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Mia Macias Named “Miss SWOSU 2025” at Annual Scholarship Pageant



Mia Macias (pictured, center) has been awarded the title of Miss SWOSU 2025. Pictured with her are runner-ups Sierra Stephens (left) and Gabrielle Clayton (right).

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) has announced the winners of the Miss SWOSU 2025 Scholarship Pageant, which was held on November 9 at the Weatherford Performing Arts Center (PAC).

Mia Macias from Leedey was crowned Miss SWOSU 2025. Mia, a freshman majoring in General Business, impressed the judges with her community service initiative, “A Home for Hope,” which focuses on advocating for child and family homelessness. Mia received a \$2,500 scholarship to SWOSU.

Sierra Stephens from Mountain View was awarded 1st Runner Up, receiving a \$1,300 SWOSU scholarship. Sierra also received an additional \$250 SWOSU scholarship for selling the most scholarship patrons.

Gabrielle Clayton from Clinton was named 2nd Runner Up and received a \$1,100 SWOSU scholarship.

Jessica Goucher from Waynoka won the Talent Award for her performance of “Feeling Good.” She was awarded a \$100 SWOSU scholarship and a \$50 gift certificate from the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce for selling the most tickets.

The Peer Respect & Leadership Award went to Lauren Wicker from Mustang, who was honored with a \$50 gift certificate from the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce.

Mackenzie Brown from Tecumseh received the Crowd Pleaser Award and was given a \$100 gift certificate from the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce.

Each non-finalist was awarded a \$600 scholarship to SWOSU. SWOSU congratulates all the participants for their hard work and dedication.

For more information about the Miss SWOSU Scholarship Pageant, please contact Co-Directors Ellen Hamburger-Mol and Tia Sauer-Blanchard at missswosu@swosu.edu.



Pictured, from left to right: “Crowd Pleaser Award” recipient Mackenzie Brown; “Talent Award” recipient Jessica Goucher; 1st Runner-Up Sierra Stephens, “Miss SWOSU 2025” Mia Macias; “Miss SWOSU 2024” Mackynsie McKedy; “Peer Respect & Leadership Award” recipient Lauren Wicker; Finalist Madalyn Owens; and 2nd Runner-Up Gabrielle Clayton.



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James Miller

James Ellis Miller, 83, of Elk City, Oklahoma was born on May 17, 1941 in Hammon, Oklahoma. He is the son of Jay and Birdie (Buttry) Miller. He went to walk the heavenly streets of gold with his Lord and Savior on Friday, November 8, 2024 at the Elk City Nursing Home, Elk City, Oklahoma.



He attended Hammon High School, Hammon, Oklahoma and graduated with the Class of 1959. During his high school years, he worked at one of the three movie theaters in Hammon at that time. James also worked on a couple of area dairy farms and other farms while growing up.

After graduation, James joined the National Guard. Upon completion of his service, he started his near lifelong career in the trucking industry. One of his first driving jobs was for Kelly Dairy in Elk City hauling milk to Fort Worth, Texas. Throughout the years he would drive for various other companies finally buying his own trucks and starting a business. James would haul many different things over the years.

The latter part of his life was spent in Maybell, Colorado with friends and eventually moving back to Elk City.

He enjoyed over the years going hunting and fishing with friends and telling tall tales. He had many great adventures to say the least.

The biggest thing he ever did was joining Community Fellowship Church in Hammon, Oklahoma and being baptized at the young age of 81. That really meant a lot to him.

James was an active member of Community Fellowship Church along with being a member of the Elk City Masonic Lodge #182. He was a past Worshipful Master.

Cherishing his memory is son, Joe Miller and his wife, Kelli from Elk City, Oklahoma; two grandsons, Dylan Miller and Brayden Miller and his wife, Grace all of Elk City, Oklahoma; granddaughter, Baylee Miller of Edmond, Oklahoma; one great granddaughter, Blaire Miller of Elk City, Oklahoma; two nieces and one nephew.

James is preceded in death by his parents, Jay and Birdie Miller, two brothers, Bill Miller and Gene Miller; two sisters, Nina Clayton and Helen Gwartney.

Bo Ray

Melvin T. "Bo" Ray, a resident of Elk City, Oklahoma, peacefully departed this life on November 15, 2024, at the Baptist Village, surrounded by the spirit of love that he so deeply embodied. His services will be held on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at the Kiesau Lee Funeral Home Chapel. in Clinton, OK.



Born on February 28, 1942, in Butler, Oklahoma, Bo was the beloved son of Tude Mitchell Ray and Bessie Angeline (Brown) Ray. His life was a tapestry woven with the colors of hard work, adventure, and a deep appreciation for the beauty of nature.

A true lover of the outdoors, Melvin found joy in farming cotton and spent countless hours fishing in serene ponds and "little" lakes. His heart was as free as his wandering spirit, which led him across the country, seeking new experiences and friendships along the way.

Bo had a passion for music and dance, participating in both a square dance club and a western swing club, where he shared laughter and joy with those he encountered. He was a "jack of all trades and master of none," immersing himself in various professions, from working in the oil fields to lumberjack work and even white deer filming. His diverse interests painted a picture of a man who embraced life's adventures wholeheartedly.

Bo's legacy lives on in the hearts of his family, which includes his devoted wife, Kay Martin, of the home; his loving sons, Tony Ray and wife Raylene, of Foss, OK, Eric Ray and wife Kay, of Elgin, OK; and daughter-in-law, Sheila Ray. He is also survived by his cherished sisters; Angelina Ray, of Clatskanie, OR; Sallie Lushenko, of Purdy, MO; Wilma Nichols, of Burns Flat, OK; Lavone Lewis and husband Dave, of Norman, OK.; and a warm circle of grandchildren and great-grandchildren; Katy and Misty Ray, Justin, Kaycee, Nikki, Chance Barber, Cody, and Corey Ray, as well as Collin White and Rileigh Ray.

Bo was preceded in death by his wife, Joan Ray, mother of his children; son, Mark Ray; as well as his parents, three brothers and three sisters.

Pauline Bingenheimer

Pauline Frances (Fischer) Bingenheimer, age 92, slipped away to Jesus's waiting arms at her home Thursday, November 7, 2024. Pauline was born April 16, 1932, to Martin and Eva (Voth) in Hooker, OK.



Pauline often talked of her early years on the farm near Hooker with her nine brothers and sisters. It was there she learned thrift, hard work, and responsibility.

Pauline attended Corn Bible Academy in her early school years. She graduated from Clinton High School in 1950. Shortly after high school, she married Joe Bingenheimer on April 21, 1949. Pauline was the supportive stay-at-home mom and wife. Together, they traveled and visited family. They were married for 73 years before Joe's passing.

Pauline had a passion for life, especially for her family and friends. She greeted friends and strangers with a bright smile and her lipstick was always perfect.

She was an avid gardener, and Pauline was famous for her colorful beds of trademark red poppies and blue larkspur in cottage garden. Pauline was generous, sharing flowers, plants, and seeds with her neighbors. Often seen in her white pants and sun hat, hair coiffed and nails done, Pauline would dig in the garden and stay fresh as a daisy.

Pauline was a dedicated member of the First Baptist Church in Clinton, where joyfully taught Sunday School. Her caring nature was evident to all; she often reached out to those in need, offering clothing and support.

As a Christian, Pauline lived by those values. She shared the gospel and her firm faith with all around her. Pauline cherished her precious family. They were her world. Through fervent prayers of a righteous woman, she guided those who went astray, keeping her faith, that God would lead others to grace. She loved family times and decorating for holidays. She created a warm and welcoming atmosphere around her impressive 9-foot table that was always filled with a variety of food. A good German housewife, she loved to cook borscht, pies, potato salad, or zwieback. She was always the first to bring one of famous dishes to any event.

Pauline's warmth, generosity, and love for her family and community will be deeply missed. She leaves behind a legacy of kindness and devotion that will forever remain in the hearts of those she touched.

Pauline is survived by her son, Michael Bingenheimer of Clinton, OK; and three daughters: Paula Stewart, Clinton, OK; Kim Robinson, Clinton, OK; and Ann Bardone and husband, Patrick, both of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

She is also survived by five grandchildren, Jacob Stewart and wife, Amy of Clinton, OK, Adrienne Clerici and husband, Chris of Durango, Colorado, Jordan Stewart and wife, Melissa of Clinton, OK; Katelin Wilson and husband, Matt of North Carolina; and Haley Robison of Durango, Colorado; and six great grandchildren: Grant, Kate, and Audrey Stewart, all of Clinton, OK; Rocco and Carson Clerici, both of Durango, Colorado; and Oaklyn and Bodhi Stewart, both of Clinton, OK.

Also surviving Pauline are her siblings, Julie McIlhaney and husband John of Virginia and Lawrence Fischer of Montana.

Preceding Pauline in death were her parents, her husband Joe, son in law Larry Stewart and son in law Barry Robinson, sisters: Rosella, Selma, Esther, and brothers Arthur, Ervin, Eldon, and Paul.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Clinton Mission House, PO Box 1522, Clinton, OK, 73601.

Rusty Runnels

Robert Dwayne Runnels, also known as "Rusty" and "Hippie", was born July 10, 1957, in Lawton, to Robert Franklin and Mary Ann (Petty) Runnels and passed away Monday, November 11, 2024, at home surrounded by his family having reached the age of 67 years, 4 months, and 1 day.



Rusty was raised and attended school in Hydro, graduating with the Class of 1975. Out of high school, he drove a truck, hauling oilfield equipment and cattle.

On September 11, 1985, Rusty married Tina J. Henslee in Hydro, Oklahoma, and later moved to Thomas to raise their family.

It didn't matter what Rusty was doing, whether it was riding his motorcycle or what, he always had a great time doing it. He will be remembered for loving his grandchildren and spending time with family and friends.

Rusty is survived by his daughter, Misty Hall and husband, Samuel of Arapaho; girlfriend, Wendy Rogers; brother, Dusty Runnels and wife, Rhonda of Enid; half-brother, David Runnels and wife, Susan of Federalsburg, MD; half-sister, Sharon Dulin and husband, Donnie of Seaford, DE; sister-in-law, Stacy Blanford and husband, Ron of Weatherford; two grandchildren, Jessie and Aiden Hall; two great-grandchildren, Dallas Reeves and Neveah Lawshea, Nikki Swaney and husband, Joe, Danielle Goodall and husband Heath, Gordon Perry and wife, Jordan.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife; his brother, Billy Don Runnels; and a half-sister, Myrtle Duke.

Winnie Gather

Winnie Mae Gather was born August 27, 1940, in Hobart, to Woodrow Kelsey and Muriel Bernice (Evans) Ragland and passed away Friday, November 15, 2024, at Bellevue Health and Rehab in Oklahoma City.



Winnie was raised on a farm and attended school in Cloud Chief and later graduated from Hobart High School in 1958. She made her home in Weatherford where she raised her family. She moved to Mustang and later moved to Burns Flat from 2003 to 2021 when she moved into the assisted living center in Oklahoma City. Winnie enjoyed working in her flower gardens, crocheting, cooking and spending time with family and friends.

Winnie is survived by one son, Terry Gather and wife, Eleanore of Oklahoma City; one sister, Anita Zavadil and husband, Jon of Columbus, Nebraska; six grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

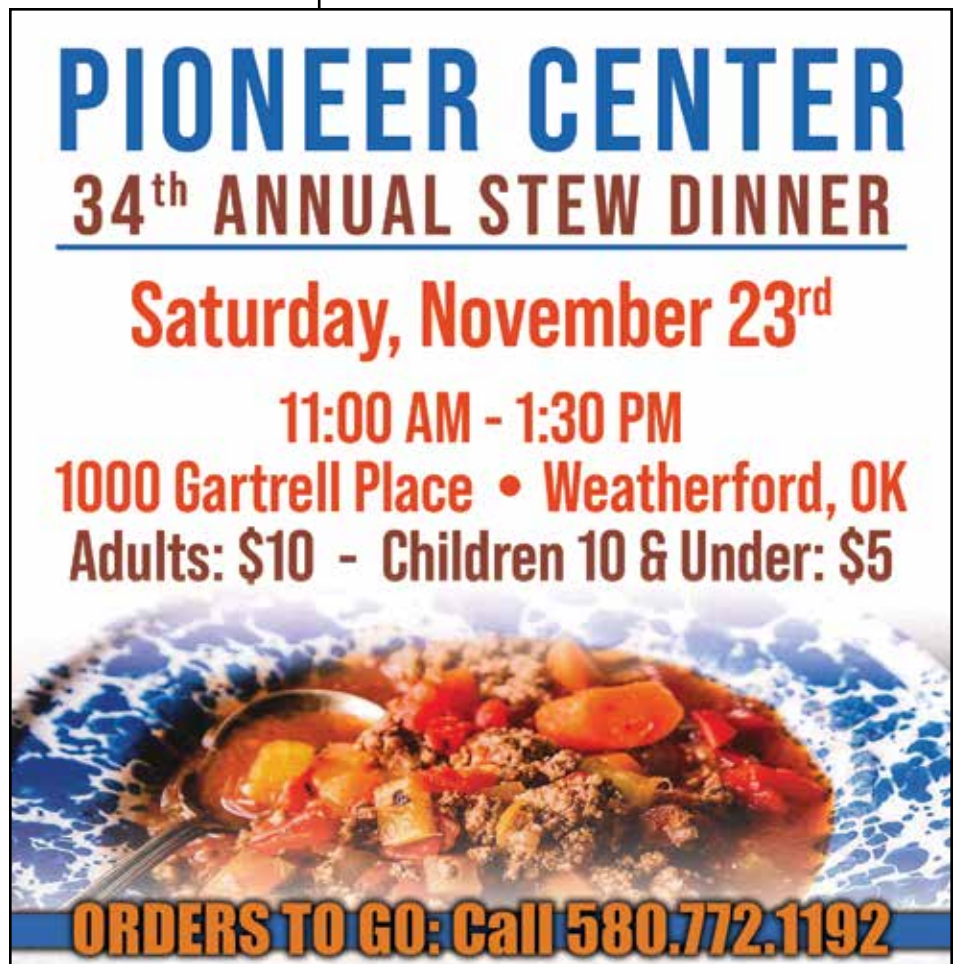
She was preceded in death by parents; two sons, Richard and Raymond Gather; twin sister, Glenna Taylor; and one brother, Noble Ragland.



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Elk City's Christmas in the Park Returns to Ackley Park November 29



Chase Wright
Staff Writer

Join Us for Elk City's Christmas in the Park! Get ready to sleigh the holiday season with us in Ackley Park where the Elk City Chamber of Commerce and Visit Elk City will be bringing festive lights, holiday cheer, and family fun to Elk City.

Starting Thanksgiving night, watch the park come to life with dazzling holiday lights from 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM nightly!

Kicking off the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving, enjoy festive activities every weekend from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, right up until Christmas Eve. Perfect for a holly-jolly evening out with family and friends.

While you're at the park, you'll find plenty to make your night magical. Meet Santa and Mrs. Claus, share your holiday wishes, and snap a memorable photo with the jolly duo! Take a merry ride on the Holly Jolly Trolley through the park's sparkling displays, or the Mini Train for a perfect adventure for little elves. For a unique view of the lights, climb aboard the Double Decker Bus, or take a classic spin on the Centennial Carousel, and don't forget to warm up with a cup of hot chocolate—'tis the season to treat yourself!

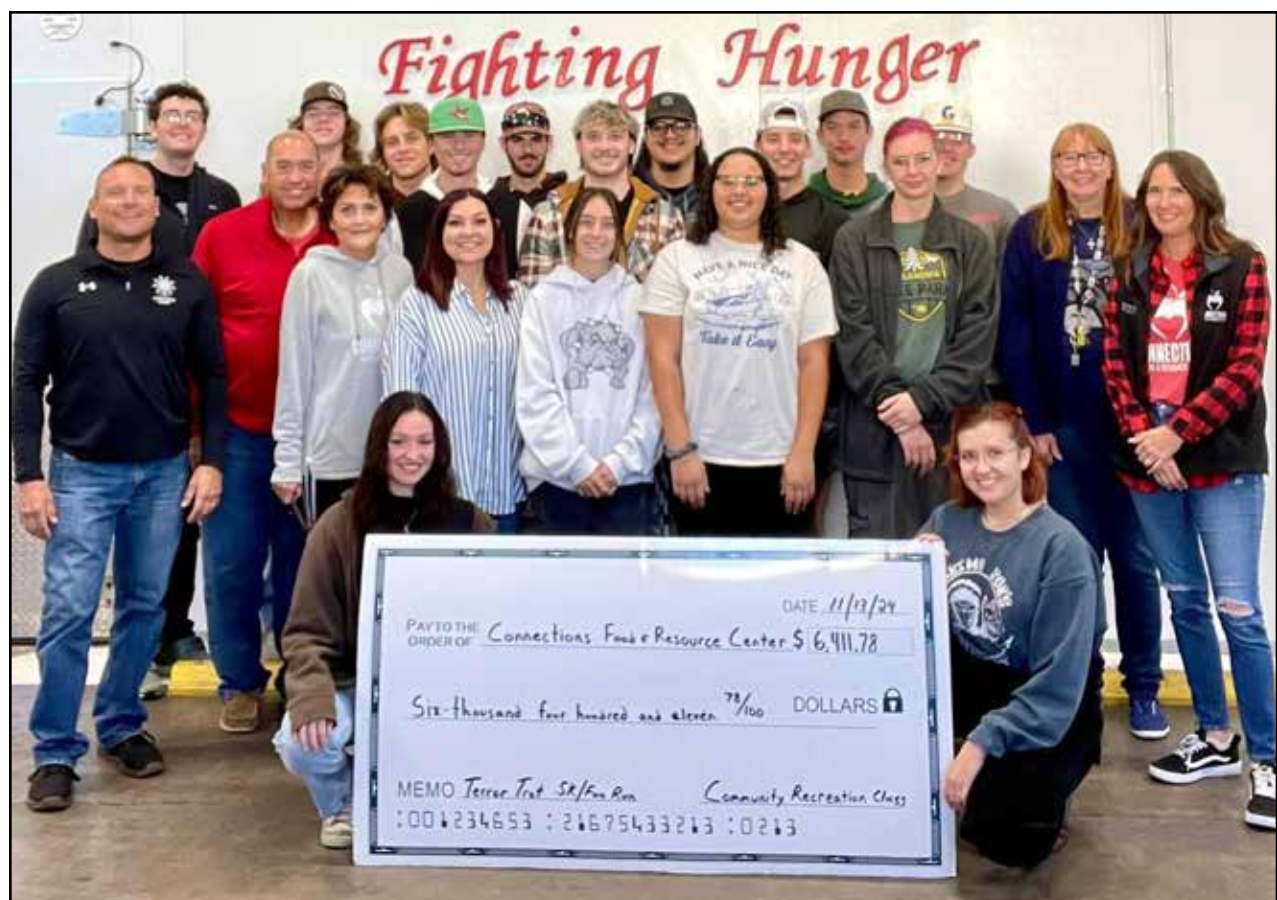
So, make Elk City your holiday destination this winter. With magical lights, joyful gatherings, and a bit of Christmas shopping, it's sure to be tremendously wonderful!

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SWOSU instructor Paul Hummel (pictured, farthest left) stands along his Community Restraion class. Together, they hosted the 1st annual Terror Trot fundraiser on October 30 for Connections Food and Resource Center in Weatherford. The can food donations brought in 213 pounds. The class is pictured with a novelty check for \$6,411.78

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We can choose to feed our minds from good sources. The best source to gain eternal truth is the Bible. This is not to say "I read only the Bible" as some would sanctimoniously say. There are great books written by both secular and spiritual writers. God speaks to us as we read his Word. But he also speaks to others as they read. Then they are led to write books about the insights they have gained. That is valuable to us.

But I would like to offer a few suggestions as to how read the Bible to gain the most benefit. Many have a goal to read so much each day or to read the Bible through each year. Many have done this to their great profit.

To risk being misunderstood, let me point out that this may not always be the most effective way to study the Bible. You may note that I use the word "study" instead of read. There is a difference.

In John Ortberg's book *The Me I Want to Be*, he entitles a section, "How to Get Fed from the Bible." After all, isn't that the desire of all Bible readers?

I'm afraid there are many of us finding ourselves reading out of "duty" or because that is what we are supposed to do as followers of Christ.

And that is not all bad. God can speak to us. But that may not be the best way to find spiritual nourishment.

First, let us read the Bible out of curiosity. Are there questions I can ask of the text that allow me to find truth and fuel for a more effective life.

In the teaching passages of the letters of Paul, Peter, James, John, and Hebrews you might be asking yourself what truths, teachings, or principles are found in these verses. Then the matter of application to your life comes to play. As someone has said, "We don't read the Bible primarily for facts but to change our life or behavior."

In the narrative portions such as the gospels, poetry, historical passages you might ask, "What does this passage tell me about Jesus, God the Father, or the Holy Spirit—his character, his actions, his plans or purposes?" In each of these methods you can ask, "Is there an example for me to follow or a sin to avoid?" Then before you leave the passage look for a verse that speaks to your heart. Paraphrase—write out the verse in your own words and pray it back to God.

This assumes that you are going to have pencil and paper handy to put down on paper your findings. Then you have a record of your readings if you want to share it with someone else.

I know, this takes some time. That's why you would not likely read and study over a few verses—not even a whole chapter. But I can guarantee you will remember what you read far longer than if you read through 2-3 chapters without really thinking and meditating on it.

Rick Warren has put it this way. Think if you would of crossing a beautiful clear body of water. You can see the bottom and all the creatures and rock formations beneath. You can cross the lake in a speed boat quickly, but not really seeing beneath the water. Or you can row across the lake slowly, taking in all the beauty beneath the water. That is the difference in reading for conquest and studying for life change.

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Mike Smith
News Director

High School Football Playoffs Begin: Clinton, Thomas Advance to Round 2

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Football Playoffs have begun in western Oklahoma, and the results were a bit surprising. Of the teams that WestOK Weekly readers root for, only four made it into their respective class brackets; Clinton, Elk City, and Weatherford representing Class 4A, and Thomas representing Class A-II.

Probably the most surprising upset was the Weatherford Eagles' first district game against the Bethany Bronchos.

With a perfect 5-0 District track record, Weatherford was poised to make it quite far into the bracket had they not fallen to Bethany 28-6.

After a first quarter with no scores, Bethany scored two touchdowns in the second quarter and one more in the third.

Weatherford's one touchdown in the second quarter was the highlight of the night. Stone Chism

made a 20-yard pass to CJ Nickson, who then ran the ball 71-yards for the most exciting play of the night.

The Elk City Elks had a similarly turbulent night, getting knocked out of contention by the Tuttle Tigers 34-6.

It wasn't all bad for Western Oklahoma's 4A schools, as the Clinton Red Tornadoes defeated the Blanchard Lions 21-20. The game came down to one field goal, which the Lions missed in the last 30 seconds of the game.

On the A-II front, the Thomas-Fay-Custer Terriers had a clean first game against the Wilson Eagles, with a final score of 28-6.

Clinton will soon face off against Wagoner and Thomas will face Hominy. Both games will be held on November 22nd. You can watch both games live by visiting the website wright.media/

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CANUTE / COURT DEDICATION - Canute Public Schools is calling on its former players, staff, family and friends to attend a dedication ceremony for the district's new basketball floor. The dedication ceremony for Mike and Sandra Maddox will be held on December 16th and will begin at 6pm. The new floor will be named Mike Maddox Court.

WEATHERFORD / SCHOOL ROOFING - The Weatherford School Board of Education approved a contract with Armko Construction for roofing projects in the district. Architect John Hansen spoke about the role of Armko Construction, saying Armko would oversee the project from start to finish. "We'll put together construction documents... related to that approved scope of work by working with the insurance carrier [and] put that out to bid," said Hansen. "Once the successful bidder is contracted, we will oversee the repairs to make sure it's done according to the contract documents."

WEATHERFORD / AIRPORT RD - Work continues to progress on the bridge project on Airport Road over I-40 in the city of Weatherford. Mayor Mike Brown says the work is nearing an end. "They're getting close, but [these projects] have been an inconvenience for about a year longer than we anticipated," expressed Brown, "but [Airport Road] is going to be a beautiful bridge, and will really make the traffic flow better." Brown says he is hopeful that both the Airport Road and Lawter Road projects will be complete soon, with an optimistic prediction being before the end of November, but "for sure" by the end of 2024.

ELK CITY / EMT COURSE - The Elk City School Board of Education recently approved an EMT course at the high school beginning in January says Superintendent Mike Sparks. "Going to be in partnership with the Elk, City EMT and Fire Department, the students who take that course will be eligible to become a certified EMT at the end of that course," said Sparks. "I think it's a great thing for students that are interested in a possible medical field." Sparks says it is the first of many things in the pipeline for Elk City Public Schools.

DIRICKSON / DISTRICT 2 JUDGE - Governor Kevin Stitt has appointed Custer County Associate District Judge Donna Dirickson as the new District Judge for District 2. Judge Dirickson shares her thoughts on being appointed to the position, saying "I'm very honored this was a dream of a lifetime to have the support of the local bar as well as the governor to appoint me to this position, stepping in where Judge Weedon left off. I've got some big shoes to fill and that she was certainly an excellent District Judge, and I hope to live up to the standards that she established for the office." Judge Dirickson is succeeding Judge Jill Weedon, who recently retired.

CLINTON CC / WATER WELLS - Clinton City Council acting as the Public Works Authority recently approved a task order from Burns & McDonnell. The task order calls for the drilling of three test wells on the northeast corner of the Dixon Property to determine flow and water quality before procuring additional rights and permissions from the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) for completing a new well. "[Burns & McDonnell] will help us with the OWRB consultations to get all those applications timely and professionally submitted," said Gene McCullough, who serves as public works director for the city of Clinton. The project's cost is not to exceed \$209,550.

WEATHERFORD / SALES TAX - It was another down month in sales tax for the city of Weatherford for September sales, says Mayor Mike Brown, who says sales tax receipts have been down seven straight months. "Last year was an all-time high [for Weatherford's] sales tax receipts. Every month, we're going against a record high. Unless you're growing at a really fast pace to be able to keep that string going." The city of Weatherford still collected just over a million dollars in the latest sales tax receipts.

WASHITA COUNTY / RETIREMENTS - A retirement reception will be held next month for both Washita County Sheriff Roger Reeve and Undersheriff Kenneth Loftiss. The event will be held on December 18th in the Washita County Activity Center in Cordell from 1-3pm.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

Happy Birthday to YOU!

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Christian Free Store - Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875. **Alfalfa, OK, Community Center** "Bible Study," Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public. **OK Parkinson's Alliance**, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org. **Iron Sharpens Iron** is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

Happy Birthday Wishes for Nov. 20th - Daniel Blackwolf, Becky Brandhorst, Chellie Cox, Phil Hoover, Kenneth Hoover, Polly Hulsey, Kasi Kincaid, Blake Pearson, Merlin Shontz, Neva Taff, Kyia Trent, Mike Trent, Tanner Wilburn; **Nov. 21st** - Leanna Aycock, Tyler Carder, Brian Gossen, Linda Hays, Chris Holt, Reyna McDaniel, Emily Meyers, Craig Morton, Jack Sadler, Debbie Schwartz, Catherine Stewart; **Nov. 22nd** - Keely Anderson, Henry Arriaga, Cindy Broadbent, Brad Burton, Dakota Estes, Dorothy Lafauer, Naida Meyer, Alan Newman, Mike Taylor, Jenny Vincent; **Nov. 23** - Shelia Goerend, Shelly Laville, Benny Pruitt, Annbriella Robert, Kayla Shepherd, Scott Taylor, Zach Weichel, Austin Wile, Dustin Williams, Carla Wilson, Cody Wright; **Nov. 24** - Beckie Beech, Cara Coy, John Flaming, Paula Isch, John Locke, Steven Sawatzky, Leon Sellers, Kenlee Smith; **Nov. 25** - Shelci Bennett, Bill Butler, Maria Cardenas, Levi Ervin, Gayle Hamm, Charis Kimble, Renee Miller, Ida Perez, Shon Sissney; **Nov. 26** - Crystal Cambell, Jessi Cornelius, Keith Foster, Phil Goossen, John Heidebrecht, Savanna Martinez, Brenda Page, J.D. Smith, Regan Waller, Corey White.

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This holiday season, double the impact of your donations to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma with the Holiday Match. Through January 15, all donations to the Regional Food Bank are matched, up to \$350,000

This match is thanks to APMEX and the Cresap Family Foundation. KOCO 5 returns this holiday season as the official television partner of the Holiday Match.

"Supporting our community is at the heart of what we do," said Ken Lewis, CEO of APMEX. "For both our founder and myself, food security has personal significance, making our partnership with the Regional Food Bank especially meaningful. This season, we're honored to work together in the fight against hunger, supporting our neighbors in need."

Oklahoma ranks as one of the hungriest states in the nation.

Throughout the past year, the Regional Food Bank continued to see an elevated need for food assistance. This need led to the second-highest distribution numbers in the nonprofit's 44-year history.

"The Holiday Match is a unique opportunity for Oklahomans to send twice as many meals to our neighbors living with hunger," said Stacy Dykstra, chief executive officer of the Regional Food Bank. "We are so thankful to our partners at APMEX and the Cresap Family Foundation for sponsoring this match and we encourage Oklahomans to get into the spirit of giving and join us during the Holiday Match."

KOCO 5 will highlight the Holiday Match throughout the campaign with special programming detailing the impact of the Regional Food Bank's programs.

The Regional Food Bank's network of community-based partners operates in 53 counties across central and western Oklahoma.

Partners like Connections Food & Resource Center in Weatherford serve hundreds of Oklahoma each month.

The Regional Food Bank recently spoke with Gina, a shopper at the Connections FRC. Three years ago, life threw Gina a curveball when she gained custody of her 7-year-old granddaughter.

Soon after, Gina began to have trouble providing enough food for her family. A friend told her she would qualify for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, a federal senior nutrition program, and recommended she visit Connections FRC.

In her monthly senior box, Gina receives milk and other shelf-stable food items. But she also gets to shop at Connections FRC, taking home fresh fruit and vegetables and meat. She is even able to pick up cereal, which her granddaughter loves.

"I guess I'm pretty lucky, because with the food we get here we're able to make it," Gina said. "But without this place, I don't know where we would be at."

Help deliver hope to Oklahomans like Gina this holiday season by making a tax-deductible donation at rfbo.org/give or by calling 405-600-3161.

Donations may also be mailed to:
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Football Seniors Robards and Monroe Named Bulldogs of the Week

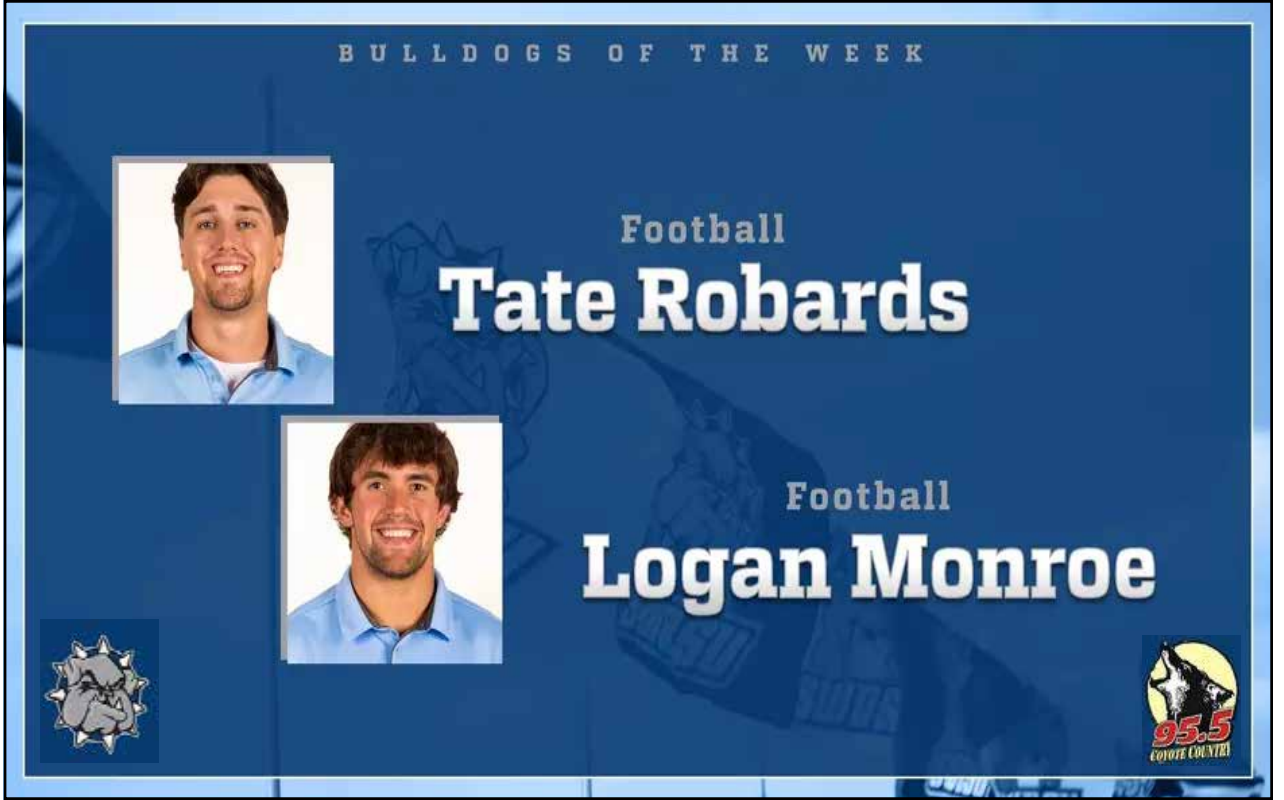
Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Seniors Tate Robards and Logan Monroe have been

chosen as the newest Bulldogs of the Week. The weekly student-athlete recognition is brought to you by Wright Media, the home of SWOSU Athletics for both livestream and radio.

Robards (Stone Canyon, Okla.) accounted for five total touchdowns in SWOSU's 50-0 rout of Northwestern Oklahoma State last Saturday in the season finale. The senior quarterback averaged nearly 22 yards per completion with three touchdowns through the air and another two rushing scores. Robards finished 13-for-25 for 285 yards for his best game as a Bulldog, in his final game as a Bulldog.

Monroe (Dallas, Texas) led a Bulldog defense that posted its first shutout since 2002. The senior linebacker led all tacklers in the game with 13, and added a forced fumble and a quarterback hurry to his final stat sheet. Monroe's tackle of the Ranger's running back in the third quarter drove the ball loose and into teammate James Thomas' hands for a 26-yard scoop n' score touchdown. He finishes as SWOSU's leading tackler for a second consecutive season.



Oklahoma History: The Honors of Master Sergeant Earl D. Plumlee



U.S. Army Master Sgt. Earl D. Plumlee (left) stands as the citation is read before receiving the Medal of Honor from President Joseph R. Biden. December 16, 2021.



United States Army Medal of Honor recipient Earl D. Plumlee, circa 2021.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

The Medal of Honor, the United State's military's highest award for valor, is the only military award that is congressionally approved for presentation by the President. When ranked among the most prestigious medals in the world, it is the U.S' top award.

As such a highly distinguished honor, recipients must be of the highest quality, "distinguished conspicuously, at the risk of his or her life above the call of duty, by courage and intrepidity."

Medal of Honor recipients must also have extraordinary merit, personal bravery and risk of self-sacrifice at the highest levels--ones that the United States Military classifies as "incontestable." Those full of gallantry, heroism, and devotion. These recipients are what we all strive to be, beacons of selflessness with unwavering conviction.

Finding people who meet these criteria is a rare thing, and even rarer still to have one so close to home, but we do. Master Sergeant Earl D. Plumlee of Clinton, Oklahoma was a member of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). Plumlee was chosen and presented with the Medal of Honor on December 16, 1921. Since 1863, there have been 3,476 Medals of Honor awarded, with only 10 awarded since the Vietnam War.

Earl D. Plumlee grew up working with his family on their cattle ranch and oil field instrument company. His military career began when he joined the Oklahoma National Guard during his junior year of high school. Following graduation, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps.

Plumlee would go on to rise through the ranks, graduate from special training programs, and serve around the world. He quickly proved himself to be an effective leader, full of bravery and heart.

The moment that showcased his resolve came on August 28, 2013, when he engaged with the enemy during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. That day, the complex he was stationed in was attacked. When an explosion rang out, knocking a 60 foot breach in the perimeter wall, Plumlee and 5 other special operations soldiers quickly jumped into a vehicle and sped to the site.

Insurgents with suicide-vests and armaments poured through. The driver of Plumlee's vehicle purposefully slid into a spot between the enemy's fire and teammates on foot, some of them already injured.

Under heavy enemy fire, Plumlee used his body to shield the driver and began to engage the enemy. He drew his pistol, without cover and regard for his own safety, and immediately pressed toward the closest enemy who was just meters away.

Plumlee reached cover, having taken out 2 insurgents. With no time to take a breath, he again pressed on, leaving cover and advancing alone.

The pressure from the enemy halted his advances and under intense enemy fire, he temporarily retreated and met up with another soldier. Ignoring his own injuries, he pressed on again. And again after heavy fire, temporarily retreated. He hadn't gained any footing, but what he did do was buy time for those injured to get removed safely and for reinforcements to arrive.

When the reinforcements did arrive, Plumlee grouped up with another band of soldiers. With them, he pushed out again. During this push, he saw another wounded U.S. soldier and carried him to safety and addressed his wounds.

By this time, new reinforcements arrived for the U.S. Without delay, Plumlee organized the newly arrived soldiers into a defensive stance and methodically cleared the area. Soon enough, they had successfully repelled the attack.

Reports came in of his bravery. They called it extraordinary heroism; Plumlee credited his unit and the U.S. Army. When reflecting on the moment and his thoughts, Plumlee states, "It was probably the proudest moment of my career, just to be with those guys, at that time, on that day."

Going through his long list of experiences, accomplishments, and accolades truly deserves an in-depth look to really begin to understand and appreciate the weight and impact he's created, and will continue to have, on history.

There are many opportunities to learn more about Master Sergeant Earl D. Plumlee. Each Medal of Honor recipient receives a full dedicated piece detailing the account of their history and the deed(s) that solidified their right to the medal. The U.S. Army site: army.mil had several coverages of his awards, merits, and deeds, including a special piece over the Medal of Honor. Their YouTube channel also features the White House award ceremony where Plumlee received his medal along with Sergeant First Class Alwyn C. Cashe and Sergeant First Class Christopher A. Celiz

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SWOSU Men's Basketball overcame a cold shooting start and picked up a 76-67 win over Oklahoma Christian on Wednesday night in the home opener.

It's SWOSU's second consecutive victory and pushes them to 2-1 on the young season.

The Dawgs shot 29.6% in the first half and were just 1-of-10 from beyond the arc, but got to the foul line 14 times which helped mitigate the slow start. At the half, SWOSU trailed just 31-29.

Following the break, the offense began to knock down shots. SWOSU was over the 50% mark after halftime with six three point makes – five of those from Eli Al-Debaran & Tobias Roland. The two combined for 41 points on the night, 26 in the second half.

The Eagles held one final slim 41-40 lead with a little over 15 minutes to play in the game before SWOSU overtook them for good. Then, a 24-8 run occurred over the next eight minutes.

SWOSU had open up their largest lead of the game before the Eagles made one final push to make things interesting.

OC cut a 64-49 Bulldog lead to just six with two minutes to play, but SWOSU knocked down all six of their free throws down the stretch to close the game out for good. SWOSU outrebounded OC 35-29, had the edge in the turnover battle 16-14, and went 27-for-32 (84%) at the foul line, setting season highs in both makes and attempts.

Roland led all scorers with 21 points and added four rebounds and three steals. Al-Debaran was right behind, with 20 points and another two steals. MJ Warrior provided 14 points and a game high six assists. Spencer Musgrove scored six points and hauled in a game high eight rebounds.

It was the lone action of the week for the Dawgs, who will have to wait until next Thursday, November 21 to compete again when Central Oklahoma comes to town for another 7pm contest.

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The Lady Bulldogs have started their season 3-0 for the first time since the 2020-21 season, securing an 81-59 victory following a dominant defensive performance that saw 27 forced turnovers against Eastern New Mexico.

Averi Zinn led SWOSU in scoring once again, posting 17 points on 5-8 shooting, including a 2-2 record from beyond the arc, while dishing out four assists and three steals. Hailey Grant added 16 points, going a perfect 4-4 from the free throw line and causing disruption on defense with two steals and a block.

After the first quarter, the Dawgs and Greyhounds were tied at 17, although the Bulldogs dominated the turnover battle 9-2. However, the Dawgs struggled with rebounds, trailing 13-4.

In the second quarter, the Dawgs capitalized on free throw opportunities, a trend that continued throughout the game, going 9-12 and taking a five-point lead into halftime.

SWOSU took control in the third quarter, fueled by impressive interior play and trips to the free throw line thanks to two technical fouls and an intentional foul from ENMU. Notably, the Bulldogs didn't attempt a 3-pointer in the third quarter and made none in the fourth on three attempts but still outscored the Greyhounds by 17 in the latter half. This marked their lowest three-point attempts this season, with just nine total.

The Lady Bulldogs didn't shoot below 40% in any quarter, finishing at 44.8% from the field and 33.3% from beyond the arc.

ENMU shot 36.8% and 23.8% from the three-point line. SWOSU more than doubled ENMU's free throw attempts (36-16), capitalizing on free points with 26 makes (72.2%).

Every Lady Bulldog entered the game. The Lady Dawgs will face Central Oklahoma in Edmond on Saturday, November 23, at 1:30 pm, following a week-long break.

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