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High School and College Graduations in Western OK Hosted May 2-18



Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

The school year is winding down all around western Oklahoma and schools across the area are getting ready to celebrate the class of 2025 with graduations happening throughout the month of May. Here is a breakdown of some of the graduations in the area, so you can congratulate your loved ones across the region.

On Friday, May 2, SWOSU will officially kick off graduation season in Western Oklahoma with the College of Pharmacy's commencement ceremony. It will begin at 7pm at the Fine Arts Center on the SWOSU campus.

SWOSU will celebrate all other graduates at the Pioneer Event Center on May 9 at 6pm, followed by two more ceremonies on May 10, with a morning ceremony beginning at 9am and an afternoon ceremony beginning at 12pm.

Corn Bible Academy will host their high school graduation on Thursday, May 8, beginning at 7:30pm on their campus in Clinton.

Arapaho-Butler will host their high school graduation on Sunday, May 11, beginning at 4pm in their high school gymnasium.

On Thursday, May 15, Lookeba-Sickles and Mangum will host their high school graduations. Lookeba-Sickles's will take place at the Ethel McClain Gymnasium and Mangum's will be hosted in the MHS Auditorium. Both ceremonies will begin at 7pm.

Friday, May 16 will be an exceptionally busy day for high school graduations, with 11 high schools around Western Oklahoma hosting their graduations.

Two ceremonies will begin at 6pm: Cheyenne will host their high school graduation on their high school campus; and Reydon will host their graduation in the Reydon Gymnasium.

All other May 16 graduations will begin at 7pm. Canute's ceremony will be hosted at the school auditorium; Clinton will host their high school graduation at the amphitheater in McLain Rogers park, weather permitting; Cordell will host their high school graduation in their high school auditorium. Hinton will host their high school graduation on the Hinton High School campus; Hydro-Eakly will host their high school graduation in their high school gymnasium; Sayre will host their graduation in their auditorium; Thomas-Fay-Custer will host their high school graduation in their school auditorium;

Watonga will host their graduation on the high school football field; and Weatherford will host their high school graduation at the Pioneer Event Center on SWOSU's Weatherford campus.

The next day, on Saturday, May 17, Hammon will host their 2025 high school graduation at the Hammon High School Dome beginning at 7pm.

Finally, on Sunday, May 18, Elk City will host their high school graduation beginning at 4pm at the Pioneer Center gymnasium on the Elk City High School campus.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2025! If you are unable to make it to your loved one's graduation, Wright Media will be livestreaming some of western Oklahoma's ceremonies, available both live and on-demand. The website URLs are listed below:

Weatherford: wright.media/one/
Clinton: wright.media/two/
Thomas-Fay-Custer: wright.media/three/
Hydro-Eakly: wright.media/five/
SWOSU: wright.media/six/
Watonga: wright.media/seven/



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Byrd Andrews

Richard Charles "Byrd" Andrews was born on May 8th, 1954, in Coffeyville, Kansas, to William Faye and Doris Ann Andrews. He passed away on April 8th, 2025, peacefully in Edmond, OK, surrounded by the love of his family at the age of 70 years, 11 months.



Byrd began a lifelong adventure in marriage to Janice Daniel on March 25th, 1978. Byrd was a loyal spouse, father, Papa, Pops, and friend. He was often found playing his guitar, reading to grandkids, cheering on KU, cooking one of his signature dishes, or listening to a record with the volume cranked. He took great pleasure in hunting quail with his bird dogs, camping, and going on trips with his family.

He was kind, supportive, caring, humorous, and playful. Byrd had a special way of connecting with people through his humor and wit. He made people feel seen, accepted, and cared for. He navigated relationships with a genuine heart and loved people well.

Surviving to continue his legacy are his wife Janice Andrews of Edmond and his two daughters, Rachel (Seth) Sanders and Elizabeth (Alex) Allen; two brothers, Mark Andrews and David Andrews; and seven grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents William and Doris Andrews, his brother Jack Andrews, his son Matthew Andrews, and his father and mother-in-law, Dean and Regina Daniel.

Carmeletia Jones

Carmeletia Joy Jones, 66, of Elk City, OK was born on April 29, 1958 in Elk City, OK. She is the daughter of Emmanuel and Jessie Bell (Devereaux) Jones. She went to hold the hands of her Lord and Savior on April 4, 2025 at her daughter's home, in Oklahoma City, OK surrounded by her loving family.



Carmeletia enjoyed sewing, gardening, watching movies, but most all she loved spending time together with her family and friends.

Carmeletia was employed by 3M in Weatherford, OK, retiring in 1994. She was also employed by Great Plains Regional Medical Center in Elk City, OK for over twenty years, retiring in August 2020.

Carmeletia was a longtime faithful member of Mt. Carmel Full Gospel Church, Elk City, OK. She had a deep personal relationship with God and enjoyed singing, studying, praising God, and sharing His Word. She loved helping with the kid's church programs and was known as the "Orange Juice and Candy Lady". Carmeletia will be deeply missed and greatly remembered, her kindness and love will continue to inspire and influence all who knew and loved her.

Cherishing her memory is her two sons, Roy Williams Jr. and his wife, Milka of Las Vegas, Nevada, Timothy Bagby Jr. and his wife, Amber of Elk City; three daughters, Alexia Jones of Oklahoma City, Terri Johnson of Oklahoma City, Tracy Williams of Elk City; 15 grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; brother, Wayne Jones of Elk City; sister, Norma Jones of Elk City; one son-in-law, Carl Johnson of Elk City; and many other nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Carmeletia was preceded in death by her parents, Emmanuel and Jessie Bell Jones; one great granddaughter, Hayani Prince; one great grandson, Lionell Bagby; one brother, Robert Jones; and two sisters, Freda Keel and Dimitria Jones.

Russell Clark

Russell Laverne Clark was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend who went to be with his Heavenly Father on Sunday, April 13, 2025. He was 75 years, 7 months and 4 days old.



Russell was born September 9, 1949, in Thomas, Oklahoma to Derrel and Eva Clark. He spent his high school years actively participating in FFA and running the family farm. He graduated from Thomas High School in 1967. Russell then continued his education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing. He later attended The University of Oklahoma, where he earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration and completed most of his coursework towards a Doctorate Degree in Marketing at Oklahoma State University.

While attending SWOSU, he met the love of his life, Marilyn Hughes, and they were married on January 23, 1970, in Clinton, OK. One of his favorite pastimes was getting his private pilot's license to make solo flights. He loved going to car shows to see cars both old and new. He loved being an "amateur photographer" to document all family events and treasured having photographs of his family. Two of his favorite trips were to Osh Kosh, WI for air shows and a 50th anniversary cruise. Russell was an active member of the Church of The First Born.

Russell began his career by receiving his Salesman and Brokers licenses in real estate. After selling real estate for many years, he took a position with The Small Business Development Center as a business consultant for over 15 years. The final years of his career were with the Oklahoma Tax Commission as an auditor, where he retired in February 2025.

Russell is preceded in death by his parents and his son Cameron. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn Clark of Weatherford; his two daughters, Kendra Smith and husband, Tyler Smith of Oklahoma City and Kyla Clark of Weatherford; two sons, Charles Clark, and wife, Toni Clark of Broken Arrow and Craig Clark and wife, Randi Clark of El Reno; grandchildren, Kaidence, Amiah, Corbin, Camille, Teagan, and Savannah; and sister Elaine Garner of Weatherford.

Grace Spradlin

Grace Juanita Gerner Spradlin was born on March 23, 1928, at the family farm in Bessie, Oklahoma, to her parents, Louis and Rosa (Reinschmiedt) Gerner. She passed away on April 12, 2025, at the Corn Heritage Village in Weatherford, Oklahoma, with her family by her side.



Grace attended New Hebron Grade School through the 8th grade. She graduated from Cordell High School in 1946.

On May 29, 1946, she and Kermit Spradlin of Dill City were united in marriage in Wheeler, Texas. To this union, one daughter was born.

Grace worked for 40 years at the Clinton Laundry and Cleaners as a bookkeeper and office manager. After she retired, she volunteered at the Methodist Nursing Home. She was a member of the Peace Lutheran Church of Bessie and the Tabitha Circle.

She loved her family and enjoyed watching her grandchildren play baseball, softball, and wheelchair racing. She was a longtime fan of the OU Sooners football and softball teams. She also enjoyed watching the Thunder play basketball.

Grace was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Kermit, two sisters, Alvera Dickerson and Mary Clarkson, and her granddaughter, Amy Fitzgerald.

Survivors include her daughter, Kim Fitzgerald, and her husband, Scotty, of Oklahoma City; grandson, Tyler Fitzgerald, and his wife, Nina, and their sons Lucas and Conor, of Austin, Texas; granddaughter, Ashton Howard, and her husband, Bryan, and their sons Lincoln and Creed, of Elgin, Oklahoma. She is also survived by her sister-in-law, Jeane McClanahan, of San Diego, California, and many other family members and friends.

Grace's family was her greatest joy, and she loved them all very much. She will be greatly missed.

The family would like to thank Corn Heritage Village and Shepherd Home Health & Hospice for the care they provided to our mom and grandmother, Grace. We are truly grateful for your dedication, compassion, and the excellent care you provided for her. Thank you for making her stay as comfortable and happy as possible. Your kindness and the attention you gave her meant the world to all of us.

Sandra Wright

Sandra Christeen Wright was born December 26, 1935 to Bill Wilson and Ernesteen Price. She passed away April 11, 2025, at the age of 89 years, 3 months, and 14 days.



Sandra lived in Merritt with her grandparents, mama and daddy Price, and her parents, Ernesteen and Willard Goodnow. She graduated from Merritt High School, Class of 1954. When she was a young child, she picked cotton with her sister on the family farm. Her mother was a school teacher for 54 years; her father worked maintenance at Hinton High School and was also a carpenter. After high school, Sandra attended college at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, where she majored in Elementary Education. She was a proud member of Delta Zeta while in college. In 1956, she married Aubrey Dean Wright. They made their home north of Weatherford, before relocating to the farm south of I-40, where they raised their family. They had four children: Kenton, Kevin, Kerry, and Kristy. In 1957, she graduated with her Bachelor's degree. She graduated from SWOSU with her Master's degree in Elementary Education in 1976.

She shared her mother's passion for teaching. Many different schools were blessed by her unique style of teaching. She taught at Hinton for five years, then taught at Weatherford for the next 20 years. Later on, she taught in Moore, retiring at Winding Creek Elementary in 2000.

She will be remembered and loved for the many things she did for the children who came through her classrooms. Sandra was a woman who was set in her ways and who was always guided by her strong faith. Her giving, caring, loving heart was felt by all who knew her!

Sandra is preceded in death by her parents, (Bill Wilson) and Ernesteen and Willard Goodnow. Husband: Dean Wright. Sons: Kevin and Kerry Wright; and one brother: Darrel Wilson.

Sandra is survived by her only daughter, Kristy Wright-Nott and husband, Peter. Grandchildren: Graham, Iris, Ethan, Forrest, Ryan, and wife Leah, and Parker Nott. One son, Kenton Wright and wife Mary. Grandchildren: Chris Wright Henson and wife Misti, Melanie Wright Henson, Valynn Wright Davis and husband Jeff. Sandra's great-grandchildren: Raylin Wright, Jentry and Liberty Davis. Her siblings: Willene Walker, sister-in-law Joi Wilson, Warren Wilson and wife Delores; Brenda Thomason and husband Brian.

In remembrance of Sandra Wright's life, the family asks that any charitable donations be made to the American Association for Cancer Research or the American Diabetes Association.

Sherri Russell

Sherri Lea Russell, 66, of Elk City, Oklahoma was born on August 8, 1958 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of Don Harold and DeVon Jane (Smith) Jones. She went to hold the hands of her Lord and Savior on Sunday, April 6, 2025 at Great Plains Regional Medical Center, Elk City, Oklahoma surrounded by her family.



Sherri enjoyed watching True Crime stories and reading. She also enjoyed studying history and genealogy and loved the Ozark mountains, but most of her passion was spending time with her grandchildren. Sherri will be truly missed by all who knew and loved her. She was an advocate for COPD, mental health, and Animal Rights and Treatment. Sherri was the overseer for Cedar Village Trailer Park, Elk City, Oklahoma for numerous years, and was beloved by her tenants as the heart of the park.

Cherishing her memory is her four daughters, Kelli Payne Kelley of Pensacola, Florida, Miranda Payne Dickey of Bentonville, Arkansas, Ashley Russell Mitchell of Bainbridge, Georgia, Makenzi Fuqua-Russell of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; six grandchildren, Quentin Kelley of Pensacola, Florida, Wesley Kelley of Pensacola, Florida, Ethan Dickey of Bentonville, Arkansas, Caden Dickey of Bentonville, Arkansas, Stacy Mitchell of Bainbridge, Georgia, Parker Gauntt of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; one great great-grandson, Ben Kelley of Pensacola, Florida; one brother, Jerry Jones of Elk City, Oklahoma; and one sister, Brenda Chapin of Henryetta, Oklahoma; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Sherri is preceded in death by her parents, Don Harold Jones and DeVon Jane (Smith) Fagan.

Memorials can be made to the Elk City Animal Shelter in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648.

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BancFirst Weatherford Celebrates Conclusion of Inaugural Student Board for 2024-25 School Year



Shown in photo (from left to right) Front Row: Taylor Isom, Karsen McPherson, Sariah Longoria, Zoie Altland, Mia Mosier. Back Row: Cody Bell, Yukon Butler, Jake Crisp, Bayli Lawles, Parker Shields, Brayden Huff, Neelie Lindamood, Tommy Northrip, Alison Galindo Torres.

BancFirst Weatherford is proud to celebrate the successful conclusion of its inaugural Student Board for the 2024-2025 school year. This initiative aims to provide high school seniors with valuable insights into personal banking and the financial industry while fostering leadership and professional development.

In August 2024, BancFirst Weatherford invited senior students to apply for this unique opportunity. After a competitive selection process, 12 outstanding students were chosen to participate. Since September, the Student Board has met monthly to discuss a variety of banking-related topics, enhancing their understanding of financial management and the banking industry.

As the program's capstone experience, the Student Board traveled to Oklahoma City on April 17th to tour the BancFirst Tower and engage with top bank executives. This hands-on experience will provide students with an inside look at banking operations at the highest level.

"We have been incredibly impressed with this group of seniors," said Cody Bell, president at

BancFirst Weatherford. "Their enthusiasm and dedication have made this program a success, and we have no doubt that they will go on to be extraordinary leaders in their future endeavors."

The BancFirst Weatherford Student Board is an ongoing program, running annually from September to April. Designed to distribute financial education to young individuals, the program also serves as an opportunity to inspire and develop future BancFirst employees.

BancFirst Weatherford looks forward to continuing this program for years to come, equipping students with essential financial knowledge and leadership skills.

For more information about the BancFirst Weatherford Student Board, please contact:

Tommy Northrip
 Vice President, BancFirst Weatherford
 Tommy.Northrip@BancFirst.bank
 580-772-5541

HIGHER GROUND

The Resurrection



Jim Morrison

There are many events in history that are difficult to determine with accuracy or truthfulness. Was there a conspiracy behind the assassination of John F. Kennedy? Did Hitler really commit suicide in that bunker in Berlin? Is the grave that is marked as the burial place of Jesse James really containing the body of that outlaw?

While the answers to these questions may be interesting or important to some people, to the vast majority of us it will make little difference whether the facts are right or not. It will not change the way we conduct our lives.

In fact, in the minds of many, truthfulness is not a very big deal. We live in a day in which the idea of the existence of absolute truth is questioned on every hand. Are there things that are absolutely true all the time and everywhere whether people know it or like it. It takes real guts for a student to make a statement in class that premarital sex is wrong--wrong for everybody not just for those who think it's wrong. If we carry this to its logical conclusion then we will end up with anarchy, with everyone doing what is right in his own eyes.

Sheldon Vanauken and his wife were students in Oxford University. Their passion was literature. They were not believers. They were admirers of C.S. Lewis, the great literary figure and Christian apologist. They became friends with Lewis and, through that friendship, they were forced to consider the claims of Christ. Was there anything to the Christian faith or was it for weak people who needed a crutch? In their search for truth they finally came to a conclusion that it was important. Quoting him in his book, *A Severe Mercy*, he wrote "by now we knew it was important. If true and we admitted to each other the possibility that it was---it was, very simply, the only really important truth in the world. And if untrue, it was false. No halfway house. First of nothing."

That is the basis on which we look at the resurrection of Christ. If true it overshadows every other truth of the world. If false we are wasting our time. There are liberal theologians today who don't like the idea of the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus. They will call him a good man, a great teacher and that his spiritual influence is that which lives on.

The stories of his resurrection are simply symbols pointing to the triumph of the human spirit, or so they would say. They would argue that it is not necessary to believe that his body came forth from the grave. The Apostle Paul made it quite clear. "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." (I Cor. 15:17) If Christ is not raised, then living for him, doing what he says, following his will is a great delusion. We should be pitied. Like insane people who live by hallucinations.

But because he has been raised from the dead and is alive forever, all our obedience, all our love, all our self-denial counts for something. Our lives have meaning, they have significance and usefulness. We don't come to the end of our days and say; it was all in vain, empty, pointless, and insignificant. That is why Paul ends this chapter with Vs. 57. "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain."

The greatest evidence of the resurrection is the changed lives of the disciples and millions since that time. People don't die a martyrs' death or suffer unbelievable torture for something they know is a lie. The disciples had seen the risen Jesus and were forever changed and they changed the world.

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Mike Smith
News Director

WOCS Names its Clinton/Weatherford Students of the Month (March)



from Western Oklahoma Christian School
 Western Oklahoma Christian School (WOCS)'s Clinton campus Students of the Month are Sadie Nickel and Gavin Warkentin (left). The Weatherford campus Students of the Month are Mabel Hollingsworth and Mason Sowders (right). Students must demonstrate personal responsibility, maintain a good attitude, and show respect for their classmates, teachers and staff. The awards are sponsored by Lucielle's Roadhouse.

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from State Rep. Anthony Moore / Facebook
 The 2025 4A Basketball State Champion Weatherford Eagles were invited to the Oklahoma State Capitol by State Representative Anthony Moore (R-Clinton). There, the Eagles were recognized for bringing home Weatherford's first-ever basketball state title.



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NEW OKLAHOMA JUSTICE - A Woodward attorney is the newest member of the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Travis Jett was appointed by Governor Kevin Stitt and announced during a recent press conference. District 2 District Judge Donna Dirickson of Weatherford was one of the three finalists for the position. The seat became vacant when voters failed to retain Justice Yvonne Kauger during the November general election last year.

CUSTER CO / GALLOWAY - Custer County Emergency Management Director Mike Galloway has officially announced his retirement. His last day will be June 30. "I'm going to try to get my wife back to South Africa and I may stay for a couple months with her. She wants to see her family one last time," Galloway said. Custer County District 3 Commissioner Lyle Miller showed his appreciation to Galloway for his service to county residents in attendance at the announcement as commissioners begin the process of finding a successor for Galloway. "We're not replacing Mike. I don't think that's possible. But we will put somebody in his seat," Miller expressed.



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CLINTON / NEW SUPERINTENDENT - The Clinton School Board of Education will soon be searching for the next superintendent of the district with the naming of Tyler Bridges as Superintendent of Stillwater Public Schools. "This opportunity gets us back close to where home is for both my wife and I; we're both from Chandler, [which is] 30 minutes south of Stillwater, and it's where our parents and extended family live." Bridges explained. "This is a good opportunity for us to get back close to home. It was a tough decision to make but it felt like it was the right one at [this] time." Bridges will officially step into his new position in Stillwater on July 1st.

HYDRO EAKLY / PRINCIPAL - The Hydro-Eakly school district has a new Middle School/High School Principal. Hydro-Eakly's District Board of Education approved Teri Kimble for the job. Kimble, who has taught in the district for 17 years, will begin her new duties on July 1.

WEATHERFORD / GRAND CAN - Another Grand Can Sculpture Competition is in the books for Connections Food & Resource Center in Weatherford. Assistant Executive Director Eddie Bennett revealed this year's event brought in 19,260 pounds of food, nearly 4,000 pounds more than last year. Bennett also said that, through six grand can events, a combined 87,000 pounds of food have been donated to help feed needy western Oklahomans. New Life Church was this year's Grand Can Sculpture Champion with their dinosaur hatchling sculpture.

SWOSU / HARDAWAY - Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) has announced the appointment of Dayna Hardaway as the institution's next Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. Hardaway officially began her role on April 21 and will report directly to SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell. Hardaway previously served as the Executive Director of Human Resources for Wichita Falls's Independent School District, where she leads recruitment, retention, employee relations and educator support systems in partnership with Midwestern State University and other community partners.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

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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 April 23 - Marilyn Baldwin, Shelby Blagg, Lena Cardenas, Tyler Ellis, Andrew Fraser, Adam Fraser, Devon Jordan, Daryl Mosburg, Tom Willis; **April 24** - Sandy Duncan, Nikki Frye, Ron Goodman, Mary Harris, Jason Kemper, Shelby Martinez, Greg Mouse, Carol Wahnee, Jill Ward; **April 25** - Casey Elston, Gary Eytcheson, Regena Gardner, Mercedes Hampton, Edward Lopez, Bailee Pond, Kacie Roof, Brooke Schneberger, Shaun Skinner, Baylor Watkins, Lonnie Whitson; **April 26** - Megan Britton, Peyton Carmin, Micah Dobrinski, Dennis Green, Alex Hicks, Matt Lamm, Denise Lay, Kenneth Maddox, Dakota Meinhardt, Benton Toczko; **April 27** - Richard Ballew, Kaden Buckner, Arthula Carmen, Songhawk Fields-Toahy, Melissa Martin, Liz McBrayer, Avry Nailon, Hermon Small; **April 28** - Janice Ball, Jacob Bass, Alison Mainers, Jay Martin, Alvin McNeal, Gentry Ortiz, Matthew Sumner; **April 29** - Mack Barnes, Ben Brown, Derek Carroll, Mary Frye, Dana Janning, Trent Koch, Summer Lettkeman, Logan Littke, Bailey Mae Matthews, Bruce McLemore, Michelle Nance, Suzzi Rossiter, Vernon Slagle, Cheryl Thomason, J.R. Ussery.

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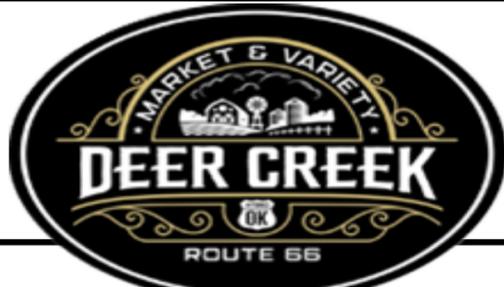
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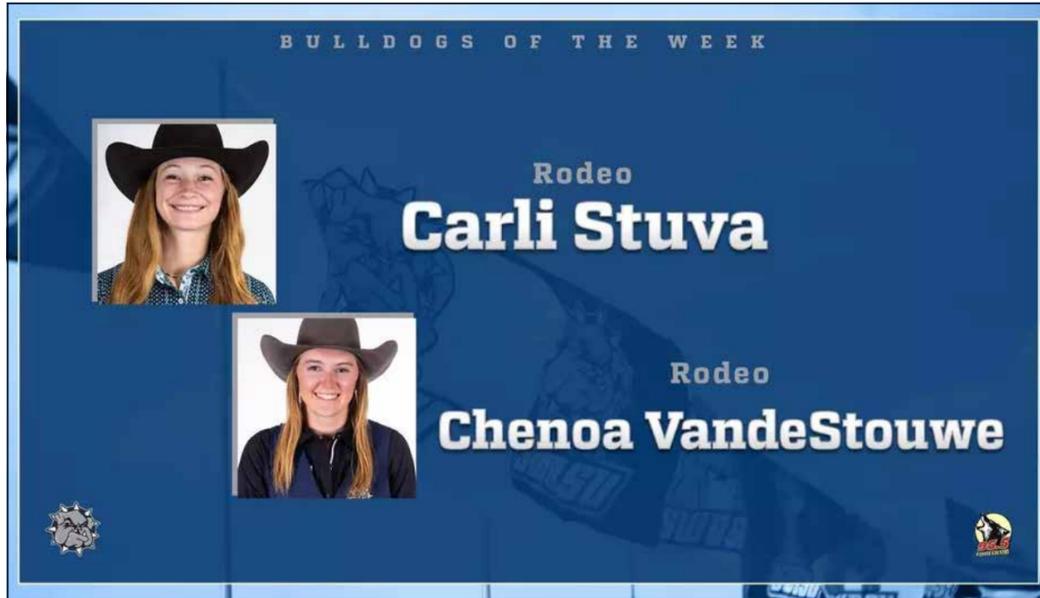
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Carli Stuva and Chenoa VandeStouwe are Latest Bulldogs of the Week



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Carli Stuva and Chenoa VandeStouwe have been named the latest Bulldogs of the Week after helping lift SWOSU Women's Rodeo to a win at Fort Hays State over the weekend.

This weekly student-athlete recognition is brought to you by Wright Media – the home for SWOSU athletic livestream events and radio broadcasts.

Carli Stuva (Fontanelle, Okla.) became the fourth different SWOSU cowgirl to win the women's all-around at a rodeo this season after her performances in Breakaway Roping and Barrel Racing.

Stuva tied for the average victory in Breakaway after a strong 2.8 second showing in the short round and paired it with a top-10 finish in the average of Barrel Racing.

Chenoa VandeStouwe (Inwood, Iowa) clocked consistent times in Goat Tying (8.3, 8.1) to finish second in the average.

VandeStouwe was third in the long round and tied for second in the short go. It's her highest overall finish of the season in the event.

Pickleball Association's "Space City Paddle Battle" Blasts Off May 2-4



Weatherford's third annual Pickleball Tournament comes back to the Rader Park Courts this upcoming May 2-4, offering fun for all ages and over \$9,000 in pickleball-related giveaways. Now named the Space City Paddle Battle, to compliment Weatherford's pre-existing tourism strategy, the tournament guarantees to bring the best pickleballers from around the state.

The Space City Paddle Battle begins on Friday, May 2 with a social event filled with good music, free giveaways, and of course some pickup pickleball games. On Saturday and Sunday morning beginning at 9am tournament games will take place and run through the afternoon. The tournament will feature several divisions for players of various skill levels and age groups with cash prizes being offered to the winners of the open divisions. The Weatherford Area Pickleball Association, who is organizing the tournament, isn't your traditional association.

"We don't pay dues, it's just something that we came up with as a way to try to grow pickleball in Weatherford," said Mac McCune a member of the association. "It worked because we have people from all over that come to Weatherford to play" added McCune.

And he's not wrong. The Weatherford Area Pickleball Association's Facebook page has over a thousand followers from Weatherford and surrounding communities like Clinton, Elk City, Hinton, Hydro-Eakly, and Thomas to name a few.

For this year's tournament McCune as well as other association members like Amy Bluth and Arlee Copeland worked alongside the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce and its Executive Director Kim Silman to build something everyone in Oklahoma can enjoy.

Reaching out to several pickleball related vendors

and businesses, as well as local businesses, the team curated a veritable treasure trove of pickleball swag including professional level gear. That swag will be given away to guests in a mix of free giveaways and paid raffles throughout the tournament.

Members of the Weatherford Area Pickleball Association also rolled up their sleeves and volunteered their time and money by putting up wind screens and new benches for guests and participants of the tournament. All of the labor and materials were provided solely by members of the association and not by the City of Weatherford, showcasing the profound sense of community the association has fostered.

For more information about the event or to find out how you can register to compete you can search Weatherford Area Pickleball Association on Facebook.

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SWOSU Golf Members Phillips, Sala, Dodgion Earn All-GAC Honors



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Three SWOSU Golf members earned All-Great American Conference honors, announced by the league office on Sunday night. Jack Phillips and Freya Sala were both First Team selections, while Drew Dodgion was placed on the Second Team. Sala was one of five unanimous women's golfer selections.

Aside from all-conference nods for play on the course, nine in total from the men's and women's programs earned academic honors including men's golfer Lukas Hendricks who was named an Men's Elite Scholar Athlete for a second straight year for having the highest GPA of any male competitor in the championship field. Dodgion, Ashlyn Acosta, Lucia Rivas, Ryan Carlisle, Caspar Graf, Otto Heden, Sutton McMillan, and Mariano Racca were all named GAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes. The distinction is awarded to eligible student-athletes

participating in the championship field with at least a 3.70 GPA and 70 hours of completed classwork.

Phillips (Sydney, Australia) earns first team status in his first season competing collegiately. He's finished 12th place or better in three tournaments this season, highlighted by a two-stroke win at the Tulsa Cup last fall when he shot two-under par (72-74-70) in the three-round tournament. Phillips is currently ranked 16th in the Central Region with a 72.4 scoring average.

Sala (Mexico City, Mexico) improves upon her second team selection from a year ago with unanimous first team honors in 2024-25. She has four top-three finishes to her credit this season including a win at the MSU Women's Invitational last fall and has finished no worse than 12th in nine of 10 tournaments this regular season. Sala was SWOSU's top finisher (fifth place) at the Ford/

Lincoln Diffie Invitational in March – helping lead the Lady Bulldogs to a team victory in their only team win of the season. She is currently the No. 2-ranked women's golfer in the Central Region with an average stroke count of 73.6.

Dodgion (Guthrie, Okla.) is now a two-time All-GAC selection as a member of the second team in her senior season. She's finished 12th or better four times this year including a pair of top eight placings in back-to-back tournaments last fall. Dodgion sits 12th in the Central Region individual women's rankings with a 75.6 scoring average.

The 2025 Men's & Women's GAC Championships are set to get underway on Monday, April 21 at Hardscrabble Country Club in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The tournament spans through Wednesday with a round of golf each day. It's the first year the conference tournament has been held at this venue.

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SWOSU Softball Sweep Reddies, Reddies Sweep SWOSU Baseball



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Softball came away with a doubleheader sweep of Henderson State on Senior Day, earning the series victory in 3-0 fashion in the process. The Bulldogs beat the Reddies 9-4 in the first game of the day before earning a come from behind 3-2 win in the finale.

It's SWOSU's first GAC sweep of the 2025 season and it couldn't have come at a better time. The sweep, paired with other matchups around the league this weekend, catapults SWOSU into serious postseason contention heading into the final week of the regular season next week.

The Lady Bulldogs currently sit essentially tied with two other teams in seventh place with 11 GAC wins.

SWOSU will face Northwestern on Tuesday for the conclusion of that series before traveling to face Arkansas Tech across state lines next weekend.

Game One - SWOSU 9, HSU 4

The Bulldogs had back-to-back three-run innings in the second and third to build a lead and extended it with another three runs spread across the fifth and sixth.

Henderson State displayed shaky defense throughout, finishing with six errors as a team. SWOSU cashed in on those, plating five runs directly from the miscues by applying pressure to the HSU defense.

Riley Lusk doubled in the game and led the lineup with a 2-for-4 game. She also started in the circle, pitching two innings before Jaycee McKee provided effective long relief from the third inning on to earn the win. Both teams finished with eight hits apiece.

Game Two - SWOSU 3, HSU 2

SWOSU found itself without a hit through four innings until Katie Boline broke the trend with a triple that led off the fifth inning.

The Reddies managed two runs in the second inning after a two-out error prolonged the frame, leading the game 2-0.

The game remained in Henderson's favor until Boline spark plugged the offense with her triple. Shallen Mershon chopped the deficit in half by scoring Boline with an RBI single, and Chesnie Hewitt singled the tying run later in on.

Tied 2-2 after five innings, Emily Wedel used a bunt single to apply more pressure to the Reddie defense.

An error on the throw allowed a pinch running Sierrah Woods to score from second for what proved to be the game winning run.

Alexis Taylor threw a complete game to earn the win in the circle. She scattered six hits – all singles – and allowed just one earned run in her outing. The sides again matched each other with hits, this time with six each.

Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Baseball suffered a sweep at the hands of Henderson State this weekend in Arkansas, falling three times to the Reddies by a combined five runs.

The Bulldogs will close out the regular season next week with a home midweek matchup against East Central before traveling to face Northwestern next weekend. The Dawgs now sit 10th in the conference standings, two games behind Southeastern for the eighth and final postseason spot. The current GAC standings can be found here.

Game One - HSU 4, SWOSU 2

Two walks and three Reddie hits in the fourth inning let the home team plate three runs, as they went on to beat the Dawgs in a low scoring series opener.

SWOSU scored solo runs in the top of the fourth on an RBI single from Reece Burke, to lead briefly, and in the seventh after a throwing error allowed Connor Jeffers to score after stealing second base. The Bulldogs managed just one hit from the sixth inning on, hindering their comeback efforts.

Josh Doelitsch was handed the loss on the mound in five innings of work, responsible for all runs allowed. Tyler Fortin entered in the sixth and threw the rest of the way.

The offense was limited to four hits to HSU's eight. Bodi Wallar doubled. Campbell Sullivan walked twice and scored a run.

Game Two - HSU 8, SWOSU 7

The Dawgs led 3-0, 5-1, and 7-3 at different points in the seven-inning game, but got upended by a two-out, two-run home run in the bottom of the fifth which capped the game's scoring for good. SWOSU entered the fifth leading 7-5 before the Reddies were able to plate three to grab and lead one last time.

Gage Gaunt and Campbell Sullivan homered in the game. Gaunt also tripled in a 3-for-4 effort. The offense doubled their hit total from game one, but struck out a combined 10 times. Drew Fifer had a no decision in his 3.2 inning outing. Greg Ross suffered the loss. Justin Schrader threw 1.1 innings of scoreless relief as SWOSU's final arm to see action.

Game Three - HSU 8, SWOSU 6

SWOSU again jumped out to a lead in Saturday's finale. In the third inning, Hunter Smith hit his first home run of the season and Ty Eastwood singled in another run to put SWOSU up 2-0.

A Connor Jeffers RBI double in the fourth had the Dawgs leading 3-1.

HSU plated runs in every inning from the third to the sixth, capped off by a four-run sixth that gave them the lead for good.

The Reddies hit two home runs in the sixth – a solo shot to lead the inning off which gave them a 4-3 lead, and a three-run shot later in the inning to push the margin out further.

Trailing 7-3 in the eighth, Reece Burke answered HSU's three-run bomb with one of his own to give the Bulldogs life. The Reddies tacked on an insurance run the next half inning and SWOSU couldn't get anything else going on offense to close out the game.

Eastwood finished 3-for-5 to lead the lineup. Gage Gaunt doubled. Ayden Page was given the loss in 5.1 innings of action on the mound.

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