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## Weatherford Eagle Boys Basketball are Crowned 4A State Champions



Courtesy Kelley Schmidt Photography

**Alexander Shook**  
WOK Contributor

After four straight years of making it to state only to fall short of the Championship title, the Weatherford Eagles have finally returned home from OKC victorious following three well-fought battles against the Mount St. Mary Rockets, the North Rock Creek Cougars, and the Crossings Christian Knights.

The Eagles finish out their season with an outstanding 97% winrate at 32 wins and 1 loss.


**Quarterfinals - Eagles vs. Mount St. Mary: 73-49**

Weatherford advanced to the quarterfinals following their strong preliminary game against the Mount Saint Mary Rockets.

Leading 34-27 at halftime, the Eagles raked in a staggering 23 points in a dominant third quarter. Even a strong fourth quarter wasn't enough to get the Rockets back on par with the Eagles.

Tate Sage and CJ Nixon led the charge for Weatherford, bringing in 24 points and 21 points, respectively.

(see STATE CHAMPIONS, Page 7)






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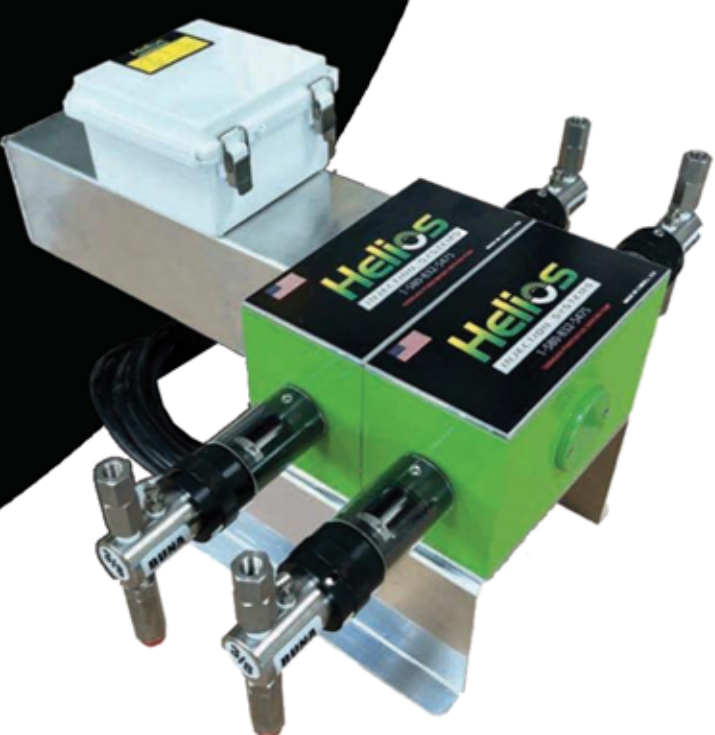
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**Juanita Davis**

Juanita Mae Davis, a 90-year-old Putnam resident, passed away March 10, 2025, at the Corn Heritage Village, in Weatherford.



Born on August 15, 1934, in Norman, OK, Juanita Mae (Stanley) Davis was the cherished daughter of Charlie A. and Etta Lou (Trim) Stanley.

A true farm girl at heart, she found joy in working on the farm, particularly in caring for cattle. Juanita also had a passion for taking trips to Branson, MO, and enjoyed dressing up and wearing her favorite shoes for outings. Known for her positive spirit, she touched the lives of many around her with her unwavering optimism.

She spent her formative years in Oakwood Elementary School. and embraced her Jr. High Years in Putnam. With determination, she graduated from Hydro High School in 1952. On May 24, of that same year, she married her one true love, Elvin Davis, in a ceremony in Pampa, TX.

Juanita is survived by her son, Mark Davis, and wife, Teresa, of Putnam, Oklahoma; her daughters, Rita Countess, of Weatherford, Oklahoma and Sandra Davis-Gordon, and husband, Danny, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Charlie and Etta Lou Stanley; her husband, Elvin Davis; and her son, Steve Davis.

**Jane Nightwalker**

Jane Nightwalker, a resident of Clinton, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully at the age of 73 on March 8, 2025, at the Clinton Therapy and Living Center.



Born on September 20, 1951, in Seiling, Oklahoma, Jane was the daughter of Roy Sr. and Gladys (Williams) Nightwalker.

Following her graduation from Seiling High School, she pursued higher education at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, NM, obtaining a degree in Native American Studies from Chief Dull Knife College in Lame Deer, Montana. She also earned an associate's degree as a Law Advocate from the Crown Point Navajo Technology Center in Crown Point, New Mexico.

Jane dedicated her career to advocacy and service for her people and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribe. She was elected as a Legislator in the A-1 District, where she also held the position of Speaker of the 4th Legislature of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

Jane was known for her joyful spirit and cherished moments. She enjoyed planning Bingo fundraisers while she served on the LLC Tenant Committee. She enjoyed playing cards and dominos with family and friends. She also enjoyed visiting casinos, traveling to Montana and Denver to connect with relatives, and had knowledge in car repair.

Above all, Jane loved her family deeply, especially her granddaughter, Star Lynn, whom she raised with affection. Her favorite color was blue, and she took pride in her contributions to the community, actively participating in and supporting progress for her people. Jane participated in the Southern Cheyenne Sundance Ceremonies.

Jane is preceded in death by her parents, Roy Sr. and Gladys Nightwalker; her paternal grandparents, James Walking Night and Lucy Takanina; and her maternal grandparents, Ebenezer Williams and Edith Howling Man; her sisters, Peggy Yazzie, Leda Nightwalker, Jean Nightwalker, and Edith Nightwalker; and her brothers, Robert Nightwalker and Roy Nightwalker Jr.

She is survived by her sisters, Alberta Nightwalker, Alvenia Nightwalker, and Bertha Kay Nightwalker; her brothers, George Nightwalker Sr. and Fred Nightwalker, Sr.

**Carl Alba**

Carl William Abla, 96, of Erick, Oklahoma was born on December 18, 1928 in Erick, Oklahoma. He is the son of Alley W. and Vergie Mae (Lord) Abla. He went to walk the heavenly streets of gold with his Lord and Savior on Monday, March 10, 2025 at his residence in Erick, Oklahoma.



Carl met and married his best friend and soul-mate, Ardis Malissa Hill on February 1, 1961 in Nevada. Together they raised their children and shared many wonderful years of marriage together. She preceded him in death on August 1, 1997.

Carl owned and operated Abla's Bulldozer Service from 1950 to 2024, retiring after seventy-four years of service. Carl had a lifelong passion for Bulldozing, which was his favorite love and brought him great joy. He obtained his first bulldozer when he was twenty-two years old. Carl enjoyed many hobbies including, square dancing, boating, and watching old western movies.

He was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Carl treasured spending time with his family and friends and will be missed greatly by all who knew and loved him.

Cherishing Carl's memory is his two daughters, Brenda Arent and her husband, Lee of Yorktown, Texas, Binnie Craig of Elk City, Oklahoma; three sons, Wesley Abla and his wife, Cindy of Mena, Arkansas, Bubby Abla of Wichita, Kansas, Corey Thomsen and his wife Justine of Hydesville, California; one sister, Marita Norell of Lawton, Oklahoma; one brother, Charles Abla and his wife, Judy of Southwick, Massachusetts; twenty-two grandchildren; numerous great grandchildren, one great great-grandchild; his special companion, Shirley Ely of Elk City, Oklahoma; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Carl is preceded in death by his wife, Ardis Malissa Abla; his parents, Alley W. and Vergie Mae Abla; and five sons, Rocky Abla, Rodney Abla, Butch Abla, Jeff Abla, and Robert Abla.

**DJ Giabbai**

Doris Jean Miller-Giabbai, lovingly known as DJ to her friends and family, passed away peacefully at Integris Hospice House in Oklahoma City on Sunday, March 9, 2025, at the age of 71 years, 6 months, and 21 days.



DJ was born on August 18, 1953, at Thomas Hospital to Sam and lola (Shreck) Miller. She spent her early childhood on the family farm on Bear Creek before moving to town with her parents. From childhood, DJ had a special love for animals, always taking in and caring for strays. She lovingly nurtured many family pets and farm animals throughout her life, always ensuring they were well-loved and tended to. She had a passion for horseback riding, and her beloved horse, Pepper, held a special place in her heart. She attended Thomas schools, graduating from Thomas High School, and later pursued higher education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), initially studying nursing before switching to business accounting.

After earning her degree, DJ began her career with the City of Clinton, where she worked for 10 years before relocating to Oklahoma City. There, she joined the Oklahoma Motor Vehicle Commission, where she licensed new car dealerships and dealers. She remained there for 27 years, making many lifelong friends before retiring. She was always the go-to person for advice on where to find a great deal on a car.

DJ had a generous spirit and a deep love for her community. She volunteered for many years at the Oklahoma State Fair and dedicated much of her time to the Oklahoma City Animal Shelter, helping find loving homes for countless pets--often bringing a few home with her as well. On December 29, 2001, DJ married the love of her life, Arthur Giabbai, and together they built a beautiful life in Oklahoma City. DJ cherished her grandchildren, nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews, showering them with love and spoiling them at every opportunity. She also enjoyed flea markets, always on the hunt for hidden treasures, and most of all, she loved spending time with her family and friends.

DJ loved cooking and swapping recipes with friends and family. She was always eager to try something new in the kitchen and never showed up to a family gathering without one of her delicious homemade creations to share. Her meals were made with love, and nothing made her happier than seeing others enjoy her cooking.

Above all, DJ was a devout Christian, whose faith guided her throughout her life. She was a kind and compassionate soul who lived by her beliefs, always extending love and kindness to those around her. DJ will be deeply missed by all who knew her, but her kindness, faith, and love for animals and family will live on in the hearts of those she touched.

DJ is survived by her husband, Arthur Giabbai, of the home; her two beloved dogs, Gucci and Riley; her sisters, Lois Windberry and husband, Johnny, Carol McFeeters, and Karen Hart, all of Thomas, Oklahoma; two sons, Nicholas Giabbai of Cleveland, Oklahoma and William Giabbai of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma; her nephews, Jerod Windberry of Ooltewah, Tennessee, Matt Hart and wife, Laci of Thomas, Oklahoma, Collin McFeeters and wife, Chelsea of Sapulpa, Oklahoma; and her nieces, Ashley Marroquin and husband, Luis of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Samantha Jezek and husband, Connelly of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Allyson McFeeters of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Abbie Hart of Thomas, Oklahoma. She also leaves behind four grandchildren and thirteen great-nieces and great-nephews, who will always remember her love and generosity.

DJ was preceded in death by her parents, Sam and lola (Shreck) Miller; one sister, Sheryl Ann Miller; and two brothers-in-law, Michael McFeeters and Robert Hart.

**Lonnie King**

Lonnie Gene King, age 70, of Eakly, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully at his home on Sunday, March 9, 2025. He was born on June 14, 1954, in Anadarko, Oklahoma to Floyd and Lola Richardson King.



Lonnie attended Eakly Schools and graduated from Eakly High School in 1972. He spent much of his early life farming alongside his grandfather, George Richardson. He married Sharon Ringler August 5, 1977, in Bowie, TX. Lonnie, Sharon, Kimberly, and Kris made their home on the farm just south of Eakly. That next year the family welcomed new babies Jared, and soon after, Josh. Lonnie dedicated himself to farming, peanuts, hay, and cattle while always thinking of ways to keep his family entertained. He loved chasing his children and grandchildren while riding dirt bikes, 4-wheelers and golf cart. In addition to his work on the farm, Lonnie learned to play golf after promising his father, Floyd, a golfing trip to Arizona to play on a PGA course. His devotion to his family and community was evident through his active involvement. He served on the Eakly Co-op board, was a deacon at Oakdale Missionary Baptist Church, served many years on the board of trustees at the Cedar Hills Baptist Youth Camp and was an original board member of Spreading The Word Ministry.

Lonnie's faith was central to his life. On April 1, 1990, he surrendered his life to Jesus, and soon after, he began singing and leading music at Oakdale Missionary Baptist Church. He loved sharing his joy while talking with others about Jesus and through music. He had a deep love for his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, enjoying time spent playing with them.

Lonnie is survived by his wife, Sharon, of the home; three children: Kimberly King of Weatherford, OK, Kris Base and her husband Steven of Apache, OK, and Josh King and his wife Bethany of Comanche, OK. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Zach Mogg and wife Kelsey of Yukon; Alli Goldston and her husband Brandon of Leedey; Tatum White and her husband Dillon of Sterling; Teagun Base and fiancée Brenna Nowell of Apache; Alex King of Comanche; Reason Moore of Weatherford; Connor King, Micah King and Hudson King all of Comanche. His great-grandchildren include Jaxton Mogg and Vaida Mogg of Yukon; Emersyn Goldston of Leedey; Sadie White of Sterling; Beckett Goldston of Leedey; and one more great-grandchild on the way. Lonnie is also survived by two siblings, LuAnne Tune and her husband John of Norman, and Gary King and his wife Lisa of Lookeba, as well as a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and many other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Floyd and Lola King; one son, Jared King; two grandchildren, Elijah King and Josie King, and three siblings, Clifford, Robert Dwayne, and Don King.

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## Annual HS I-40 Baseball Tournament Returns

# March 27-28

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Tuttle	W'ford
Woodward	

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**Alexander Shook** WOK Contributor

For many years, the I-40 Baseball Tournament (also known as the I-40 Classic and the I-40 Festival) has seen high school baseball teams from western Oklahoma face off in a low stakes pre-season tournament.

This annual event is coming back for 2025, with 12 matches spread across two days and two fields featuring nine high school teams.

All games hosted by Weatherford will be available live and on-demand at [wright.media/one](http://wright.media/one) and the same goes for Clinton games at [wright.media/two](http://wright.media/two).

A coin flip will determine the home team of each game, including those played by Clinton and Weatherford.

Additionally, the tournament's run rule is set to 10 points prior to the 5th inning and 8 points during or after the 5th inning.

Each match has a hard limit of 2 hours and 15 minutes, with the leading team being crowned the winner if the game doesn't end before then. Any game that's running ahead of schedule will start early, so be prepared to watch games early!

A huge shoutout to the seven travelling teams: Calumet, Elk City, Kingfisher, Jones, Okarche, Tuttle, and Woodward. It's because of their monetary contributions to Clinton and Weatherford Public Schools that this long-running festival can be held year after year. Thank you!

**2025 I-40 Baseball Festival**

Clinton games hosted at Acme Brick Park  
Weatherford games hosted at Rader Park

**Thursday, March 27**  
**Games @ Clinton**

Clinton vs. Calumet.....12:00 pm  
Calumet vs. Woodward.....2:30 pm  
Clinton vs. Kingfisher.....5:00 pm

**Thursday, March 27**  
**Games @ Weatherford**

Tuttle vs. Okarche.....12:00 pm  
Elk City vs. Jones.....2:30 pm  
Jones vs. Weatherford.....5:00 pm

**Friday, March 28**  
**Games @ Clinton**

Elk City vs. Calumet.....12:00 pm  
Elk City vs. Okarche.....2:30 pm  
Clinton vs. Okarche.....5:00 pm

**Friday, March 28**  
**Games @ Weatherford**

Tuttle vs. Okarche.....12:00 pm  
Elk City vs. Jones.....2:30 pm  
Jones vs. Weatherford.....5:00 pm

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# HIGHER GROUND

## The Other "3:16s"

Jim Morrison

We have been looking at the 3:16s (chapter 3, verse 16) of the New Testament. In the Apostle John's first letter to Gentile Christians and to believers everywhere. In I John 3:16 he further defines the love of God: "This is how we know what love is; Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

We could rightfully say that Jesus showed us how to live and through the cross he taught us how to love.

We are to so live that we give up our right to ourselves, our place in life, our selfish ambition, and so live for the kingdom and the benefit of others that they might catch a glimpse of the Savior in our lives.

We are, as it were, a city set on a hill, a light in a window that man can see our good works and ask why and then be drawn to Him and glorify him in their lives.

Fuller Seminary recently did a survey of former Muslims who had been converted to Christ. The question that was asked was what was the greatest influence that caused you to leave the Muslim faith? Several reasons were given but the number one reason that was given was "The Lifestyle of the Christian we knew." There was no gap between the practice of the Christian and his profession.

The next "3:16" is found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. In his prayer, Paul says, "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being." 2 Corinthians 8:9 says that "though he was rich for your sake he became poor that you through his poverty might become rich." We often think of riches as pertaining to material wealth. But would you be comfortable to be rich and yet have no influence, to live a life that mattered to no one? You would be poverty stricken in the things that really matter. On the contrary, he who leaves a legacy of a life that touched hundreds and thousands and influenced many into the kingdom; that man died wealthy indeed.

I'll paraphrase the apostle Paul, who said in his prayer that our Father is rich and he wants to impart those riches to you. And I am asking him that out of those glorious riches he will strengthen you will power in the inner man--in that area of your life where you make decisions, where your will operates.

Is there any greater need that a person can have than to have the power of the Holy Spirit fully operating in their being? This is the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead.

The next 3:16 tells us the importance of appropriating that word into our lives. Col. 3:16: Paul instructs the Colossian church to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." Your effectiveness in teaching and encouraging other Christians will be in direct proportion to the degree that you saturate yourselves with the word of God.

Other notable 3:16s include 2nd Thess. 3:16 and 2nd Timothy 3:16. You can check these out for yourselves.

To comment: [jhn82@outlook.com](mailto:jhn82@outlook.com), 580-302-1142



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# LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



**Mike Smith**  
News Director

## The Annual “Grand Can Sculpture Competition” Returns April 9-11

# Grand Can

## SCULPTURE COMPETITION

*Compete so others can eat!*

**Construction Begins: April 9**  
**Viewing & Voting: April 11**

The Connections Food and Resource Center of Weatherford is set to host their annual Grand Can Sculpture competition to help fight hunger in Western Oklahoma later this month.

The teams will face-off on April 9th to showcase their imaginative can-based architectural skills while collecting food and money donations that will go towards helping those in need around Western Oklahoma.

The Grand Can Sculpture Competition is both a food drive and a fundraiser, with contestants competing for various awards. Their hard work can be voted on and viewed by the public on April 11th.

The awards presented include the “People’s Choice” award, which is determined by social media likes and monetary donations. Donations can be made via credit cards, checks and cash. The Connections center also has accounts via Venmo, Cashapp, and Paypal. Any digital donation should include the team names in the donation to ensure that points are accurately awarded. Each dollar donated will count as one vote towards the team specified and the team with the most points at the end of the night will go home with the Grand Can Grand Champion. KWEY 95.5 the Coyote will be on-location for a radio remote during the event.

Voting will conclude at 5:30pm and awards will be given out at 6pm. Deconstruction of the can sculptures will be handled by Weatherford Public Schools Native American Club On Saturday.

Come out and check out the wonderful can sculptures while supporting a good cause March 31st from 11am to 6:30pm at the Connections Food and Resource Center located at 122 S. 8th Street in Weatherford. For more information, you can visit their Eventbrite page by searching “Grand Can Sculpture Competition” on [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com) or you can follow Connections Food & Resource Center on Facebook.



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National Trails Office (US National Park Service)

Following their “Souper Bowl of Caring” event, the First United Methodist Church of Weatherford (FUMC) donated \$1,177 to the Connections Food and Resource Center. Pictured, from left: Connections Executive Director Elizabeth Amen, FUMC Youth Leader Kelley Ramey.

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**WEST OK / JANUARY SALES TAX** - Western Oklahoma’s Sales tax collections for January have been released and the city of Elk City is flourishing. According to City Manager Tom Ivester, Elk City pulled in nearly \$1.4 million, smashing the 2024 average of \$1.2 million. Meanwhile, Weatherford experienced another down month, says Economic Development Director Yolanda Creswell. For January sales, the city collected just over \$975,000. The city of Clinton was up by less than 1% for January sales, collecting more than \$473,000.

**CADDO CO / PECK** - A jury trial date of April 28th is planned for a former Hinton High School wrestling coach in Caddo County District Court. 35-year-old Jacob Peck of Mangum is charged with child abuse for allegedly grabbing a female student athlete around her throat in a choke style manner following wrestling practice. Court records show that an investigation uncovered two other juvenile victims who came forward alleging similar encounters with Peck.

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**JNC / SUPREME COURT FINALISTS** - The Judicial Nominating Commission has announced the three nominees for the position of Justice for the Oklahoma Supreme Court in District 4. The three names submitted to Governor Kevin Stitt for his consideration include Custer County District Court Judge Donna Dirickson, alongside Travis Jett and Jon Parsley. The governor has 60 days to appoint one of the finalists to the position. The seat became vacant when former Justice Yvonne Kauger was not retained by voters in the Fall 2024 election.

**CLINTON / LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON** - The Clinton Chamber of Commerce will host a legislative luncheon at noon on Friday, March 28. The event will take place at the Frisco Center, located at 101 S 4th Street. State Representative Anthony Moore and State Senator Darcy Jech will be in attendance to provide an update on the state’s current legislative session. Reservations must be made before Tuesday, March 25. To attend, please contact Clinton Chamber President Julie Caldwell by emailing [juliecaldwell@clintonok.org](mailto:juliecaldwell@clintonok.org) or by calling 580-323-2222.

**ELK CITY / FIRE** - Elk City fire officials have released information surrounding a recent structure fire, which occurred in the southwestern part of town and required assistance from Sayre and Carter Fire Departments in battling the blaze. Authorities say the home suffered extensive damage. Crews remained on scene for several hours to ensure the fire was extinguished. No injuries have been reported. At this time, the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

**WEST OK / TEACHER OF THE YEAR** - The 10 finalists have been released for the 2025 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year award, which included Stacey Barker of Merritt Elementary School as a potential recipient. The finalists will be evaluated by a panel of Oklahomans who will decide which candidate will be named as the state’s Teacher of the Year. The winner of the state honor will be announced at the annual InspireOK Professional Development Event for educators during the month of July.

## WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

**HAPPY Day TO YOU!**



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**Alcohol causing problems?** Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information.  
**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](mailto: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 March 19** - Agustin "Augy" Castorena, Claudia Castro, Elisie Jo Lafever, Josh Nickels, Krisha Shantz; **March 20** - Letha Bentley, Hayden Billings, DaLynn Brinkley, Spring Cordes, Maxine Crissman, Barbara Deevers, Scott Guthrie, Oma Hicks, Nicholas Janning, Bryale Johnson, Tena Leatherbury, Don Morris, Trevor Ridgeway, Adam Rogers, Savana Schmidt, Bethany Shannon, Denny Smith; **March 21** - Mary Ellis, Aspen Martin, Mustafa Sami, Kay Sewell, Presley Sperle, McKenzie Sprowls, Jim Wahnee, Nina Wilhoit; **March 22** - Jan Britton, Lana Jones, Mallory Miller, Clyde Rawson, Felipe Rodriguez, Holly Stotts, Randy Thompson, Chase Turney, Linda Wilson; **March 23** - Candy Davis, Rhonda Holden, Luke Jacobsma, Geneva Koch, Joe Koop, Kenny Lee, Armando Lira, Violet McClanahan, Dylan Taylor; **March 24** - Matthew Brown, Bridget Crowder, Jared Dilla, Linda Wilhelm; **March 25** - Nick Bryson, Sheila Davis, Alec Goerend, Carolyn Koop, Marty Lockstone, Jennifer Prophet, Betty Richardson, Sarah Ruiz, Kaprice Skinner, Mary Thomas.



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# Oklahoma History: The Coronado Expedition Through Oklahoma



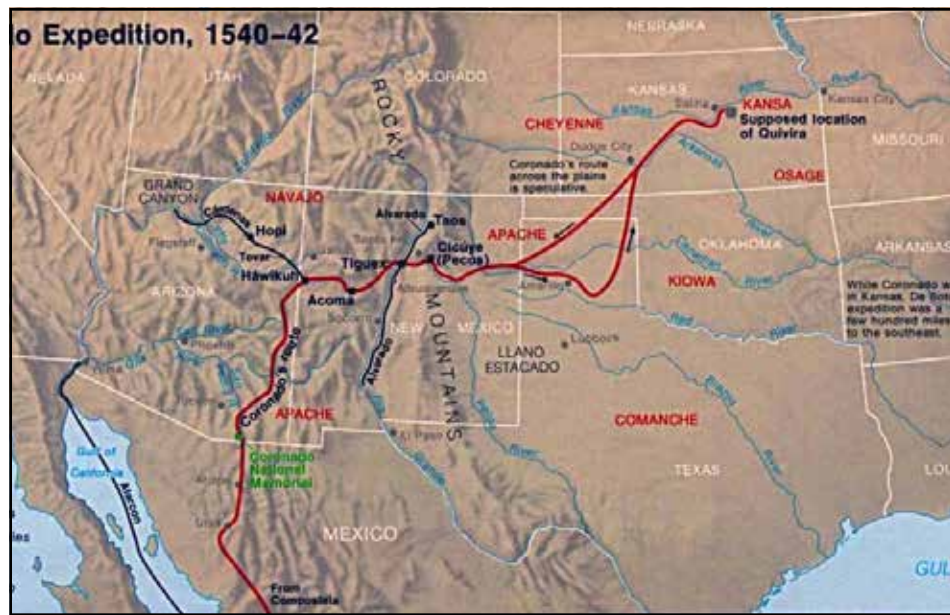
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“Coronado Sets Out to the North,” an oil painting depicting Francisco Vazquez de Coronado’s Expedition (1540 - 1542). He traveled from Colonial New Mexico to the Great Plains.



National Trails Office (US National Park Service)

Autograph Rock contains the names of many travelers from the 1850s and later. The second Cold Spring is about 7 miles west and 7 miles north of Boise City.



NOAA Photo Library

An annotated map detailing the full journey of Coronado through what is now Mexico and the United States, including all known notable stops and their significance.



Provided

An oil painting of the expedition by Frederic Remington, circa 1900, showing Francisco Vázquez de Coronado’s Expedition, passing through Colonial New Mexico and the Great Plains

**Chase Wright**  
Staff Writer

In 1540, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado embarked on a grand expedition from New Spain (present-day Mexico) in search of the legendary Seven Cities of Cibola.

Over the next two years, his journey took him across vast stretches of the American Southwest—through what are now Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. Coronado’s path through the land that would become Oklahoma was a brief yet notable chapter of this expedition, marking one of the first European forays into the southern Great Plains. The following narrative retraces that journey through Oklahoma’s Panhandle, highlighting the expedition’s trials, discoveries, and legacy in the region.

Assigned by the Spanish crown to find the fabled cities of gold, the 27-year-old Coronado set out with a sizable force. He departed Compostela, Mexico, in February 1540 at the head of some 300 Spanish soldiers (240 on horseback and 60 on foot), accompanied by around 800 Mexican Indian allies and servants, plus several Franciscan friars.

The entourage herded hundreds of cattle and horses northward into unknown lands, driven by visions of golden treasure. After months of arduous travel, Coronado reached the pueblos of Cibola (in present-day Arizona/New Mexico) only to find ordinary villages instead of wealthy cities.

Disappointed by the lack of riches in the Southwest, he listened eagerly to new tales of wealth: a Pawnee captive called El Turco (the Turk) spoke of a far-off province named Quivira, where people reportedly dined from golden plates and silver bowls.

Hope rekindled, Coronado turned his army eastward in search of this new promise. By the spring season of 1541, Coronado’s expedition marched onto the Great Plains under El Turco’s guidance.

Leaving behind the mountains and mesas of New Mexico, the Spaniards advanced into a vast sea of grass and sky, heading toward the rising sun. Weeks passed as they crossed the Llano Estacado and entered the rolling terrain of the Texas Panhandle.

Along the way, they encountered immense herds of “wild cattle”—the American buffalo—grazing in ravines and open prairies. Coronado’s chroniclers noted traveling “110 leagues west of Mexico, then to the northeast 100 leagues and to the north 250” before reaching the barrancas (canyons) where these buffalo roamed.

By this point, however, it became clear that El Turco had misled them. The fabulous golden cities were nowhere to be found.

The guide’s stories were a ploy. Frustrated soldiers seized El Turco and tortured him into confessing his deceit—the tale of Quivira’s riches was a fabrication to lure the Spaniards away. Coronado now faced a harsh reality: his expedition had strayed far onto the plains with nothing to show for it.

Determined not to turn back empty-handed, Coronado resolved to press on with a smaller party. Leaving behind the bulk of his army, he selected thirty mounted conquistadors and six foot soldiers, his most resilient men, and set out northward in late spring 1541.

Along with Coronado went a handful of priests, native allies, and a new guide: Ysopete, a Wichita captive who insisted he knew the way to Quivira. They rode out of the red-rock canyons of Texas onto the open high plains of the Oklahoma Panhandle. For weeks, Coronado’s band traversed the prairies that stretched to the horizon.

His crew likely followed ancient game trails and watering at creek beds under the vast sky. Though the land offered little but grass and wind, Ysopete kept them moving steadily north by northeast. Eventually, after more than thirty days’ journey across the plains, the weary Spaniards spotted signs of habitation. In July 1541, Coronado finally arrived at Quivira, on the great plains beyond the Oklahoma border.

Quivira proved to be no golden city at all, but rather a cluster of Indigenous villages in what is now central Kansas. Coronado and his men found a settlement of the Wichita people, who lived in grass-thatched houses and cultivated fields of corn, beans, and squash along the river valleys.

The Quivirans greeted the foreign visitors with understandable astonishment. To the Spanish conquistadors, these people appeared humble and nearly unclothed, a far cry from the wealthy civilization El Turco had described.

Coronado spent about twenty-five days among them, searching for any hint of treasure or another kingdom over the horizon. He saw no gold or silver—only the simple prosperity of agricultural life on the plains. A copper ornament here or a piece of metal there was the closest thing to wealth that Quivira offered. Realizing at last that his long quest was in vain, Coronado accepted the truth: there were no riches to seize in Quivira.

In a final act of retribution, he ordered El Turco to be executed for leading the Spaniards on a futile chase. The dream of golden cities had evaporated on the Kansas prairie.

Coronado sent teams out in further explorations of the region and during one of the smaller expeditions.

Garcia Lopez de Cardenas was the first European to see the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

With winter closing in, Coronado made the call to turn back—first to New Mexico, then ultimately to New Spain.

His men regrouped and retraced their route southwest. By late 1541, they were following a path that would, centuries later, become part of the Santa Fe Trail.

Heading back across the Great Plains, they slogged through the same relentless stretch of Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle, only now in reverse. Water was scarce, and the harsh winter storms slowed their progress, but staying on familiar ground gave them a better shot at making it home.

Historians believe they passed near what are now the towns of Liberal, Kansas, and Tyrone, Hooker, Optima, Guymon, Goodwell, and Texhoma, Oklahoma.

To Coronado’s men, the high plains of the Panhandle were a desolate, punishing landscape. Today, farming and ranching towns break up the horizon, scattered across land they once struggled to cross.

A stone marker near Beaver, Oklahoma, stands as a reminder of their passage—one of the few tangible traces of their time in the region.

Stories of Coronado still surface in Oklahoma’s history. At Autograph Rock in Cimarron County, where travelers along the Santa Fe Trail left their names carved into the stone, some claim a weathered inscription reads “Coronato, 1541.” If real, it would be the oldest known European carving in Oklahoma.

Despite how well known this “fun fact” is, historians debate its authenticity; it survives more as folklore than fact. Whether or not Coronado left his mark there, the story is still spread as a small detour during his failed search for gold.

By spring of 1542, what remained of the expedition limped back into New Spain—exhausted, empty-handed, and out of luck. The commander who had set out with expecting glory returned with neither riches nor conquest.

Coronado lived out his remaining years in Mexico, fading into relative obscurity before his death in 1554. His name never carried the weight he once hoped it would.

But the expedition wasn’t entirely forgotten. His route marked the first extensive European exploration of the southern Plains, including the far western edge of present-day Oklahoma. It didn’t lead to gold, but it put the land on the map—at least for those who came after.

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# Drew Fifer and Ty Eastwood Named the Latest Bulldogs of the Week



**Jon Chidester**  
SWOSU Media Relations

Drew Fifer and Ty Eastwood have been named

the latest Bulldogs of the Week. The recognition is brought to you by Wright Media – the home for SWOSU athletic livestream events and radio broadcasts.

Fifer (Louisville, Ky.) earned a win in game two of the series with Arkansas-Monticello on Saturday. He finished with a season high 10 strikeouts and pitched six innings for a second straight start, matching his longest outing so far this year.

Eastwood (Ft. Cobb, Okla.) led a SWOSU hitting lineup with eight hits and seven runs scored. He had a hit in every game last week including a pair of three-hit games against Arkansas-Monticello. With another three RBI, he accounted for 10 total runs in four games for the Dawgs.

## STATE CHAMPIONS

Continued from Page 1

### Semifinals - Eagles vs. North Rock Creek: 68-58

Though the final score doesn't show it, the semifinals proved to be a tough bout for the Eagles' match against the North Rock Creek Cougars. Going into the fourth quarter, Weatherford lagged behind the Cougars by a single point, 43-44.

Audio commentary from Chuck Ramsey was worried as he realized the Weatherford boys went 0-11 at the three point line. However, a consistently high accuracy for two-pointers and free throw (as well as 10 total turnovers from the Cougars) allowed Weatherford to "skate out of that one," as Chuck put it during the post-game show.

Ethan Sage and Tate Sage both snagged the most baskets for the Eagles, scoring 12 points each.

### Finals - Eagles vs. Crossing Christian: 46-44

For the third year in a row, The boys had made it to the State Championship game. Two-time state champions Douglass were ousted in their quarterfinal match against Crossing Christian, who would stand as Weatherford's final barrier for the State Champion title.

The Eagles held a comfortable lead over the Knights going into halftime, with the score sitting at 34-25. However, the Knights would quickly close the gap between the two teams, even surpassing the Eagles towards the start of the fourth quarter.

With less than 4 minutes left on the clock and the score sitting at 40-44, Weatherford called a time out. The Eagles emerged and tied up the game with 2 minutes to go. What followed was an intense stalemate that maintained the 44-44 tie all the way up until the last 8.5 seconds of the game, when Tate Sage passed the ball to an open CJ Nixon, who sank a decisive two-point buzzer-beating shot.

This victory is a fitting conclusion to the team's many Seniors, including CJ Nixon and Tate Sage, who have been a part of the starting lineup since their 2021 freshman season. The team will also be saying goodbye to Class of 2025 graduates Braylon Gayer, Cash Jennings, Walker Kennedy, Grayson Riddell, Ethan Sage, and Kashen Skinner.

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## Baseball is Victorious in UAM Rubber Match



**Jon Chidester**  
Asst. Athletic Director

SWOSU Baseball won a second consecutive Great American Conference series by defeating Arkansas-Monticello 9-2 in Sunday's rubber match. The Dawgs got solid pitching performances and put pressure on the Boll Weevil defense all afternoon in the win.

The result pushes SWOSU back to .500 in league play, where they sit 7-7 on the year. Overall, the Bulldogs move to 15-8.

For a third straight game in the series, the offense came ready to produce by scoring in the first inning. The lineup tacked on single runs in the first and second innings, followed by a two-run third and led 4-0 through the middle part of the ball game.

SWOSU put balls in play all day and forced the UAM defense to make plays. Three of SWOSU's first four early runs came courtesy of Weevil blunders. Gage Gaunt doubled in a run in the third inning, representing the lone earned run from the first third of the game.

With a lead, starting pitcher Sebastian Diaz kept throwing up zeros. He pitched into the fifth without allowing a run, striking out five and scattering three hits.

Diaz did walk three and hit another two but pitched successfully around those free passes. Conner Watson entered in the fifth and induced a double play to get Diaz out of his jam and maintain SWOSU's shutout. Watson (W, 2-2) then pitched a three-up and three-down sixth to earn the win in relief.

Following a scoreless seventh from Tyler Fortin, the Bulldog bats broke the game open with five more runs. Sean Monsour singled, Ty Eastwood doubled, and Bodi Wallar walked to load the bases with no outs. Then SWOSU got two across by handling the bat with a sacrifice fly and a fielder's choice before another UAM error let more runs come home. A Reece Burke single put an end to SWOSU's scoring.

Leading 9-0, the Weevils scored managed to score single runs in the eighth and ninth off Jackson Blue, but the damage had already been done.

Eastwood led the lineup with a 3-for-4 day at the plate – his second three-hit game of the series.

Four straight road games await the team beginning with a non-conference midweek matchup against Oklahoma Baptist on Tuesday, March 18. SWOSU will then trek to the Natural State to face Southern Arkansas in continued GAC play next weekend, March 21-22.

## Softball Falls in Sunday Doubleheader at UAM



**Jon Chidester**  
Asst. Athletic Director

SWOSU Softball went winless in Sunday's conference doubleheader against Arkansas-Monticello, falling 4-1 in game one and 8-7 in game two.

The Bulldogs (10-15, 3-10 GAC) will look to salvage the series and avoid a sweep on Monday in the finale, beginning at noon.

### Game 1 - UAM 4, SWOSU 1

Skyla McPhillips homered in the second inning to answer a first inning run by UAM, but a three-run third was the difference in game one.

Both pitchers went the distance, with no scoring by either side after the third inning. Alexis Taylor suffered the loss in her third complete game of the season.

The offense started the game with solid production with three extra-base hits through the first two innings. Chesnie Hewitt doubled in the first and Taylor McMahon tripled after McPhillips went yard in the second. From the third inning on though, SWOSU managed just one base runner.

### Game 2 - UAM 8, SWOSU 7

A late offensive surge fell short in the nightcap. SWOSU trailed 8-4 entering the sixth and plated three runs to make things interesting late. Kaylee Barkley's two RBI knock capped off the four-hit inning, but that offense couldn't carry over to the seventh.

A four-run second inning is how SWOSU produced the rest of their runs. Kylie Morton doubled in two runs, and Chesnie Hewitt followed it up with her second home run of the season – a two-run shot to left field. At the time, it put the Bulldogs up 4-2 on the scoreboard. UAM then tied the game back up in the third and took the lead for good with a four-run fifth.

Riley Lusk got a no decision in the circle with three innings of work. Hannah Nieuwenhuis (L, 0-3) picked up the loss in relief. She entered in the fourth for Lusk and navigated the inning well but got into trouble in the fifth. Jaycee McKee collected the game's final five outs.

Barkley, Hewitt, and Morton accounted for seven of SWOSU's 10 hits in the game and all of the RBI.

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