

OBU

MAGAZINE

FALL 2019 | obumagazine.com



Honors Students Study Abroad

PAGE 4

When the shades of evening fall, through the hush of fading day,
Silent voices praise thy name. Hearts look up to pray.
May thy spirit guide thy sons, keep thy daughters true.
Loyal to our Alma Mater, God bless OBU.

Your campus awaits

HOMECOMING 2019

OCTOBER 25-27

Class of 1969's Golden Anniversary
Stubblefield Chapel Worship Service
Fine Arts Showcase

Olde Fashioned Ice Cream Social

50th Anniversary of Western Civ
Includes a panel discussion featuring

Dr. Jim Farthing

Dr. Joe Hall

Dr. Doug Watson

Dr. Bill Hagen

Dr. Carolyn Cole

Dr. Debbie Bosch

Dr. Glenn Sanders *(tentative)*

Homecoming Parade

Class Reunion Lunches

Bison Football

100th Anniversary Celebration of OBU Theatre

For details visit okbu.edu/homecoming.

Zip! Bang!
OBU

4



contents

Features

- 3 **Interim President's Letter**
- 4 **Honors Study Abroad**
Faith Building; Personal Growth
- 8 **Dr. Cherith Tucker**
Promising Teacher Award 2018
- 10 **Ford Mastin**
Meritorious Service Award 2018
- 12 **Dr. Susan DeWoody Q&A**
Faculty and Staff set OBU Apart
- 16 **Presidential Succession**
The Search for OBU's 16th President
- 18 **OBU Graduate School**
Online or On-Campus MBA
- 20 **Faculty Installations**
Professors Receive Academic Positions
- 22 **100 Years of Theatre**
Celebrate this Season of Productions



10

CELEBRATING
100 YEARS
OF
Theatre
ON BISON HILL

22



OBU Magazine online
obumagazine.com

contents *cont.*



OBU

MAGAZINE

A PUBLICATION OF
OKLAHOMA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

2019 | VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2

OBU MAGAZINE

obumagazine@okbu.edu | 405.585.5410

Editor	Paula Gower
Contributing Editor	Kenny Day
Writers	Brittany Barrett Kenny Day Hannah West
Creative Director	Chele Marker-Cash
Photographer	Heather Horner
Social Media	Brittany Barrett
Website	Damon Seymour

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

Interim President	Dr. C. Pat Taylor
Executive VP for Business and Administrative Services	Randy L. Smith
Senior VP for Advancement and University Relations	Dr. Will Smallwood
Associate VP for Enrollment Management	Bruce Perkins
Provost	Dr. Susan DeWoody

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
Marketing and Communications	585.5400
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

OBU Magazine is published by the Marketing and Communications Office, Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma. It is mailed to more than 16,000 alumni, parents and friends of OBU throughout the country and world. To change your mailing address, send an email to update@okbu.edu; write *OBU Magazine*, OBU Box 61275, 500 West University, Shawnee, Oklahoma 74804.

In compliance with federal law, including the provision of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Oklahoma Baptist University does not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, disability, military service, or genetic information in its administration of educational policies, programs, or activities, its admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other university administered programs, or employment.

Departments

14-15 University Advancement

Garlow Gift for Student Life
Women of Vision's Impact on Campus

24 Student Athlete

Brantly Thompson Excels on Court and
in the Classroom

26-31 Profile in Excellence Award Recipients

Jarrod Frie, '00
Lawrence Kirk, '88
Shelley Sanders, '92
Eugene Soulsby, '65
Bryan Wilks, '00
Susan Willis, '83

32 Alumni Notes

Future Bison, Marriages, Class Notes,
In Memoriam

37 Hobbs Blog

University Education with a Soul



**Honor Student
Alexis Besch**

Study Abroad in
Prague, Czech Republic
PAGES

ON THE COVER

Honors student Alexis Besch spent time in Prague, Czech Republic, to gain a broader awareness of the culture and enrich her college experience. See story, page 4.



Dr. C. Pat Taylor retired as president of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri, Aug. 31, 2018, after nearly 22 years in this role. Prior to becoming president of SBU, Taylor served as chief academic officer at OBU for 10 years. As senior vice president and provost, Taylor was responsible for OBU's academics, student development, admissions, religious life, library services and athletics from 1986 to 1996.

He previously served as associate vice president for academic affairs at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, from 1979-86. From 1975-79, he was an assistant professor of education at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. While at Belmont, he served as head resident of Pembroke Hall, a men's dormitory housing 150 men. His experiences also have included community college and high school teaching and coaching.

A native of Salem, Kentucky, Taylor received his Doctor of Education with emphasis in history and philosophy of education from then Memphis State University. He received a master's degree in history from Western Kentucky University and a bachelor's degree in history and secondary education from the University of Tennessee-Martin.

Dear alumni and friends,

It has been an honor and a joy to serve again at OBU these past eight months. The call to return to Bison Hill for an interim position is one of the very few things that could have pulled me away from my newly established retirement status in Florida. I had been retired from Southwest Baptist University for just over five weeks when I was asked to serve as interim president. These past months have reminded me just how much I love this University. My two daughters are both OBU alumni and cherish their years at OBU as well.

In August right before the beginning of the fall semester, I had the privilege of giving a State of the University address to OBU faculty and staff. I want to share with you some of what I shared with them. In summary, here is what I said:

OBU has a very bright future ahead. While we recognize that it is a difficult time for all higher education institutions, and in particular Christian universities, the challenges of today are manageable. Here are several specific reasons why OBU will remain strong.

- OBU has loyal alumni who were well-prepared through their education here and as a result, they are successful, appreciative and loyal to their alma mater.
- OBU has a unique relationship with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma having been founded by the Convention in 1910. This unique relationship means every Oklahoma Baptist has a stake in our future and wants us to succeed.
- OBU is blessed with a strong endowment of more than \$140 million. Very few Christian universities of our size have an endowment as large as ours.
- OBU has a heritage of excellence and a great tradition of providing a high quality Christian liberal arts education.
- OBU is committed to our mission and we do our best to live it on a daily basis.
- OBU is blessed with great people: our Board of Trustees, our faculty, and our staff. They will lead OBU into the future and ensure that our best days are ahead of us.
- OBU is blessed with 1,868 outstanding students.

As OBU searches for our 16th president, I ask that you join us in praying for the search committee, for the Board of Trustees, and for the candidate that God will call to lead our University during the years ahead.

God bless you and God bless OBU!

C. Pat Taylor
 Dr. C. Pat Taylor
 OBU Interim President

STUDYING ABROAD

Deeper Faith. Personal Growth. Lifetime Impact.

An essential feature of OBU's Honors Program is the opportunity students have to study abroad.

OBU honors students Alexis Besch and Lauren Shipman spent time abroad to gain a deeper awareness of different cultures while enriching their college experience.



Alexis Besch on the Charles Bridge in Prague



Lauren Shipman with at-risk young women in Ghana

ALEXIS BESCH went to Prague, Czech Republic, for three-and-a-half months where she experienced the culture, studied in new ways and grew deeper in her faith. She hoped her venture would help her to appreciate and adapt to other cultures in the future as well.

“I wanted to see what my faith and my values would look like when I wasn’t in a secure environment where everyone was like me,” she said. “It gave me a good opportunity to test and grow my values.”

Her classes abroad were taught in a similar style to her classes at OBU, but the professors emphasized gaining knowledge over striving for a grade.

“The professors would only address grades in regard to telling you how to pass. It was very focused on knowledge and learning the material,” she said.

Studying abroad helped Besch better understand how learning could impact her future. It expanded her horizons and made her consider different job opportunities and options for her master’s degree.

“It helped me to focus more on gaining knowledge for myself and my future rather than focusing on getting great grades,” she said.

While in Prague, Besch had to learn to balance her faith while engaging a diverse culture, explaining that most of

the students who were there were from secular schools and had significantly different interests from her.

“Czech itself is known as a party scene because it is so cheap,” she said. “I found that I didn’t meet a lot of people who shared the same interests as me. So finding quality [study] time [with other students] was difficult because the other students wanted to go party all the time.”

As a result, the experience highlighted Besch’s love for studying and learning. Because her peers would skip studying, Besch was pushed to study on her own and rediscovered how much she enjoyed learning new things.

In her spare time, Besch learned more about Czech culture. One of her favorite ways to engage the culture was to visit some of the local coffee shops on her free days. She tried new food and spent time touring and hiking. She connected with a local church and attended Bible studies there. She also traveled on the weekends, visiting seven different countries.

The experience also allowed her to grow deeper in her faith.

“I better understand how to reach people with the Gospel now,” Besch said. “There is not just one structured way. This is something that I was challenged with, and I think it is very valuable.”



PARTICIPATION IN THE HONORS PROGRAM CARRIES SOME PRESTIGE.
COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM DISTINGUISHES YOU AS A
“GRADUATE WITH COLLEGE HONORS” AT COMMENCEMENT.
BUT ASIDE FROM THE PRESTIGE, THE REAL REWARDS ARE
THE RELATIONSHIPS BUILT WITH OTHER STUDENTS,
WITH FACULTY MEMBERS AND WITH IDEAS.



Lauren Shipman on Easter Sunday at the Pearl House

LAUREN SHIPMAN spent a semester studying abroad in Ghana, West Africa, providing her the opportunity to travel and pursue her passion for helping others.

Shipman spent the majority of her time helping at the Pearl House, an organization whose goal is to protect, educate and disciple young women who are at risk for child marriage, human trafficking or continuing the poverty cycle. The Pearl House provides at-risk young women with an education and a place to live while also introducing them to Christ, she said.

Shipman first discovered the Pearl House in high school while researching various

ministries that she could pray for even though she was too young to volunteer.

“I’ve always had a heart for those affected by human trafficking and those in need of education,” she said. “Some of the research I did indicates that higher levels of education reduce the amount of human trafficking that occurs in an area, whether that was sex trafficking, work trafficking or child labor.”

Shipman’s classes were mostly self-taught instead of being in a traditional lecture-style setting. As a result, she did not have any time-constraints on when assignments were due, which Shipman said fit

very well into the African culture.

“Everything was more hands-on than my classes at OBU, which I really enjoyed. It was nice to be out in the field actively trying to put concepts to work,” she said.

For Shipman, who says she is “not a natural risk-taker,” some aspects of studying abroad were challenging. She struggled with learning to try new experiences on her own and creating new relationships, she said.

“Traveling alone and being the only intern there definitely stretched me,” she said. “It was completely out of my comfort zone, but I

knew that I was doing this for the Lord.”

The hardest part for Shipman was maintaining a connection between two worlds; staying active in Ghana while not losing touch with friends and family back home.

“It’s difficult when you don’t get to see your friends and family, and you are not a part of a community that is comfortable to you,” she said.

Shipman recalled how God used her discomfort to pave the way to create deeper relationships with the girls she was serving when she discovered lizards in her bathroom one evening early in her trip. Startled, she began to scream, causing several of the Pearl House girls to run to her room to find out what was happening.

“They didn’t make fun of me, but they took care of the lizard and got it out of my room,” she said.

From that point on, the girls would come in every night to get rid of any lizards they found and would stay to spend time with her.

“I realized how close we had become because of the lizards,” she said. “It was very cool to see how God used one thing that caused discomfort to create relationships.”

Along with spending time with the girls at the Pearl House, reading and helping them with homework, Shipman explored the community around her. She developed relationships with the locals and found that they are a very communal culture. After only a month, she knew almost all of the people in the community, discovering that they all went to the same church, she said.

Shipman found that the experiences in Ghana also gave her a new perspective on her time as she realized that the time she spends in college is short. It also taught her to enjoy the moment and value where she is instead of always looking ahead, she said.

“Four months seemed like a really long time to be away from my family and friends when I was leaving, but it was just a semester. When I got back, I realized how quickly it had passed. I then looked at the next semester wondering how I could get the most out of it in terms of academics, time with the Lord, and enjoying being in college,” she said.

Shipman encourages other students to study abroad, saying, “OBU is one of the best schools at accommodating their students, especially when it comes to ministry and integrating a student’s interests into their education.” ■

Honors Core Classes Offer Further Enrichment

The honors core is comprised of four classes. This combination of classes offers an enriching but challenging environment designed to “cultivate and build upon a Christian intellectual heritage,” beginning with Augustine’s “Confessions” first semester and closing with how to apply those principles to one’s own life.

CORE COURSE 1

Critical Skills

first semester

This class focuses on interaction with works through composition and discussion. Attention is given to critical reading, writing, and thinking; to research skills; and to individual learning styles.

CORE COURSE 2

English Composition and Classical Literature

second semester

This course engages the Greek and Roman great texts while also focusing on writing, specifically in-class essays in preparation for Western Civ. Learning to integrate the strands of what you are learning is an integral skill which builds on the critical thinking skills emphasized in the first semester.

CORE COURSE 3

Honors Arts and Western Culture

sophomore year

Arts and Western Culture examines visual and musical art from the inception of Western culture through the Middle Ages, Renaissance and modern era to today. Students spend the first half of the semester discussing painting, sculpture, architecture and photography. The second half of the semester focuses on music and learning the terminology to discuss it as an art form.

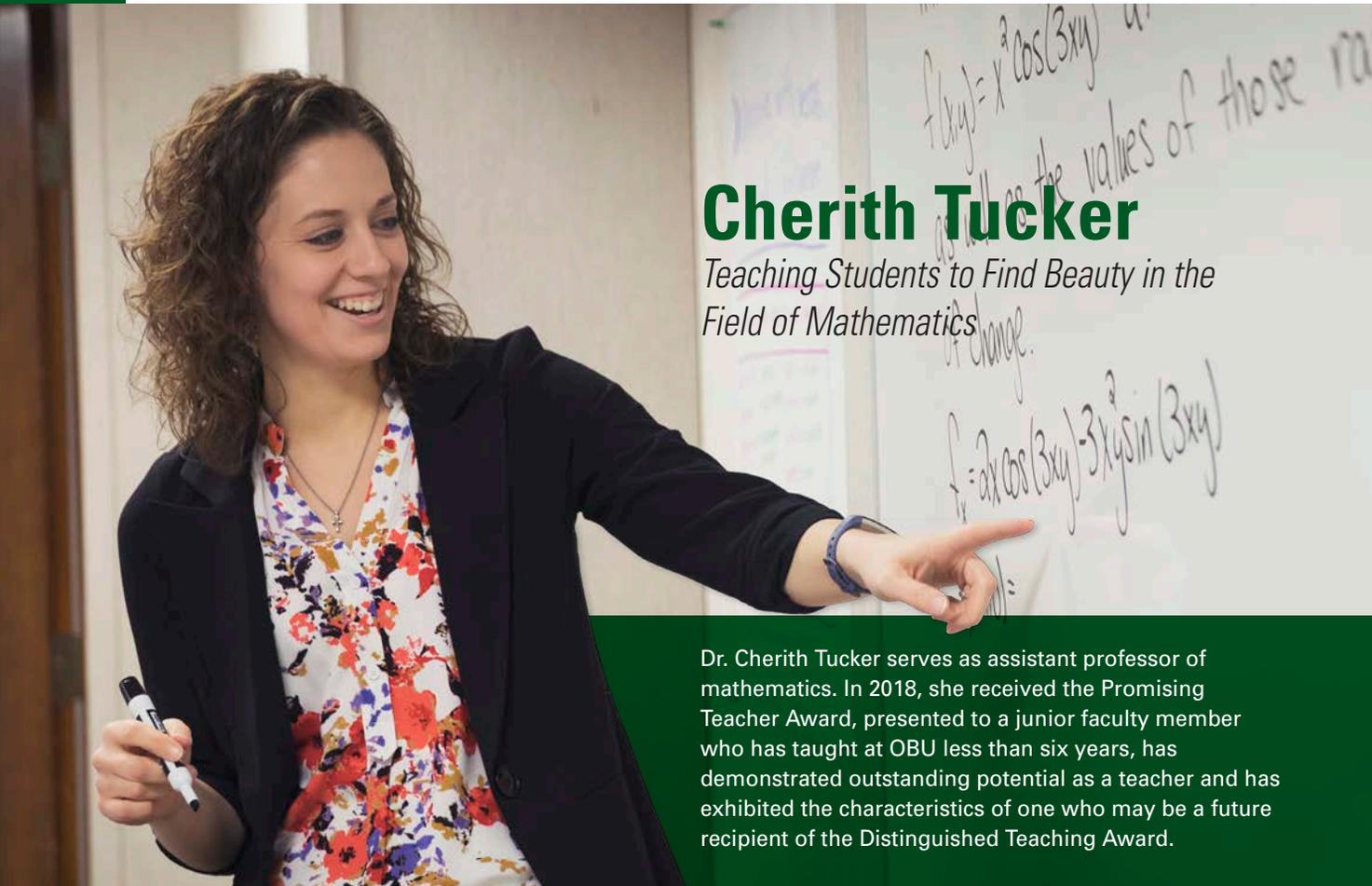
CORE COURSE 4

Honors Biblical Ethics

junior or senior year

Biblical Ethics gives students a space to struggle with issues they have encountered in reconciling biblical doctrine with their morality in order to form a coherent worldview. The timing of this as the last class makes for discussion between friends which does not shirk away from the contentious issues but addresses them graciously and respectfully.

Taken from an Honors Newsletter article by Lauren Dean, OBU Honors Student



Cherith Tucker

Teaching Students to Find Beauty in the Field of Mathematics

Dr. Cherith Tucker serves as assistant professor of mathematics. In 2018, she received the Promising Teacher Award, presented to a junior faculty member who has taught at OBU less than six years, has demonstrated outstanding potential as a teacher and has exhibited the characteristics of one who may be a future recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award.

“My favorite part of the day was getting up in front of a class of students to talk about math. That’s when I knew that I wanted to be a teacher.”

WHEN CHERITH TUCKER started her undergraduate journey – adamantly opposed to the thought of teaching – she set her eyes on a path of differentiation from her family. Her father and sister both math teachers, Tucker explored subjects such as business, psychology, religion and science. However, when the time came to register for classes, she couldn’t leave behind her favorite subject: mathematics.

An Unexpected Journey

Tucker thrived as a mathematics major at Southern Nazarene University, describing SNU as having a similar mission and environment to OBU – a quality which would eventually lead her to Bison Hill.

“I loved my time at SNU,” she said. “Mostly, I loved forming deep connections with my professors and peers, and I knew OBU also valued those connections.”

Through the encouragement of her SNU professors, Tucker decided to pursue a Master of Arts in mathematics from the University of Oklahoma. During her time as a teaching assistant, she fell in love with something unexpected: teaching mathematics.

“My favorite part of the day was getting up in front of a class of students to talk about math,” she said. “That’s when I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. Looking back on it, I am so thankful that the Lord guided my steps through the encouragement of my math professors in college. I hope that I can be an encouragement to my students in whatever direction the Lord is calling them.”

Following her master’s degree, Tucker earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Oklahoma.

Debunking a Myth: Math can be Fun?

In 2013, Tucker joined the Hurley College of Science and Mathematics as assistant professor of mathematics.

She reflected on her excitement in joining the OBU faculty and the growth she’s experienced on Bison Hill.

“The math department at OBU was young, energetic and dedicated to making the experience of their students an incredibly positive one, and I really wanted to be a part of that,” she said. “I have grown tremendously since joining the faculty in 2013. I have had the opportunity to develop relationships with both colleagues and students that have challenged me to be a better teacher, leader, friend and mentor.”

She also recalled math teachers in her own life who impacted her tremendously along her journey.

“I have had several really excellent mathematics teachers in my lifetime, and they have been the ones that have impacted me the most deeply,” she said. “In high school, my favorite math teacher had so much fun teaching math. His joy and excitement couldn’t help but rub off on his students. In college, both of my math professors were incredibly encouraging, opening my eyes to the very wide world of mathematics. They took me to math conferences each year, offered extra math classes for me to take and encouraged me to continue in my education.

“In graduate school, my advisor was one of my favorite teachers. He explained incredibly difficult concepts in a very simple way, and his calm demeanor brought a sense of peace to his classroom. I strive to emulate these teachers.”

As with any job, teaching mathematics comes with a set of challenges. In Tucker’s experience, the biggest challenge is facing students’ preconceived perceptions of math.

“To me, the most challenging part of teaching mathematics is dealing with students’ negative emotions and attitudes toward math. Many students have had terrible experiences

in their previous math classes and overcoming that hurdle is certainly difficult for them,” Tucker said.

When students overcome challenges, such as a negative view of math, Tucker feels a strong sense of satisfaction.

“It is most rewarding when I see a student experience that light bulb moment, when things begin making sense to them and they start to get excited about a truly beautiful field of study.”

The Beautiful Complexities of Math and a Marvelous God

Beautiful. Math. Two words not many would associate together, yet Tucker’s wish for others is to perceive math as beautiful.

“I love math because it is beautiful. It’s like a giant puzzle in which each piece fits perfectly into place to form a complex but amazingly elegant picture. The Lord created this world to operate under the laws of mathematics, and it is truly a privilege to get to know the logic, order, pattern and symmetry of His character. I wish for other people that they could see the beauty and intrinsic value of mathematics as well,” she said.

The Remainder

Tucker acknowledges that most of her favorite activities outside of the classroom still revolve around math. For one, she serves as the sponsor for the OBU Math Club, which meets monthly to discuss a variety of math topics.

“The OBU Math Club has meetings each month in which we talk about a variety of interesting math topics,” she said. “These have all been great opportunities to get to know my colleagues and students outside of the classroom, in a slightly nerdy environment.”

She also enjoys travelling with students and colleagues each year to the Oklahoma-Arkansas Mathematical Association of America conference and always looks forward to the math department’s “Math Bash” party at the beginning of each year. It’s an opportunity for professors and students to play games, eat and catch up on what is going on in their lives.

“We have an incredible math department at OBU, with some of the most caring and knowledgeable faculty. It is truly a pleasure to work with them and learn from them on a daily basis,” Tucker said.

Away from campus, Tucker enjoys working as a sponsor for the University Baptist Church youth group and also enjoys spending time with her niece and nephew. ■

Ford Mastin

*Developing Champions on the Track
While Impacting Lives for Eternity*

A Legacy of Championship Service

Coach Ford Mastin has led OBU Track and Field to national dominance, all while maintaining focus on his primary goal.

Growing up in the country outside of Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Ford Mastin learned many valuable lessons. The value of hard work. The appreciation of nature's beauty. A love for the Lord. And a passion for athletics. After leaving his rural roots behind and moving to Stillwater in eighth grade, Mastin continued to excel in academics and athletics through high school.

He came to OBU with plans to build a career in music and ministry, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in music education in 1977. He was a member of the Bison track team and was part of a core group of students that led a rejuvenation of the program. Little did he know at the time that he would one day be called on to return to Bison Hill as a coach, to build on the legacy of the program.

While at OBU, he sensed a call to missions and ventured to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he earned a Master of Divinity. While there, he spent time training with the TCU track team and was ultimately hired as an assistant coach. He enjoyed working with the athletes and realized that their international athletes were the Christian minority on the team.

"Coaching led to the idea that a great mission field for me was public education in America," he said.

Mastin then went on to teach and coach in Prague, Oklahoma, for 14 years. Then, something happened and God opened a door he wasn't expecting.

"The idea of coming back to OBU as a coach was started when David Sallee suggested I consider it," Mastin said. "I



applied twice for the job, and finally got it the third time, after my second master's degree was completed [Master of Education from East Central University], to be able to teach in the OBU PE department. I sensed the call to prepare and motivate college students to be teachers and coaches and do the ministry I was doing in the public schools."

Mastin has seen that calling manifest in so many ways since coming back to OBU in 1996, this time as the track and cross country coach and assistant professor. A national championship-winning coach many times over and member of four national coaching halls of fame, Mastin takes the most pride not in what happens on the track, but rather in what happens in the lives of his athletes after they leave Bison Hill.

“This is a day-to-day adventure in building relationships. Fun trips, exciting competitions, development of great athletes, constant projects and lots of hard work. Memories of thousands of special moments.”

“At the last state cross country meet we hosted, there were nine high school coaches that were at one time on a team at OBU,” he said.

Mastin’s list of accomplishments is long and impressive. He is a 13-time NAIA National Coach of the Year with 18 national championships. He has led 497 athletes to 1,383 All-America honors and has coached more than 150 individual and relay national champions. Currently serving as track coach and assistant professor of physical education and health and human performance, he received the University’s Meritorious Service Award during Spring Commencement in 2018. In 2001, he received the Promising Teacher Award.

Yet, when asked how he would sum up his career to date at OBU, Mastin doesn’t list trophies or victories. Instead, he focuses on his primary goal: developing people.

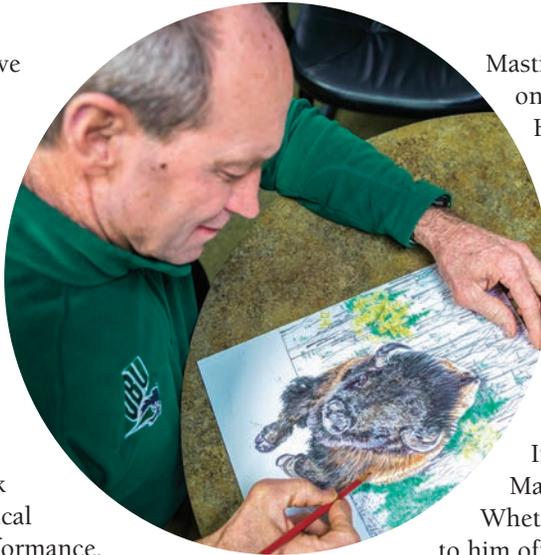
“This is a day-to-day adventure in building relationships,” he said. “Fun trips, exciting competitions, development of great athletes, constant projects and lots of hard work. Memories of thousands of special moments.”

He isn’t shy about the top objectives he has for his student-athletes either, listing the three most important things he wants them to learn.

“First, the most rewarding goals are the ones you accomplish with others,” he said. “Second, no award is as great as the ‘thank you’ that might come when you help someone with no one knowing. Third, that bad thing that happened is just one chapter of your biography. Turn the page; the chapters to come will make a great story.”

Mastin maintains a commitment to “helping OBU be God’s place.” He seeks to do this by appreciating and encouraging others to stay on task, play their role, and care about others in a way that portrays a Christ-centered atmosphere.

When asked what brings him the most satisfaction in his job, Mastin replied, “probably the thing that brings the most pain. It is watching people leave after four years. You’ve invested a lot of effort in helping them reach their potential. They have become like a family member, but you have to say ‘goodbye’ and hope they stay in touch.”



Mastin has too many memories to pick only one as the highlight of his career. However, one recent moment was extremely special to him.

“Watching the World Games on TV last year, and seeing the lead-off runners of the 4x100 relay. The women’s bronze-winning team and men’s silver-winning team were started by former OBU track athletes.”

In addition to his skills on the track, Mastin is also an accomplished artist. Whether painting or drawing, those close to him often see him doodling away or see the finished product of his work.

“I have always tried to paint a picture for every wedding for an athlete I’m invited to,” he said. “That has been a hard promise to keep up with. I love to make Bison-themed Christmas cards to give OBU people and recruits. I try to model that something homemade is meaningful.”

Mastin is also a talented actor and vocalist, having starred and performed in numerous plays and musicals over the years. He took a turn as a traveling salesman in OBU’s production of “The Music Man” in 2015 and played the lead in Shawnee Little Theatre’s “South Pacific” the same year.

“I like to be a part of Shawnee Little Theatre when my son is directing and my daughter is in the cast. It is a guaranteed six to seven weeks of family time that can’t be duplicated,” he said.

Mastin cherishes family time. His youngest child, Kaeley, is a junior at OBU and has starred in numerous stage productions herself, while his son, Trevor, ’16, currently teaches art at Will Rogers Elementary in Shawnee while also following his passion for acting and directing on stage. Mastin’s oldest child, Linsey, ’09, teaches English at Shawnee High School, while his wife, Terri, is a fourth-grade teacher at Horace Mann Elementary.

No matter where you find Ford Mastin, whether on the track with a whistle around his neck, in a quiet place with a paintbrush in hand, in costume ready to take the stage, or at home investing quality time with his family, you can rest assured that he is dedicating himself to impacting others, teaching them to live with love and compassion while also achieving their highest potential. ■

Q&A

Dr. Susan DeWoody

Dedicated Faculty and Staff Set OBU Apart



Dr. Susan DeWoody, provost, loves OBU students. Whether cheering them on at a game, talking with them around campus, or working with faculty to ensure they receive the best education possible, she keeps students a priority in everything she does.

Q What excites you most about being provost?

A OBU is a special place and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to be here and to serve in any capacity where God would lead me. We have a world-class faculty here, and being in this role allows me to work collaboratively across campus as we strive to provide a transformative experience on Bison Hill.

Q What are some of the most rewarding aspects of your position?

A No two days are ever the same and they typically involve opportunities to work alongside many different faculty and staff every day. The most rewarding days are those that afford the chance to intersect with our student population. We have stellar students at OBU.

Q What are some of the most challenging aspects of your position?

A God has wired me in such a way that challenges are not typically something I see in a negative light. So, I think the challenge would be in accomplishing enough each day to continue to see progress toward accomplishing our mission.

Q What are some of your main job responsibilities as provost? Which areas do you oversee?

A As provost, I am responsible for student life and the instructional aspects of the institution, including also academic services and the registrar's office. The less visible piece of my role includes the oversight of institutional research and assessment, as well as institutional accreditation.

Q What do you think sets OBU apart from other universities?

A Besides being the only Baptist higher education institution in the state of Oklahoma, I believe the Wall Street Journal said it best last fall when OBU was ranked number two in the nation for student engagement. We teach the whole student at OBU, and I genuinely believe that our faculty and staff take their roles with student engagement very seriously.

Q What is something that might surprise people about being provost?

A I think what would surprise people the most is specific to me being the provost at OBU, as I didn't have this position in mind with regard to my professional goals. I'm grateful for the opportunity, and God has given me a myriad of opportunities to serve over my nearly 17 years in higher education, but this was not a calculated step I had considered for my journey at OBU. When you visit with most provosts, many had a path and a plan they pursued to get to the position, which started with a long stretch as a faculty member in the classroom. I genuinely enjoy administrative work and feel God has called me to it, much like the calling I sensed when I applied for this position.

Q Why did you decide to come to OBU?

A As a native Oklahoman, I have an affinity for the state and her people. As a first generation college graduate, I knew about OBU when I chose a college to attend, but I didn't think OBU was attainable for me and my family, so I didn't look here. My service here is different than many employed on Bison Hill because I am not an alumna, but I am an Oklahoman and a Southern Baptist, so what we offer at OBU really matters to me. OBU is a special place and I want all families who desire a world-class Christian liberal arts degree for their student to know that OBU is a possibility.

Q What are some things you enjoy doing when away from the office?

A Much of my time away from the office is spent engaged in college ministry with my husband at our church, New Hope Baptist Church in Bethel, Oklahoma. The majority of the 40 plus students we serve in our ministry are OBU students. We often host them in our home for meals and study nights, and try to provide as much support as we can as a home-away-from-home while they're studying at OBU. Our laundry room is always hopping and we're grateful to be able to help our students. When the students are away on breaks, we take breaks and love to travel in the region.

Q What would you say to high school students who are considering OBU?

A Come to campus and experience first-hand why OBU should be at the top of your list. God is working here on Bison Hill; I see it every day. We have a beautiful campus and lovely amenities which will compare well against our competition. What other campuses don't have is our people. I believe our faculty and staff at OBU, paired with the students you'll meet, will have you ringing the bell in admissions to officially join our family. Come. Be a Bison!



Dr. Susan DeWoody, provost, enjoys spending time with students every chance she gets. She and her husband are actively involved in college ministry at church and often host students in their home.

Gift for New Space Honors Drs. Lyle and Willa Ruth Garlow



LAST FALL THE UNIVERSITY relocated the offices of Student Life and Spiritual Life to a central location on the first floor of the Geiger Center, moving into the newly renovated Dick and Sue Rader Office of Student Life and Women of Vision Center for Spiritual Life. As part of this renovation, members of the Garlow family, longtime supporters of OBU, generously gave to create the Drs. Lyle and Willa Ruth Garlow Conference Room. The Garlow's children, Warren and Dawne (Garlow) Pybas, '73; and Sam, '76, and Becky (Vickrey) Garlow, '76; and grandchildren, provided the gift in memory of Drs. Lyle, '50, and Willa Ruth Garlow, '50, who were deeply invested in OBU as students and throughout their lives of service to Oklahoma Baptists and beyond.

"OBU's mission to transform lives was important to them," Sam Garlow said, "and this conference room, in the heart of OBU's Student Life Center, honors their love, commitment and service to OBU. Our parents clearly

recognized the impact OBU had on them, their family, and the world. Both Lyle and Willa Ruth had a heart for missions and had multiple opportunities for international service. Throughout their lives they experienced firsthand the impact of OBU across our state, our nation and our world by preparing lay people, pastors, church staff and missionaries for lives of service to Christ."

DR. LYLE GARLOW graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and served as pastor of four Oklahoma Baptist churches. He served 14 years in the religious



education department of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma followed by 21 years of service as the associate executive director. He held positions of program director at Falls Creek youth summer camps, president of the Southern Baptist Stewardship

Commission and organizer of many international mission works on four continents. After retirement, he worked with the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma and served as the administrator of the Association of Southern Baptist Foundations.

He was awarded OBU's Alumni Achievement Award in 1991 and an honorary Doctor of Divinity in 1992.

DR. WILLA RUTH GARLOW was



a motivational speaker, early childhood education specialist and author. She wrote curriculum materials and articles for

LifeWay publications and various other magazines and periodicals. She also wrote devotional materials for Oklahoma Baptist Village Communities. She traveled the world, speaking in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and throughout the United States. She served on local church staffs as minister to preschoolers and children and served on the BGCO Board of Directors from 2009-12.

She received OBU's Alumni Achievement Award in 1980 and an honorary Doctor of Religious Education in 2014. She delivered the address at OBU's 2012 Winter Commencement.

In 2018, a gift from Lyle and Will Ruth Garlow established the Lyle and Willa Ruth Garlow Early Education Scholarship Fund for Church Vocation Studies at OBU. The impact of their lives will continue through this endowed scholarship.

Women of Vision Invest Together for Bigger Impact



LAST YEAR, WOMEN OF VISION raised a little over \$85,000 to invest on Bison Hill. The group voted during the annual meeting to use that collective gift to fund the installation of blue (safety) phones on campus and establish the WOV scholarship endowment that will impact students attending OBU for years to come.

Since Women of Vision launched in 2015, the group has invested over a quarter million dollars in the life and mission of the University. This collective gift each year not only impacts OBU students and their transformational experience on campus, it also impacts the entire OBU family.

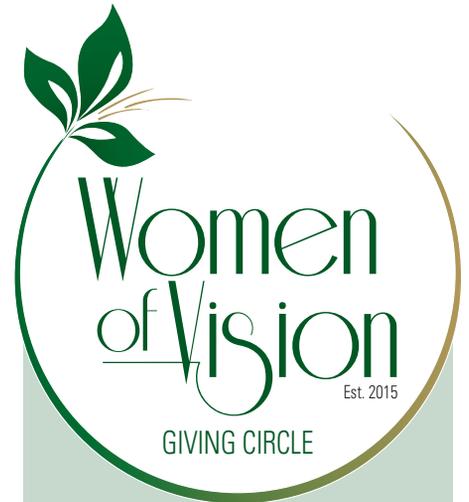
WHAT IS WOMEN OF VISION

Women of Vision is a giving circle at OBU that offers a unique opportunity to join other women who desire to create a valuable financial source to support, promote, sustain and enhance the University's mission. Through the giving circle, individual contributions are pooled, and together, the Circle members decide how the money should be directed on Bison Hill.

ANNUAL MEETING/LUNCHEON

Current members and alumnae interested in becoming members are invited to the annual luncheon at OBU Geiger Center, Thursday, Nov. 21, at 11 a.m. During the luncheon, OBU projects will be presented and members will vote on the project they would like to fund. To join the giving circle, each member contributes \$1,000 (\$500 for those who have graduated within the last five years) per year to be used to fund the selected project. To find out more or to purchase tickets, please contact Crystal McKee at crystal.mckee@okbu.edu or 405.585.5413.

"We can do MORE together."



IMPACT SINCE 2015 INCEPTION

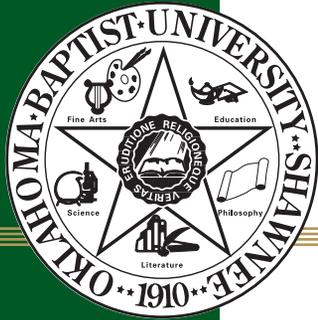
The Women of Vision group has chosen the following ways to invest their collective gifts on Bison Hill.

2018
Blue safety phones and establishment of a WOV scholarship

2017
Renovation/relocation of Spiritual Life, offering students space and resources for meaningful, spiritual encounters

2016
Installation of keyless card access technology on all major buildings, further enhancing the safety and security for the entire OBU family

2015
Installation of additional outdoor lighting in key areas around campus, providing peace of mind through added safety and security



PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AND THE SEARCH FOR OBU'S 16TH PRESIDENT

A Brief History of OBU's Presidents

In 1911, one year after the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma established The Baptist University of Oklahoma, the OBU Board of Trustees elected Dr. J.M. Carroll as the University's first president. The early years were extremely difficult and survival of the new university was in question. In June 1912, the Board accepted Dr. Carroll's resignation and voted to suspend operations until the new Shawnee Hall was completed.

On Dec. 2, 1914, the Board of Trustees elected Dr. F.M. Masters of Ardmore to be the second president. During summer 1915, the Board voted to hire eight faculty members and to reopen the school during fall 1915, when Shawnee Hall opened.

In 1919, J.A. Tolman was elected OBU's third president. With God's blessings, the determination of Oklahoma Baptists, and the commitment of the faculty and staff, The Baptist University of Oklahoma survived and in 1920 became The Oklahoma Baptist University. The 1920s and the early 1930s were very difficult, but the school continued to survive and grow under the leadership of presidents Dr. J.B. Lawrence (1922-26), Dr. W.W. Phelan (1926-30), Dr. W.C. Boone (1930-32), and Hale V. Davis (1932-34).

In 1934, the Board of Trustees elected Dr. John Wesley Raley (1934-61) as OBU's eighth president. Dr. Raley led the University for 27 years and is the longest serving president in school history. The University accomplished many significant things during the Raley years. In 1958, the Board of Trustees approved plans to build a new chapel which would be named in honor of President Raley. This chapel continues to serve the University well.

In 1961, Dr. Raley retired as president due to health issues and was named chancellor. Dr. James R. Scales (1961-65) was named the ninth president followed by Dr. Grady Cothen (1966-70), Dr. William G. Tanner (1971-76), and Dr. E. Eugene Hall (1977-82).

During August 1982, Dr. Bob Agee was elected the 13th president of OBU and for the next 16 years, under Dr. Agee's leadership, the University experienced significant growth. Many decisions made during the Agee years still have a positive impact on OBU today. The endowment experienced significant growth during the 1980s and 1990s. Many new buildings, including the Bailey Business Center and the new Montgomery Hall, were added to the campus and older buildings were renovated.

"Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who art the only source of light, send down upon this school the rich gift of Thy Good Spirit, that truth may be sincerely sought, faithfully received, and obediently followed. Endue its teachers with wisdom, zeal, and patience. Inspire its scholars with the spirit of truth, honor, and humility. May they, day by day, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Grant to all in this school such a cheerful and forbearing spirit, such strength of body, clearness of mind, and purity of heart that Thy word may be heartily done and Thy name glorified. Let Thy blessings rest upon us now and Thy Spirit dwell in this place from generation to generation."

– W.P. BLAKE
Chairman of the OBU trustees, 1910

In 1998, Dr. Mark Brister was elected OBU's 14th president. The following year additional property north of MacArthur was added to the campus, expanding OBU's property from 125 to 190 acres. In 2007, the Recreation and Wellness Center was dedicated and Brister retired.

Dr. David Whitlock was elected president in October 2008 and served until January 2019, when he retired from the presidency and served as chancellor until May 2019. During the Whitlock years, the Jane E. and Nick K. Stavros Hall and The Village student housing complex were constructed and multiple campus buildings were renovated and refurbished. Enrollment and the endowment grew significantly during these years.

OBU's 2019 Interim President and Presidential Search

During their February 2019 meeting, the OBU Board of Trustees voted to employ recently retired Southwest Baptist University President Dr. C. Pat Taylor as OBU's interim president. Taylor spent nearly 22 years as the SBU president and served 10 years prior to that as OBU's chief academic officer.

The trustees also approved the 12-member OBU presidential search committee to lead the charge in searching for OBU's next president.

Ben Stewart, *chair*
Bryan Gilbert, *vice chair*
Scott Neighbors, *secretary*
Steve Allen
LaVerne Dowding
Danna Humphreys
Jeff Moore
Owen Nease

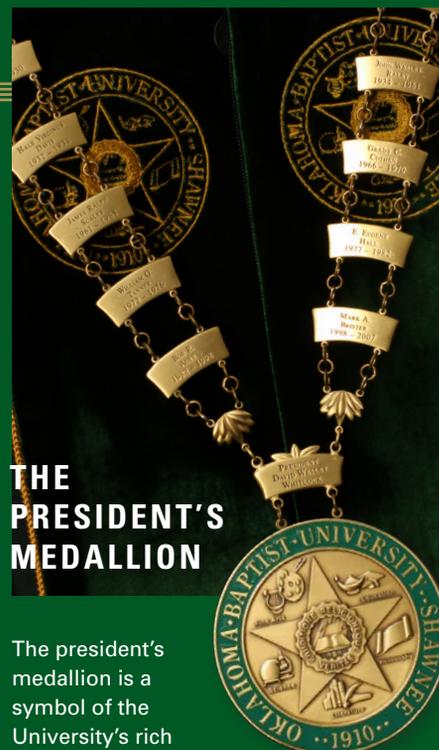
Ex officio, non-voting members of the search committee include:

Dr. Bret Roark, *faculty representative, chair of the OBU faculty council and professor of psychology/chair of Behavioral and Social Sciences*
Jami Smith, *alumni representative*
Clayton Myers, *student body representative, president of the Student Government Association*
Dr. Hance Dilbeck, *BGCO Executive Director-Treasurer*

Dilbeck expressed gratitude for Stewart's willingness to serve, saying, "Ben Stewart's investment in this process will bear good fruit for our University. I have full confidence in him. We ask all Oklahoma Baptists to join us in asking our Father to give clear guidance as He prepares our next president."

Based on the recommendation of the search committee, OBU retained the national executive search firm Carter Baldwin to assist in the nationwide search. Representatives from Carter Baldwin visited the OBU campus in May to meet with the presidential search committee, the Board of Trustees, and groups of faculty and staff to develop a list of essential qualities the person selected as OBU's next president should possess.

The OBU President Search profile may be viewed on the Carter Baldwin website:
carterbaldwin.com/opportunities/obu-pres



THE PRESIDENT'S MEDALLION

The president's medallion is a symbol of the University's rich history and heritage.

A gift from an anonymous donor in honor of the OBU centennial, the medallion is worn at formal ceremonies.

Displayed on the left and right sides of the chain are rectangular links listing the previous 14 presidents and their dates of service. The two sides come together at the base of the chain above the medallion with the name of the current president.

Engraved on a square link above the previous presidents on one side is a portion of the prayer by John Wesley Raley Sr. delivered on his inauguration as a reminder of those who have served: "God, make this my altar, myself the sacrifice, this task to which I put my hand."

Engraved on a square link on the other side is a list of the core values that guide the decision-making process of the University: "Christ Centered, Excellence Driven, Learning Focused, Missional Purposed, Community Directed."

Displayed on links on the back of the chain are G. Lee Phelps, missionary, and W.P. Blake, trustee chairman, who visited the future campus location in 1910 and there gathered and arranged twelve stones, commemorating God's leadership of the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

Also displayed are Shawnee leaders George D. McKinnis and J. Lloyd Ford, OBU interim presidents and their dates of service, and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and its founding date of 1906.

OBU Now Offering Transformational Business Education Online and On Campus

World-Class Business Education with Convenience in Mind

OBU is known for academic excellence. With its broad liberal arts curriculum, small class sizes, outstanding professors and biblical worldview permeating through all of its areas of study, the University offers transformational learning in a personal environment.

While that tradition was birthed in undergraduate studies, OBU's Graduate College has continued that legacy in its master's degree course offerings in business, nursing, Christian studies and marriage and family therapy. With the MFT program taught in Shawnee, and the other degrees delivered online, the Graduate College offers degrees in both spaces.

While the MBA degree has been offered online for several years, the Graduate College began delivering the degree on-campus in Shawnee this



“One of the things that makes the OBU MBA program unique is that every professor in the program has industry experience doing the things that we teach. We work hard to make the material applicable and as relevant as possible for each student both now and in the future as a manager.”

—Dr. Rich Rudebock
Robert L. & Sara Lou Cargill Chair and Professor of Business



fall as well. The on-campus courses are taught in the evenings so students can complete a degree entirely in-person, fully online or a combination of the two. Since the courses are designed for working professionals, students can take classes at their own pace but can complete the program in as little as 16 months.

Quality, Taught from a Biblical Perspective

While many universities offer an MBA, OBU is unique for its combination of academic quality and biblical perspective. Students learn the practical business knowledge needed in the workplace along with the value of ethics and integrity from professors with practical, real-world experience.

Professors have a wide variety of industry and professional experience. Their desire to develop future leaders through the integration of faith and academic excellence creates an environment fostering personal and professional success. The learning environment is engaging and practical, and guest lecturers bring added dynamics to the learning experience.

Transformational Business Leadership Education

Will Brantley, director of recruitment for OBU's Graduate College, is excited to launch MBA

classes on the University's campus in Shawnee.

“While many students prefer online courses due to the time flexibility they afford, others still need that in-person contact and wish to pursue graduate course work in a convenient, on-ground format,” Brantley said. “We are pleased to host MBA students here on our Shawnee campus as they work to build their careers and their organizations through our innovation-focused MBA program. The personal interaction with OBU professors and Oklahoma business leaders will greatly enhance the MBA journey for those who meet with us in Shawnee.”

The on-campus program provides an excellent opportunity for area businesses to send employees to master's level business training without having to commute a great distance.

Brantley not only recruits students into the Graduate College, but he is close to earning his MBA from OBU this fall after taking classes over the last two years online.

“Our MBA program has been challenging,” he said. “I've encountered new ideas and been challenged to rethink how I approach leadership and problem solving. Our program has helped me grow as a leader.”

Nationally accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, OBU's MBA in

Transformational Leadership places a heavy emphasis on creating value through innovation and problem solving.

“This degree teaches students how to transform organizations and teams they lead, and how to transform themselves personally and professionally,” he said. “The curriculum challenges students to think in ways that aid in making complex decisions thoroughly and creatively, all from a biblical worldview.”

An MBA continues to be one of the most popular postgraduate degrees in the U.S., according to the U.S. Department of Education. Studies show that an investment in an MBA degree can return between 30 and 150 percent in increased earnings potential.

Students in the on-campus program also have the option to complete a 12-hour certificate in corporate innovation or business operations. Both certificates contain courses from the MBA program and may be continued into the full MBA degree. Three additional nine-hour certificates are offered online-only in project management, leadership or energy management.

The program is 33 credit hours. Tuition is \$550 per credit hour with no additional fees. Students may apply now, as classes begin approximately every eight weeks, whether online or in-person. ■

Professors Installed to Academic Positions



Five OBU professors were installed into academic positions during the University's annual Convocation in August.

Endowed chairs and professorships are awarded to professors who have demonstrated exceptional ability in their academic disciplines.

Endowed positions are funded by gifts to the University which are specified for this purpose. The funds are then invested in the University's permanent endowment fund, and the annual earnings are used to assist with the chair or professorship's compensation.

DR. JAMES VERNON

Professor of Music

Installed into the Burton H. Patterson Professorship in Music

Vernon earned a Bachelor of Arts from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Additionally, he earned a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He teaches courses in music composition, music theory and fine arts, and directs both the Bisonette Glee Club and the OBU music composition program. He has composed works for vocal idioms, instrumental, choral and a multitude of pieces for stage play productions as well as an opera. His work has been performed throughout the United States and in parts of Western Europe.

The Burton H. Patterson Professorship in Music is named for **Burton H. Patterson, '56**, an entrepreneur, attorney, educator and musician who has a longstanding relationship with OBU. He was licensed to practice law in Texas in 1959. He retired in 1999 as the senior partner of Patterson, Sargent and Glanville and incorporated The Foundation for the Advancement of Christianity. Patterson and his wife, Ginger, live in Texas.

DR. KAYLENE BARBE

Professor of Communication Studies

Installed into the Frank W. Patterson Professorship in Communications

After graduating from Baylor University with a bachelor's degree, Barbe worked for a year as a legal secretary for an attorney. She later completed her Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Communications at the University of Oklahoma. Barbe likes to travel, hike, read, watch movies and work on home improvement projects, in addition to spending time with family and friends. She is an active member of University Baptist Church, volunteers for Family Promise in Shawnee and works with first through sixth grade GAs.

The Frank W. Patterson Professorship in Communications was established by Dr. and Mrs. Burton Patterson in honor of his father. **Dr. Frank Patterson, '28**, worked for the University Press while a student at OBU. After pastoring churches in Oklahoma and Arkansas, he was appointed for service at the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso, Texas, where he was the second general director and served for 33 years.



DR. LOUIMA LILITE

*Associate Professor of Music
Coordinator of Voice Studies*

*Installed into the McGavern-Montgomery
Professorship in Music*

Lilite earned a Bachelor of Music from Biola University Conservatory of Music, a Master of Music from Penn State University and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the prestigious Eastman School of Music. His OBU recognitions include the Distinguished Teaching Award, the Provost Award of Excellence and the Promising Teacher Award. Lilite is the Oklahoma District Governor of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and known as an accomplished recitalist and soloist, having taught and coached in the U.S. and overseas.

The McGavern-Montgomery Professorship in Music honors the memory of three individuals. **Clair R. McGavern** served as a member of the OBU music faculty from 1949-75. In 1974, he helped establish the Concerto-Aria Concert and in 2011 he was inducted into the OBU Faculty Hall of Fame. **Ruth Clark McGavern** was the wife of Clair McGavern. She taught piano at OBU until 1978.

Nancy Montgomery was a voice major at OBU and performed with the University's women's quartet. After graduation and teaching in various roles around the U.S., Montgomery returned to OBU in 1955 as assistant professor of music, teaching voice, music education and music appreciation.



DR. JOHN MCWILLIAMS

Professor of Natural Science

*Installed into the W.B. Blackstock Family
Chair in Science Education*

McWilliams earned his Bachelor of Science, Master of Science and Ed.D. all at the University of Arkansas. For the past 20 years at OBU, he has supervised science education majors and taught the science content courses. He has been awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award and directs the OBU Planetarium. McWilliams has a passion for Christian apologetics, especially as it relates to science. In 2017, he published the novel "The Lights Over Middle Creek," a fiction-format that introduces and explores scriptural and apologetic concepts.

The W.B. Blackstock Family Chair in Science Education honors **W.B. Blackstock**, an oil man, and his wife Clara Mae, an elementary school teacher. Both have a long association with and interest in education at all levels. Blackstock was particularly interested in the natural world and many fields of science, thus his bequeathing of the W.B. Blackstock Family Chair of Science Education, an extension of his lifelong dedication to education.



DR. HEATH THOMAS

*Dean, Hobbs College for Theology and Ministry
Associate Vice President for Church Relations
Professor of Old Testament*

*Installed into the Floyd K. Clark
Chair of Christian Leadership*

Thomas holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from OBU, a Master of Arts from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from the University of Gloucestershire. Prior to returning to OBU, he served as director of Ph.D. studies and associate professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Passionate about opening up the Scriptures, he preaches and teaches regularly. He sustains a recurring interest on the biblical books of Lamentations and the Minor Prophets, and has published a number of works related to these.

The Floyd K. Clark Chair of Christian Leadership was made possible when OBU alumnus Al Clark gifted resources for an endowed academic position in honor of his father, **Floyd K. Clark**. The gift recognizes Clark's commitment to providing educational opportunities through OBU to his sons. A native of Oklahoma, Floyd participated in the Normandy Invasion and served in Korea with the Oklahoma National Guard. Clark held many roles of service and leadership at Midwest City's Country Estates Baptist Church.

CELEBRATING
100 YEARS
OF
Theatre
ON BISON HILL
1919-2019

Mrs. Rhett Mae Dorland came to OBU in 1919 as head of the department of Public Speaking and organized College Players shortly thereafter. Since that time, Theatre at OBU has entertained audiences, prepared students, and earned awards with productions ranging from well-known classics to contemporary works. Join us as we kick off the celebration with a Theatre alumni dinner immediately proceeding the Oct. 26 performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*, and then join us for the remainder of the season as we celebrate 100 Years of Theatre on Bison Hill.

TICKETS

ORDER ONLINE
okbu.edu/theatre

Box Office sales begin two weeks prior to performance.

Visit Sarkeys Telecommunication Center.
Mon - Fri | 9 am - 4 pm | 405.585.4350

For **SEASON TICKETS** call **405.585.4350**
\$30 Adults | \$12 Students

1923 DRAMA



1946 DRAMA



2019-20 SEASON PRODUCTIONS

Presented in partnership with OBU's Division of Music

by W. S. Gilbert & Arthur Sullivan
THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Set sail with this rollicking, delightfully funny tale of young Frederic, an orphan who was mistakenly apprenticed to a pirate at the age of eight. Frederic is now 21 and, though quite fond of the group of joyous and fun-loving pirates, chooses to forsake the pirates' way of life and dedicates himself instead to their eradication, while falling for the beautiful Mabel in the process. Gilbert and Sullivan's cheeky and charming operetta abounds with swashbuckling, fair maidens and a Major General with the true gift of gab.

Adults \$15 | Students \$5

OCT 24, 26, 31, NOV 1, 2 – 7:30 p.m.

OCT 27, NOV 3 – 2:30 p.m.

Craig-Dorland Theatre

Made possible in part by the Max Brattin Fine Arts Endowment.

Emily
 An Amethyst Remembrance
 by Chris Cragin-Day

By the time she was 30, Emily Dickinson had so isolated herself from the world that she never left the house and rarely accepted visitors. This play looks at the various events and relationships in Dickinson's life and her journey into a world of isolation in reverse time, beginning with her life boarded up inside the New England Dickinson home and working backwards to her return home from Mt. Holyoke College. It incorporates Emily's poetic voice as a glimpse of her true self.

Adults \$12 | Students \$5

FEB 6, 7, 8 – 7:30 p.m.

FEB 9 – 2:30 p.m.

Sarkeys Black Box Theater

by Neil Simon
Barefoot in the Park

Neil Simon's Barefoot in the Park is a romantic comedy focusing on a pair of newlyweds, Corie and Paul, as they begin married life in a tiny, fifth-floor walkup apartment in Manhattan. Paul is a strait-laced attorney; Corie has a far more spontaneous, free spirit. As the young couple contend with a lack of heat, a skylight that leaks snow, several long flights of stairs, an odd ball neighbor and Corie's well-meaning mother, they must also reconcile their own personal differences in how they approach life's challenges.

Adults \$12 | Students \$5

April 23, 24, 25 – 7:30 p.m.

April 26 – 2:30 p.m.

Craig-Dorland Theatre

1968 – 110 IN THE SHADE



2004 – ORESTIA





Excelling in the Classroom and on the Court

Sophomore clinical health and human performance major Brantly Thompson came to OBU in August 2018 to play basketball. Arriving in Shawnee from Tuttle, Oklahoma, where he excelled as a high school basketball player, Thompson was up to the challenge of college life on the court. A major standout during his freshman year on the Bison basketball team, Thompson shines in the classroom as well.

Growing up in Tuttle, Thompson doesn't remember a time when he didn't love to play basketball. Although he played many different sports, basketball was always his favorite.

"I can't recall the first time I ever started playing basketball," he said. "I just know that my dad coached me throughout my childhood. I grew up playing different sports, but basketball always stuck with me because it was what I was best at. Also, playing basketball runs in my family."

He excelled at the game, helping to lead his high school team to the state semi-finals. He also earned the Canadian Valley Conference Most Valuable Player award and represented Oklahoma in the Faith 7 game, played on OBU's campus. He earned Little All-City recognition. He then chose OBU because it was "the perfect fit for him both athletically and academically."

Upon arriving on campus, the 6'4" shooting guard immediately made an impact for the Bison during his freshman campaign on the court. He scored his season-high of 22 points

Thompson brings skill to the court, teamwork to the locker room and diligence to the classroom.

in a game against Rogers State University and averaged 10.3 points per game for the season. He started in all 21 games during the season.

His outstanding play earned him recognition outside of Bison Hill. He was named the Great American Conference Player of the Week during week four of conference play when he averaged 19.5 points per game and made 70 percent of his shots in road victories over Harding and Arkansas Tech.

Athlete...AND Student

While Thompson takes his role on the men's basketball team seriously, he also takes his role as a student just as seriously. While he puts his highest effort into both basketball and his studies, he admits that balancing the two can be a difficult task at times.

"Time management can be tough," he said. "I sometimes find it difficult to do homework or everyday tasks while also improving my game. Being a student-athlete leaves little free time, but the sacrifice is worth it."

Thompson did well maintaining that balance during his freshman campaign. In fact, he was nominated for the College Sports Information Directors of America All-District Academic Team by earning a 3.75 grade point average. He also earned a spot on OBU's Athletic Director's Honor Roll.

Being a student-athlete is a decision Thompson is glad he made. To him, playing basketball has matured him in ways he didn't know were possible. Thompson has learned to push through adversity and apply hard work to accomplish

goals because of basketball. He applies these lessons with his studies and with every aspect of his life.

Thompson spends many days training. Whether that is practicing with his team, individual workouts with coaches, weight training, or shooting on his own, he is always looking to improve his skills on the court.

Head basketball coach Jason Eaker complimented Thompson on his character and basketball ability.

"I've been coaching for 15 plus years at various institutions around the nation and Brantly Thompson, when you combine character, his relationship with Christ, his unselfishness, his 'team first' attitude, his work ethic and his basketball ability, it's almost impossible to match by any young man I've ever coached," Eaker said.

Making an Impact

While he hasn't yet settled on his ultimate career path, Thompson knows that he wants to help others, inspire them to be their best and influence people in a positive way. His desire to do this was born out of his gratitude for so many people in his life that have forged him into who he is today.

"There are many people in my life who have helped me along the way, such as family, coaches, professors and friends. Probably too many to name them all."

In addition to the time he invests into improving his game on the court and the time he spends to succeed academically, Thompson, like any other college student, also enjoys time with friends.

"My best memories at OBU so far would have to be late-night Whataburger runs during J-Term with my friends. That never gets old. I'm looking forward to making many more memories like that over the next three years."

Thompson truly is embracing the full scope of what it means to be a student-athlete on Bison Hill. He relishes this opportunity and is doing everything he can to make the most of it. Even as a sophomore, he understands that this, too, will one day come to an end and he must do everything he can to enjoy it all while it lasts.

"What I'm going to miss most when I graduate would have to be the college atmosphere, being a student-athlete and spending time with my friends and teammates," he said.

Basketball has truly taken Thompson to places he never thought possible. Whether it is his time on the court in high school, memories of all of those games and practices growing up, bonding with teammates here in college, or travelling to road games as a Bison, he has grown to value and love the sport and all that it means to his life even more since coming to campus over a year ago. While basketball has done this for him, and while it has helped him find his place at OBU, forge new friendships and make many lifelong memories along the way, the game itself will always be at the center of it all.

"I love how beautiful basketball is," he said. "There's so much more to it than putting a ball in a hoop. Through basketball, I've learned a lot, and I will continue to learn through great coaches and teammates." ■

Following the Call to Treat Business as Mission

JARROD FRIE, '00
Partner at Corsair Medical

THROUGH HIS PROFESSIONAL LIFE as a successful businessman, Jarrod Frie has remained faithful to his calling to share the Gospel.

“OBU just felt like the right fit for me at the time, and I couldn’t be happier that God led me there,” Frie said. “OBU allowed me the opportunity to create lasting friendships as well as prepare me for life after college.”

While at OBU, Frie had many professors who notably stood out. However, there was one in particular that he would never forget.

“I took a Bible class taught by former OBU president Dr. Bill Tanner,” Frie said. “His understanding of the Word, wisdom, and teaching style made a huge impact on my view of scripture.”

A native of Broken Arrow, Frie returned to the Tulsa area after earning a Bachelor of Science in exercise science at OBU. He then began working in the medical field with Medtronic Spine and Biologics through a distributorship based out of Tulsa. His first position with them entailed running surgical sets between hospitals, but he eventually became a spine and biologics representative for them, selling implants to orthopedic and neuro spine surgeons.

After several years working for Medtronic and gaining valuable knowledge and experience in the industry, Frie launched his own company, Biomaterials of Oklahoma now called Corsair Medical, an independent spine and biologic distributorship in Tulsa.

That move eventually provided



Frie the opportunity to diversify into many other business opportunities including the acquisition of Edison Healthcare, a concierge medical travel company with smart care centers across the U.S.; Scissortail Home Health; Shield Screening, a pre-employment background and drug screening company; and several other startups and investment opportunities both inside and outside the medical field. He currently serves or has served as partner or managing partner for Corsair, Edison, and Payor Relations Management Group (PRMG). He also serves as a board member for PRMG.

Now, with more than 15 years of experience in the health care industry behind him, Frie has transitioned into a role at Corsair Investments where he focuses primarily on mergers and acquisitions in addition to overseeing the operational development of newly-acquired businesses.

“The most challenging and rewarding part of my job is identifying a potential opportunity and helping it become a success,” he said.

Frie credits his time on Bison Hill with providing him the building blocks not only for the successful

career he enjoys today but especially for his faith and for sharing that faith with others.

“OBU gave me an incredible foundation both academically and spiritually that has provided me the ability to treat business as a mission field,” he said. “Growing up as a pastor’s kid, I struggled early on in my business career with my eternal purpose. God quickly showed me I had a tremendous opportunity to share the Gospel with people that others may not.”

Frie looks back fondly on his four years on Bison Hill, cherishing

the lessons learned, friendships made and character forged during those formative years. While many memories bring a smile to his face, one comes to the top of mind when asked about his most memorable experience as an OBU student.

“I have so many great memories while at OBU, but the one that stands out most would be the senior walk back to Raley Chapel during graduation,” he said. “From the time we made the walk as freshmen, to our senior year, felt like a flash!”

Frie’s love for his alma mater has stayed with him throughout his career. He spent six years serving as a member of the OBU Board of Trustees from 2010 to 2016. During his final year, he served as the board’s chair.

He and his wife, Alycia (Calkins) Frie, '99, are both graduates of OBU. They have four children: Alexandria, Kaitlyn, Sutton and Moise. Three years ago, they adopted Moise “Mo” from Haiti when they felt the Lord calling them to adopt.

When Frie is not traveling between sporting events for his children and working, he enjoys hunting as much as he can in the fall. ■



Answering the Call When it isn't Easy

DR. REVEREND
LAWRENCE KIRK, '88

Director of Christian Education for the St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and Lecturer for the OBU Hobbs College of Theology and Ministry

LAWRENCE KIRK, '88, came to OBU as a young husband and father of three to answer God's call on his life to enter into ministry.

After graduating from high school, Kirk attended college for two years and began working in the computer business. During a revival in 1979, Kirk heard a young man preach and knew God was calling him into full-time ministry.

"I was so inspired by his theological training; I knew I wanted to give God more than 'sitting in the pew' on Sundays," Kirk said. "I wanted to pursue theological training."

OBU provided that opportunity when in 1986 Kirk left his job and entered OBU as a full-time student.

"At this particular point in my life I was married with three small children and a father-in-law who thought I had lost my mind," he said. "I commuted from Oklahoma City to Shawnee every day and completed my degree in 1988."

Many OBU professors have made a profound and lasting impression on Kirk.

"Dr. Dick Rader helped me believe in myself; Dr. Bob Evans taught me to appreciate the Greek language; Dr. Warren McWilliams taught me to think critically; and my friend, Bobby

Kelly, has taught me how to appreciate the Scriptures and how to make them relevant to this current generation," he said.

Kirk says he can remember struggling in some of the classes but always being encouraged by the professors who never gave him what he didn't earn. That integrity meant a lot to Kirk and as a result, his motto with his current students is "excellence without excuse."

"One of my fondest memories is when I took a course from Dr. Mack Roark," he said. "I got a 'C' on one of my assignments and I was devastated. I went in to talk to Dr. Roark and he said 'in 15 or 20 years from now, no one will ever know about this grade.' I saw Dr. Roark a few years ago and reminded him about that statement jokingly saying, 'It's been over 30 years now and I still remember that 'C.'"

After graduating from OBU, Kirk entered into the ministry as the assistant pastor at St. James Baptist Church in Spencer, Oklahoma. He also worked on his Master of Divinity by taking courses through Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's satellite campus in Shawnee. Since the degree also required 30 hours of course work to be completed on the Southwestern

campus, he traveled for 42 weeks to Fort Worth, Texas, and completed his degree in May 2002.

"After graduation, I was called to my present position as director of Christian education for the St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. This was another challenging time in my life whereas my dad struggled with cancer and passed away in 2014."

Citing the support of his family, his pastor and his church family, Kirk completed his doctorate from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, in May 2017.

Kirk works to provide relevant learning opportunities for the members of St. John through Sunday school classes for all age groups and does teacher training workshops across the country, motivating Christian education leaders to press for excellence in teaching God's word.

Kirk also serves as a lecturer in OBU's Hobbs College of Theology and Ministry. He and his wife conduct marriage ministry workshops and they love to see how God has used their struggles through life and marriage to encourage others.

"Many tell me that the Bible came alive to them in my teaching, but I remind them the Bible has always been alive; you just came alive to the Bible," he said.

Kirk married his high school sweetheart 45 years ago. Together they have one son, two daughters and six grandchildren. In his spare time, Kirk enjoys bass fishing. ■

From Financial Success to Financial Significance

SHELLEY SANDERS, '92

Senior Vice President-Investment Officer, Wells Fargo Advisors



SHELLEY SANDERS, '92, came to OBU for a quality education and discovered her passion for financial management along the way. Because of the values reinforced in her on Bison Hill, she does more than help her clients invest their money and accumulate wealth, she helps them envision how their wealth can impact others for good.

Sanders never shied away from hard work. While studying as a full-time student at OBU, she also worked in a bank trust department.

“Working and going to school at the same time was challenging,” Sanders said. “However, the support I received from many of the professors and the genuine concern for my spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing made the challenge seem possible. The lesson of hard work leading to personal growth and success has stayed with me.”

Although she obtained a degree in finance, Sanders says Dr. James Hurley, former professor of biology, significantly impacted her life because of his passion for education, science and his students.

“He was exceptionally demanding and, in hindsight, that helped prepare me for the career I have today which requires both the passion and the rigor that Dr. Hurley demonstrated every day,” she said.

Sanders credits Dr. Dan Reeder, Albert J. Geiger professor of finance, with solidifying her love for financial management and encouraging her to pursue her career.

“I was blessed to have one year with Dr. Dan Reeder. He joined OBU my senior year and saw something in me that, at 22, I could not see in myself,” she said.

After graduating from OBU, Sanders entered the world of investment management and by the time she was 24, she was managing a \$300 million bond portfolio. A few years later, she moved to Austin, Texas, to accept a position as a portfolio manager where her work focused on nonprofit organizations, families and individuals. While there, she completed her Chartered Financial Analyst designation.

Sanders moved back to Oklahoma to manage the investment division of a trust company and years later returned to her passion working directly with families on their wealth management needs.

“Just as I did while I was a student at OBU, I continued to work while completing my master’s degree in finance from Boston University. I’m very fortunate to have found my calling in life early and still be passionate about my work today,” she said.

Her passion for investment management shines brightest when she has the opportunity to help clients see

past the numbers and create significance in their lives.

“I get to help people move their focus from money and investments to what that money and investments can do for them, their family, their community and even the world community,” she said. “I like to refer to this as moving from financial success to financial significance. Accumulating wealth is one thing, but when I can help a client understand how their wealth can have

meaning and be significant for the people and causes they love, then I know that I’m making a difference and that is my great reward.”

According to Sanders, taking the time to truly understand her clients is the biggest key to her success.

“My 30 years of experience has taught me that successful wealth management is about the comprehension of a client’s goals, needs and personality traits. The daily market volatility requires nerves of steel and patience, but it is the understanding of the uniqueness of each client that is the greatest challenge and that is critical to the success of the wealth management process.”

Sanders’ time at OBU helped her understand how to succeed in financial management without losing her passion.

“OBU did a great job of reinforcing what my parents taught me. Hard work pays off. Hard work with a Christian spirit of love, understanding and serving those around me is how I sustain my passion for my career,” she said.

One of her favorite verses in the Bible is Proverbs 16:3 which says, “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” ■

DR. EUGENE SOULSBY first attended Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri, before transferring to OBU as a junior. He was drawn to the music department and its exceptionally high reputation – along with its dean, Dr. Warren M. Angell.

Soulsby said his voice teacher, Mr. Gary Horton, along with Dr. Richard Lin, founder and director of the Chorale, had an incredible influence on his life.

“I loved my choral arranging class with Dr. Angell, whose high energy, skilled piano talent, and voluminous ideas for arranging the human voice and piano accompaniment left one inspired and motivated. All of these men’s lives and talents inspired me to develop my own God-given abilities to be ‘my utmost for his highest.’”

Soulsby recalls Dr. Ralph Scales speaking in chapel and leaving him “spell-bound” in his seat.

“Dr. Scales challenged and motivated us to ‘study to show ourselves approved workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.’ For me, it was a confirmation that I was at the right institution at the right time doing the right thing,” Soulsby said.

“OBU gave me a thirst for knowledge and the inspiration to rise to the best of my God-given potential. But most importantly, I witnessed teachers, administrators, office personnel displaying a genuine interest in students and their lives – commitment and investment,” he said. “This picture has stuck with me throughout my life as I’ve dedicated my life to service and allowing the Spirit of God to make me that kind of person to those dear folks with whom God has allowed me contact.”

After graduating from OBU, Soulsby pursued a Master of Music from the University of Louisville. He sang in several productions, including performances for the Kentucky Opera Association and University of Louisville choir. While in Louisville, he was called to his first full-time



minister of music position at First Baptist Church, Shelbyville.

“It was there I met the love of my life, Peggy Ann, my wife of 52 years and mother of our children,” he said. “She came to my adult choir practice on a Wednesday evening, and I was smitten!”

In 1967, he and his wife moved to West Point, New York, to begin their three-year commitment with the United States Military Academy Band. Soulsby also served as minister of music and was ordained as a deacon at Ridgecrest Baptist Church in New Windsor-Newburgh, New York. It was here he came to know Dr. Paul Proulx, a chiropractor and fellow deacon, with whom he spent long evenings talking about chiropractic. Soulsby would later discover how God had orchestrated these discussions to eventually redirect his career path.

Planning to pursue a college teaching position, Soulsby auditioned to study under renowned tenor Blake Stern and enrolled at the Yale University Graduate School of Music. Soulsby performed the role of George at the Northeastern Premiere of Carlyle Floyd’s opera “Of Mice and Men,” based on the John Steinbeck book. Both Steinbeck and Floyd attended the premiere.

Soulsby then searched for a teaching position in a college or university to no avail.

“God had other plans,” he said. “It became urgently apparent to Peg and me that we needed to hear from Lord God as to what our next step

The Right Place at the Right Time

DR. EUGENE SOULSBY, '65

Retired Chiropractor and Minister of Music

should be. These were days of much discussion, prayer, tears and more prayer, and the subject of chiropractic kept coming to the surface.”

Soulsby attended Logan College in St. Louis, Missouri, knowing God again had placed him in the right place at the right time. Eager to obtain licensure, he discovered that Idaho, at that time, would allow an intern to take the board and license the intern pending graduation. With a chiropractic degree and Idaho license in hand, Soulsby moved west 1,500 miles to Burley, Idaho, thinking it would be a temporary location. But he and his family made Burley their home for 44 years.

Soulsby practiced for 36 years before retiring in 2011. He and his wife served at First Baptist Church, Burley, from 1976-2004 as minister of music where he also taught Sunday school, a men’s Bible study class and church-wide Bible studies.

“To help as many people as physically possible in a given day, to serve for the sake of serving, to give for the sake of giving, and to do all of this out of love for my heavenly Father who creates and sustains all life, is my first goal.”

Soulsby graduated from Newburgh Theological Seminary in 2016, and is currently working on turning his dissertation, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Worship,” into a book.

He and his wife have four children who, along with their spouses, attended OBU. They also have nine grandchildren. ■

Family Roots on Bison Hill

BRYAN WILKS, '00,

CEO of Freeform Agency, a Fortune 500 company and the second-fastest growing company in Oklahoma



WHEN BRYAN WILKS came to Bison Hill as a student, he was already extremely familiar with campus. Since his father was an OBU professor and his mother was active around campus, Wilks spent a lot of time attending chapel and hanging out with students before he was even a student.

By age 10, Wilks was an unofficial member of a male social club, towel boy for OBU's basketball team and even regularly attended chapel with students. To him, OBU was home.

"I enjoyed being around my parents and the students," Wilks said. "They were my best friends, so attending OBU for college meant I could spend more time with them. I look back with great thanks that God let me spend those college years near my parents. It was a place and time where we were all healthy and happy."

When asked about professors who greatly impacted him during his time on Bison Hill, Wilks mentioned one very important professor, his father.

"My dad and hero Dr. Tom Wilks," Wilks said. "I don't say that just because he's my dad. This is a man I know better than anyone. Like so many others, he greatly impacted how I see the world. I learned that his faith was much deeper than his religion. He always focused on the relationship first. I took many of his classes my freshman year and instead of memorization and methodologies, he taught us how to love people."

As the co-founder of Freeform, a technology and marketing company, Wilks has enjoyed how much OBU

prepared him as a young entrepreneur. The company, founded in 2013, has experienced tremendous growth. In 2016, Inc. Magazine ranked Freeform the 456th fastest growing company in America and 2nd in Oklahoma.

"Apple didn't invent the computer, but the company developed its own version that made the device simple and approachable for everyone," Wilks said. "Following this idea, we saw an opportunity to make growth simple for everyone. As a result, in 2019 Freeform launched a product with the goal of replacing cumbersome and ineffective marketing technology with pure and simple growth. We call it ProfitHack."

Wilks and his team created this product with their customers in mind. ProfitHack has allowed users to launch impressive marketing campaigns and has even been nicknamed the QuickBooks of marketing by its users.

Before Freeform, Wilks graduated from the Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C. He then earned a Master of Business Administration from Stanford Graduate School of Business. Silicon Valley inspired him to focus on furthering his technology education. Finally, Wilks earned his master's degree in information technology with honors from Harvard University.

Wilks began his professional career in politics. He managed a high-profile congressional campaign in Texas, assisted U.S. House Majority Leader

Dick Arme during Contract With America and served as the Executive Director of the Conservative Leadership Political Action Committee in Washington, D.C.

In the past decade, his experience spanned from manufacturing, entertainment, technology and advanced consumer marketing. Wilks served as the vice president of business development and director of marketing for two of the largest privately held companies in North

America. Under his leadership, his teams implemented significant growth strategies through new market penetration, mergers and acquisitions, and industry roll-ups.

When asked about his success, Wilks credited OBU for giving him confidence when pursuing his goals.

"It was at Bison Hill that I decided to change my corner of the world," Wilks said. "As college students, we have in common hard days, doubt, uncertainty, insecurity and people who say we can't. We tend to believe others are smarter or more equipped. However, at OBU you aren't a number. People invest the time and effort needed to help you overcome those doubts. This environment prepared me as an entrepreneur to safely explore, take chances and be different."

Even though Wilks has had tremendous success in his career, he always looks back to his time at OBU and is thankful for the memories.

"Every time I see Raley Chapel I think about my mom," Wilks said. "She was among the first women to be a guest speaker at OBU chapel. She inspired students and led many to a personal relationship with Jesus. A long way for a girl raised in a poor home by a single mom. Bison Hill is certainly more than a place of academic excellence for the Wilks, it's where some of our greatest family memories and accomplishments live." ■



Learning to be Relational Minded

SUSAN G. WILLIS, '83

*Dean of Professional Studies at
Rogers State University*

GRADUATING FROM OBU in 1983 with a bachelor's degree in health, physical education and recreation, Susan Willis never imagined she would end up as the current dean of professional studies at Rogers State University.

"I have a history of family who went to OBU including my parents," Willis said. "If anything, I was resistant to going to OBU just because I wanted to do my own thing. I visited several universities but when I visited OBU I got a first-hand experience of how much faculty and administration cared for students. When I left, I just knew that it was the place for me. That personal attention really spoke to me."

Willis credits OBU as the model for higher education. She believes the personal attention she received at OBU influenced how she forms relationships with students and potential students.

"OBU gave me such a well-rounded Christian liberal arts education that prepared me well for my career and life," she said. "The emphasis on critical thinking has served me in all I have done. The individual concern for me as a student is something I have taken with me into my career in higher education hoping my students feel that same individual concern. I have chosen to stay at a smaller regional university throughout my

career because of the more personal relationships you can have with students and colleagues. I loved the family feeling at OBU and have chosen to spend my career in a smaller university because of that."

After graduating from OBU, Willis was a research assistant at the University of Wyoming. This is where she earned her master's degree and her interest in researching the influence of physical activity on bone density. She then continued her research at the doctoral level at Texas Women's University.

She taught for 20 years at East Central University and has been at Rogers State University for 11 years since then. While at ECU, she was the department head of kinesiology where she developed entirely new curriculum programs including exercise science, athletic training and a master's degree in sports administration. She also coached men's and women's cross country for 13 years.

When Dr. Willis came to RSU as the department head for sports management, she developed a new degree program and established many internship opportunities in Tulsa and surrounding areas. In 2016, she became the interim dean for the school of business and technology.

One year later, RSU re-organized academic schools and Willis became the dean of the school of professional studies.

"Higher education is going through a very difficult time both in Oklahoma and nationwide," she said. "Our funding is down and there is more competition to attract students. We are making difficult decisions with programs and personnel. My goal every day is to be a positive influence through these times. But overall, when you watch students walk across that stage and receive their diplomas, it reminds you of why we are here. I love hearing from former students and keeping up with what they are doing now."

Willis credits her ability to form relationships with her students to her time at OBU. Without the professors that poured into her, she would have never tried to form the relationships she did.

"OBU's atmosphere gives you the opportunity to get to know your professors," she said. "The two who influenced me the most were David Sallee and Norris Russell. Coach Sallee was not only a great example of a coach, he was also a great example as a scholar. Dr. Russell came to OBU at a time when I was struggling about changing my major. He was a specialist in the field of exercise physiology, and I knew right away that was what I wanted to do. He also showed me the scholarly work I could do in this area and, with his help, I did the first honors project in that department." ■





Dr. Heath Thomas, *Dean of the Hobbs College; Associate Vice President for Church Relations; Floyd K. Clark Chair of Christian Leadership*

OBU's Herschel H. Hobbs College of Theology and Ministry recently launched its own blog at hobbsblog.okbu.edu. Below is an abridged version of a recent post from Dr. Heath Thomas. Thomas examines how Christian liberal arts universities like OBU help deliver a transformative educational experience to students, changing not only what they know but more importantly impacting who they will become.

University Education with a Soul

The American university lost its soul, and we need to find it again. University education is a beautiful, noble, formative and helpful endeavor. At its best, university education is transformative: it effects change in people. But the question is...what do they become? We may see graduates who can land a job and make money, but all too often, the students who leave university into the "real world" leave without a soul.

An internal drive for an amorphous notion of "excellence" often leads universities to forsake their original mission and morph into places who churn out people who can get a job to make money, professors who can get research grants, and academic units that move up national rankings. But in the process, the university forgets moral formation inherent in its education and so fails in its mission to benefit the world.

The Wisdom of Education

It wasn't always so. When set against its originating ideals, university education developed to shape the character, minds, hearts and souls of students so that they could acquire wisdom to engage the world well with skills that were relevant to their communities.

Wisdom, as described in the Bible, equates to a love of God in the whole of life so that we live well in God's world. Wisdom is devotion to the Lord that works itself out in proper and fitting action in the world. We don't naturally have wisdom, so we need to seek after it.



hobbsblog.okbu.edu

At its best university education is a pursuit of wisdom. Grounded in a deep and abiding love for God in all of life, university education trains individuals to think and act in the world with acquired skills and dispositions to engage the world well.

The Soul of the Christian Liberal Arts University

Distinctively Christian liberal arts universities, like OBU, are created to provide education with a soul. They are built on a social compact: they will form their students so those students will be beneficial for the world. To be beneficial to the world, students need a soul. And because Christian liberal arts universities are grounded in a desire to build God's wisdom into the lives of its students, they provide this soulish education.

The path to wisdom is grounded in Scripture and expressed in the liberal arts tradition of the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). This ancient and venerable education, translated in a modern core curriculum, shapes the whole person in the whole of life for the glory of God and the good of the world. When other skills useful to the world (business, fine arts, education, literature and language, philosophy, theology and ministry, among others) couple with the classical Christian liberal arts core, one finds the ingredients for a university that develops students' souls.

If it is true that university education has lost its soul, I believe we can find it again in Christian liberal arts education.

This is an abridged version. For access to the full post, visit hobbsblog.okbu.edu.



500 W. University
Shawnee, OK 74804

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



ONLINE Graduate Programs

Earn your master's degree online from OBU and increase your impact as a leader. An OBU graduate degree helps you learn how faith and work intersect.

Find your place.

Apply to OBU.

Master of Arts in Christian Studies
Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies
Master of Business Administration
Master of Science in Nursing



okbu.edu/graduate