers, or simply for making 21st-century decisions in any career that will depend on STEM skills.

While these programs will further elevate the profile of our college, we already have faculty and students who were recognized regionally and nationally. I only have the space to provide examples from two of our 24 departments: In the Department of Music, Thomas Lanners received the 2014 Distinguished Teacher Award from the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association, while the OSU



trumpet ensemble (undergraduate students Cleon Chai, Nick Doutrich, Tyler Murray, Matt Register and Natalie Upton) won the National Trumpet Competition. In the Department of Chemistry, Allen Aplett was named the 2014 Oklahoma Chemist by the American Chemical Society, and Richard Bunce received the Oklahoma Medal for Excellence in College/University Teaching from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. Imagine — each department has examples just like these!

Currently, the arts and arts programs are undergoing a transformation at Oklahoma State. Last year, the OSU Museum of Art debuted in its new home at the Postal Plaza Gallery in the heart of Stillwater. We are formally entering a campaign to expand the visibility of the arts on campus, which will include a new performing arts center, a new home for the Department of Music and a completely renovated facility for the Department of Theatre. The arts at OSU will never have looked — or sounded — so good!

Over the next few pages, please continue to enjoy with me the College of Arts & Sciences' journey to distinction.

Best Wishes 🍀

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bret S. Daniłowicz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

BRET S. DANIŁOWICZ

DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Randy Couture earned the nickname "The Natural" with his quick rise in the arena of professional mixed martial arts fighting.

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COLLEGE OF  
ARTS AND  
SCIENCES

# Still 'The Natural'

STORY BY Brian Petrotta

Hard work, dedication helps former OSU wrestler move from athletics to arts and business successfully



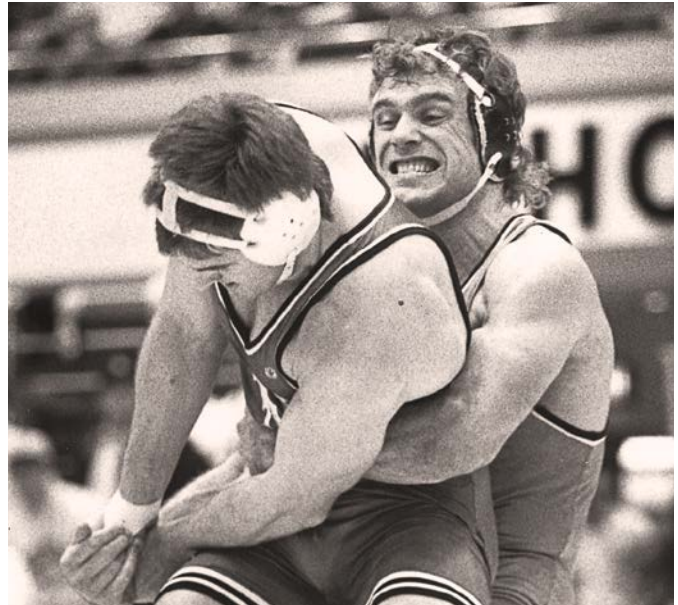
They call Randy Couture “The Natural,” a moniker bestowed after a swift rise to the peaks of professional mixed martial arts (MMA) fighting. While his athletic exploits still rate notice, “The Natural” earns his nickname these days by taking on vastly different projects with similarly apparent ease.

“He’s a jack-of-all-trades.” Those words are intended as a compliment to Couture, but they fall far short. They ignore all the hard work, extreme discipline, and driving focus with which the 1992 Oklahoma State University graduate approaches each challenge. In truth, not an ounce of success came easily to Couture.

These days, his challenges range from writing to broadcasting to acting in feature films. Physical brawn cannot carry the former Cowboys wrestler in such pursuits, but lessons learned in the cage and on the mat continue to pay off.

“I think that people have these preconceived ideas of what wrestlers and mixed martial artists are,” Couture says. “They think we’re these big, burly folks who can’t articulate.”

For Couture, nothing could be further from the truth. He has worked as a television analyst on MMA bouts, written or co-written three books, and spent the last decade building a promising career in film, most notably as part of *The Expendables* franchise. In fact, *The Expendables 3* hit theaters in August, and Couture, alongside such action star icons as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone, has been involved in all three installments.



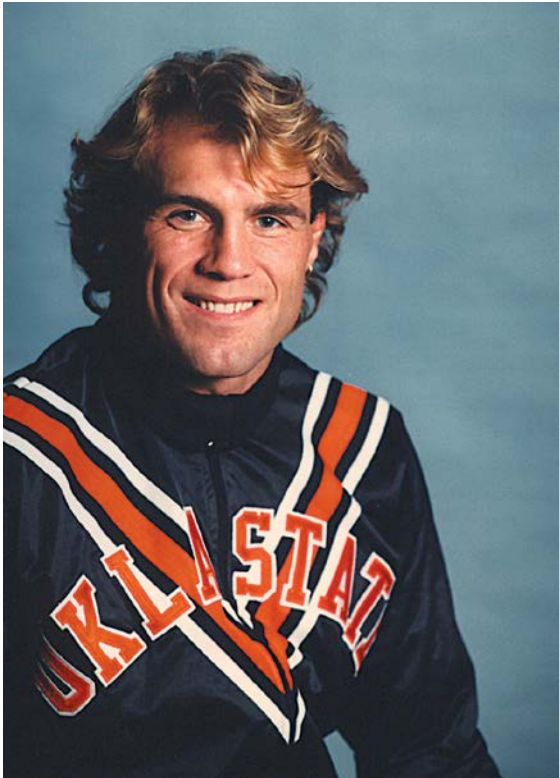
Randy Couture was a **three-time Academic All American** member of OSU's wrestling team during his days on campus.

When he is not writing, broadcasting or acting, Couture spends time with his highly successful Las Vegas-based gym Xtreme Couture MMA, his Xtreme Couture clothing line, and his military charity, Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation. Retirement from MMA, it seems, has left Couture as busy as ever.

Oklahoma State fans are likely to recall his runner-up finishes at the NCAA wrestling championships in 1991 and 1992. What they may not remember is that Couture was a three-time Academic All-American and would have made it all four years

had freshmen been eligible. A foreign languages and literature major who specialized in German at OSU, Couture entered college at 25 after serving in the United States Army for six years. Part of that time was spent in Germany, but that did not necessarily give Couture a leg up.

“I learned a lot of slang,” Couture says. “I didn’t know how to spell, and I really didn’t know how to read [German]. Language skills at that age are a lot of road memory anyway, so then it becomes a function of diligence.”



Randy Couture in his OSU days in the early '90s

His professors in the foreign languages department made an impression on him. He appreciated the continuity and focus of the faculty.

“It was a small group, you had a lot of the same instructors, so you developed relationships with them and they got to know you a little more,” he says. “It made it more enjoyable.

Diligence, focus, motivation — pick one and it probably applies to Couture. Those qualities have, in the

past, been most visible in his athletic pursuits. He was a three-time All-American at OSU, made Team USA’s Greco-Roman wrestling team as an alternate, and took the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) by storm, winning six world championships and earning a spot in its Hall of Fame.

Couture continues to seek challenges, looking for ways to fail. For that, he believes, is how to build character.

“I think it started from the wrestling mindset at an early age — the kind of diligence and technical mindset that it builds, because every single guy I know has lost matches and had to deal with adversity,” he says.

The facts that he did not win an NCAA championship nor advance beyond “alternate” status for the U.S. Olympic team clearly motivated him as a competitor. He remains equally motivated with his current pursuits.

“It’s problem-solving in its simplest form.”

Couture has overcome all sorts of problems. Many are detailed in his best-selling autobiography, *Becoming ‘The Natural’: My Life In and Out of the Cage*. Published in 2009, Couture gives an uncompromisingly honest account of his life up through the latter stages of his UFC career. He spent more than two years

with co-writer Loretta Hunt to produce the book and, thanks to his lay-it-all-out-there approach, it was not always an easy journey.

“I tried to be as honest as I could in the book and, you know, a lot of that was hard and painful to drudge up,” he says, “but a lot of it I’ve dealt with and still managed to get through those things, not use them as excuses to fail.”

As he moved into his 40s, Couture realized his years in the UFC were numbered. Acting, something the athletically gifted Couture never saw himself doing, became not only a viable option, but a passion. It was a risky passion for while Couture had spent considerable time in front of a camera, he was always “The Natural” (or “Captain America” or “Old Man”, depending on your preference for his nickname). His biggest challenge has simply been to set “Randy” free so that his on-screen characters feel authentic.

“I’ve spent most of my life in an individual combat sport where the key was to be able to compartmentalize, to place your emotion in boxes and kind of stuff them away,” he says. “Now I’m in an endeavor where the whole idea is to let those things out.”

And yet, honesty remains.



**Randy Couture** is busy as ever today, with a career that involves acting, broadcasting and entrepreneurship.

“You do some things you would never do in real life,” Couture says of acting, “but you still have to kind of twist that around in a way so that you can relate to it and tell the truth. If you’re not telling the truth, nobody is going to buy it.”

Apparently audiences and producers are buying it indeed, for Couture’s career is on an upward swing. The *Expendables* franchise has given him a high-profile platform and put him in contact with some of the most successful movie stars in the business. Aside from enjoying a behind-the-scenes interaction with “Rocky” and “The Terminator,” Couture observed and sought to learn from the best of the best, just as he did in wrestling and MMA.

“They know their industry, they know their audience, they know how to succeed, and that takes a lot of hard work and dedication to what they do.”

That could easily describe Couture’s path to becoming a UFC champion. It took hard work, dedication and keeping his failures close enough to be used as motivators instead of inhibitors. It began when he started wrestling as a child; those values continued to grow as he did. He spent six years in the Army, including three in Germany where he honed his wrestling skills enough to earn a recruiting visit to OSU.

“I knew the first week I rolled into Stillwater, I’d made the right choice,” Couture says.

Current OSU head wrestling coach John Smith made a huge impression early on, largely by how he pushed himself competitively.

“I walked into the wrestling room on my recruiting trip in 1988, and I saw John Smith and Kenny Monday in there training, putting the time in and doing the work,” Couture says.

Smith had just wrapped up one of the great collegiate wrestling careers in the 134-pound weight class and would soon win his first gold medal at the 1988 Olympic games in Seoul. He became head coach of the Cowboys wrestling team during Couture’s senior season in 1992.

“I learned in the Army that I could compete at that level, and I learned at Oklahoma State that I could win at that level,” Couture says.

He’s been winning ever since but is quick to point out his physical prowess only tells part of the story, especially in regards to the sometimes misunderstood UFC.

“It’s a thinking man’s game,” Couture says. “It’s not just physical brawn; it’s kinetic chess in just about every sense. You have to outthink your opponent in a physical way and that takes a lot of discipline and dedication.”

While his coaches and contemporaries such as Chuck Liddel or Tito Ortiz have pushed him and helped shape his career, Couture looks to home for his most important inspiration.

“I think the biggest influence in my life has always been my mother,” he says. “As a single parent, with three kids, she demonstrated the work ethic that she instilled in us three kids and is one of the things that allowed me to distinguish myself from all the others.

“It boils down to being able to put yourself out there and do the work.”

Couture is “out there” in a whole new way these days. In addition to *The Expendables 3*, he has starred in two projects for the Spike TV channel, a film called *Fight Master* and a series called *Gym Rescue*. He also has a cameo in the action-comedy, *Stretch*, which stars Ed Helms and Jessica Alba, among others. It is a different role for Couture, and he seems especially excited about it.

“I’ll be interested to see if anyone even recognizes me in that one but it’s a fun movie,” he says. 🍿

Mary Beth Davis demonstrates the Ekso Bionic Suit at Deer Creek Middle School in Edmond.  
PHOTO / DAVID MCDANIEL, THE OKLAHOMAN, © 2014



## ‘Watch Me’

OSU student doesn’t let paralysis stop her

STORY BY Jamie Hadwin

Certain events during a person’s life are associated with walking: walking down the aisle at a wedding or across a stage to receive a diploma.

Mary Beth Davis, a zoology graduate from Oklahoma State University, never really gave those events much thought until a car accident four years ago left her paralyzed from the waist down.

Doctors told Davis and her family that she might have to change her career plans and that she may never walk again.

“I’m always up for a challenge and I challenge myself personally all the time,” Davis says. “If somebody tells me, hey, you can’t do something, I’m going to be like, ‘Watch me.’”

### AND WATCH THEY DID.

On May 10, Davis defied her doctors’ prognosis by graduating as a pre-vet major, and with the use of an Ekso Bionic Suit, she walked across the stage in Gallagher-Iba Arena and received her diploma.

Aug. 27, 2010, was the Friday of the first week of fall classes. Davis was in her first semester at OSU in Stillwater, after transferring from OSU-OKC. Driving home to Guthrie, she went off the road slightly, overcorrected and flipped her truck.

At the hospital, Davis and her family were told she had broken the C6 and C7 vertebrae in her neck and had also bruised her spinal cord. The road to recovery was going to be a long one, but Davis knew she could not give up.



In the beginning, Davis had to have help with most everything. Once she was able to get out of bed and participate in therapy more frequently, she became stronger.

Strong enough that the following spring, Davis re-enrolled at OSU, taking one physiology class. The first day of class was an adjustment, but returning was a familiar and welcome feeling.

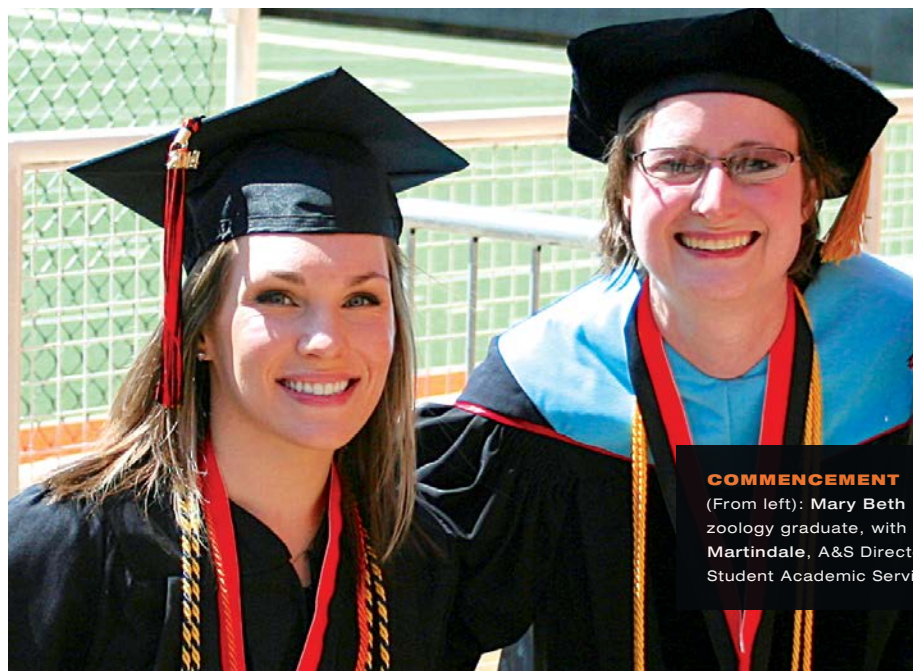
“After the first five minutes after lecture started, it felt normal, you know,” Davis says. “I was taking notes, I was listening, and you just kind of forget about your injury for a little bit while the class is going on.”

Davis was determined to keep moving forward, describing herself as having always been a student who loves learning and being in class. Because she knew she wanted to go to veterinary school before her injury, it helped her to stay focused on that goal.

Davis was exposed to the Ekso Bionic Suit when the Integris Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation Center in Oklahoma City received the suit as a donation from the Chickasaw Nation. The Jim Thorpe Center is the only rehab center in Oklahoma that has one of these suits.

When INTEGRIS received the suit, the center’s director and her former therapist believed Davis would be the perfect candidate to use it. With support from the Jim Thorpe Center, Davis strapped herself into Murphy, the suit’s Robocop-inspired nickname, and began learning how to work with the suit to start walking.

“It really is actually pretty straightforward,” Davis says. “We were at Deer Creek Middle School demonstrating it for engineer classes, and it’s pretty easy to explain.”



#### COMMENCEMENT

(From left): Mary Beth Davis, zoology graduate, with Amy Martindale, A&S Director of Student Academic Services

The Ekso Bionic Suit works by using a series of simple motors, straps, remotes, and Davis’s own weight-shifting abilities. A backpack on the back of the suit stores all the suit’s programs, including ones specific to Davis. After the first step is initiated through remote, Davis takes over by shifting the weight in her torso signaling to the suit that she is ready to take the next step. The program makes sure she’s in the right position and then obliges her body’s request to move forward.

Davis gets a lot of questions when people see her using the suit. She doesn’t mind all the questions, but one thing she really wants to emphasize to curious minds is that the suit has an impressive list of health benefits for its users.

Some of those health benefits include improved core stability, increased bone density from weight-bearing activity, improved circulation, a better digestive system and improved mental and emotional well-being.

On top of being a college graduate and Ekso Bionic Suit aficionado, Davis is also the 2014 Miss Wheelchair Oklahoma. Her winning platform involved her studies at OSU as a nutritional science minor.

Davis says a lot of focus for individuals who use wheelchairs typically surrounds accessibility, ADA requirements, and disability rights. Using the knowledge she learned in her nutritional science courses, Davis promotes health and nutrition as a goal for the disabled community.

“It was a really unique platform to advocate,” Davis says. “Ultimately, I’m trying to get people healthier. It can improve their lives and their disability.”

Davis is taking a year off after graduating and will apply to the OSU School of Veterinary Medicine to start classes in fall 2015. During this year, she will perform her duties as Miss Wheelchair Oklahoma, speaking at seminars and support groups and advocating her platform. She also will continue extensive therapy in Dallas.

Davis’s road to recovery has been long yet rewarding. The support of her family and friends and her faith have played a large role in her personal success. She can’t imagine herself doing anything different than what she’s doing now.

“You either waste an opportunity or make the most of the it,” Davis says. “And this is what I’ve chosen to do with this new life.” 🍷



THE DOEL  
REED  
CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS

Through the Doel Reed Center for the Arts in Taos, N.M., OSU is offering students and lifelong learners unique academic opportunities.

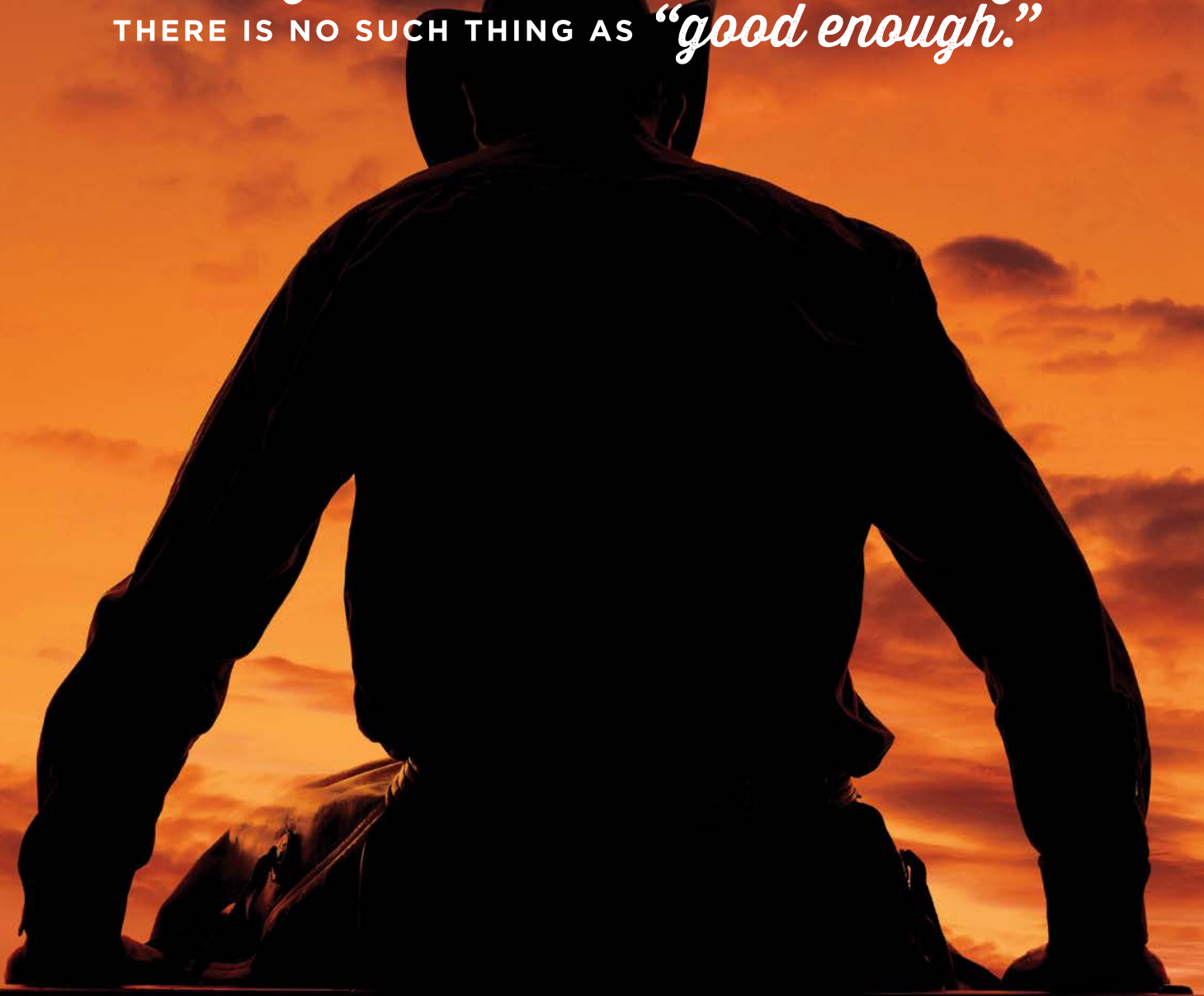
If you would like to help us enhance educational experiences through the Doel Reed Center for the Arts, please contact Debra Engle at the OSU Foundation at 405-385-5600 or [dengle@OSUgiving.com](mailto:dengle@OSUgiving.com).

For more information about summer academic and adult leisure learning course opportunities, please visit [drca.okstate.edu](http://drca.okstate.edu) or [facebook.com/doelreed](https://facebook.com/doelreed).



The Doel Reed Center for the Arts is named for the renowned artist who directed OSU's Department of Art from 1924 until retiring to the family estate in northern New Mexico in 1959. Thanks to the generosity of his daughter, Martha, the picturesque property and three historic adobe structures now serve as an inspiring setting for teaching, research and outreach related to the Southwest.

*For loyal and true Cowboys,*  
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS *“good enough.”*



**THEY DECLARE JOBS FINISHED** only after they are proud of the result. Their personal standards are higher than most, which is why their successes are also greater.

**NEARLY 100,000** loyal and true Cowboys have combined to exceed **\$1 BILLION** for *Branding Success*: The Campaign for Oklahoma State University. But the state's most successful higher-education campaign continues until Dec. 31, 2014. **OUR JOB ISN'T COMPLETE.** There is still so much to do.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about supporting OSU now or through your estate, contact Lauren Kidd, Senior Director of Development, at [lkidd@OSUgiving.com](mailto:lkidd@OSUgiving.com) or 405.385.0724.



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## Drumming Up Success

### OSU's marching band 'makes the dream work'

In 2012, Oklahoma State University President Burns Hargis and his wife, Ann, led the initiative to provide new uniforms to the OSU Cowboy Marching Band. In fact, the pants of the uniform can only be achieved through a combination of dyes, resulting in a new color that could be called "America's Brightest Orange."

Two years later, the Cowboy Marching Band still drums up success and is as orange and as big as ever.

Doug Henderson, director of the Cowboy Marching Band, appreciates the support and success the band has received in the four years he has been at OSU and credits part of that with the amazing teamwork between the band's members and staff.

"To have 300 or more people feel like they play an important role in the total product and be on the same page is not an easy thing," Henderson says. "When I was in grad school, we had this phrase, 'Teamwork makes the dream work.' Everyone kind of gets it now and understands what their role is."

To make the dream work, Henderson collaborates with Dr. Ben Lorenzo and Wayne Bovenschen, assistant directors of the marching band, to plan for the band's continued success, including space to accommodate the band's growth, sustained recruitment efforts, support from OSU administration and the success of OSU athletics.

"We want to get people in the stands earlier, and the bottom line was let's win some games and that will happen," Bovenschen says. "It's already happening, and there are other things non-football related that the president supports, too. Whenever he has a big event, he contacts the band to see if it's possible to have us play."

While Bovenschen works primarily with the percussionists, Lorenzo spends much of his time planning and rehearsing the logistics of the band's formations. The recent turf replacement at Boone Pickens stadium and the addition of the Sherman E. Smith practice facility help provide some of the best practice and performance areas for a marching band in the country.

The new facilities are a marked improvement from the uneven grounds of the library lawn where the band used to practice. Lorenzo is grateful for the new practice areas, but he would like a practice area that is 100 percent for the band.

"We have the same schedules as the football team and other athletic teams," Lorenzo says. "We're in constant contact to see if this [a field] is available, and if not, where can we rehearse, but our students have been great in being flexible with that."

Henderson knows the newer facilities appeal to high school recruits when they are considering OSU, but he'd also like to continue focusing on his outreach activities in Oklahoma and surrounding states. OSU participates in 10-15 clinics each spring where band staff will work with a high school band and offer them guidance and instruction. It's a great opportunity to talk with students about the OSU band program.

Jonathan Villela, music education senior, is in his second year as one of the marching band's three drum majors, a position that comes with a lot of responsibility, including conducting half-time shows. He came to OSU to pursue a degree in pre-health sciences. His participation in the marching band led him to change his major, and now he wants to follow a career path similar to Henderson's.

While Villela is a music education major, on average, only 25 percent of the band is composed of music majors. The

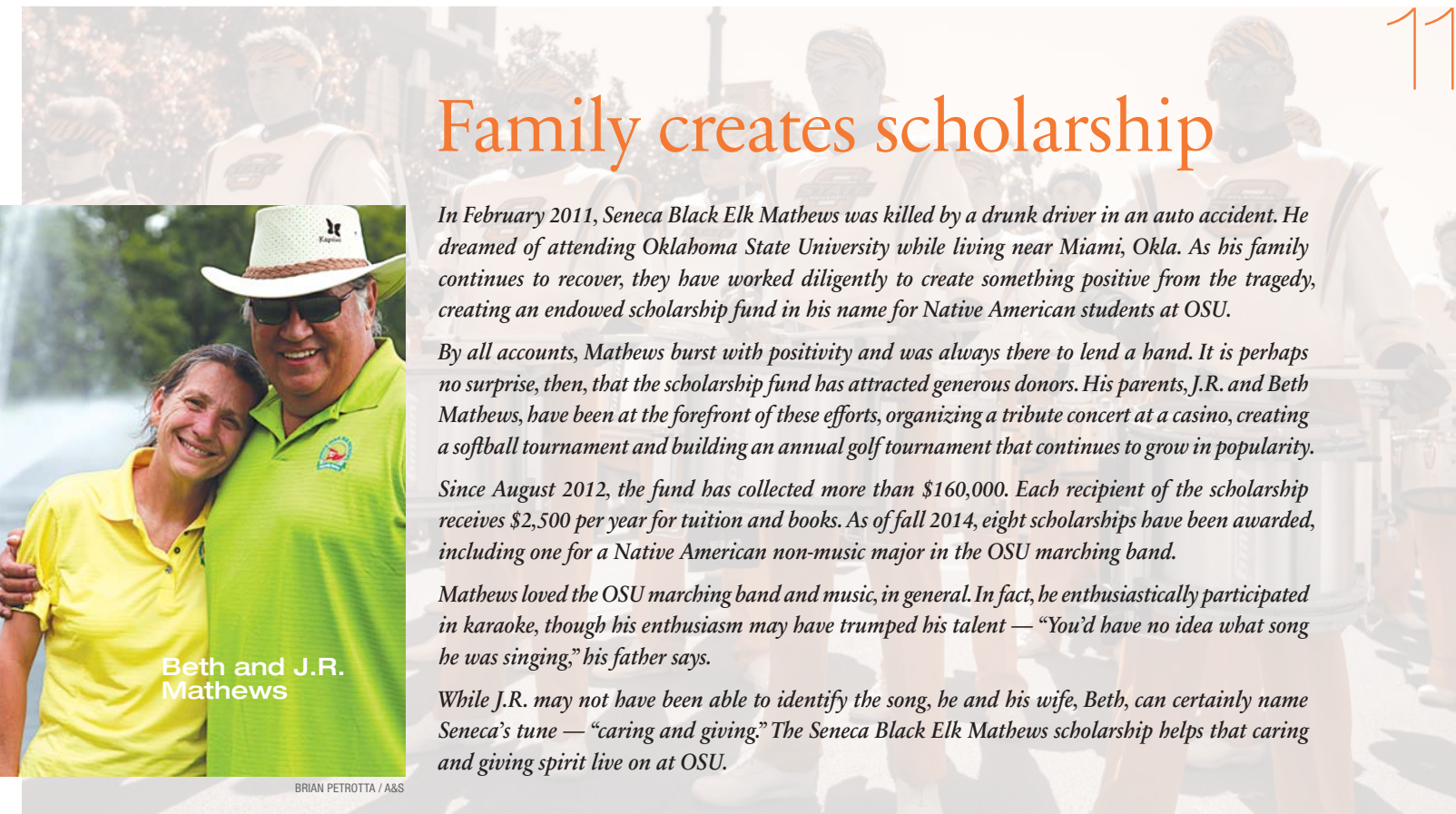
other 75 percent will pursue careers that don't revolve around music, but what the students learn in marching band benefits them in other areas.

Students must have a commitment to excellence in order to memorize the music, learn the marching band formations, and do it all at a very high level. That commitment to excellence carries over into the workplace, no matter what it is.

Villela explains that his experiences in the band taught him to be efficient and responsible. He believes band members understand that things that are worthwhile, like the halftime shows or a future promotion, take hard work and investment. The reward isn't always immediate, and it often takes a lot of dedication.

"It certainly does make you look at yourself in the mirror," Villela says. "In a sense, you represent the program. I appreciate that because it's really made me ensure that I am the person I want people to see." ❧

Jamie Hadwin



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## Family creates scholarship

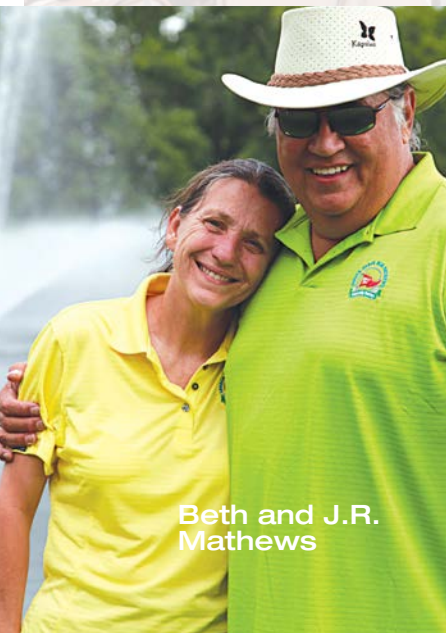
*In February 2011, Seneca Black Elk Mathews was killed by a drunk driver in an auto accident. He dreamed of attending Oklahoma State University while living near Miami, Okla. As his family continues to recover, they have worked diligently to create something positive from the tragedy, creating an endowed scholarship fund in his name for Native American students at OSU.*

*By all accounts, Mathews burst with positivity and was always there to lend a hand. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the scholarship fund has attracted generous donors. His parents, J.R. and Beth Mathews, have been at the forefront of these efforts, organizing a tribute concert at a casino, creating a softball tournament and building an annual golf tournament that continues to grow in popularity.*

*Since August 2012, the fund has collected more than \$160,000. Each recipient of the scholarship receives \$2,500 per year for tuition and books. As of fall 2014, eight scholarships have been awarded, including one for a Native American non-music major in the OSU marching band.*

*Mathews loved the OSU marching band and music, in general. In fact, he enthusiastically participated in karaoke, though his enthusiasm may have trumped his talent — "You'd have no idea what song he was singing," his father says.*

*While J.R. may not have been able to identify the song, he and his wife, Beth, can certainly name Seneca's tune — "caring and giving." The Seneca Black Elk Mathews scholarship helps that caring and giving spirit live on at OSU.*



Beth and J.R. Mathews

BRIAN PETROTTA / A&S

# DIGGING FOR



# TREASURE

Mammoth find a boon for OSU's geography department



PHOTO / TOM COX



What began as a mere invitation to the site of a potential mammoth has evolved into an unexpected whirlwind of information pointing to the past, present and future for Oklahoma State University.

The geography department in the College of Arts and Sciences is busier than ever as it anticipates funding for the artifact's campus debut.

In July 2013, natural gas company Access Midstream stumbled across the bones while drilling just outside Enid, Okla., and contacted the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, which confirmed the remains belonged to a mammoth. Survey member Lee Bement contacted the university for help.

Tom Cox, a first-year Ph.D. student at OSU who had previously worked with Bement, took over the dig site and included the data and overall experience in his master's thesis. Cox had been working with OSU geographer Carlos Cordova on reconstructing the environments of paleo-mammoth remains in the Great Plains region. Bement gave Cox the chance to work with an untouched site, a rare opportunity for a graduate student, especially at OSU.

"What we thought was going to be this little thesis project has turned into something huge," Cox says. "I think the biggest thing I've wanted to see come out of this is to show people that geography isn't just learning about dates, places and things. There is so much cool stuff that you can do in geography that people don't even know about."

After two months of weekend excavations, Cox had a nearly complete and surprisingly well-preserved mammoth, referred to as the Helena or Enid mammoth. Volunteers, which included OSU students and faculty, were recruited for the

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CONTINUES



excavation through word of mouth. The bones were donated to OSU by the site landowner, an OSU alumnus.

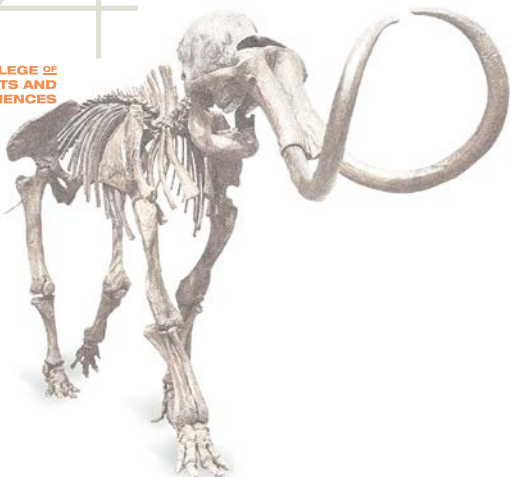
OSU's involvement can be described as a matter of happenstance, says Dale Lightfoot, head of OSU's geography department who has been involved in orchestrating the big picture. Everything happened at the just the right time; Lightfoot credits this to Cox's and Cordova's interest and expertise.

This project is extremely significant for OSU because the university doesn't have a specialty that focuses on research involved with paleontology. OSU has only been able to take on this project because of Cordova's experience with mineralized plant remains (phytoliths and fossil pollen) and Cox's interests and skills.

Cordova specializes in geoarcheology, the application of earth sciences to archaeology, and paleo-ecology, the study of past ecosystems. He's generally interested in ecosystems that existed in North America, particularly in the Great Plains, from the Pleistocene to the Holocene period, and how the climate, vegetation and animals have adapted or gone extinct, as well as the role humans and global climate played. For Cordova, the Helena mammoth excavation and data analysis serves as a data point that he can use for his broader project. With the Helena mammoth, Cordova conducted research similar to what he's been gathering for North American plants, animals and soil for relating them to those of southern Africa.

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COLLEGE OF  
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Shawna Smith, a first-year geology graduate student, and Taylor Iberosi, a junior majoring in geography, worked with the remains in a campus lab. With the help of the Dean's Excellence Fund, the two gained rare hands-on experience in the preservation and final construction of the Helena mammoth throughout the spring semester.

"I got an email from my adviser, who was looking for geography majors to volunteer for the dig," Iberosi says. "I emailed her back asking if this was a real thing. She emailed me right after, assuring me that it was real, and I jumped on that opportunity like it was the last biscuit on the breakfast table."

After receiving special training in proper preservation techniques from the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, the two students began to preserve, puzzle and glue the bones back together. In addition, they photographed, sketched and measured the completed bones while documenting the lab process.

"Some important points I'm taking away from this experience are the scientific need for attention to detail and a new appreciation for extensive documentation that will serve me well in my future career," Smith says.

Although the data analysis is complete and the remains safely stored, the story continues. Because of the lack of technology and certain expertise at OSU, Cox and Cordova have sent samples to labs and are patiently waiting for many answers regarding dates and specifics about the Helena mammoth that may determine the next chapter of its story — and that of OSU.



Cox and Cordova have their own ideas regarding the mammoth: Is it an Emperor or Columbian mammoth? How old is it? Male or female? What did it eat? What killed it? And there may be evidence of human involvement with the animal, but more will be known once the proper testing is completed. For example, the leg bones of the Helena mammoth were completely separated from the rest of the body, found in a separate area of the dig site.

"Hopefully, this is going to be a new area of research for OSU," Cox says.

The department hopes to secure funding and display plans for the mammoth in the fall, but until then, Cordova and Cox have bigger ideas.

"There is more than just this mammoth," Cordova says. "It's not only that mammoth. It's all the mammoths that may have existed in that area and all the other ones we are looking at." &

*Shelby Holcomb*



# Bringing Students Back to Politics

Professor's range of experiences, sense of humor appeals to classes as he works to 'create good citizens'



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Democratic challenger **Joe Dorman** takes on Republican Gov. **Mary Fallin** during their only debate during the race.  
PHOTO / PHIL SHOCKLEY / UNIVERSITY MARKETING



**M**idterm elections are approaching, and recent polls show that less than a quarter of adults under 30 are sure they'll vote this upcoming election season.

Brandon Lenoir, visiting political science professor at Oklahoma State University, aims to change this trend.

Does he stand a chance? Well, many of his students call him engaging, enthusiastic and funny. Yes, funny. So is that the secret behind Lenoir's success with his students, many of whom are part of this absent group of voters?

Derek Wietelman, a political science and statistics junior, thinks Lenoir's diverse experience in politics, media, the military and academia all contribute to his success.

"He has all these various life experiences in different fields that he can tie together and interweave and it benefits everyone," Wietelman says. "He's a really funny guy, too. I think anytime you add humor to your lectures, it helps with student engagement."

CONTINUES





### DIVERSE BACKGROUND

Lenoir gained political experience working for the Idaho deputy state controller's office after graduating from Idaho State University. From there, he moved to Washington D.C., lobbying for local and state governments to use the Internet to provide government services.

He was doing a lot of privacy and security work concerning the Internet, but after 9/11 and the passage of the Homeland Security Act, many of his projects were eliminated. He reached a "T" in the road.

"Do I shift policy focus or do I do a career change?" Lenoir says. "I had already received a few offers to go into television, so I took a job with NBC [affiliate WICS-TV in Springfield, Ill.] and covered politics in the state of Illinois. That was how I got my feet wet in broadcast journalism."

Lenoir covered Rod Blagojevich's first gubernatorial campaign and the indictment of Blagojevich's predecessor, George Ryan, both of whom he joked "are in the same federal prison right now." He even bumped into a little-known Illinois state senator from Chicago named Barack Obama.

Lenoir later moved to Michigan to cover the state capitol for WLNS in Lansing, a CBS affiliate. One of the major stories he worked on involved Guantanamo Bay. The timing of his "Inside the Wire" series came when stories of abuse at Gitmo were just breaking.

"From a historical perspective, very interesting, obviously a dubious history," Lenoir says. "But still, being on the front line of history was interesting, and that ties in when I talk to my students about media and politics."

After his Gitmo coverage, Lenoir took a job in Pittsburgh with ABC affiliate WTAE, but he found he was covering less politics, which motivated him to get back to what he really enjoyed doing.

### CHOOSING STILLWATER

Lenoir received a master's in political science and his doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh, and after adjunct and visiting professorships in Pennsylvania, he was ready to explore another region of the country.

Lenoir interviewed with a handful of universities, but after his interview at OSU, he says the decision to move from the east coast to Stillwater was an easy one.

"The student population, the land-grant university, and the fact that it's a research school all fit into the criteria of what I was looking for," Lenoir says. "And I wanted them to have a good football team."

Since arriving at OSU, Lenoir has stayed active about getting his students involved and interested in politics.

"OSU Debate Series: Decision 2014" was a collaborative effort with Lenoir, his students, and the university to establish OSU's political science department as the go-to resource in the state when it comes to political questions.

The debate series is already receiving a lot of attention. Earlier this year, Sen. Tom Coburn announced his early retirement, putting two Senate seats on the Oklahoma ballot this year. C-SPAN and OETA have expressed interest in airing the debates, especially since Coburn is a high-profile senator.

On May 1, Lenoir and his students held a preliminary debate with the GOP candidates running for Coburn's seat. The debate featured Rep. James Lankford, former state Sen. Randy Brogden, and Norman paramedic and EMS instructor Jason Weger. Lankford would go on to win the Republican primary, facing Oklahoma state Sen. Connie Johnson of Oklahoma City in November's general election.

A few months later, on Oct. 2, OSU hosted the state's only gubernatorial debate between Republican incumbent Mary Fallin and Democratic challenger Joe Dorman, both of whom are OSU alumni.

The following week, on Oct. 7, Lankford and Johnson participated in a debate for Coburn's Senate seat. All debates were free and open to the public and took place in the theater in OSU's Student Union, with Lenoir serving as moderator.

OStateTV, the university's video and web-based network, recorded the last two debates, which were streamed live on OETA and C-SPAN. The involvement of these organizations really gave his students the opportunity to learn some of the intricacies in organizing a political and media event.

The debate between candidates for state superintendent of public schools will be held Oct. 28 at the OSU-Tulsa campus.



PHOTO / BRIAN PETROTTA

### RISING PROFILE

In another high-profile event, Gov. Mary Fallin set time aside during a campus visit last spring to speak to a media and politics class about her own experience with the media as a politician.

Lucas Sheets, an agricultural business senior with a minor in political science, was instrumental in making Fallin's visit happen. Lenoir, knowing that Sheets was the president of the OSU College Republicans, encouraged Sheets to reach out to Fallin about speaking to the class while she was on campus. Sheets explains how events like Fallin's visit raise awareness of OSU's political science department.

"Without a doubt, if I hadn't been taking this class, College Republicans wouldn't have been involved with Mary Fallin," Sheets says. "To get students there to ask questions and see the actual people ... they think it's really cool to see and talk to people that have political experience like the governor. They were pretty impressed."

Lenoir still participates in broadcast journalism through his appearances on *Oklahoma Forum*, a public affairs program on OETA featuring topics related to the Oklahoma state legislature.

He often arranges for his classes to attend live tapings when he is a guest on the program, so they can get a behind the scenes view of how a political television segment is put together.

Lenoir has even managed to have his students involved in some of his research. Last spring, he recruited a cross-section of OSU students to participate in his Perception Analyzer experiment.

For the experiment, students watched President Obama's 2014 State of the Union address and the subsequent GOP rebuttal. They recorded their reactions in real time by using a knob. Turning the knob to the left indicated they did not agree with the current message and turning the knob to the right showed they did agree. Based on the students' demographics such as gender, age, etc., Lenoir tracked in aggregate numbers which issues resonated and which did not.

"If you're going to study voter mobilization and the challenges that are involved with getting people who traditionally wouldn't vote to get out and vote, what a better place to be than a college campus?" Lenoir says. "What I try to do is get the students involved. I don't tell them how to vote, but I do give them extra credit to register to vote. If they vote in this election, they're probably going to vote again in the future. I'm trying to create good citizens."

Whatever Lenoir's secret to success is, it seems to be spreading. By giving his students a reason and opportunity to get excited about politics, they begin to become hungry for more events like the debate series, the OETA trips and speaking events featuring political figures.

With the debate series, OSU will continue the path to raise its visibility on the state and national levels with help from its students, faculty and support from the university. The nation will soon be in the hands of young voters, and Oklahoma State University is doing its part to shape America's brightest future. 📺

Jamie Hadwin

# There's Nothing Like Prison ...

... As a crew discovered in bringing ArtsAloud-OSU project to inmates



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Jodi Jinks listens to her students go over a script.

ALL PHOTOS / BRIAN PETROTTA

## Once upon a time,

an OSU assistant professor of acting and a group of her most talented students went to prison. None of them had committed a crime nor were they being punished. In fact, each of them felt privileged.

"It was a great experience, something I will never forget," OSU sophomore Kia Dorsey says.

Make no mistake, apprehension existed and even tears were shed but there was also laughter and, ultimately, understanding. By pulling her students so far out of their comfort zone, Jodi Jinks saw the vision of her ArtsAloud-OSU program realized at the John H. Lilley Correctional Center in Boley, Okla.

It was April 18, 2014 — truly an "Orange Friday" if you consider the prison uniform — and Jinks brought her students to the facility to perform for the inmates. Acting out any script in that environment would induce goose pimples but Jinks' approach added a new level of anxiety. She teaches "devised theatre," in which the inmates worked with her to tell their stories and create a performance. They had already performed this material for their fellow prisoners but now the OSU students were going to play that same material back to those who lived the stories and penned the script.

Imagine playing the part of a man nicknamed "Bear" directly in front of him.

"This kind of acting experience takes the notion of 'embodied learning' to another level," professor and head of the theatre department Andrew Kimbrough says. "The students get a very powerful sense of the lived experience of the inmates/writers."

Jinks established this program at OSU after earning the Mary Lou Lemon professorship in January though she began this type of work several years ago at women's prisons in Texas. Her first effort in Oklahoma brought her (and volunteer Linda Smolen, who served as co-director of the play) to a minimum-security, all-male facility, and though the gender of her subjects changed in Oklahoma, the overall reaction did not.

"They're thankful for the interaction," Jinks says. "I think they're loving the fact that they're being heard, that they have a story people actually want to hear."

After several months of writing and collaborating with Jinks, the inmates created a show called *Reflections of Time*, which chronicled "the challenges, the joys, and the dreams of these particular men, and reminds us that we are all so much more

than our worst choices." A month before the OSU students arrived, the inmates performed the show for their contemporaries. The script was packed with inside jokes and included poetry, short scenes and even a band with inmates who did not take part in the class.

"It just went so well," Jinks says.

OSU graduate student Lacy Delaino was among the small group of people from outside the prison to observe the show.

"I had no expectations of it whatsoever," Delaino says, "but they performed in such an incredible way."

The subject matter, perhaps not surprisingly, often touched on forgiveness but also included stories of who they were before prison and even who had they had become while inside the correctional center. It sounds like a therapeutic process, but Jinks is quick to point out her role is to help them create a work of art.

"I am not a psychologist," Jinks says emphatically. "I stay away from the dark material because I don't have the skills to do anything with that. When I hear people talk about 'healing' in association with this work, I want to push back."

CONTINUES



Jodi Jinks

Nevertheless, the inmates' performance in front of their fellow prisoners proved to be an emotional experience. Delaino says those in the audience commented after the show how thankful they were to see their fellow inmates share details and stories they may have kept quiet in day-to-day interactions. They laughed and, yes, they cried.

"The most surprising part was to see the vulnerability in these men and that they were willing to show it in front of their peers," Delaino says.

The task for the seven OSU student actors was to capture that vulnerability, find the humor, and play the story back to the inmates inside the Lilley Correctional Center. The

students had limited time to rehearse — and several were involved in OSU Theatre's production of *Man of La Mancha*, which debuted a week later — but they delivered a performance that seemed to please both their instructor and the audience.

Zack Graham, then a senior at OSU, says he was not scared or nervous about entering the prison but more apprehensive about "messing up" the show these men had written.

"Watching them watch us was an emotional experience," he says. "It surprised me how emotional I got. Once we got their reactions, it was kind of like, 'Oh, I have emotions, too.'"

The slightly informal setting of the prison's chapel lent itself to a more reciprocal experience than a typical show on a stage in a theater. During dress rehearsal, Jinks warned the students that parts of the show would inspire members of the audience to respond. She pushed her actors to embrace such interaction and to even encourage it.

Dorsey related that in a few scenes they left out a word or adjective, forcing the actors to enlist the audience for help in filling in the blanks. At another point, Jinks directed actor D.J. Grigsby, who had the task of playing "Bear," to go up to the inmate himself and say, "Hello, Mr. Handsome!" during the monologue.





Moments such as the latter drew tremendous laughter, no doubt a welcome release in between teardrop-inducing pieces with titles like “How to Trust” and “Forgiveness and More.” According to Jinks, the inmates embraced the young actors’ interpretations.

“They were very impressed with the skills of the acting students. Some of them said, ‘Well, that’s what I was trying to do with my part!’”

After the students performed, they held a question-and-answer session with the inmates. Dorsey and Graham both noted how much the prisoners enjoyed seeing trained actors deliver the script. Suddenly confronted with seeing both sets of very different

students in the same space (“I felt like my parents were meeting my future in-laws”), Jinks spent most of the time watching the inmates.

“I saw some people crying as they saw their pieces read back to them,” she says. “I remember looking at Kevin, who’s 6-foot-7, and seeing his mouth wide and his eyes wide, watching this student read his part. He was glowing.”

That performance ended a sixth-month journey for Jinks and the inmates. She received four letters shortly after the event, all complimentary and the inmates asked for additional writing assignments. She will return in the fall to continue working at the Lilley

Correctional Center and has already expanded the ArtsAloud-OSU program, with Delaino taking the lead at Jess Dunn Correctional Center in Taft, Okla. Jinks hopes to add another prison and more volunteers soon.

Gratitude became the fruit of her first mission with ArtsAloud-OSU. From the inmates reflecting on their time to their own performance, to then watching trained OSU actors tell the story they had written, to the actors feeling privileged to perform in front of, and meet, the authors, every turn produced reciprocal gratitude.

On April 18, 2014, at the John H. Lilley Correctional Center, a group of OSU students went to prison. They could not have been more thankful. &

*Brian Petrotta*



# The School of Hard Rocks

OSU's Les Huston Geology Field Camp going strong at 65

BEFORE T. BOONE PICKENS MADE HIS NAME IN THE ENERGY INDUSTRY, HE ATTENDED A FLEDGLING FIELD CAMP NEAR CAÑON CITY, COLO., AS A GEOLOGY STUDENT WITH OKLAHOMA A&M COLLEGE. A FEW THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THEN.

OKLAHOMA A&M COLLEGE IS NOW OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND ITS GEOLOGY SCHOOL IS THE BOONE PICKENS SCHOOL OF GEOLOGY.



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Students from the field camp made their way to the top of **Pikes Peak**.

ALL PHOTOS / C.J. APPESETH

The field camp has been renamed the Les Huston Geology Field Camp, and it celebrated its 65th year this past summer. Despite the changes, geology students are still receiving the same hands-on field experience students like Pickens received in the camp's early days.

Jim Puckette, associate professor of geology at OSU and current field camp director, attended the camp in 1975 as an OSU geology student. He returned to OSU in the '90s as a professor and was asked to assist with field camp.

"The next year I went out and taught half-time," Puckette says. "And then within a year or so, I was teaching full time and I was made director, and I just love the camp."

#### HISTORY

The first Oklahoma geology camps were held in the Arbuckles of southern Oklahoma. When Oklahoma A&M and the University of Oklahoma began looking to Colorado for a new field camp site, a Cañon City rancher named Les Huston suggested some of his land would be well suited for their needs. In 1949, the schools began leasing land from Huston.

Originally, the campers and faculty stayed in tents. Over time, the camp would add a kitchen and cabins, and by the '60s, all the tents were gone. In the mid '80s, OU would forfeit its half of the lease to OSU. In 1990, the land was donated to OSU to maintain the field camp, which was then renamed after Huston.

When Puckette took over as field camp director in 1998, the cabins were still "rustic." He and his staff began renovating the camp. They upgraded the cabins and bathrooms, doing most of the labor themselves.

After a flash flood in 2006 washed away most of those cabins, the camp built its present-day facilities with help from a successful fundraising campaign. The camp now sees record high usage with students coming from OSU and other universities.



Students at the **Les Huston Geology Field Camp** outside Cañon City, Colo., show off their OSU pride.

#### CAPSTONE

The field camp is the capstone course for OSU geology undergraduates. The camp helps students apply what they learn in their core curriculum to a real-world setting. Puckette listed the four core areas of the OSU geology program as mineralogy, petrology (the study of rocks), structural geology, and sedimentology and stratigraphy (the study of rock stratification).

C.J. Appleseth, a first-year graduate student with the OSU geology program, attended field camp this past summer. He was excited to get out of the classroom and onto the rocks, describing the camp's mapping exercises as the "meat and potatoes" of geologic fieldwork because they combine knowledge from all the program's core areas.

"If I could sum up mapping ... you're basically walking around and recording what you're walking on, and then later trying to draw a map based on those measurements you took," Appleseth says. "It's a whole different animal being able to climb around these rocks versus just reading about them."

Sedimentary rock and geophysics receive the most emphasis at field camp because many of OSU's geologists will end up going into the environmental or petroleum industries, but students also get to expand their repertoire through exercises on other types of rock in the area.

## TEAMWORK

Not only does the Les Huston Geology Field Camp offer a variety of rocks and strata to study, but diversity is also reflected through the schools that send students and faculty to the camp each year.

The camp regularly receives students from schools in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and Missouri. Occasionally, the camp has students from the Appalachians and the northeastern part of the country.

“Some schools are better at teaching certain areas than others,” Appleseth says. “You get to play off each other’s strengths because not everyone is going to be 100 percent solid in every area of geology.”

Working with campers they’ve never met before also preps OSU geology students for the workforce. In the petroleum industry, it’s not uncommon to work with geologists from all over the world. Working in teams to complete projects is a skill employers like to see on résumés.

“These students have been able to work with, not their buddies and their friends, but

students they’ve never really met before until they come to field camp,” Puckette says. “I think they learn a lot about themselves, and they learn a lot about human nature.”

## COMMUNITY

The Huston family has remained closely involved with the camp since the camp’s beginnings. During the camp’s “tent years,” the Hustons would often open up their ranch to let students shower, do laundry, and enjoy a good meal.

Tiny Striegel, Les Huston’s daughter, remains a key figure in the camp’s operations. In addition to donating her father’s land to OSU to use for the field camp, she also contributes her time and wisdom when she visits the camp and its students each year.

The community of Cañon City has also become very familiar with the camp. Campers and faculty contribute to Cañon City’s economy when they shop and eat at local businesses. Puckette and the faculty frequently give presentations to the local geological society. The community wants to see the camp succeed.

“Every year, we have people stop in and visit us,” Puckette says. “It was a really important part of their life. And because of the relationship we have with our neighbors, we’re part of that little community out there.”

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Donors and alumni also support the camp through an endowment fund that helps with camp operations, however, the camp is designed to break even. Major repairs or disasters are not included in the camp’s annual budget.

Puckette says the camp would not have been able to rebuild after the 2006 flood without donations from corporations, individuals and alumni. The campaign to rebuild raised nearly a half million dollars.

Students also receive assistance from a scholarship fund set aside to help with the costs of attending the five-week camp. Alumni and geological societies are frequent contributors to the scholarship fund.

These contributions allow OSU to continue to bring geology students to its field camp

and offer a memorable and educational experience year after year.

## IMPACT

A geologist is used to seeing change in rocks over time, and for those who visit the Les Huston Geology Field Camp, they see something new every year. The landscape might be ever-changing, but any geologist will tell you that basics of field work taught at the camp beginnings are still just as applicable today.

As someone who has completed a field camp session and is continuing his education with the Boone Pickens School of Geology, C.J. Appleseth describes how field camp is a common denominator for all geologists.

“It’s like a geologist’s rite of passage going through field camp,” Appleseth says. “Everyone has to do it, and I can go talk to a man in the industry who looks like he’s on the doorstep of retirement, and our experiences at field camp will be very similar. Some things may change, but other things remain 100 percent the same.” &

At the field camp, students go over what they learned in classrooms and apply it to a real-world setting.



# Tiny Striegel

Whether it was because her family's home was open to campers looking for a shower and a good meal, or through her visits to the camp to interact with the campers and faculty, Tiny Striegel has become synonymous with the OSU geology field camp experience.

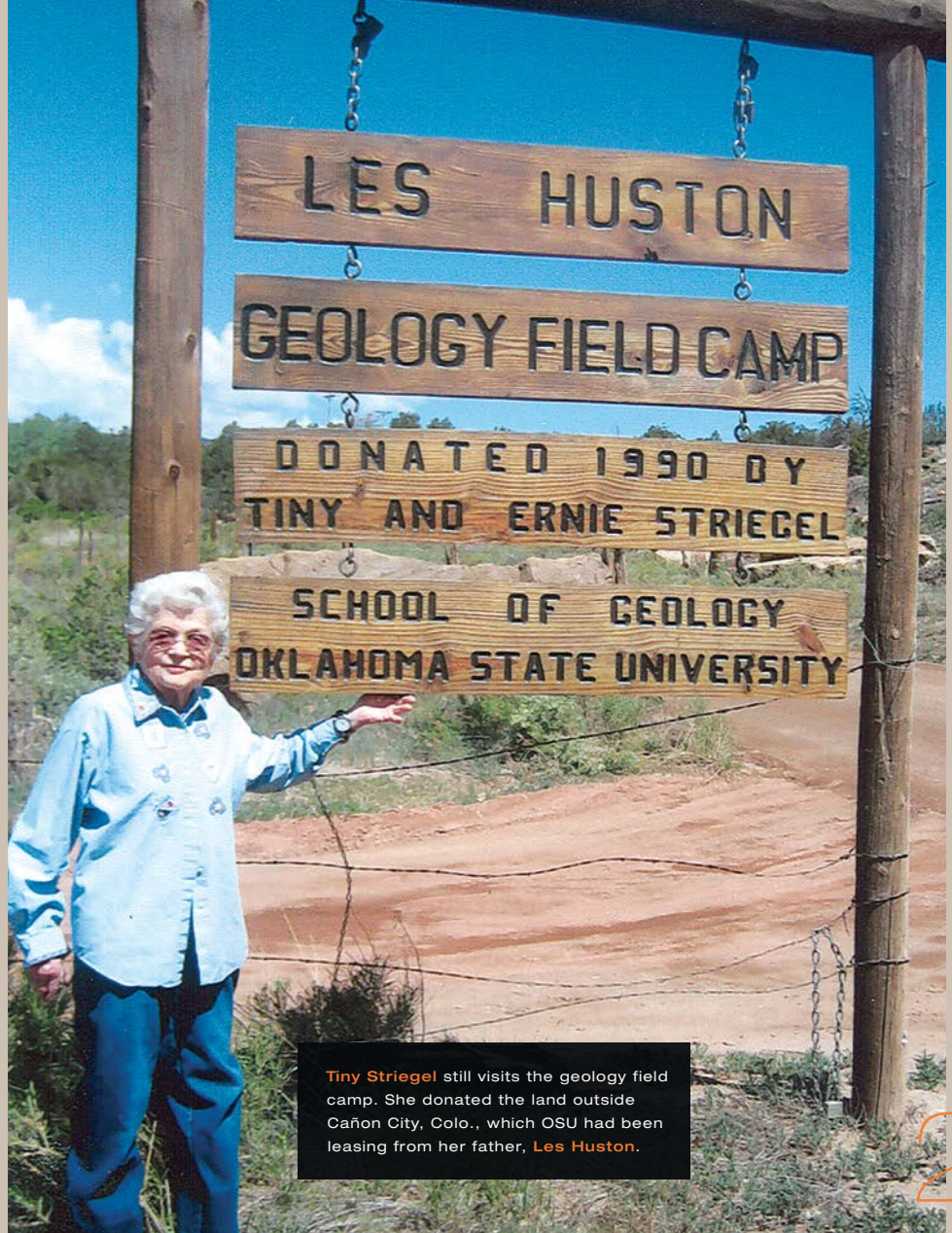
In addition to donating her father's land to OSU for preserving and maintaining the field camp, Striegel has also donated roughly \$500,000 through legacy gifts and annuities to the university.

"In the fine print was something the attorneys failed to see," jokes Jim Puckette, OSU geology field camp director. "Tiny comes with the camp — and what a fortunate arrangement for the students and staff of field camp."

When she's not devoting her time and efforts to the field camp, Striegel is an accomplished poet and a pillar of the Cañon City community.

Puckette recently recognized Tiny Striegel as an honorary alumnus of the Boone Pickens School of Geology. Striegel believed she was at the geology banquet to give a presentation and was surprised to receive the honor. True to her poetic roots, she wrote after the banquet:

"To be honorary member of the alumni there, my grateful joy I cannot hide. The highest honor anywhere I humbly accept with greatest pride."



**Tiny Striegel** still visits the geology field camp. She donated the land outside Cañon City, Colo., which OSU had been leasing from her father, **Les Huston**.

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# Jim Puckette

Jim Puckette indeed "has orange running through his veins" after earning two bachelor's degrees, his master's and his doctorate from Oklahoma State University.

And his time at OSU didn't end there. After spending a decade as a geologist in the oil industry, he returned to OSU as a research assistant and eventually became a professor with the geology department.

In addition to his work with OSU and the Les Huston Geology Field Camp, Puckette remains active with several organizations and civic clubs. He belongs to several committees with the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and has been involved with the Geological Society of America.

Puckette served as a scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 818 and has given numerous presentations on geology in public schools and to various civic clubs.

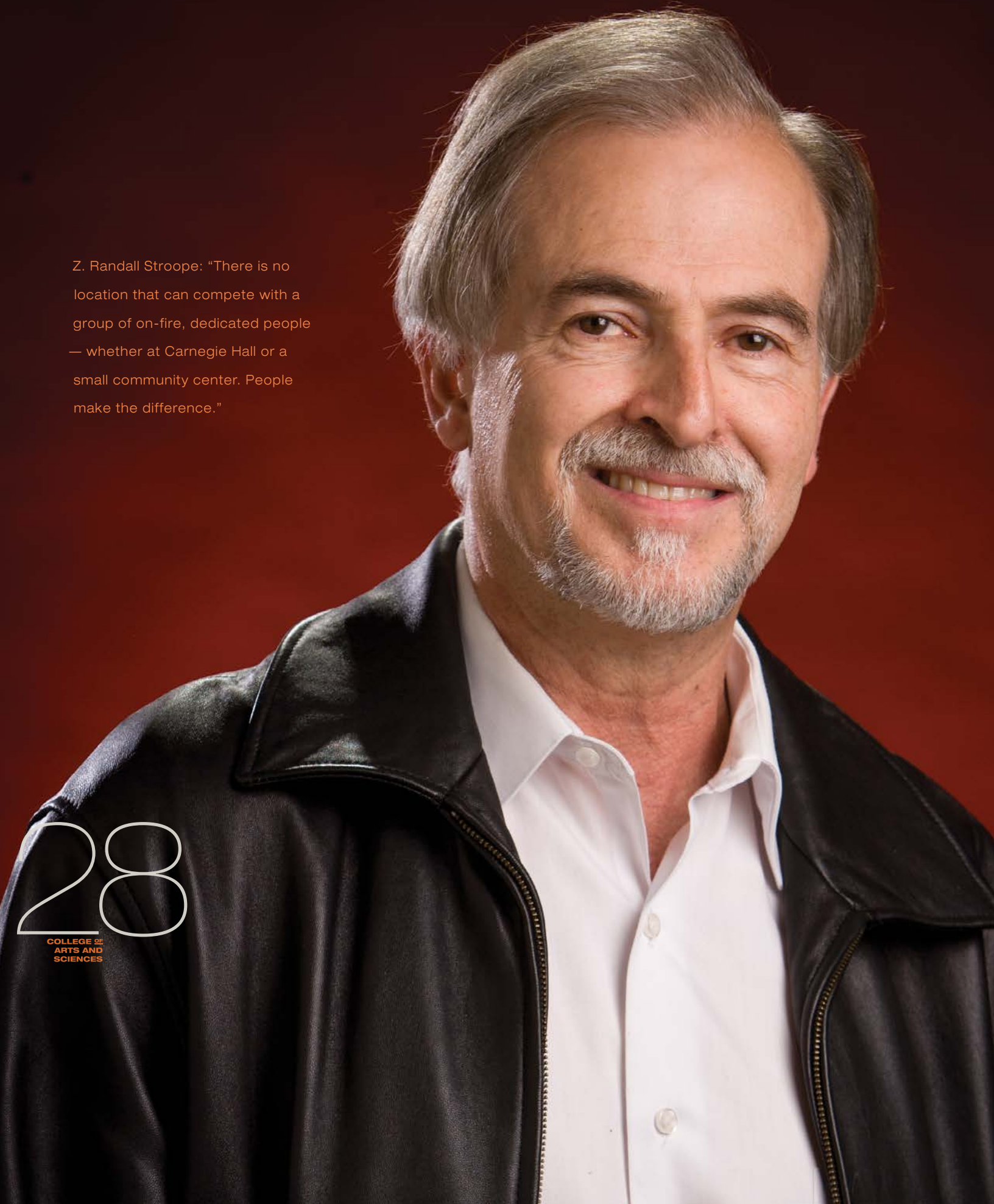
In recognition of his achievements, he was recently honored with and holds the Geoscience Education Chair in Honor of Dr. Jim Puckette. The chair was created and funded by many donors, largely from the Geology Advisory Board.



Z. Randall Stroope: "There is no location that can compete with a group of on-fire, dedicated people — whether at Carnegie Hall or a small community center. People make the difference."

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# If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space.

Professor and conductor Z. Randall Stroope's edge is still a crowded place that includes conducting at New York City's Carnegie Hall, directing music for Mass at the Vatican and at music festivals across the U.S. There's also room on the edge for publishing more than 100 musical works that have sold millions of copies, developing a music-conducting computer software and directing international music festivals.

"I am honored to be able to darken the door of many of the great performance venues of the country, but ultimately what stands out about the experience are the people," Stroope says. "There is no location that can compete with a group of on-fire, dedicated people — whether at Carnegie Hall or a small community center. People make the difference."

Stroope finds such people at OSU, where as director of choral and vocal studies, he was awarded the Doug and Nickie Burns Endowed Chair in Choral Music.

The chair has allowed Stroope to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding music department, students and the OSU community. It also ensures that the arts aren't simply pushed aside.

"The money has greatly enhanced several areas of performance and research that would not have been possible otherwise," Stroope says. "As an example, I am working on a new conducting software program with a person at the University of California, Berkeley. I was also able to bring in two international guest artists — one from the Metropolitan Opera in New York — to work with our students this year. Also, conducting playback technology was purchased this year. The incredible generosity of Doug and Nickie Burns has made a deep mark in the lives of so many students and faculty, even in the first year."

Stroope thinks John F. Kennedy's phrase, "A rising tide lifts all boats," captures the new funds' impact on the music department. Students agree.

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CONTINUES



“Dr. Stroope has made tremendous efforts to recruit good musicians and to publicize events, helping to put OSU on the map,” says Judith Prenzlow, a junior vocal music education major. “He also helps bring in excellent master-class presenters, like (opera singer) Barbara Dever this past semester, which has been more than constructive for all the voice students.”

OSU alumni Doug and Nickie Burns created the endowment in 2008 to retain OSU’s pre-eminent faculty, raise awareness for the arts and support OSU’s music department. Their daughter, Whitney Burns, sang in the choral program, so this endowment symbolizes the Burns’ personal connection to the department, which makes the award and the endowment that much more important to Stroope. The Burnses initially donated \$250,000, which was matched by T. Boone Pickens’ chair commitment and then by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, bringing the endowment’s impact to \$1 million.

An American composer, conductor, lecturer and world traveler, Stroope is among the most active and decorated people in his profession. Stroope shares his love for music with the world, and most importantly, with OSU. Since 2000, he has conducted twice a year at New York’s Carnegie Hall. He has also conducted five times in the last four years during Mass at the Vatican; directed 38 all-state choirs; conducted music festivals in 45 states; directed 12 summer international music festivals in England, Germany and Italy; and he has around 125 published works that have sold millions of copies.

This fall will mark the beginning of Stroope’s sixth year at OSU. While he has guest conducted at renowned venues and worked with some stellar conductors and performers, Stroope believes that OSU is an unbeatable place. Among other features, Stroope pointed out the family-like atmosphere, a commitment to excellence, opportunities for faculty to accomplish great things and the active ownership and pride the community has with OSU.

Stroope lauds OSU’s administration and regents for thinking beyond the current state of academia, moving forward and leading. He also says the leadership is pushing hard to ensure OSU continues as one of the finest universities in the country.

Music has been a natural part of the Albuquerque, N.M., native since he was young. His mother was a pianist, and his father sang in church choirs. When Stroope was 8, he began studying piano and later participated in band and other activities. The pilots in Stroope’s musical journey were his piano teacher, who ensured that he saw area performances, and his college piano and composition teachers. Stroope received a master’s degree in music from the University of Colorado and a doctorate in musical arts from Arizona State University.

Stroope is married to Cheryl Stroope, a vocal music teacher at Stillwater Middle School and Stillwater Junior High. The Stroopes have five children, who are scattered across the U.S., and a sheltie dog who accompanies them on their adventures and sometimes during class.

Stroope has a distinct, memorable presence and teaching style. His rehearsal atmosphere is comfortable, fast-paced and humorous, his students say, although he has extremely high expectations. His ultimate priority is musicality instead of absolute accuracy, according to Prenzlow. His high standards have helped many students to grow personally and as performers.

“Though he’s really famous within the choral community worldwide, he’s still very personable,” says Renae Perry, a senior vocal music education major. “His support made me believe in myself as a musician.” 🎵

*Shelby Holcomb*





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# Learning the Wide World of Sports

Media camp aims to turn fans into journalists

ALL OF THE GROWTH AND ATTENTION TO OSU ATHLETICS ARE GREAT FROM AN ATHLETIC RECRUITING PERSPECTIVE.

PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE OSU SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IS PULLING ITS WEIGHT IN THE SPORTS WORLD BY RECRUITING TOP STUDENTS THROUGH ITS ANNUAL SPORTS MEDIA CAMP.

CONTINUES



Since 2007, the OSU sports media camp has allowed high school students to get hands-on experience in sports broadcasting and journalism. Many of these campers later return to OSU as students in its sports media program.

Dave Hunziker, or as many know him, “The Voice of the Cowboys,” has been the camp’s director since it began. He acknowledges the impact the camp has had on the sports media program.

“A high percentage of the best students in our program have been to this camp,” Hunziker says. “This has been a tremendous recruiting tool.”

OSU began offering its sports media degree in 2006, and members of the sports media faculty decided they needed to hit the ground running on recruitment. The following year, they held the first sports media camp.

The camp hosted eight campers its first year and was a great learning opportunity for both campers and faculty. The camper limit usually hovers around 18-20, but this year, the camp expanded its roster to 24.

Adam Hildebrandt, a 2012 sports media graduate, was one of those first eight campers at the first OSU sports media camp. He attended the camp twice before coming to OSU as a freshman in the sports media program.

Hildebrandt now works for a group of media stations in Moberly, Mo., doing play-by-play and analysis for local sports teams as well as contributing to the daily news programming.

“Everything that I’m doing now was born from this camp,” says Hildebrandt. “All the things I learned at the camps I use in some form of my work. The amount of well-rounded preparation you get from the camp I don’t think you’ll find anywhere else.”

The sports media camp gives campers the opportunity to experience multiple aspects of the sports media industry. John McGuire, OSU sports media professor and camp faculty member, says one of the camp’s goals is to turn sports fans into sports journalists.

“You’ve got to make the progression from being just a sports fan to being somebody that understands what’s involved in reporting, and writing, and telling a story,” McGuire says. “And these concepts are introduced to students at this camp.”

McGuire and Hunziker, with their combined professional and academic experience in broadcast and play-by-play calling, teach the campers how to be “on the air.” They work on vocal projection and conversational skills, vocabulary and research in sports broadcasting.

The campers take the skills they develop to record podcasts, do on-camera stand ups and conduct play-by-play coverage.

One of the camp’s highlights involves a trip to a minor-league ballgame, where the campers sit in a press box and record live play-by-play coverage. This year, the campers called an Oklahoma Redhawks game in which the Redhawks made an explosive sixth-inning rally, helping them defeat the Omaha Stormchasers 8-5.



While the baseball game is perhaps one of the most exciting parts of the camp, the faculty, counselors and previous campers stress enough how the camp develops important journalism skills.

That's where Ray Murray steps up to the plate. Murray, an OSU sports media professor, works with the campers on print stories and instructs them how to do research in order to be prepared to ask the tough questions.

The campers put their research to the test at a mock press conference with an OSU coach or athlete. In the past, campers have held "press conferences" with OSU football head coach Mike Gundy, OSU women's basketball head coach Kurt Budke and former OSU golfer turned pro, Chris Tidland.

Murray says the camp helps end misperceptions that a career in the industry involves sitting around watching ESPN's *SportsCenter* and eating hot dogs at the ballpark by exposing campers to many sides of the sports media industry.

"In addition to writing talent, you have to research," says Murray. "It's highly competitive. You have to know what you're talking about. You have to ask the tough questions, and you've got to be observant."

Nathan Ruiz, a sports media sophomore from Sparks, Nev., attended the camp the year they held a press conference with Tidland. Murray says Ruiz's story was so good that it ended up running on the front page of the OSU student newspaper, *The Daily O'Collegian*.

With OSU offering one of the few sports media degrees in the country, Ruiz already had a strong desire to attend OSU, and the camp was an added bonus. He says that getting to experience a little taste of college life is a great way to draw students to the program.

"Being on OSU's campus makes you fall in love with it," Ruiz says. "I did feel a little more prepared going into my freshman year simply because of being at the sports media camp. It benefited me during my first year and will keep benefiting me over the next three years."

It's a great time to be a sports media student at OSU, as Ruiz found out this year. He's an avid baseball fan and as a sportswriter for the *O'Colly*, was able to cover OSU's baseball team as they made their run for the College World Series, which came up short at the super regionals.

OStateTV, a digital media network that showcases OSU-related videos, launched two years ago. OStateTV will serve as a laboratory for OSU School of Media and Strategic Communications students, who will provide content, including a regular student-produced sports show.

Orange Power Studios, which produces original and exclusive content for the OSU athletics department and assists in production efforts with Cowboy Sports Properties and Fox Sports Net, is making its debut this fall.

The OSU sports media camp and its state-of-the-art training resources are designed to give a hands-on experience to those students looking to be successful in the sports media and broadcasting industry, and it's hard to argue with the camp's results.

"Every one of those kids won some type of award while they were in college," McGuire says. "So I don't know if there's cause and effect there, but there you go." 📸


Jamie Hadwin

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Campers at the 2014 version of the OSU sports media camp gather outside the Paul Miller Building.

PHOTO / MICHAEL LINDBLAD





**Sharmily Khanam**  
presented her work on an  
antibiotic-resistant bacteria  
to a general audience in  
the **Three-Minute  
Thesis Competition**

GARY LAWSON / UNIVERSITY MARKETING

# Three Minutes to Win It

OSU Ph.D. student strives to shed light on her research

STORY BY Jamie Hadwin

Researching calcium-induced antibiotic resistance on *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*: Imagine saying that five times fast. Microbiology and molecular genetics doctorate student Sharmily Khanam did almost just that.

On April 10, Khanam gave a presentation over this research in three minutes or less, with the use of only one visual slide, and to an audience with no background in the field of microbiology.

Khanam's presentation, representing the College of Arts & Sciences, was one of many in Oklahoma State University's second annual Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, sponsored by Halliburton.

Khanam says random conversations about her work inspired her to take on this challenge to explain such a technical subject to people unfamiliar with it.

"Whenever I am talking to general people, when they hear about me working on antibiotic resistance, they are very curious," she says. "It's a daily-life issue. I can at least deliver the message; that this is how it works, and we are trying to get better ways to treat (bacterial) infections."

## THE BACTERIA BEHIND IT ALL

*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is an extremely antibiotic-resistant bacterial pathogen that can cause severe or even fatal infections. Khanam says that most fatalities with it occur due to the adaptive nature of the bacteria.

Research found that in the lungs of cystic fibrosis patients, where *P. aeruginosa* infections are very severe, elevated levels of calcium significantly influence

the physiological properties of the bacteria. Khanam and her team study the link between calcium and the bacteria's antibiotic resistance.

## JOURNEY TO OSU

Khanam received her master's degree in molecular medical biology from the University of Nottingham in England. She visited the United States for the first time when her husband came to OSU for his doctoral work in theoretical physics. She felt at home in Oklahoma, and its geography and friendly people reminded her of her home in Bangladesh, but Stillwater also had something else to offer.

"I looked at OSU for my research because I wanted to work on bacterial pathogenesis," Khanam says. "I found really good researchers here in the microbiology department, and Dr. Patrauchan is, of course, one of them."

Dr. Marianna Patrauchan is Khanam's adviser and heads the research on the effect of calcium on *P. aeruginosa*. In addition to providing guidance and knowledge in bacterial research, she also offered Khanam some powerful advice on her presentation.

"She told me ... talk about what we work for ... what is our passion," Khanam says. "Then I started working on it in a way so I can actually deliver the message in a more meaningful way."

## PREPARING FOR THE COMPETITION

Khanam used her academic connections to give her presentation in front of as many people she could get to listen as she prepared for the 3MT Competition.

"I even presented in front of my daughter; she is a 4-year-old," Khanam says. "I tried to just figure out whether they are able to at least follow what I'm doing. I'm trying to see whether it makes any sense to them or not."


Khanam frequently speaks at symposiums and conferences about her research, so she wasn't nervous about speaking in front of an audience. She *was* nervous that she wouldn't be able to get her message across to the 3MT audience.

"I'm presenting something that I'm working for, and I'm so attached to it," Khanam says. "I'm coming from a different language background, so that makes me very conscious. Maybe they won't be able to understand it, and then that would be the reason they would not appreciate it."

## BACTERIAL-FILLED FUTURE

Although Khanam did not place at the competition, she knows her research is important and is worth appreciating, and is not in the field of microbiology for the accolades. She describes working on bacterial pathogenesis as her "aim in life."

She loves the passion of the academic setting but is not opposed to doing research at a private company or institute. As long as the research is "challenging" and "adventurous," she says she would accept the opportunity to work with different researchers in a variety of environments.

"Research is more like a philosophy," Khanam says. "The more mentors, diverse mentors I get, the richer my philosophy of research would be." 

## 2014 COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES Top Ten Seniors



More than 175 scholarships and awards were recognized at the **2014 OSU College of Arts & Sciences awards banquet**. Among those awards were the college's **Top 10 Seniors**, who were honored for their academic excellence and campus and community involvement. Standing with **A&S Dean Bret Danilowicz**, they are (from top left): **Michelle Danser, Kristi Triplett, Kenzie Wahl, Lucy Bates, Haydon Vosburgh, Baylee Butler**, (from bottom left): **Hope Headrick, Anneliese Krull, Anna Marie Baroni, and Sammi Hembree**.

## 2014 ARMY ROTC Spring Awards Ceremony



COURTESY OSU ARMY ROTC



The **2014 Army ROTC Spring Awards Ceremony** presented awards and scholarships to its cadets and program supporters on April 23. From left at the ceremony are cadets **Anthony Molinar, Amber Evans, Moriah Wallace** and **David Taylor**.

# MEDICAL COWBOYS

## TREAT SCHOLARSHIP NEED



When the OSU Medical Cowboys program was established in 2007, Dr. Barry Pollard not only saw an opportunity to help pre-med students financially but also to create a network of medical professionals who shared his passion for Oklahoma State University. Entering its seventh year, the program is playing out that vision.

One of the first recipients of the scholarship was Kayeleigh Stallings, who is entering her third year at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center after graduating from OSU in 2012 with a degree in biological sciences. She was a standout high-school student who flourished at OSU, thanks in large part to financial flexibility from the scholarship.

**"If I hadn't had the scholarship, I would have had to get a part-time job and that would have prevented me from doing all the extra-curricular activities I valued so much,"** she said.

The extra-curricular activities were critical in preparing her for medical school, as was her flawless 4.0 grade point average. She served as an active member of the College of Arts & Sciences Student Council, led the college's peer mentorship program for two years, and worked closely with A&S faculty. She was also heavily involved in Greek life at OSU and, during her senior year, worked in a microbiology lab — something she did not expect to be able to do as an undergrad.

Best yet, the scholarship put her in contact with the Medical Cowboys committee, including regular correspondence with Pollard, who heads the program. Like Stallings, Pollard graduated from OSU. He has excelled as a neurosurgeon in Enid, Okla., and created the Medical Cowboys program with the

OSU Foundation to raise awareness of OSU's role in developing medical professionals.

**"Primarily we're looking for students who have a desire to be in the field of medicine and understand the devotion it takes to dedicate their lives to that,"** Pollard said.

Several scholarships are available each year, with some taking into account financial need and others targeting a specific area of the state. The latter is designed to reach what Pollard considers a critical audience in Oklahoma.

"We need to recruit from rural areas as those students are more likely to go back to those areas to practice medicine," he said.

The Medical Cowboys program continues to grow and still has room to expand. Pollard, having seen the impact of pooling resources, notes ways interested parties can contribute: through the general fund, the annual giving program, and by taking advantage of available matching funds. A recent class of unofficial "medical cowboys" went in together on a donation.

"As a group, we try to help anyone who wants to contribute," Pollard said.

It is the "group" that gives Medical Cowboys its power. Whether pooling funding to create significant scholarships or creating a network of OSU-educated medical professionals, Pollard and the OSU Foundation have blazed a trail for future Medical Cowboys.

BY BRIAN PETROTTA

