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Elk City Chamber of Commerce to Host Annual Banquet January 14th



Brandy Coffman
2024 President

Elk City Chamber Presents

Annual Chamber Banquet

JANUARY 14, 2025
7:00PM | ELK CITY CIVIC CENTER

PURCHASE TICKETS BY CALLING THE CHAMBER
OFFICE: 580.225.0207



Kevin Akins
2025 President

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

The annual Elk City Chamber of Commerce banquet is quickly approaching. The 2025 event will take place on January 14th at 7:00 PM at the Elk City Civic Center. Join the Chamber as they reflect on the incredible accomplishments of 2024.

This event will be a time of transition and celebration of last year's successes for Elk City. The evening will highlight the leadership of 2024 President Brandy Coffman. To conclude her 2024 term, Coffman will give her heartfelt thanks and a fond farewell.

The Elk City Chamber will also be welcoming in the newly selected 2025 President, Kevin Akins.




Join us for an evening of excitement for the year ahead! Tickets must be purchased in advance. To secure your spot, call the Chamber of Commerce at 580-225-0207.

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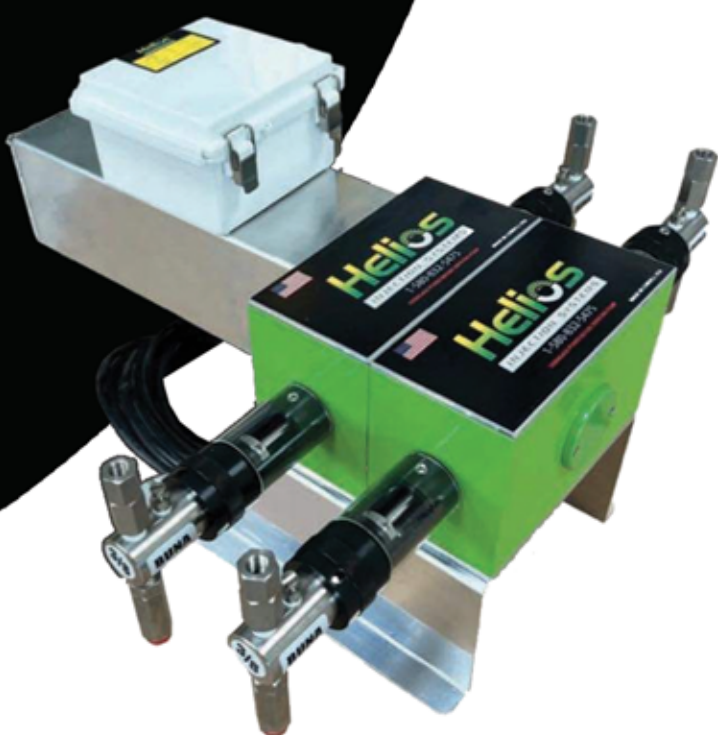
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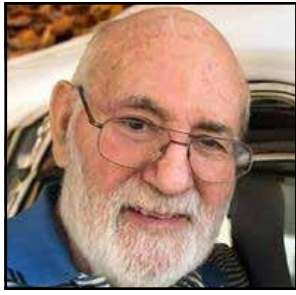


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Richard Roof

Richard Lee Roof was born July 23, 1938, in Thomas, to Lee Wilbur and Hazel Esther (Barton) Roof and passed away Saturday, December 28, 2024, at Corn Heritage Village of Weatherford, at the age of 86 years, 5 months and 5 days.



Richard was raised and attended school in the Thomas and Weatherford areas, graduating from Weatherford High School in the Class of 1956. He attended Southwestern State College for a year. In 1957, Richard married Annette Horst and made their home in Weatherford. They moved to Bethany in 1960 for 10 years and returned to Weatherford in 1970. He married Mary Reynolds. Richard was owner/operator of the .Kountry Kitchen Custom Cabinets for 20 years before retiring. After retirement, he worked at the Et Cetera Shop. Richard moved to south Texas in 2013 and later moved to Denton to be near his son and returned to Weatherford in 2021.

Richard was preceded in death by his parents, brother Wayne; and son David.

He is survived by his son Randy Roof of Livingston, TX, two daughters: Julie Boese and husband Robert of Corn, OK and Vicki Roof of Weatherford, OK; two brothers: Gary Roof and Perry Roof and wife Winnie of Excelsior Springs, MO; two sisters: Letha Ward of Greensboro, NC and Karen Coffee of Hinton, OK; long-time girlfriend Barbara Barker of Weatherford, OK; 13 grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren.

Terrance Hawkins

Terrance Gravley Hawkins was born January 30, 1957, minutes after his twin brother Timothy, in Oberlin, Kansas, to Nora Lee and Wallace Lowell Hawkins. He was welcomed by his brothers Seth, Toby, and Todd.



Wallace passed away suddenly in 1965, and soon after Nora moved the 5 brothers to Weatherford, OK, and later to Arapaho, OK where Terry and Tim graduated from high school in 1975.

Terry attended SWOSU for a bachelor's degree in history, and later he worked on a masters degree at St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana.

While working in Red River, New Mexico, he met Margarita Garcia, and they were married November 11, 1995. While living in Colorado Springs, they were blessed with their daughter Elspeth Hope.

Terry passed away suddenly in Weatherford, OK on December 30, 2024. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and three living brothers: Seth, Toby, and Tim.

Terry loved the Lord and his family, and had life long interests in history, theology, Irish culture, and John Wayne. Terrance will be laid to rest beside his brother Todd, and father Wallace, at the Sharon Cemetery north of Gotebo, OK.

Delano Ramsey

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Delano Ramsey, age 87, of Butler, who left this world on December 27, 2024, as a cherished family member and friend



Born on May 10, 1937, to Frank "F. D." and Hazel (Broadbent) Ramsey in Butler, Delano's journey was marked by love and devotion. On March 4, 1962, he married the love of his life Judy Hadzor in their hometown where they created a warm and welcoming home. Together, they shared countless joyful moments, dancing and celebrating family reunions at Roman Nose State Park, embodying the spirit of togetherness.

Delano shared a deep and meaningful bond with his daughter, Teresa. He lovingly taught her the values of love and respect, shaping her with his guidance. To Teresa, he was more than a father—he was her first love, her best friend, and her eternal hero.

Delano dedicated 57 years of his life to a fulfilling career in retail sales as a lubrication consultant with Hydrotex, which allowed him to travel the globe. Retiring on September 1, 2024, he left behind a legacy of hard work and commitment.

As a grandfather, he cherished playful summers, spent jumping on hay bales and camping in the backyard, where laughter echoed and stories were shared around the campfire. With love, he taught his grandchildren to drive and inspired them to love Jesus. Together, they sang their favorite hymns like "I'll Fly Away" and enjoyed classics from Patsy Cline, Buddy Holly's Peggy Sue, and The Beach Boys' Good Vibrations.

A man of unwavering faith, Delano was deeply committed to his family, work, and church. He had an innate ability to connect with others, never meeting a stranger along the way.

He is survived by his loving wife Judy Ramsey, of the home; and his beloved daughter Teresa Bridge and her husband Donald, of Elk City; his daughter-in-law Tama Ramsey; his sister Darlene Gooch, and her husband Earnie, of Milford, Ohio. His legacy continues through his grandchildren: Dawson Bridge and his wife Nicole, Tara Oliphant and her husband Tommy, Ashley Brewer, Megan Perez and her husband Martin, Denton Ramsey and his wife Megagan, Wyatt Ramsey and his wife Brooke and Danielle Wegner and her husband Jack. He also leaves behind cherished great-grandchildren: Rylan Parks, Drayton Parks, Ryder Oliphant, Scarlett Oliphant, Joshua Dungan, Colten Vidaurri, Carter Brewer, Jessie Perez, Jordan Perez, Gavin Ramsey, Freya Ramsey and Chrysten Munoz; and three great-great-grandchildren: Jaythyn Edmundson, Braylee Edmundson and Rylen Edmundson.

Delano is preceded in death by his parents F.D. and Hazel Ramsey; his son Ben Ramsey; his sisters and their spouses: Virginia and her husband Paul, Zettie Jo and her husband Cappie, Twila and her husband Vernon, Janice Hadley, Jewel Fay and her husband Dewain; his brother Buford and his wife Aleta.

His earthly journey will conclude with a burial at Antioch Cemetery, north of Butler. The family finds comfort in knowing that Delano's spirit will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

Gerald Stegall

Gerald Ray Stegall, 65, of Burns Flat, OK passed away peacefully Monday, December 30, 2024, at St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City. He was born to Jackie Ray and Ida Belle (French) Stegall on June 27, 1959, in Winfield, Kansas.



Gerald attended Woodward High School and graduated with the Class of 1977. He then attended Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, OK. He graduated with an Associates Degree in Applied Science. It was at NOC that Gerald met his best friend Kathryn Diane McConnell, who he married on June 8, 1980, in Hennessey.

Gerald was not one to sit on the sidelines. He worked for Halliburton for thirty years, then ten years with Hoskins Wireline as a salesman, and he worked for Kimball Midwest until he retired.

He was an active Elder at his church Cumberland Presbyterian in Burns Flat, as well as Sunday School Superintendent. He spent 30 years as an active member of the Boy Scouts of America where he served as the Scout Master. He was the Chapter Advisor of the Order of the Arrow and received the White Buffalo Award.

Gerald was a 32nd Degree Mason, and later he was awarded the Knight Commander of the Court of Honor (KCCH). He performed in the 9th, 10th, 11th and 24th Degrees for Scottish Rite. He was Past Venerable Master of the Knights of Saint Andrews, Wise Master in the Rose Croix, a member of Hennessey, Elk City and Cordell Lodges, a shriner and a member of the bodies of York Rite. Gerald was a Past Master of the Elk City Lodge, past Grand Lodge Officer two times and received the Masonic Medal of Honor in 2023.

Gerald was a 37-year member of the Eastern Star where he was Past Patron of the Clinton and Hennessey Chapters plus Grand Representative several times. In 2022 he served as Worthy Grand Patron. He was an active member of DeMolay International and the Elk City Rainbow Advisory Board.

He enjoyed drawing, painting and leather works, his artwork won many awards and Gerald made different leather items for people all over the world. Gerald was a big supporter of the Burns Flat-Dill City School athletics and the school district.

Gerald is preceded in death by his parents, Jackie and Ida Belle Stegall; and his father-in-law, Warren McConnell.

He is survived by his loving wife Kathryn Stegall of the home; four children: Kendra Walker and husband Derrick; Garrett Stegall and wife Laci; and Kristy Denbo, all of Burns Flat; and Samuel McConnell of Sayre; 10 grandchildren, Dylan Walker and wife Brianna, Gage Stegall, Dakota Walker, Kylie Denbo, Kaitlyn Denbo, Emma Stegall, Dawson Walker, Drew Walker, and Keaton Stegall, all of Burns Flat; and Levi McConnell of Dill City, OK; great-grandchild Brylee Walker of Burns Flat; mother-in-law Margie McConnell of Hennessey; and two brothers: Gary Stegall and wife Robin of Cheney, KS; and Darrin Stegall and wife Talara of Broken Arrow, OK.



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SWODA Celebrates the Retirement of Two Local Longtime Leaders



Dana Church
Economic Development Planner

SWODA proudly recognizes the recent retirement of two esteemed team members, Debora Glasgow and Robin Selman. Their decades of dedication and contributions have left a lasting impact on SWODA and the communities it serves.

Debora Glasgow: A Legacy of Leadership

Debora Glasgow joined SWODA in 1998 as the Front Office Receptionist. Over the next 26 years, her passion for community service and leadership skills propelled her through various roles, including Director of Community Development, Deputy Executive Director, and finally, Executive Director. Under her guidance, SWODA expanded its initiatives and strengthened its commitment to improving the quality of life across Southwest Oklahoma.

Reflecting on her career, Debora shared, "Serving the public and communities has always been at the heart of my work." She found it challenging to single out one impactful program, instead highlighting SWODA's traditional initiatives such as Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP), Community Expansion of Nutrition Assistance (CENA), Aging Services, and Case Management. Among her proudest accomplishments were helping her team create and implement the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery (SUPTR) program and witnessing the growth of the Transportation program. "It was a 'slow go' from the point of introducing the concept to the board, staff turnovers, etc., and look where we arrived!" she said. Additionally, she noted the transformative impact of SWODA's home construction program in several communities.

As she steps into retirement, Debora plans to continue advocating for senior needs and services and volunteering to give back to the region she holds dear. Regarding her recent retirement celebration, she expressed heartfelt gratitude, saying, "It was an absolutely humbling experience. Team SWODA went above and beyond, and I'm completely thankful and grateful."

Robin Selman: A Career of Dedication

Robin Selman devoted 39 years to SWODA, beginning her journey in the Employment and Training division. Over the years, her expertise and compassion shaped her impactful work in the Community Development department.

One of the most rewarding programs Robin contributed to was the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP).

"Seeing all the jurisdictions get assistance with equipment, water or sewer projects, fire trucks, fire equipment, and gear was incredibly fulfilling. Without the REAP funding, most would not receive these much-needed things," she shared.

Robin also reflected on her time in the Welfare to Work program, where she helped single mothers rebuild their lives and gain stability for their families.

When asked what kept her with SWODA for nearly four decades, she credited the organization's supportive and family-first culture, meaningful relationships within the SWODA region, and the close-knit bonds she formed with colleagues. "A close-knit work family that is there for you through the good and bad. Lots of friendships were made that I will treasure forever," Robin remarked.

Looking to the future, Robin envisions staying involved by volunteering at local food banks or exploring other opportunities to serve the community.

Honoring Their Contributions

Both Debora and Robin have played pivotal roles in SWODA's success. Their leadership, vision, and tireless efforts have left a profound legacy that will continue to benefit the region for years to come.

SWODA celebrated their remarkable careers with a retirement event on December 19, 2024. Colleagues, partners, and community members gathered to express gratitude and share well wishes as Debora and Robin transition to this exciting new chapter in their lives.

Continuing the Mission

As Debora and Robin step into retirement, SWODA remains committed to carrying forward their dedication to fostering regional development and empowering communities in Southwest Oklahoma.

To share messages for Debora and Robin, please contact dana@swoda.org.

About SWODA

The Southwestern Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA) is a multi-county organization dedicated to enhancing the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the region. Through planning and partnerships, SWODA addresses challenges and promotes growth for a better tomorrow.

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Beginning Again



Jim Morrison

We have greeted or acknowledged our friends or even those we hardly know with the phrase, "Happy New Year." It is well-meaning and thoughtful, even though we don't have a clue as to what the new year will bring.

In the last week of 2024, three of my dear friends passed to the next world, leaving grieving families and friends behind. But in each case their new home is filled with pleasures forever more.

That is the hope that we have in Jesus. This hope is not like "I hope it rains tomorrow" which in Western Oklahoma is filled with doubt. But the hope we have in Jesus is filled with certainty if we have given Him his rightful place as Lord of our lives.

In 1st Peter the apostle writes to a church that is beginning to suffer persecution and perversion of the gospel.

He writes, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls about looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:6-8)

In this day of self-importance, to humble ourselves may be the most difficult of his instructions. As one preacher said, humility is the realization of the "smallness of our greatness." Humility does not mean thinking less of our selves, but thinking of ourselves less.

"Resist the Devil, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering." (1 Peter 5:9)

Peter speaks of being "self-controlled and alert." Too often we are controlled by the media or the culture. In an earlier word in the same letter the apostle said, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled, set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed . . ." (1 Peter 1:13)

As we rely on our own understanding without acknowledging God's desire or plan in the matter, we will often be led to destruction. With aging eyesight and macular degeneration, I often have to read with one eye closed and with the help of a magnifying glass.

But I am not going to let that stop me from seeking to know more fully the infinite grace and knowledge of God.

I am 87 but I am preparing for my 90's should God allow me to live that long. I have two sisters, 95 and 93, so there is a pretty good chance that I may move into that decade. I want to remain useful and productive.

But I realize that the devil would like to destroy my witness and set me on the shelf. That's why I want to "prepare my mind for action."

I don't want to be one of those setting around staring at a screen in their palms seeking bits of surface knowledge, often without depth of the full story.

I want to set myself up for action should the Spirit bring to mind some ministry to attempt or cause to assist.

As life's struggles come your way just remember:

1. God is in control
2. He loves you.
3. You can trust him.

May God give you "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow."

To comment: jhm82@outlook.com, 580-302-1142

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Mike Smith
News Director

JNC Looks to Fill District & Supreme Court Vacancies in Western OK



OKLAHOMA JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMITTEE



Mike Smith News Director The Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) says 14 candidates have applied for the vacancy of District 4's Supreme Court Justice seat after Yvonne Kauger was voted out of office in the November 2024 election.

Notable Candidates for the District 4 Supreme Court Justice Seat:
 Beckham ADJ *Michelle Kirby Roper*, Elk City
Chelsea Celsor Smith of Leedey.
 District 2 Judge *Donna Dirickson*, Weatherford

Additionally, four candidates have applied for the vacancy of Associate District Judge in Custer County. The seat became vacant with the appointment of Donna Dirickson, the former Associate District Judge (ADJ) to District Judge, following the retirement of District 2 Judge Jill Weedon.

All Candidates for Custer County Associate District Judge:
Dana Hada, Weatherford
Lynn Lawrence Housley, Weatherford
Sheri Marie Johnson, Foss
 Custer Co. Special Judge *Stephanie Jones*, Clinton

The Judicial Nominating Commission will begin the interview process in the near future in an effort to fill the positions.



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The 1st and 2nd Grade Weatherford Eagle Youth Football coached by Dustin Hayes stopped by Connections Food and Resource Center in Weatherford for a guided tour. The group brought \$250 to help fight hunger in Oklahoma.



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CLINTON / HOSPITAL DRAW - The Clinton Hospital Authority has approved a third line of credit and a second request draw totaling \$170,000 from the Clinton General Fund and Public Works Authority. The hospital authority also approved the 2025 budget, says Hospital CEO Lyn Lacefield. A vote inside the city of Clinton for the sale of the hospital to Rural Hospital Solutions is still on for January 14th.

WEATHERFORD / NEW CHURCH - A building permit has been issued by the city of Weatherford for the construction of a new Trinity Baptist Church, which was destroyed by fire in November 2022. Skyler Spradlin, the Lead Pastor for Trinity Baptist Church, explained the project: "The building size will be just about the same as our old building. It'll be a highly functional, useful building that we're excited to get into." The new building will also better utilize its floor space that's more conducive to regular activities, according to Spradlin. Trinity Baptist plan to rebuild at the former Trinity Baptist Church site on West Huber Avenue. Construction could begin as early as Spring 2024.

BERRONG / CARTER - The chair of the Custer County Democratic Party, Jeff Berrong, recalls a time when President Jimmy Carter made a visit to western Oklahoma: "Jimmy Carter, to my knowledge, is the only sitting president who has visited Western Oklahoma. There's a really neat story about him coming to Elk City, flying into Burns Flat in 1979 when the Air Force Base was still there, keeping a promise he made to the publisher of the Elk City Daily News." Carter died Sunday at the age of 100.

WEATHERFORD CC / LAND LEASE - The Weatherford City Commission has approved a land lease agreement with New Cingular Wireless for a communication tower to be located at Rader Park West Complex. City Attorney David Duncan outlined the agreement, stating contract negotiations have resulted in New Cellular Wireless "paying more money" and "doubling the amount of insurance they're carrying." Duncan also said New Cingular Wireless has accepted the sole responsibility of restoring the property should the tower ever be removed.



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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 Jan. 8th - Louise Betche, Bobby Birdwell, Timber Bishop, Deidra Bright, Tosha Christian, Haley Cordes, Kelli Goldenm Sadie Harris, Diana King, Randy Lowenkamp, Cindy McGuire, Marc Odom, Dawn Potter, Jamie Sisson; **Jan. 9th**- Floyd Birkenfield, Mark Bowman, Carla Caldwell, Levi Cupp, Zac h Grossman, Andrew Kern, Frances Kissler, Rusty Kreizenbeck, Hailey Martin, Dawson McCamon, Doug McGuire, John E. Royal, James Sharry, Andrea Snider, Monte Taylor, Dustin Thomas, Robert Womack. **Jan. 10th** - Ardean Atteberry, Bernard Boeckman, Anthony Davenport, Harold Griffin, Charla Holland, Bruce K asper, Kimberly King, Summer Megli, Rick Reynolds, Martha Sauer, Madella Shelton, Robert Skipworth, Denise Slagle; **Jan. 11** - Codie Adcock, Sue Brandhorst, Skylar Cannon, Bobby Green, Marvin Hines, Paula Jeffers, Chuck Maddox, Robert Mayfield, Ona Mcconnell, Marie Jack, Olson Jack, Olson Charles Sewell, James Taylor, Logan Taylor, Daniel Torres; **Jan. 12** - Max Davis, Todd Earp, Alisha Edmondson, Evie Ellis, Julianna Gallegos, Keren Martinez, Raja Matthews, Jodi Mckinnon, Jacque Morlan, Blake O'Neale, Debbie Redinger, joe Sullivan, Kale Visnieski, Eric Willis; **Jan. 13** - Dale Durnell, Leah Gibson, Kenny Gipson, Judy Hartsell, Bill Hayes, Allen Helt, Rod Jones, Jamie Lovecchio, Diane Peoples, Memaw Radke, Janeene Sandlin, Darwin Scheffe, Billy Scott, Bryan Wood; **Jan. 14** - Grey Adkins, Billie Anderson, Chris Brotherton, Chuck Estes, Jim Loomis, Brittany McBroom, Michael Miller, Debra Norseworthy, Janie Penner, Gary Pigg, Nathan Villines.

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Oklahoma's Gene Rainbolt, Founder of BancFirst, Passes Away at Age 95



Harry Eugene "Gene" Rainbolt was born on February 20, 1929, and passed away on January 2, 2025. He was 95 years old.

Rainbolt started developing his reputation as a philanthropic banker in 1962. His most well known achievement was the founding BancFirst in 1989, which now stands as Oklahoma's largest state-chartered bank. Through his countless contributions to numerous organizations throughout the state, Rainbolt was consistently using his influence to improve the lives of all Oklahomans. He was frequently featured on OKC Friday's annual "50 Most Powerful Oklahomans," peaking at 5th in 2007.

Following news of his passing, members of the Oklahoma Legislature came out to mourn and share their experiences with Rainbolt.

"I am heartbroken by the loss of Gene Rainbolt. Gene was not just a banker, entrepreneur and philanthropist. He was a visionary who reshaped the state's banking industry and a transformative force in the state of Oklahoma. He prioritized community, especially small, rural communities and underprivileged families and children. Gene lived by his passion and championed opportunities for those who needed help. The impact he leaves behind is profound including for me personally. When I lost my son Gregory, the Rainbolt family was among the many who were there during one of the most trying times of my life, including making a financial donation to a charity in Gregory's name. I will never forget the generosity, encouragement and love they showed to me and my family. To my friend David and the entire Rainbolt family, I hope they know my wife Donna and I continue to pray for them during their time of grief.

"Gene Rainbolt will be remembered as a transformative leader and his legacy of kindness and generosity will endure for generations."

- Senator Paul Rosino

"Oklahoma lost a beloved icon and trailblazer with the passing of Gene Rainbolt. His vision, generosity and relentless optimism transformed our state for the better. Through his philanthropic endeavors, advocacy work and leadership, it was clear that Gene was committed to solving problems facing our state. He worked tirelessly to uplift Oklahomans and created countless opportunities for many, while inspiring hope throughout countless communities. I have had the privilege of getting to know his son, David, over the past several years. Through this friendship, it is clear to me that Gene's spirit and willingness to help others will continue.

"Gene Rainbolt's passing is a profound loss for our state. Yet, as we mourn, we also celebrate a life well-lived and his inspirational legacy. My wife Misti and I keep the Rainbolt family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

- Senator Chuck Hall

"Gene Rainbolt was an Oklahoma icon, a benevolent civic leader and a banking visionary who set a gold standard for so many of us in the industry," said Sen. Chuck Hall, R-Perry. "I first met Gene over 30 years ago when I started out as a banker. His work to build the largest state-chartered bank in Oklahoma was truly remarkable. Outside of business, his philanthropy and unwavering commitment to better this state helped transform countless towns and cities where he had bank branches. Gene's absence will be deeply felt in Oklahoma's banking community and beyond.

"I'm praying for the Rainbolt family during this difficult time, but I hope Gene's family and friends find solace in knowing that his legacy will live on in Oklahoma for decades to come."

- Senator Lonnie Paxton

"I am deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Gene Rainbolt, my dear friend and constituent. Oklahoma has lost an incredible leader—an incredible human being. Gene Rainbolt believed in the best of all of us. He invested his time and treasure in organizations and programs that helped all Oklahomans. He knew his influence and leadership would make a true difference, so he spent his life making sure we all knew about the real needs of Oklahomans. He always looked out for the marginalized and those who needed extra help. He was a true friend to me—always providing a listening ear and giving of his time to mentor me, especially as I began my journey in public service. I will never forget our first meeting. When very few people believed in me, he helped me to see what I was capable of. I have always admired—and been inspired by—his dedication to improving our criminal justice system, our public education system, and ensuring that every Oklahoman had an opportunity for economic prosperity. He believed in bettering the lives of every person, and he put his belief into action. His deep care for the future of our state was—and will continue to be—unmatched. I am sending my love and condolences to the entire Rainbolt family, who have also become dear friends of mine over the years. I will miss you, my dear friend. May you rest in peace."

- Representative Cyndy Munson

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Oklahoma History: William R. Pogue's Contributions to NASA and Skylab 4



Courtesy NASA

Edward G. Gibson, Gerald P. Carrz, and William R. Pogue (Nov 8, 1973) near Pad B, Launch Complex 39, Kennedy Space Center, Florida, during the preflight activity.



Courtesy NASA

The NASA portrait of William Pogue. Photo taken August 27, 1975.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

William R. Pogue, a proud native of Okemah, Oklahoma, carved out a remarkable legacy as both a trailblazing astronaut and accomplished aviator. Born on January 23, 1930, his journey from small-town beginnings to orbiting the Earth exemplifies dedication and a thirst for discovery.

After completing a degree in education at Oklahoma Baptist University, Pogue pursued further studies, earning a master's in mathematics from Oklahoma State University. His career took off with the United States Air Force, where he flew 43 combat missions in the Korean War piloting F-84G fighter-bombers. Pogue's skills later led him to join the elite Thunderbirds aerobatic team, and he even served as a test pilot with the Royal Air Force through an exchange program.

His military achievements garnered him prestigious honors, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and multiple Air Medals. In 1966, NASA selected Pogue as part of its fifth group of astronauts.

Before his historic spaceflight, he supported several Apollo missions, playing a critical role behind the scenes.

His moment in the spotlight came with Skylab 4, the third and longest crewed mission to America's first space station. From November 16, 1973, to February 8, 1974, Pogue and his two crewmates spent an unprecedented 84 days in orbit, traveling approximately 34.5 million miles and circling Earth 1,214 times. The crew's mission was packed with groundbreaking science. They conducted over 56 experiments, including solar observations with the Apollo Telescope Mount, studies of Earth's weather systems and land use, and pioneering research into how long-term spaceflight impacts the human body. Pogue participated in multiple spacewalks to repair and maintain Skylab, even installing thermal shielding to protect the station from overheating.

Despite their successes, the mission wasn't without its challenges. Halfway through their time in orbit, the crew pushed back against an overwhelming schedule, turning off communication with Mission Control for a day. This "day of silence," now often referred to as the "Skylab Mutiny," allowed the astronauts to focus on Earth observation and recharge mentally. The incident sparked important conversations about managing workloads in space, ultimately leading to better conditions for future missions.

Pogue's contributions earned him widespread recognition. He was awarded the NASA Exceptional Service Medal and shared the prestigious Collier Trophy with the Skylab team. Back home, his achievements were celebrated in Oklahoma, where he was inducted into the Aviation and Space Hall of Fame. The municipal airport in Sand Springs now bears his name, ensuring his legacy lives on in his home state.

After retiring from NASA and the Air Force in 1975, Pogue turned to writing and public speaking. His book, *How Do You Go to the Bathroom in Space?*, answered some of the public's most curious questions about space travel.

His collaboration with Ben Bova on the science fiction novel *The Trikon Deception* showcased his imaginative side. He also spent many years inspiring audiences with tales of his time among the stars.

William R. Pogue passed away on March 3, 2014, at the age of 84, leaving an enduring impact on space exploration and education. His life, from the quiet streets of Okemah to the endless frontier of space, serves as a powerful reminder of humanity's potential when curiosity and courage come together.

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SWOSU Men Survive a Game Full of Runs, 74-68



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Assistant A.D.

SWOSU Men's Basketball took on Southeastern Oklahoma State on Saturday afternoon for the only game of the week and first of the new year. Behind career highs from Tucker Shepherd and Elijah Williams, the Bulldogs erased a 13-point second half deficit to earn a 74-68 road win.

The Dawgs found themselves in a hole early in the game, trailing by as many as 12 points at 21-9 with about eight minutes into the first half. A defense that tightened the screws and freshman Shepherd who exploded for 16 first half points and 3 threes gave the Dawgs their first lead at 29-27 with five minutes to go in the first period. After back-and-forth possessions which had two lead changes and a tie, the score sat at 37-34 at halftime in favor of the Bulldogs.

Prior to Saturday, Shepherd had a career high of six points. He bested that by 10 after just one half.

After a Dawgs and-one by Elijah Williams to open up the half gave SWOSU a 40-34 lead, Southeastern went on a 19-0 run to put the scoreboard at 53-40 with 13:28 to play.

When the Bulldogs needed it, Shepherd provided, hitting another three – his fourth of the game. Tobias Roland added a three of his own. An extended 14-1 run tied the game at 54 a piece with just 7:58 remaining in the game.

This spark was what SWOSU was looking for and the energy shifted inside of Boomer Sullivan Arena. Back-to-back threes from Elijah Williams and Shephard, both off of offensive rebounds, gave the Bulldogs a lead of 64-55 for their largest of the game and capped off a 24-2 run.

A successful press break from MJ Warrior sparked a fast break for a wild open punctuation slam from Williams putting the game to rest.

Career days for both the freshman, Shepherd, and Williams led the way for SWOSU. Shepherd knocked down five threes and notched 22 points both good enough for season highs. Williams had his career high in points (21), threes (4) and rebounds (7). He shot 8-11 from the field and 4-6 from the deep ball.

The numbers had the Bulldogs shooting at 41.7% (25-60) from the field and 37.0% (10-27) from three-point land. The Savage Storm shot 47.5% (28-59) and 28.6% (4-14) from the deep ball. Both three pointers made (4) and attempted (14) are season lows for the Storm.

With their first road win of 2025, SWOSU now sits at 7-4 overall and 4-2 in the GAC and will be back at it next Thursday, January 9 when they play Henderson State in Arkadelphia, Arkansas at 7:30 pm. Then on Saturday (Jan. 11) they will travel across the street to play Ouachita Baptist to close out the road trip.

Cold Fourth Quarter Ends Ladies' GAC Streak



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Assistant A.D.

SWOSU Women's Basketball laced up the shoes for the first time in the new year when they suited up for a conference game against Southeastern Oklahoma State. After a close three quarters, the Lady Bulldogs were not able to match the Savage Storm's scoring output in the fourth quarter and fell 62-48.

The first quarter saw the Lady Dawgs able to capitalize on second chance points (4) and points off turnovers (6) to make this a tightly contested 18-17 match in favor of the Storm early on. Layni Zinn, who picked up an early two fouls in the game and only played four minutes, managed to produce a team high seven points on 2-3 shooting with the only three pointer of the quarter for the Lady Dawgs.

Inside the second quarter the Lady Bulldogs were able to go 7-of-15 from the field compared to just 3-7 for the home team, leading to winning the quarter 15-13 in points and taking a 32-31 lead into the break. SWOSU won the turnover battle 7-3 in the frame and caused three offensive fouls which helped limit shot production for SEOSU.

SWOSU lost the free throw battle inside the first half, but both teams shot perfect from the line. It was the Storm who capitalized with the 10-4 advantage including six in the second quarter.

After halftime, SWOSU was able to start quick thanks to a couple of layups from Chole Cantrell and Layni Zinn

to take their largest lead of the game at 36-31 after SEOSU started 0-6 from the field to start the half. Southeastern then caught an offensive rhythm, going on an extended 12-6 run to hold a one-point lead at 43-42 going into the final frame.

That run would continue for the Savage Storm after an 11-0 spurt in the first six minutes of the final quarter which put the Lady Dawgs to rest. SWOSU would not make a field goal in the quarter until the 1:22 mark thanks to an and-one layup made by Averi Zinn. SWOSU was 0-11 before that basket and finished 1-14 in the quarter.

Averi Zinn led the way with 12 points and three steals for the Lady Dawgs. Layni Zinn added 11 as the only other player in double digits for SWOSU.

Final numbers had SWOSU shooting just 32.2% (19-59) from the field and just 10.5% (2-19) from beyond the arc. SEOSU finished at 34.8% (16-46) and 26.3% (5-19) from three-point land.

The main difference game from the free throw line, The Storm shot 25-27 (92.6%) to SWOSU's just 8-9 (88.9%). The free throws made (25) and attempted (27) are both season highs for the Storm and most allowed by the Lady Dawgs by a wide margin.

SWOSU (6-6, 2-4 GAC) will be back in action on Thursday, January 9 in Arkadelphia, Arkansas against Henderson State at 5:30 pm.

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