

SUMMER 2014

OBU

MAGAZINE

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BISON BASEBALL

CELEBRATES HISTORIC SEASON

PAGE 16



SUMMER 2014

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STREET PRAYER

With the help of a Brazilian Baptist translator, Allie Preston, left, and Kenzi Bice, players on OBU's soccer team, pray with two boys after telling them the story of Jesus. Later that evening at an outdoor worship service near Ceará-Mirim, Brazil, Kenzi and Allie gave the boys their first Bibles. The young women were part of the OBU team's mission trip to Brazil.

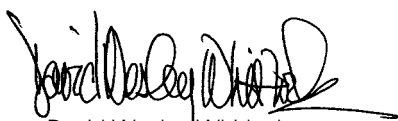


In 1912, nine OBU students gathered at First Baptist Church, Shawnee, to receive their diplomas during the first OBU Spring Commencement. On Friday, May 16, 2014, I had the distinct honor of congratulating 293 graduates as they crossed the stage in Raley Chapel during OBU's 100th Spring Commencement. Many years have passed and numerous students have earned OBU degrees since that first commencement ceremony, but one thing hasn't changed: our graduates continue to carry the distinction of having studied at a Christ-centered institution steeped in a tradition of academic excellence since its founding.

Throughout the years, we have sought to instill within our students an honest awareness of themselves and the world around them, to encourage them to strengthen their commitments to Christ, and to nurture within them a heart to care and a spirit to attempt great things that will make their world a better place.

On the following pages, you'll read about some of our May 2014 graduates, progress taking place on OBU's Vision 2020, and groundbreakings and improvements that are transforming our campus.

As you read these exciting stories, you will be blessed to see what our University community is accomplishing as we strive together to live worthy of the high calling of God in Christ. Exciting things are ahead for our beloved University. We are thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of today as we lay the groundwork for the achievements of tomorrow. God bless OBU. ■


David Wesley Whitlock
OBU President



OBU MAGAZINE STAFF

Editor

Dr. R. Stanton Norman

Managing Editor

Paula Gower

Writers

Lane Castleberry, Kenny Day, Ray Fink

Art Director

Chele Marker-Cash

Photographer

William Pope

View OBU Magazine Online

www.okbu.edu/magazine

Contact OBU Magazine

obumagazine@okbu.edu
405.585.5410

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

President

Dr. David W. Whitlock

Provost and Executive Vice President for Campus Life

Dr. R. Stanton Norman

Executive Vice President for Business and Administrative Services

Randy L. Smith

Vice President for University Advancement

Will Smallwood

CONTACT INFORMATION

(area code 405)

Academic Center	585.5100
Admissions	585.5000
Alumni	585.5413
Business Office	585.5130
Campus Ministry	585.5700
Career Services	585.5260
Mabee Learning Center	585.4500
President's Office	585.5801
Residential Life	585.5253
Student Development	585.5250
Student Financial Services	585.5020
Switchboard	275.2850
University Advancement	585.5412
University Communications	585.5410

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Reflecting on the message of the first commencement is a powerful reminder of the history of this great university.

First Commencement Address

by William H. Butler

Member of the first graduating class



WILLIAM H. BUTLER SENIOR PHOTO

“Pioneers in any sphere always have to face difficulties that those coming later do not have to meet.”

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The class of 1912 extends to you a most cordial welcome.

Today we stand in the place for which we have been striving throughout our college career. We are glad because we are now realizing what at one time was only an ideal. This is the day of all days to us. We look back over our college life without regret and with a profound feeling of appreciation for those who have in any way rendered us assistance. It is true some of our college days have not been so pleasant; discouragements have assailed us; transitory disappointments have come our way; but, realizing that ‘persistency is genius’ we moved on, until now we are the recipients of the blessings of this hour. We shall always hold in happy remembrance the yesterdays of our school years.

We are facing the future as never before; the world is a field of labor opened to us. It is ours to add to its betterment and worth. From this day forward new and graver responsibilities rest upon us, and we must lay aside our college privileges and pleasures to apply ourselves to our life's work. But we do not shrink; we accept the increased responsibilities with cheerfulness, realizing that with them come greater opportunities for rendering loving service to mankind.

We are proud of our peculiar petition. Our class, nine in number, come from seven different states. Like the citizenship of this great new state; we are cosmopolitan. But the class has done its work without a jar; so far as I know harmony has prevailed and today we are a united whole; nothing can ever sever the ties of loyalty and friendship that have bound our lives together. We take pleasure almost to the point of pride, in the thought that we are the first graduating class of the Baptist University of Oklahoma.

Pioneers in any sphere always have to face

difficulties that those coming later do not have to meet. We would rather help lay a firm foundation for those who succeed us than to enjoy the conveniences of a well-established school. Whatever misgivings others may be, we expect this University to grow in power and influence. She represents a people tested and tried, and they have never been found wanting; she represents the largest Christian denomination in the state, and is destined to become one of the great universities of the Southwest. When this institution becomes well established, as we know she will, we shall pride ourselves upon being the first class to go out from her sacred walls.

As the years come and go, our Alma Mater will remain enshrined in our hearts, wreathed with glory, and the fondest memories of her will ever cling to us as we lovingly linger upon scenes of bygone days and familiar faces – close companions of our earlier years endeared to us by many a tie.

Again we bid our friends welcome.

– WILLIAM H. BUTLER

100TH COMMENCEMENT



DR. BRAD JETT

Graduates Encouraged to Step Outside Their Comfort Zones

CHALLENGED TO NURTURE a “lifelong passion for learning,” 293 OBU students received their degrees during OBU’s 100th Spring Commencement Friday, May 16.

In academic regalia, OBU’s graduating seniors took their symbolic final walk across campus passing through rows of faculty members before reaching Raley Chapel’s east steps, filing into Potter Auditorium for the 3 p.m. ceremony.

Before an overflow audience of more than 1,800, Dr. Brad Jett, James E. Hurley professor of biology at OBU, shared his message with the graduates – “How Christian discipleship is like being an OBU student.”

“Good disciples have friends who are good disciples,” he said. “We build on each other’s strengths. Jesus didn’t send the disciples out alone, he sent them out in groups.” He likened this to friends who hold students accountable and roommates who wake each other up when they have an exam.

“Good disciples must also be willing to step outside their comfort zones,” he said. “How will you engage a diverse world if you are only willing to live in your own world? OBU students, like disciples, are risk takers, and if you didn’t want to be challenged, you should have stayed home.”

He also shared that good disciples never stop asking questions, and they have their preconceptions challenged.

“Being a good disciple, like being a good OBU student, is hard,” he said. “Of course it’s hard. It’s supposed to be hard. If it were easy, everyone would do it. Being hard is what makes it great.”

“Good OBU students like good disciples never ask the question ‘what’s going to be on the test?’” he said. “At OBU, we didn’t want you to be satisfied with the superficial answers that will simply get you by. There is too much important investment of your money and your life than to get by with the bare minimum education. Discipleship, likewise, requires more than the superficial living out of your faith.”

ENCEMENT

"Finally, OBU students like Jesus' disciples had to say goodbye," he said. "You OBU graduates are just beginning a great journey. We at OBU have tried to nurture a passion for learning in you. It's now your job to go live it. Never quell your thirst for knowledge. Refuse to grow intellectually stagnant. Expand your minds even more than they have been in the past few years."

In his charge to the graduates, Dr. David Whitlock challenged them to remember they carry the distinction of being graduates of OBU.

"We have sought to instill within you an honest awareness of yourself and the world around you," Whitlock said. "We have sought to strengthen your commitment to Christ. We have sought to equip you with the ability to think and with a knowledge base that provides the content for sound decision-making. We have sought to impart to you the heart to care and the spirit to attempt great things that will make your world a better place. You are recipients of a rich heritage. I charge you to move forward with hope and courage. I challenge you to use what you have learned as foundation blocks upon which you will build the rest of your life." ■

A few members of this 100th graduating class share their OBU experience, their plans for the future and what OBU means to them.

100th GRADUATING CLASS



Aaron Fullbright

Sallisaw, Oklahoma

Aaron Fullbright graduated magna cum laude with a degree in Christian ministry: youth ministry and a minor in Biblical studies. He received the Outstanding Senior in Christian Ministry Award and the W.P. Blake Award. He participated in Preachers' Guild, Campus Activities Board (CAB), and co-directed "Spring Affair: The Greatest Show on Earth." Fullbright plans to continue as the associate youth pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Shawnee and marry Kalyn Baker Aug. 9.

"OBU taught me how to integrate ministry and academics," Fullbright said. "I have learned that the two are not opposed to each other. Instead, they allow me to engage the world with a better understanding of both the Lord and his creation."

"I am mostly going to miss the people [at OBU]. The relationships I've built will last a lifetime. This has been home for the past four years and part of my heart will always see this University, and the people who make this University what it is, as home."

Christina Perkins

Mound City, Kansas

Christina Perkins graduated magna cum laude with a degree in nursing and received the Outstanding Senior in Nursing Award. She was a member of Campus Activities Board (CAB), served as a Welcome Week Worker (Tri-W), participated in intramural sports, traveled to Uganda on a GO trip during the summer of 2012, and was a member of the OBU College of





GRADUATES of OBU'S 100th GRADUATING CLASS

Nursing Relay for Life team. Perkins is engaged to Cody Moore, '14, and plans to move to northwest Arkansas to work as an RN at a hospital in the area.

"The standard of excellence held by OBU and the College of Nursing has prepared me to strive for and expect excellence in all that I do," she said. "My walk with Jesus Christ has also been strengthened while at OBU. My liberal arts education has empowered me to go into the world and to make a difference for Christ in a world that so desperately needs to experience the love of Jesus Christ.

"I think what I will miss the most about OBU is the people I have built relationships with. When I came in as a freshman, I didn't know a soul, but that changed quickly. I am still friends today with many of the people who were in my welcome week group that I met my first day as a student."



Molly Denny

Fort Worth, Texas

Molly Denny graduated summa cum laude with a degree in biology and a minor in Bible. She received the Outstanding Senior in Science Award. She served on Campus Activities Board (CAB), as co-chair of Blitz Week and as science coordinator for the Student Success Center. Off campus, she volunteered at Good Shepherd, a ministry for impoverished children, and served as a Sunday School teacher at Calvary Baptist Church. She plans to attend the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.

"The breadth of classes that I have taken has caused me to learn how to think, not just how to memorize information," Denny said. "Taking challenging courses has no doubt prepared me for my future in medical school. Also, the professors here have challenged me to grow intellectually and spiritually.

"I will definitely miss the overall environment of OBU – from the small class sizes, to the professors who invested in my success and cared about my learning. I will also miss being constantly surrounded by so many of my peers and professors who truly love the Lord."

Michaela Patterson

Wentzville, Missouri

Michaela Patterson graduated magna cum laude with a degree in exercise and sports science: pre-allied health and rehabilitation services. She was named the Outstanding Senior in the Division of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies. Patterson was a member of the cheer squad her freshman year, a diver on the swimming and diving team, and a peer adviser in the kinesiology department. She plans to attend the University of Oklahoma to earn her doctorate of physical therapy.

“OBU gave me a foundation on which I can further my education and accomplish my educational goals,” Patterson said. “My undergraduate degree provides a means for me to make it to physical therapy school and hopefully obtain my dream job of becoming a pediatric physical therapist. The environment helped me establish my own beliefs and taught me to do so with a Christian worldview.

“I would tell potential students to visit OBU and give it a try. It is a small school in which the faculty and staff deeply care for their students. It is a wonderful place which I have come to call home.”



Samuel Whelan

Parachute, Colorado

Samuel Whelan graduated summa cum laude with a degree in marketing and finance. A member of the cross-country and track teams, he received the Presidential Scholar/Athlete Award. Whelan married in June and began work at Chesapeake in Oklahoma City.

“OBU gave me a good education and a solid foundation of knowledge that I can use in the workplace,” Whelan said. “Many classes and professors challenged me and developed qualities in me that will greatly help me in the future.

“I will miss the large amount and quality of relationships I have,” he said. “My best memories are being out on the dirt roads for long runs (14-20 miles) with my teammates just working hard together.” ■





A Glimpse at the Journey to Reach OBU's Strategic Vision

IN 2010, OBU CELEBRATED ITS CENTENNIAL, marking 100 years of steadfast achievements throughout the life of the University. While honoring the rich history of OBU's past, and considering the importance of preparing for the University's future, OBU developed a strategic plan to serve as a guide for the next decade. Following are seven initiatives that drive the objectives and activities of the university and the progress made on each.

Through achievement of OBU 2020 initiatives, the University will expand the effectiveness of its mission as a distinctively Christian liberal arts university.

Enhance Academic Services, Programs and Support

OBU will be recognized for excellence in targeted areas of expertise and leadership by developing missionally-appropriate academic programs in the traditional liberal arts, professional areas and graduate programs.

PROGRESS – OBU has added new academic areas and adapted curriculum in both undergraduate and graduate programs to meet the needs of changing environments. The University has added or expanded undergraduate programs in pre-counseling, digital animation, social entrepreneurship, Christian and cross-cultural ministry, and creative writing among others.

The graduate school expanded to become the College of Graduate and Professional Studies, adding master's degrees in marriage and family therapy, global nursing and an MBA in energy management. Additional expansions to include two new master's degrees and two new MBA tracks in leadership and project management are pending approval by the Higher Learning Commission.

Expand Student Scholarships

OBU will expand existing scholarship programs and seek additional scholarships for students.

PROGRESS – An additional 117 scholarships have been established and more than \$17.4 million has been added to the University's general endowment and to donor-specific scholarship endowments. During the last three years, efforts to increase scholarships have yielded major scholarship

endowment additions such as the Mathena Family Fund for dependents of ministers and students majoring in pastoral ministry, the LeRoy and Zula Martin scholarship for choctaw students, the Jaxie and Eunice Short Scholarship for dependents of missionaries, and the Allen Scholarship for students from Western Oklahoma. University funded academic scholarships have increased more than \$8 million from 2008-09, to more than \$19 million in 2013-14.

Advance Student Services

OBU will enhance and increase student services on campus with new and expanded advisement, health and counseling services; additional student housing options; and additional security improvements.

PROGRESS – The Milburn Student Success Center was created to house academic advising and student success offices, making it convenient for students to access these vital services. Two new residential facilities opened for the fall 2013 semester, a third facility will be completed for the fall 2014 semester, and a fourth began construction this summer.

Campus security has been enhanced by converting the Campus Safety Office to the Campus Police Department, employing CLEET Certified officers, increasing security lighting and cameras, adding storm shelters within new construction and enhancing campus wide emergency notification systems.

Since 2010, four new sports teams were added and improvements were made to athletic facilities. OBU was named a Five-Star Champion of Character by the NAIA three times, earned two Learfield Sports Directors' Cups and won 12 national championships. Two coaches received the Coach of Character Award, and eight coaches were named NAIA Coach of the Year.

Strengthen Marketing and Enrollment Management

OBU will strengthen marketing efforts and enrollment management strategies resulting in increased enrollment and retention.

PROGRESS – Since plan implementation, OBU has experienced consistent, record-breaking enrollment growth and increased freshman to sophomore retention. The First Year Experience was established to assist freshmen transitioning to college life and an assistant

dean of students was hired to focus on specific campus life needs and parent/family programs.

Enrich Quality of Life for OBU Employees

OBU will improve institutional quality of life by increasing salaries, wages and compensation packages to assist in attracting and retaining top-notch faculty and staff.

PROGRESS – OBU committed to budgeting annual cost of living increases for all employees along with pay for performance increases based on annual reviews for staff and administrative employees. A new faculty salary system was developed to set minimum faculty salaries based on academic achievement rank and length of service at OBU. Faculty salaries have increased to exceed the 50th percentile of Council of Christian Colleges and Universities member institutions in this region.

Reinforce Faculty Development

OBU will establish a formal program of faculty development through additional endowment and grants.

PROGRESS – OBU has added three endowed chairs and one professorship. Teaching loads were reduced to allow time for professional development and a sabbatical leave program was created for faculty. Additional funds have been allocated for faculty development programs.

Improve University Relations

OBU will increase and improve external relations through community outreach and involvement, service learning and creation care initiatives.

PROGRESS – Employees are highly involved in community groups, civic organizations and churches, maintaining leadership and volunteer positions. Students regularly participate in service learning and volunteer activities within the community.

Creation care initiatives include the installation of new geothermal wells for buildings in the residential village, relocation of trees and sod due to new construction, and membership in the Environmental Peer Audit Program through the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. Participating institutions perform environmental audits of sister colleges and universities to assist in maintaining compliance with environmental laws, rules and regulations. ■

OBU COLLEGE OF

NURSING

A storied past.
A stellar future.



As you walk the halls of OBU's College of Nursing, each day may seem like any other. Classes, clinicals and exams quicken the pace for nursing students and professors alike. Time ticks by, from the start of a new semester to the end of the academic year. Yet each day brings the college closer and closer to its exciting future in a new state-of-the-art facility – Jane E. and Nick K. Stavros Hall. The new building will provide the ability to train and graduate more nurses to meet job market demand as OBU's College of Nursing moves forward with a sharpened sense of purpose and a bright future ahead.

A Legacy of Excellence

Founded in 1952, the OBU nursing program was the first baccalaureate nursing program in the state and the first program in Oklahoma to be

accredited by the National League of Nursing. It has maintained continuous accreditation (currently through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education) throughout its history. The first graduation took place in 1956 with 11 students. Since that time, the OBU College of Nursing has graduated more than 1,200 nurses. The University also launched a Master of Science in Nursing in 2008 with tracks in global nursing and nursing education.

"I can't think of an area that we study on the OBU campus that is more directly associated with, and that more directly illustrates the calling we have as a great commandment university than the College of Nursing," OBU President David W. Whitlock said. "Nursing is about meeting people at the point of their greatest needs. What a privilege, what

an opportunity our nursing students have to minister in the name of Jesus and to meet people at the point of their need – a true intersection of ministry and vocation."

Leadership for the Road Ahead

Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry was named dean of the OBU College of Nursing and began her duties July 2013. She earned an Associate Degree in Nursing from Southern Arkansas University in 1981; a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Arkansas in 1993; and a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Oklahoma in 1996. She earned her Doctorate in Nursing Practice from Union University in 2014 with an emphasis in executive leadership. Her area of specialty is psychiatric mental health nursing.

FROM LEFT:

Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry, dean of OBU's College of Nursing, addresses groundbreaking guests.

Dr. David Whitlock, OBU president (left) presents **Nick K. Stavros** with a Bison Spirit statue.

Gretchen Trimble, director of development, assists **Jaunita Proctor**, a founding member of the nursing faculty who served from 1953-66 and 1971-84. The OBU tradition of giving each nursing graduate a yellow rose during the pinning ceremony was begun by Proctor and continues today; **Dr. Robbie Henson**, Lawrence C. and Marion V. Harris chair of nursing, joined the faculty in 1991; **Dr. Lana Bolhouse**, faculty member and former dean of the OBU College of Nursing from 1973-2013; **Dr. Claudine Dickey**, current adjunct professor and former dean of the OBU College of Nursing from 1962-1973; **Mary Ella Evans** was a member of the first graduating class of 1956; nursing faculty **Karen Cotter**, **Dr. Martha Hernandez**, **Dawn Westbrook**, **Leslie Hobbs** and **Dr. Joe Rawdon** also assisted.



“The College of Nursing has a rich, noteworthy history, and is well respected among nursing leaders,” McHenry said. “The Institute of Medicine has recommended that 80 percent of the nursing workforce be prepared at the baccalaureate level by 2020. OBU has an opportunity to make a significant contribution to this recommendation by increasing the BSN nurse workforce, impacting care outcomes across the country.

“OBU is clearly positioned to take the helm and prepare nurses that will assume leadership roles in the nursing profession whether in education, practice or regulation. I look forward to building on past successes to accomplish the core values of OBU by providing a Christ centered, excellence driven, learning focused, mission purposed and community directed nursing program that will not only meet the

needs of our community, state and nation, but also the world.”

A Look to the Future

The University broke ground May 15 for Jane E. and Nick K. Stavros Hall, the future home of the OBU College of Nursing. This cutting-edge facility will allow the College of Nursing to educate and graduate more nurses, helping meet the high demand for nurses in the job market. Nick Stavros, founder and CEO of Metro Appliances and More, provided the lead gift for the building. Stavros was married to the late Jane Eleanor Stavros, daughter of Victor C. Hurt, legendary OBU athletic director and football, basketball and track coach.

Stavros Hall will be a two-story 31,600-square-foot nursing education facility. The building will include a

30-seat classroom, three 65-seat classrooms and a 107-seat lecture hall, as well as a computer lab. The facility will feature six state-of-the-art, high-tech skills simulation labs with 22 beds. These will include a medium skills lab, a health assessment skills lab, a low risk skills lab and a home health and bathing training room. The building also will have an administrative office suite, a conference room and faculty offices.

McHenry said she is excited for the new addition. “The simulation labs present an opportunity for our students to be educated and trained in an environment that will replicate what they would experience in a hospital, intensive care unit or labor and delivery room. This facility will allow us to build on an already solid tradition in nursing.” ■



“...the common thread remains that members of the OBU family learn best and grow best when they learn and grow together.”

OBU Breaks Ground for Fourth Building in the Student Housing Village

OBU broke ground for the fourth new building in the Residential Village Friday, May 16, prior to the University's 100th Spring Commencement.

The 41,810-square-foot suite-style residential facility, located on the north side of MacArthur Street and west of Raley Drive, will house 162 students. Constructed in a lodge-type style, the residential hall will feature a large rock fireplace with cedar trim in the common area, designed to serve as a gathering space for students living in Residential Village housing. The building will include an apartment for a faculty member to live in residence, mentoring and aiding students. It will also feature a tornado safe room.

Brandon Skaggs, dean of students, spoke of the positive impact the new facility will have on student life.

“I'm very excited that construction is literally happening throughout campus. What a testimony to God's glory and to Him truly blessing OBU,” Skaggs said. “We are pleased to welcome a new residence center. Our prayer is that this is a place where gospel-centered community can flourish and truly transform lives for God's kingdom.”

OBU President David W. Whitlock spoke of the excitement for the future of Bison Hill and the impact this facility will have for the University.

“The OBU family is one that grows together through shared experiences and one that holds together through shared memories,” Whitlock said. “We're excited that the students who live in this building will enjoy some new and enhanced features, but the common thread remains that members of the OBU family learn best and grow best when they learn and grow together. This demonstrates the commitment of trustees and administration to keep moving OBU forward, as we continue to see lives transformed on Bison Hill.”

Mathena Center to Provide Facility for Sports Medicine

OBU broke ground Friday, May 16, for the Mathena Center, a freestanding sports medicine and training facility located inside the Eddie Hurt Athletic Complex between the Jay P. Chance Track Building and the Bison Football Field.

The Mathena Center will feature 2,381 square feet of space with an office for the sports medicine specialist, an exam room, a whirlpool room, a hot and cold polar pool, a large treatment area with taping tables and a garage for medical vehicles used at athletic events.

Robert Davenport, OBU director of athletics, spoke of the excitement he has for the new facility and the personal connection he has with the Mathena family, who provided funding for the entire project.

“I'd like to start off by expressing my gratitude to the Mathena family,” Davenport said. “This facility will

allow us to give top-notch care to our student athletes in ways we haven't been able to before."

OBU President David W. Whitlock thanked the Mathenas for the impact they are making at OBU.

"What we do on Bison Hill matters," he said. "It matters to the kingdom, it matters to our state, it matters to the world, it matters to the local church. What we do has great significance beyond the halls and walls of Bison Hill.

"What better family name to associate with Bison Hill than the Mathenas, because what you do matters, and what you've done for your whole career has mattered," he said. "I can't thank you enough because you are making a difference through the students, faculty, staff and athletes here on Bison Hill."

Cafeteria Renovations on Target for Completion

Renovations on the cafeteria are moving rapidly ahead, staying on target for the start of the fall semester. The floor to ceiling remodel includes an expansion into adjoining rooms and will increase overall dedicated dining space from 10,700 to 15,000 square feet, providing an open, spacious restaurant-like atmosphere for students to enjoy. The new welcoming environment will include cooked-to-order meal stations, self-serve food platforms, a brick oven area for pizzas and plenty of comfortable seating. ■

To keep up to date on all of OBU's construction progress, visit okbu.edu/construction



RESIDENTIAL VILLAGE BUILDING FOUR GROUNDBREAKING

ABOVE: Residential Village Groundbreaking: left to right: Brandon Skaggs, OBU dean of students; Cody Moser, president of the OBU Student Government Association; Tonia Kellogg, director of the OBU executive offices; Randy Smith, OBU executive vice president for business and administrative services; Larry Johnston, CJC Architects; OBU President David W. Whitlock; Stan Lingo, president of Lingo Construction; Dr. David Lawrence, chairman of the OBU board of trustees and pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Weatherford, Oklahoma; and Will Smallwood, OBU vice president for university advancement.

BELOW: Mathena Center Groundbreaking: Helping shovel the first scoop of OBU soil is Adeline Carter, her father Chris Carter (left) and her great grandparents Harold and Patricia Mathena; **Cafeteria Progress:** a view of renovations in the cafeteria; **Mathena Center Groundbreaking:** left to right: Stan Lingo, president of Lingo Construction; Robert Davenport, OBU director of athletics; Dr. David Lawrence, chairman of the OBU board of trustees and pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Weatherford, Oklahoma; OBU President David W. Whitlock; Patricia Mathena; Harold Mathena; Dr. Anthony Jordan, executive director / treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma; and Dr. Hance Dilbeck, senior pastor, Quail Springs Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.



MATHENA CENTER GROUNDBREAKING



CAFETERIA PROGRESS



MATHENA CENTER GROUNDBREAKING



University's Top Awards for Faculty and Staff

OBU President David W. Whitlock presented the University's top awards for faculty and staff – the Distinguished Teaching Award, Promising Teacher Award and Meritorious Service Award – during Spring Commencement in May.

Dr. Dan Reeder, Albert J. Geiger professor of finance, was honored with the Distinguished Teaching Award, presented to a faculty member who has taught at OBU for five consecutive years or more. The recipient must exemplify the characteristics of superior instruction delineated in the "Commitment to Excellence," a statement of teaching expectations and objectives adopted by the faculty and administration. He joined the faculty in the Paul Dickinson School of Business in 1991 and has filled the role of dean and interim dean for business.

Dr. Scott Pace was recognized with the Promising Teacher Award, presented to a junior faculty member who has taught at OBU less than six years and has demonstrated outstanding teaching potential. He joined the faculty in 2010 as assistant professor of applied ministry and holds the Reverend A.E. and Dora Johnson Hughes chair of Christian ministry.

Tonia Kellogg was honored with the Meritorious Service Award, presented annually to a faculty or staff member who has made a substantial commitment in years of service and who has been a loyal and faithful faculty or staff member. She is the director of the executive offices. She joined OBU in 1991 as the director of the Geiger Center.

OBU Honors Akin with Hobbs Award

OBU President David W. Whitlock and Dr. Stan Norman, provost and executive vice president for campus life, presented the Herschel H. Hobbs Award for Distinguished Denominational Service to Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June.

"Herschel Hobbs made a massive contribution to Southern Baptists," Akin said. "My own life and ministry has been impacted by this wonderful man of God. To receive this award is a blessing and honor."

Named in honor of a legendary Southern Baptist pastor and denominational statesman, the first Herschel H. Hobbs Award for Distinguished Denominational Service was presented by OBU in 2011. Hobbs was one of the SBC's leading theologians and longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. He served two terms as president of the SBC, authored many books and hosted a radio program. OBU's College of Theology and Ministry was named for Hobbs in 2011.

Previous recipients are Tom Elliff, president, International Mission Board; Robert Kellogg, president and CEO, Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma; and David Dockery, president, Trinity International University.

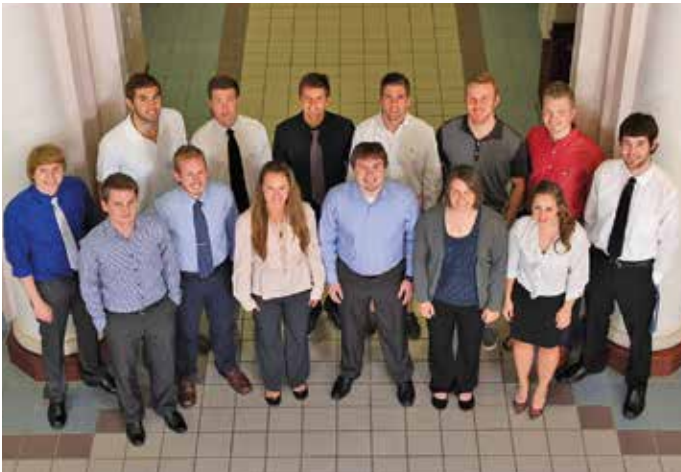


Retirees Honored for Years of Service

Two retiring employees were honored during the spring convocation and awards ceremony for their years of service at OBU.

Dr. John Nichols, associate professor of mathematics, joined the OBU faculty in 1997. He earned his Bachelor of Science from Union University, his Master of Science from the University of Kentucky and his doctorate from the University of Tennessee. In 2002 and 2007, he received the Seven Who Care Award from OBU. He has also been named to Who's Who in the South and the Southwest. In April 2004, he was named Area three Director for the Oklahoma Gideons. In April 2007, he was selected as the state chaplain for the Oklahoma Gideons.

Cynthia Hicks, supervisor of media services in the Mabee Learning Center, joined the staff at OBU in 1985. Hicks received her diploma from Norton Memorial Infirmary School of Nursing and earned her library technician certificate from Rose State College. She began her career at OBU as listening center assistant.



From left, front row: Mickey Peercy, Caleb Stogner, Lilian Ferreira, Curtis Hedrick, Stefanie Madison and Tara DeWall. Back row: Michael Juliano, AJ Barbar, Corey Day, Dario Macanovic, Fletcher Bennett, Cale Jackson, Chris Ergenbright and Kyle Kephart.

OBU Students Score in Top Five Percent

Seniors in OBU's Paul Dickinson College of Business proved themselves among the best business students in the United States. Two OBU teams successfully completed the Capsim Business Simulation, both scoring higher than 95% of all other college and university teams nationwide.

Capsim Business Simulations engage participants in a dynamic competition to turn struggling companies into successful, profitable

businesses. Classes are divided into teams that work together to focus on strategy, finance, production, marketing and all the key elements that interact to build their business.

"The teams' scores are a testament to both the students' hard work and the quality of education they receive at OBU," Dr. David Houghton, dean of the Paul Dickinson College of Business, said. "The strong performance in the Capsim simulation is affirming for both the students and the faculty."

This is the first time two OBU groups have scored at the 95th percentile or above. The teams competed against 4,296 teams from schools around the world including Auburn University, Baylor University, Brigham Young University, Duke University, Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), University of Texas and Vanderbilt University.

"Our College of Business continues to demonstrate excellence and this national recognition particularly illustrates the keen decision making and critical thinking that typifies our business students," OBU President David W. Whitlock said.

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OBU has partnered with Phoenix Community Coffee to enable our ministry students to participate in church planting efforts while working toward their degrees at OBU.

With every bag purchased, \$3 is donated to the OBU church planting program. With a purchase of three bags, shipping is free so you save the \$7 shipping cost, and \$9 is donated to OBU.

These funds help OBU equip students for successful church planting while at the same time provide them the opportunity to serve right away in their calling to mission work.

Phoenix Community Coffee (PCC) is a coffee company providing relief to a global community by combining coffee with a cause through importing, roasting, packaging and distributing quality, ethically traded coffee. Together, Phoenix Community Coffee and Oklahoma Baptist University are making a difference.



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BISON BASEBALL. BOBBY COX.

A WINNING COMBINATION

Bobby Cox is OBU's all-time leader in coaching wins in all sports ... He is the only coach to take a Bison baseball team to the NAIA World Series ... His teams have never had a losing season ... He guided the 2014 team to the first number one national ranking in Bison baseball history.

HEAD BASEBALL COACH BOBBY COX is OBU's all-time leader in coaching wins in all sports – leading the Bison baseball team to 1,110 wins through 28 seasons at the OBU helm.

Cox is the only coach to take a Bison baseball team to the NAIA World Series, accomplishing the feat in 1989, 1996, 2011 and 2014, with additional NAIA opening round appearances in 2012 and 2013.

His teams have never had a losing season. He has coached 24 All-Americans and 20 major league draftees. He guided the 2014 Bison baseball team to both the SAC regular season and tournament championships, as well as the first number one national ranking in Bison baseball history.

He has been inducted into OBU's Hall of Fame and the NAIA Baseball Hall of Fame, and was named Sooner Athletic Conference Coach of the Year in 1986, 1996, 2011 and 2014.

Yet, despite the amazing success, Cox remains grounded, humble and anxious to impact his players' lives off the field even more than he impacts their play on the field.

The Difference

When Cox took over the program, the baseball facilities left something to be desired. "It wasn't much to start with," Cox recalled. "I remember my dad and I got the tractor out one year and just started over."

Now, the Bison play in one of the best parks in the NAIA with chair-back seats, good dugouts, wireless Internet and a beautiful landscape. The field is just a stroll away from the Harry E. Coates Sr. Building which houses offices, laundry, batting cages, locker rooms with projection screens, television and very few hints of the rustic start of the Cox era.

"When I look back from where we are now, it just blows me away," Cox said.

Yet, despite the improvements in facilities and the on-the-field success, Coach Cox's greatest legacy is the impact he makes on his players.

Darrin Fowler, '93, played for Coach Cox from 1989-92. He now lives in Asher, Oklahoma, and has been employed by the Shawnee Fire Department for 21 years.

"Coach Cox is the main reason I have a college degree," Fowler said. "After the fall semester of my freshman year,

I was ready to go home, and he talked me into staying for the spring season. I had a successful freshman year which opened opportunities to go to other schools, but because of him, I didn't want to go anywhere else. He was very loyal to me, and I owed him the same respect that he gave me."

Former OBU Assistant Baseball Coach Chris Klimas has special insight into how Cox makes such an impact, both in the level of the team's play as well as in the lives of players. Klimas played two seasons for the Bison and was OBU assistant baseball coach from 2002-14.

"Playing and working with Coach Cox for 15 years, I think the number one thing that makes him so successful is his ability to manage individual personalities in a team atmosphere," Klimas said.

"He not only challenges his players on the field, but he challenges them to make good decisions in life and to be the best men they can be."

Cox's biggest joy is hearing from former players, seeing their family photos and hearing about the successful husbands, fathers and business professionals they have become.

2014 Player Honors

Six OBU baseball players were named to the 2014 NAIA Baseball All-America team. Matt Page and Julian Merryweather were named to the first team, while Steven Knudson, Ivan Vela (pictured on the cover), Jordan Morales and Jeff Ricker were named to the second team. The major draftees from this year's roster are Julian Merryweather, fifth round,

Cleveland Indians; Matt Page, 10th round, Washington Nationals; and Ivan Vela, 21st round, Los Angeles Dodgers.

Milestones

Cox earned win number 1,000 on April 5, 2011. Another milestone in his career came just three months earlier, when he was inducted into the NAIA Baseball Hall of Fame during the ABCA Rawlings-NAIA Hall of Fame and Awards Luncheon in Nashville, Tennessee.

"When you take a step back, you realize how much you've been blessed," Cox said. "I was blessed to be raised by farmers in Dale, Oklahoma, who taught me there were no watches. My dad never had a watch, so it taught me at an early age that you work until you get it done.

"To be able to do it in one place is important to me," he said. "I remember my senior year, talking to Bob Hoffman [former OBU basketball coach] about coaching and wanting to come back here to see if we could get it done. And we did. That's pretty special to me."

Cox is also quick to point out that he's not quite finished yet. "We've got a few more wins in us," he said. "We've still got a ways to go."

Klimas sums up Cox's legacy: "Anyone who has known him for an extended time would have a hard time finding anything bad to say about him as a coach or a person. That's a rarity in our profession. His legacy is evident with the wins, championships and individual awards, but I think it is just as much etched in the relationships with the men he helped his athletes become." ■

Lady Bison Soccer Team Kicks off World Cup Outreach in Brazil

They brought their cleats and their flip-flops, ready to walk through any door God opened.

TEN PLAYERS from OBU's Lady Bison soccer team traveled to Natal, Brazil, in late May for a pre-World Cup mission project involving soccer and evangelism. Their ministry kicked off Baptist outreach efforts for the FIFA World Cup, June 12 - July 13.

In a country where soccer is practically a national obsession, the Lady Bison soccer team drew attention everywhere they went. In fact, when the players, their coaches and chaperones arrived in the Brazilian town of Ceará-Mirim, they received a welcome worthy of a World Cup team. Members of the town's First Baptist Church, wearing

T-shirts promoting their outreach partnership with the Lady Bison, celebrated the team's arrival with firecrackers and other fanfare.

The group then boarded colorful open-air trucks called *trio elétricos*, used in Brazil to showcase bands during Carnival and other festivals. As they paraded through the streets atop the vehicles, an announcer from the church invited people to attend the soccer match between the Lady Bison and a local women's team, Global Ceará-Mirim. The loudspeaker drew curious onlookers who were thrilled to see a U.S. soccer team and eagerly requested photos with the athletes.

The "publicity tour" didn't stop there. Head coach Michael White and players Kenzi Bice and Sarah Zeckser soon went to a local radio station for a live interview about the highly anticipated game.

"We've really been treated like stars since we got here," White said on the air. "We are overwhelmed by the hospitality. We look forward to representing Oklahoma and Oklahoma Baptist University and playing some good 'futebol' out there."

On game day, the Lady Bison shut out the local Brazilian team with a 5-0 victory in a match that drew a crowd of nearly 500 in the Ceará-Mirim stadium. Brazilian Baptists collected food for the poor from spectators, the only admission price. A Brazilian minister also shared the Gospel during halftime.

The Lady Bison showed their skills in Ceará-Mirim, Brazil, beating a local Brazilian team 5-0. Here, OBU's Nicol Lagos (right) prepares for a pass to Rafaela Baroni (left), backed by midfielder Kenzi Bice (center).



Victories

Throughout their trip, the OBU team scored more victories on and off the field as they shared their faith, led soccer clinics, spoke in schools and encouraged Brazilian Baptists. Through the team's outreach, 18 people accepted Christ and 22 others expressed interest in hosting home Bible studies.

The OBU volunteers' work was part of a May 26 – June 2 mission trip to the northeastern coastal city of Natal and surrounding towns like Ceará-Mirim. Natal was one of 12 host cities for World Cup matches, and the U.S. team defeated Ghana there in June.

During their outreach in and around Natal, the Lady Bison partnered with International Mission Board missionaries Rick and Jill Thompson, who coordinated initiatives with three Brazilian churches in the area.

The OBU team's ministry was part of a broader World Cup-related evangelism effort involving Southern Baptist student volunteers in several Brazilian cities. Other teams worked with IMB missionaries and Brazilian Baptists in three more World Cup host cities – Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre and Brasilia – starting June 12.

Thompson said Southern Baptist missionaries in Brazil and their Brazilian Baptist partners planned during the last year for effective use of volunteers to help with "impact events" to take advantage of the excitement surrounding the World Cup. Planners wanted to reach international visitors coming to Brazil for the soccer tournament but also hoped volunteers would encourage Brazilian Baptist churches and stimulate church growth.

During events like the OBU project in the Natal area, Brazilian Baptists worked alongside the volunteers, getting names and contact information of prospects met during the outreach. Local church leaders then began following up with contacts and starting home Bible studies in an effort to plant a church.

Sharing their faith

Working in outreach with local Baptists, the OBU team experienced the receptivity of most Brazilians to hear the Gospel. At the Lady Bison soccer clinics, for example, children eager to play soccer with a U.S. team listened intently as the students shared how to know Jesus Christ.

Enjoying the best of Brazil's hospitality, the OBU group stayed in homes of church members and ate most meals in the churches. The team was frequently invited into homes and warmly welcomed at schools.

During one afternoon of door-to-door evangelism, players Kenzi Bice and Allie Preston met a woman who was experiencing great turmoil in her family. The students prayed for her in her front yard and invited her to the evening worship service.

"We got to pray for her right there," Bice said. "You could tell she felt better, more at peace and happier."

That same afternoon two Brazilian boys followed Bice and Preston down the street. The young women stopped to share the Gospel with them. Later that night, the boys attended a worship service, where they were given their first Bibles.

As the week progressed, Preston said her confidence in witnessing grew.

"I never saw myself doing this, but it's gotten easier. Being able to share God's love with other people has been a really cool experience," she said.

'Phenomenal success'

Coach White voiced pride in the team and how they handled themselves on and off the field. He said there had been some anxious moments upon their arrival "because of the things we would have to do that would take us out of our comfort zones. We know soccer, and we're very comfortable with that aspect of it," White said. "But when it came to being deliberate and open about our faith, that's where the discomfort came in."

Thompson added, "We've seen a lot of salvations. We've seen a lot of people excited about soccer and what they can do in terms of soccer and religion and a relationship with God combined. And so the success on that side has been fantastic."

The team's presence also helped Thompson make connections with some city and university officials he had never met, and those relationships will open new doors for the work of IMB missionaries and Brazilian Baptists.

"You accomplished more in seven days than I could have in seven months," Thompson told the team at the end of the week. "Thank you. Thank you."

"Thank you for coming to encourage us," said Judson Próspero Duarte, pastor of First Baptist of Ceará-Mirim. "Your presence has been wonderful." ■

by **Marie Curtis**

Writer for the International Mission Board



OBU Wins Learfield Sports Directors' Cup For Second Year

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, OBU earned recognition as the nation's top NAIA athletics program. OBU is only the fourth school in the NAIA to win back-to-back honors. In 2011-12, OBU earned a ranking of fourth in the nation in the NAIA Learfield Sports Directors' Cup standings.

"Winning this recognition last year energized our coaches and athletes this year," said Robert Davenport, OBU director of athletics. "Repeating as winners of the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup is a remarkable accomplishment. I am proud and excited for our student-athletes, coaches, the department and OBU."

The 2013-14 award comes with the bonus of knowing OBU student-athletes also raised their GPA from 3.04 to 3.11 since the last Cup arrived on campus. ■

NCAA Committee Accepts Candidacy

The Division II Membership Committee of the National College Athletic Association (NCAA) accepted OBU's application for candidacy membership during the 2014-15 academic year with year one of the candidacy period beginning Sept. 1.

"We are excited to move forward with the membership process and for the new opportunities it will provide," OBU President David W. Whitlock said. "Our membership will allow us to continue to pursue excellence in all that we do by providing outstanding competitive experiences for our student-athletes and fans while upholding a culture of high academic success for our student-athletes."

With the notification of acceptance, OBU begins a three-stage process of becoming full NCAA members and inclusion in the Great American Conference. OBU will continue in the Sooner Athletic Conference and NAIA as full members for the 2014-15 season, but that association ends after that.

"The decision to apply was challenging," Whitlock said. "A great deal of our history and heritage is rooted in the NAIA and we are thankful for the years spent with them. We have invested a great deal of thought into this decision, seeking input and discussing the impact throughout the University. After careful consideration, we believe this transition is the best move for OBU." ■



2014 Bison Football Schedule

August	30	6:00 PM	@	Southwestern College
September	6	1:30 PM	@	University of St. Mary
	13	11:00 AM	vs.	Missouri Baptist College
	20	2:00 PM	@	Panhandle State University
	27	2:00 PM	vs.	Southwestern University
October	4	2:00 PM	@	Southwestern Assemblies of God University
	11	2:00 PM	vs.	Langston University
	18	2:00 PM	vs.	Haskell Indian Nations University
	25	2:00 PM	vs.	Texas College
November	8	1:00 PM	vs.	Bacone College
	15	2:00 PM	@	Wayland Baptist University

Mastin NAIA Coach of Character

FORD MASTIN, OBU cross country and track and field coach, was recognized as the 2013 NAIA Coach of Character April 12 at the Annual NAIA Convention. This prestigious award is given each year to an NAIA head coach who has embraced the five core values of the NAIA Champions of Character program, demonstrated character through sports and instilled a culture of community leadership through volunteering or service.

Since returning to his alma mater in 1996-97, Mastin has built a winning tradition at OBU. His cross country and track and field teams have won eight national championships and have produced more than 300 All-Americans during his tenure.

Beyond athletic performance, Mastin also teaches, mentors and challenges student-athletes in the area of character development. He established and continues to organize Champions of Character team meetings several nights each fall, where Oklahoma Baptist alumni return to speak to the team regarding the five core values of integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship and servant leadership.

Landon Willets, '06, a former OBU student-athlete, nominated Mastin for the award. Experiencing the loss of his mother and sister in a tragic car accident while a student at OBU, Willets was one of the many student-athletes personally touched by Mastin's character and resolve.

"This award exemplifies not only the professional and coaching characteristics that Ford Mastin demonstrates every day on



campus, at practice and at track and cross country meets throughout the country; it embodies the father, the husband, the friend and the man of God that has impacted the lives of so many," Willets said. "Anyone who has been through the OBU track and cross country program has witnessed the internal strength and resolve he displays, his respectful approach to coaching and teaching, his ability to bind the individual to the good of the team, his tactful sportsmanship and his innate ability to lead by example." ■

by Sam Knehans

OBU COMMUNICATIONS AND SPORTS
INFORMATION INTERN

Track Wrap Up

OBU men's and women's track teams wrapped up another successful season. The Lady Bison finished second in the NAIA Outdoor Track and Field National Championships in May, while the men placed 10th.

The Lady Bison finished the meet with six event championships, the Most Outstanding Performer, the Most Valuable Athlete, 23 All-America honors (a meet record) and 101 points.

The Lady Bison have won seven NAIA team national championships.

Akela Jones took home the Most Valuable Athlete honors. Jura Levy earned the Outstanding Performance honors, setting the NAIA record in the 100 meters.

Travis Hinton placed second in the 400 meters. He also was the first leg of OBU's 4x400 relay runner-up squad with Alex Wilson, Clay Shepperson and Jywayne Allen.

During the season, both the Bison and Lady Bison spent time ranked number one in the nation. The Lady Bison defended their NAIA Women's Indoor Track and Field Championship title in March, while the men's team placed fourth. Ten OBU women won 25 honors and 11 Bison carried home 20 of the awards at the meet.

OBU also won Sooner Athletic Conference championships in April.

Glen Redding Jr. '76

A Passion to Serve Those In Need



Glen Redding remembers fondly how he came to choose OBU for college. He simply knew it was the right place for him. "I always wanted to attend OBU," he said. "I talked to OBU students each summer while we were at camp at Falls Creek, and they reinforced my decision."

Born in McAlester, Oklahoma, he followed his desire and journeyed to Bison Hill to pursue his degree, graduating in 1976. He later graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1978 with a Master of Religious Education degree with a counseling emphasis.

After graduating from Southwestern, he moved back to Shawnee and lived in public housing. As time passed, he ran low on money and told the director he didn't have money for rent. The director informed him they were looking for someone with a counseling degree to be a housing counselor for the authority.

Redding applied and became the Public Housing Manager for the Shawnee Housing Authority. He has remained in that career field ever since. It was in that position where Redding found his calling during that time, borne from circumstances in his own life.

"I have worked in public housing for 36 years," Redding said. "I have always had the idea that my

life was to serve others and help to bring about the kingdom. I believe in helping others, so they will believe in themselves and will work hard to get to a place of their own. I have found my calling in the work that I do for housing."

In 1985, he moved to Stillwater, Oklahoma, to serve as executive director of the Stillwater Housing Authority. He has seen the Housing Authority grow from 200 units available in public housing and Section 8 rent subsidized housing, to 134 public housing units and 656 units available for Section 8 housing.

"The most rewarding thing about my job is providing a place to live that is affordable for families to build their lives and futures," he said. "Public housing is temporary help for people and families going through tough times. The experience teaches them to build savings, budget and ultimately reach their goals."

Redding believes strongly that OBU helped prepare him for the success he has experienced in his career. He credits his advisor and professors for making a powerful impact on his life.

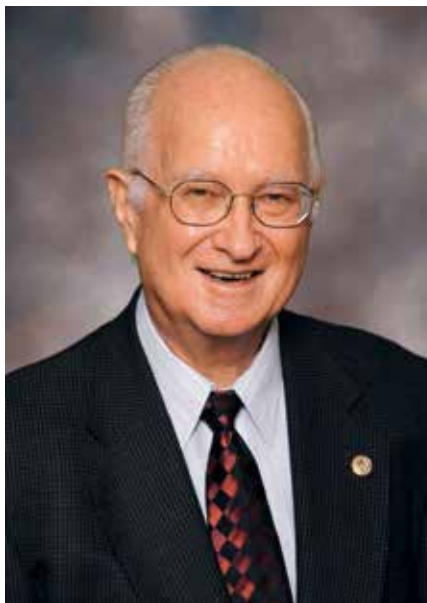
"The teachers at OBU taught me to think on my own and make my thoughts, ideas and beliefs, mine," he said.

When away from work, Redding enjoys hunting and fishing. He also loves to travel with his wife Karen and to visit new places, especially ones with historical value.

Redding is a member of University Heights Baptist Church in Stillwater, where he serves as a deacon and chair of the trustees. He is active in the Rotary and the Public Housing Authorities board of trustees, where he works for all housing authorities nationwide. He is the past chairman of the Housing Authority Insurance Group, where he has served on the board since 1989. ■

Ray Ballew '55

A Lifetime of Song and Purpose



Music has always been a powerful part of Ray Ballew's life. At an early age, he discovered the joy music gave him and the joy he could bestow on others through teaching.

Upon graduating from Classen High School in Oklahoma City in 1951, he was offered a scholarship to pursue a music education degree at OBU. He learned

about the opportunity from Judson Cook, a member of the staff at the Baptist Children's Home, where Ballew resided from third through ninth grade.

Ballew journeyed to Bison Hill where he studied music under Warren Angell, legendary dean of the College of Fine Arts, whom he credits as being a great inspiration in his life. It was at OBU where Ballew began his journey to becoming one of the most respected voice teachers in the state of Oklahoma.

After earning his Bachelor of Music Education in 1955, Ballew began his teaching career at U.S. Grant High School in Oklahoma City. He then earned a Master of Music Education from the University of Oklahoma in 1960. He also taught voice and performed in opera productions at Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, for 10 seasons, while continuing his full-time position at U.S. Grant High School.

"I taught private lessons for the fine arts colony and performed in operas every season," Ballew said. "After I studied and performed in a work at Inspiration Point, I then produced it at U.S. Grant

and later at Southwestern Christian University."

"Throughout my career I taught private lessons in voice wherever I was," he said. "Private teaching is challenging because each person is different. Preparing students for competition such as NATS, district and state, and auditions for college scholarships requires mastering the use of foreign language and all the elements of correct voice production."

Jo Ann Butler is a friend and colleague of Ballew's, and has been a fellow collegiate voice teacher in Oklahoma. "Ray knows 'the voice' better than anyone I know," she said. "When one of my students would have a vocal problem, I would call him. He would tell me exactly what to do, and it worked every time."

She also spoke of his generous nature. "He shares his knowledge so freely," she said. "No matter how busy he was, he always found time to help anyone who wanted to sing better."

Ballew completed graduate hours toward a master's degree in church music from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and continued teaching music at Mid-America Bible College in Oklahoma City and Southwestern Christian University in Bethany, Oklahoma. Southwestern Christian University bestowed the prestigious title of Professor Emeritus of Music on him in November 2011.

He also devoted his life to music ministry, serving as music minister or director in churches across Oklahoma since 1953. "When I was a student at OBU, I led music for Two Lakes Baptist Mission," he said. "It was part of my life to lead congregational music in churches and to work with choirs."

Ballew is an active member of the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma and has performed as a soloist in numerous church oratorio and cantata performances. He and his wife, Patsy, reside in Oklahoma City. ■

Ryan Abernathy '97

Called to Serve



Ryan Abernathy is a man with a purpose – a purpose that was forged and shaped on Bison Hill.

“I heard about OBU late my junior year of high school,” he said. “I had never heard of OBU. A friend of mine told me about it. When I went to a visit day in the fall of 1992, I was sold. It seemed

like a place that was custom made for me.”

Born in Dallas, Texas, he graduated from OBU in 1997. He then earned his Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2004.

“The impact OBU had on my life has been profound,” he said. “I met my wife [Amanda Reeves, '99] and three best friends there. I learned how to study scripture, how to interact and live with a diverse group of people, and how to be the man God called me to be on Bison Hill.”

“Dr. [Don] Wester taught me how to think and use my mind to delve into a subject from multiple angles,” he said. “Dr. [Mack] Roark taught me how to study. Dr. [Warren] McWilliams was my advisor and taught me a love of theology. Dr. [Tom] Wilks taught me to serve. He told us over and over again that the role of a pastor was to serve God and people.”

While serving in youth ministry at First Baptist Church, Bethany, Oklahoma, from 1997 to 2004, Abernathy saw the need to minister not only to the

youth but also to their families. He began to pray and ultimately realized God was calling him to plant a church.

In June 2004, with three other families, they launched what was then Journey Fellowship. In 2011, the church merged with another congregation and became West Metro Community Church, where Abernathy serves as teaching pastor and oversees the elder council.

The same year, he started working at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. He began as a coordinator focused on senior adults and now serves as Community Initiatives Director, where he works with coordinators to oversee the Food for Kids program, the School Pantry Program and the Senior Feeding Program, as well as more than 360 other charitable feeding programs in a 53 county area of central and western Oklahoma. The organization serves more than 300,000 individuals on a yearly basis through 1,100 partner agencies and schools.

Karen Paul, '98, serves as manager of foundations and grants at the food bank and is Abernathy's colleague. “He consistently brings a high degree of compassion and service to all that he does,” she said. “He makes those individuals he helps feel respected and cared for, even in their darkest hours.”

“My work with the Food Bank has allowed me to focus on serving the least of these, people caught in the cycle of poverty, the overlooked and forgotten, as well as those who are simply in need of a hand of mercy in a difficult hour,” he said.

“The most rewarding part of my work is seeing someone's life change,” he said. “Everything that I do is ultimately about bringing to bear God's kingdom and mercy on someone's life. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing the look on someone's face when hope has arrived in their life.”

Abernathy and his wife have three children, Annalise, Mia Kate and Ella. ■

Susan Wooten '74

A Lifetime of Learning



When Susan (Baker) Wooten, '74, was in junior choir at First Baptist Church, Ada, Oklahoma, her music minister brought the choir to a festival at OBU. Wooten recalls falling in love with the campus before she really understood what a college was.

"OBU was the right choice for

me, and that decision was foundational in refining values and guiding decisions across the scope of my life," she said. "At OBU, I became convinced that relationships, ideas and faith are what give life meaning and purpose."

"The faculty had just completed a significant effort to craft a new general education program, Unified Studies, as we arrived in 1970," she said. "It was very progressive for the time, and the habits of mind it cultivated in me have persisted to this day."

After graduating from OBU, she earned her master's degree in fine arts in painting and drawing from Clemson University in 1977. She began as an adjunct art faculty member at Anderson University, a Baptist institution in South Carolina, and joined the faculty full-time in 1980. As a professor, she developed and taught courses in many different art disciplines, leading the growth in the art department. She currently serves as vice provost and professor of art at Anderson.

"I have had opportunities to learn many new things in my work at Anderson," she said. "With good

mentors on the faculty and in the administration, over time I developed expertise in faculty development, curriculum development, assessment and institutional effectiveness, and academic policies."

"Although I work as much with faculty and staff as with students at this point in my current job, the joy of my work has always been the students," she said. "Seeing a student develop across four years in the art program energized and rejuvenated me. Seeing students try and fail and try again and eventually master some skill or new concept brings a high level of reward."

She is universally admired on the Anderson campus, as evidenced by the establishment of the Susan B. Wooten Fund for Art Majors, a need-based scholarship endowed through private donations in 2012.

Along with teaching and administration, she has remained active in the studio during most of her professional career. "The longer I remain in administration, the more the studio work helps me maintain my sanity," she laughed. "When my work in administration comes to an end at retirement in a few years, I look forward to spending more time in the studio."

Wooten credits her time at OBU with laying the foundation for her success. "The faculty at OBU set high standards, challenged us to meet those standards and supported us as we tried," she said. "The faculty and staff modeled commitment. They encouraged me to ask questions and seek answers that I could clearly articulate. There were so many smart and talented students at OBU, I learned about quality by seeing it demonstrated by those around me on a day-to-day basis."

Wooten and her husband, Bill, live in Clemson, South Carolina. She serves as a trustee and is active in the chancel choir and personnel ministry team at First Baptist Church of Clemson. ■

ALUMNI SAVE THE DATES

Zip! Bang! OBU

HOMEcoming 2014

For decades, Bison have gone with Ka-Rip. Generations of alumni excitedly "let'er go ruse" to cheer the Green and Gold to victory. The chant is a timeless OBU tradition the University and its friends return to time and again to celebrate the Bison Spirit.

Each Homecoming, it is our hope alumni and friends of all ages can identify with the reunion focus. Last year's theme – Zip! Bang! OBU! – fully captured the celebration of community on Bison Hill. As such, it is fitting we carry on that sentiment for years to come.



November 6-8

AND

Fall Alumni Tailgates

Cheer on the Bison with alumni
from your decade in reserved seating!



Classes of '10-'14

SEPTEMBER 13

OBU vs. Missouri Baptist College | 11 a.m.

'00s decade

SEPTEMBER 27

OBU vs. Southwestern University | 2 p.m.

'90s decade

OCTOBER 11

OBU vs. Langston University | 2 p.m.

'80s decade

OCTOBER 18

OBU vs. Haskell Indian Nations University | 2 p.m.

'70s decade

OCTOBER 25

OBU vs. Texas College | 2 p.m.

Claim your spot now at okbu.edu/events or call 405.585.5413.

Limited seating available. Invitations arriving soon!

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