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SWOSU Department of Education Wins National Award

Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Department of Education in Weatherford has been named one of the top programs by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Ed Klein, chair of the department, was recently notified that SWOSU was in the top 26 out of 700 programs nationally and is a recipient of the CAEP Frank Murray Award for Excellence. The award goes to universities that provided evidence and data trends to achieve accreditation with no stipulations or areas for improvement, with all efforts implemented beyond the planning stage.

"Our faculty here bring passion, persistence and exceptional ability to the preparation of new teachers every day," Klein said. "But now, CAEP has acknowledged that with this national award for the culture that we have created here at the SWOSU Department of Education."

Klein said the university's public school partners are a huge part of helping build the next generation of teachers by allowing opportunities for field experiences, hosting candidates during their internships, providing growth data on students served by our completers, and serving as members of our Teacher Education Council Advisory Board.

"Dr. Veronica Aguiñaga serves as accreditation coordinator and helps facilitate this process along with our program coordinators and directors for our 17 nationally accredited programs," Klein said. "We definitely owe these faculty tremendous thanks for their collaboration."

SWOSU and Oklahoma Christian were the only Oklahoma universities recognized by CAEP. Other honorees were from 24 programs in 17 states and the United Arab Emirates.

The Frank Murray Leadership Recognition for Continuous Improvement is named after the founding



Faculty from the SWOSU Department of Education in Weatherford have a reason to celebrate after being named one of the top programs in the nation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

president of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). CAEP was created by the consolidation of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and TEAC. Murray was the founding president of TEAC and was a key advocate for a single set of teacher preparation standards to unify the profession and was instrumental in the merger that created CAEP.

Recipients of the 2021 Frank Murray Leadership Recognition for Continuous Improvement are selected from the educator preparation providers (EPPs) that were granted accreditation by CAEP at the initial level from the previous year, who provided a full complement of evidence with demonstrated data trends and no plans.

Recipients had no stipulations or areas for improvement.

Providers selected for recognition advance equity and excellence in educator preparation through purposeful use of self-study procedures and evidence-based reporting that assure quality and support continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 learning.

Approximately 700 educator preparation providers participate in the CAEP accreditation system, including many previously accredited through former standards. CAEP is the only educator preparation provider recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning.



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Glenna Thornhill

Funeral services for Glenna Thornhill, 66, Weatherford resident and former Clinton resident were held 2:00 P.M., Monday, October 11, 2021 in Clinton First Baptist Church officiated by Dan Day. Burial will conclude in the Clinton Cemetery under the direction of the Kiesau-Lee Funeral Home.



Glenna Kay Thornhill was born August 7, 1955 to Glenn Thornhill and Venita (Wells) Thornhill in Anadarko, OK and passed away early Friday, October 08, 2021 in Yukon, OK.

Glenna was raised in Clinton and graduated from Clinton High School in 1973. She later graduated from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford with her Bachelor of Science Degree.

She was employed at the 3-M Plant in Weatherford for about 10 years and State Farm Insurance. She later began working at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and retired in 2018 as the Conference Center Coordinator.

She was a member of the First Baptist Church; she enjoyed doing stain glass, gardening and hanging out with the grandkids. She especially liked to travel with her friends from Minnesota to the beaches of Florida; she was a wandering soul that spread love and laughter and having fun wherever she went.

She is preceded in death by her parents and a brother Keith Thornhill.

She is survived by son, Jason Thornhill and his wife, Carmen, Yukon, OK and two sisters, Maureen Radke and husband, Jim, Clinton, OK and Twila Owens and husband, Joe, Woodward, OK; two grandchildren, Gavin

and Jaycie Thornhill.

She is also survived by her Aunt, Neatha Lewis, of Clinton, OK.

Joe Helt

Funeral services for Joe Helt, 97 year-old Weatherford resident, were held Monday, October 18, 2021, at First Baptist Church with Earl Stephenson officiating. Burial will follow in High Point Cemetery, south of Weatherford, under the direction of Lockstone Funeral Home.



Joe was born April 30, 1924, in Antlers to James Albert and Sarah (Langley) Helt and passed away Wednesday, October 13, 2021, at home surrounded by his family. Joe was raised and attended school in Antlers. Joe married Edith Fowler April 17, 1947, in Paris, Texas and made their home in California. They moved back to Antlers where he worked with his family and later moved to Wichita working for Boeing Aircraft for 10 years. They moved to Weatherford in 1964 where he worked in construction and in 1968 Joe started his job at 3-M for 27 years. He ran and operated Joe's Sani-Steam for 30 years. Joe enjoyed hunting, fishing, garage sales, playing dominoes and spending time with family and friends. Memorials may be made to First Baptist Church.

Joe is survived by four sons, Tommie Helt and wife, Janice of Hydro, Floyd Helt and wife, Elaine of Eakly, Glenn Helt and wife, Patty of Weatherford, and Richard Helt and wife, Leigha of Weatherford; one daughter, Flora Boland

and husband, Jerry of Weatherford; seven grandchildren; twenty great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife; four brothers, John, Frank, Floyd and Lee; four sisters, Rose, Flora, Lora and Mary; one son, J.E. Helt; and five grandchildren.

Tawann Hill

Funeral Services for Tawann Hill, 38, former Clinton resident were held 1:00 P.M., Tuesday, October 12, 2021 in the Kiesau Memorial Chapel, officiated by Pastor Wilma Jackson and under the direction of the Kiesau-Lee Funeral Home.



Tawanna Rochelle Hill was born April 13, 1983 to Harry Joe Tisdale Hill and Paula (Phillips) Hill in Clinton, OK and passed away Tuesday, October 5, 2021 in the Oklahoma University Hospital in Oklahoma City.

Tawanna was raised in Clinton and graduated from Clinton High School in 2003. She took up a career with Amazon and moved to Oklahoma City in 2011.

She enjoyed doing hair and makeup, working, and spending time with family.

She is preceded in death by her parents, paternal grandmother, Lee Gertrude Hill, Aunt Gertrude Richardson and Aunt Willie Allen.

She is survived by daughter, Jatavia Ross, OKC, OK, son, Jerome Hill, OKC, OK, sister, Falichia Hill, Clinton, OK; brothers, Jeremiah Hill, Clinton, Willie Bowen, OKC, OK and Terrell Bailey, OKC,OK.

Oklahoma Forestry Services Supports Western Wildfires and Benefits Oklahoma

Oklahoma Forestry Services (OFS) sent personnel and equipment to support numerous western wildfires throughout the summer, providing skills and expertise in firefighting operations and incident management. In turn, these responders were afforded opportunities to gain experience and strengthen their qualifications, which will benefit wildland firefighting and management of other emergency incidents in Oklahoma.

“The low fire threat in Oklahoma through the summer placed us in a position to assist with wildfires in several other states,” said Mark Goeller, State Forester and Director of Oklahoma Forestry Services. “Not only were we able to support numerous states in trouble, but it also provided our personnel the opportunity to improve their wildland firefighting and incident management skills. That additional experience allows Forestry Services personnel to provide a higher level of service when managing wildfire and other incidents when things get bad in Oklahoma.”

Oklahoma Forestry Services, like all state forestry agencies, works through a formalized partnership with the USDA Forest Service to provide personnel who are qualified in various positions within the Incident Command System (ICS). The ICS provides responders a



Provided

highly organized method of managing incidents including wildfires. Several OFS personnel serve on National and Regional incident management teams, which manage all aspects of high-complexity wildfires and all-hazards incidents.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group develops qualification standards for wildland fire positions which are adopted by federal, state, and local wildland firefighting agencies. These standards include training, experience levels, and physical fitness requirements. All staff that are deployed must have the training and certification for their assigned position and have obtained their Incident Qualification Card (commonly referred to as a red card).

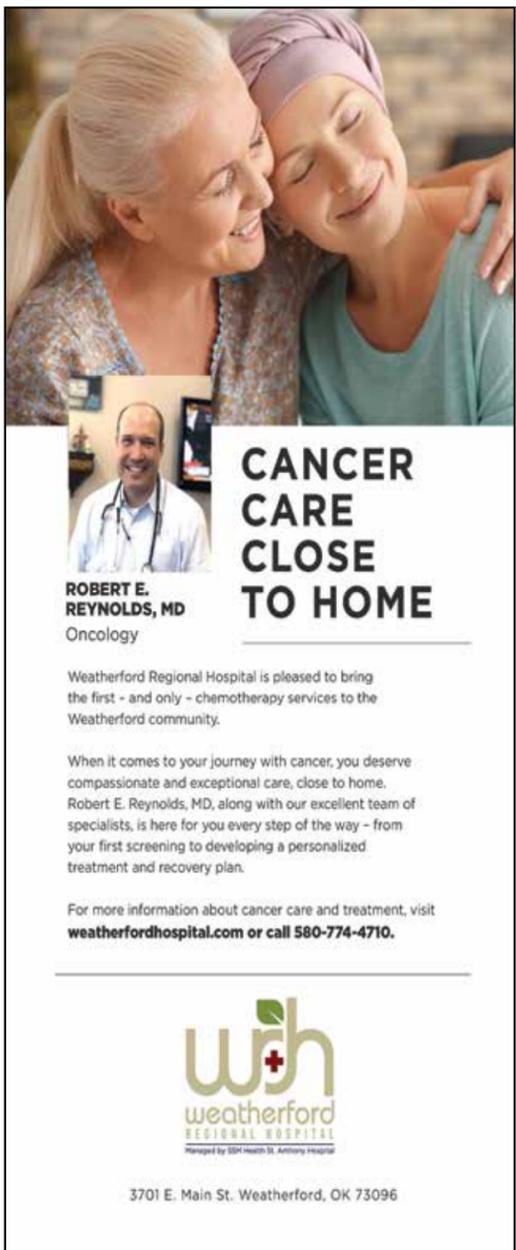
There are many roles within a wildfire incident. The command and general staff consist of an incident commander, public information officer, safety officer, and liaison officer, as well as section chiefs for operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration. The

operations section consists of wildland firefighters of various types, air operations and supervisory roles. Planning section staff provide services such as producing the Incident Action Plan, collecting and analyzing situational data, providing mapping/spatial information, maintaining incident documents and files, human resources, and check-in and demobilization of staff. The logistics section has roles that handle provisions for facilities, services and material in support of the incident, like radio communications, medical, food, supply procurement, and base/spike camp management. Finally, finance/administration personnel are responsible for all financial, administrative and cost analysis for the incident.

Through their home agencies, qualified personnel place themselves on the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability availability list. During their availability period, they must be ready to immediately dispatch for at least 16 days. Each available individual has their firefighting line gear (or other equipment necessary for their specific assignment) and their personal gear bag packed and ready to go. Frequently on western fires, incident management teams stay in primitive camping situations during their assignment as many wildfire incidents are in remote areas with rough terrain where hotel accommodations do not exist. In large scale or complex incidents, camp life can be more comfortable with hot food service, temporary cell towers (used to support operations) and portable shower and restroom facilities. While assignments are demanding, the work is rewarding and with each assignment personnel work toward achieving new qualifications, which ultimately result in higher levels of expertise and responsibility.

Oklahoma Forestry Services had 34 people working in various capacities, and 17 firefighting vehicles deployed to wildfire details in Montana, Idaho, California, Washington, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Alaska, Minnesota, Arkansas and Oregon over the past three months. Incident Management Teams typically work 16-hour days for two-week or longer assignments and then rotate out to rest before being reassigned. Most of the 34 OFS personnel were dispatched to two or more assignments.

OFS Personnel served in many types of ICS positions including: incident commander, operations section chief, public information officer, status check-in, personnel time recorder, ground support unit leader, task force leader,



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(See WILDFIRES, page 7)

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State House Study Addresses Oklahoma Teacher Shortage



State Rep. John Waldron, D-Tulsa, held an interim study on teacher retention, retirement, and ways Oklahoma can prevent teachers from leaving the state or the profession.

The Teacher Recruitment, Teacher Turnover and Projected Shortages in the Oklahoma Public School Workforce Study featured testimony from school administrators, educators and education advocates worried about the current and future shortage of classroom teachers.

“The teacher pipeline is one of the critical issues we can address in the 2022 legislative session,” Waldron said. “We have seen record numbers of retirements. We are facing a chronic shortage of applicants for teaching positions, and we are certifying more and more teachers on an emergency basis. This is unsustainable.”

Teacher retirements over the last four months have outpaced the same months in the previous four

years. The much-needed raise in 2018 has allowed some teachers to retire at a higher rate this year than previously, however, stress and external expectations are also driving factors of the retirement increase.

“Some have anticipated that there would be a large number of teacher retirements this year following the teacher walkout after teachers were given a significant raise compared to previous years,” said Sabra Tucker, executive director of the Oklahoma Retired Educators Association. “People have said, ‘I have stayed three years and I am going to go ahead and take my retirement.’”

“But mostly what I heard from people is that ‘my health is not worth staying in the classroom. As much as I love teaching and students, I do not love all the stress of being in the classroom with unrealistic expectations and more and more demands than I have ever had before in my entire career.’”

As teacher retirements grow, there has been moderately positive news regarding teachers who don’t qualify for retirement, but turnover for twelve different subjects is trending higher than previous years.

“While we have seen an uptick in teacher retirements, there have been fewer people are leaving due to other reasons,” said Carolyn Thompson,

the deputy chief of staff for the Oklahoma State Department of Education. “The year over year turnover rate was higher than the state average for 12 subjects. Ten of those are middle school. We obviously have a middle school problem.”

The study also heard testimony from public school administrators who have shown success in hiring and retaining teachers.

“Recruitment alone is just a small part of our challenge if we are going to sustain a quality workforce in public education,” said Dr. Jason Brunk, the assistant superintendent of human resources for Yukon Public Schools. “Compensation, training, support once they enter the profession, all of those things are important.”

Waldron hopes the study can add to the momentum created by public education advocates to shore up and protect Oklahoma’s education workforce.

“This isn’t a problem that is going away,” Waldron said. “It will get worse the longer we as legislators don’t act to solve it. I am humbled and encouraged by the House Common Education Committee, under the leadership of Chair Rhonda Baker, for taking this issue seriously. It’s not often that a subject has three different studies dedicated to it in the same year. There is a problem. We must work together to fix it.”

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HH will host a Haunted House for its second year on 10/30/2021, from 6pm to 9pm.

Admission for 16 and older, \$3, 15 and under are free.

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LOCAL & AREA NEWS



The Monkey's Paw Coming to SWOSU in Time for Halloween

The Monkey's Paw, a classic horror story, will be presented by the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Department of Communication, Art & Theatre on the Weatherford campus.

The show is set for Homecoming Weekend and will be featured on Saturday, October 30, at 7 p.m.; Sunday, October 31, at 2 p.m.; and then again on Monday and Tuesday, November 1-2, at 7 p.m. in the SWOSU Hilltop Theatre.

This literary classic by W.W. Jacobs gets a bit of a twist in this world premiere of a brand-new adaptation written by SWOSU Assistant Professor of Theatre Jessica Salmans. New SWOSU faculty member, Dr. Patrick Julian, will direct the piece. Technical director is Salmans.

The play takes place in England just after the death of Queen Victoria. An old friend of Mr. White has come to visit the family, bringing with him a dark

tale of a cursed monkey's paw and an admonition to be careful what a person wishes.

Admission is free with a SWOSU I.D. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. Reservations are not required but those who wish to reserve tickets may call the SWOSU Theatre Box Office at 580-774-6046.

Cast members, led by Julian, are: Braden Logan, Woodward, playing the role of Sergeant-Major Morris; Amy Jessup, Snyder, Mrs. White; Micah Baker, Snyder, Mr. White; Raistlin Hiner, Anadarko, Herbert; Diana Torres, Clinton, the visitor; Laura Julian, Weatherford, live piano accompanist; Savannah McCormick, Okarche, stage manager; Drue Woodmansee, Edmond, technical crew; Elizabeth Crouch, Choctaw, technical crew; Lindsey Troglin, Mountain View, technical crew; Reuben McCormick, Okarche, technical crew.



Cast and crew of Southwestern Oklahoma State University's production of *The Monkey's Paw* are getting ready for performances October 30-November 2 on the Weatherford campus. SWOSU students, led by Dr. Patrick Julian and Jessica Salmans, will present the classic horror story.

CLINTON CC/BLUEPEAK PRESENTATION- Clinton City Council took no action on a presentation from Bluepeak representative Desi Stoops to provide broadband service in Clinton. Stoops says they would offer various services such as one gig, two gig and five gig services. The council could possibly discuss a franchise agreement at its next meeting.

CLINTON/DAMAGE UPDATE- Weather spotters saw a tornado touch down in Clinton last week. City manager Robert Johnston got a more detailed look at damage at the Clinton Airport where hangers suffered substantial damage. Johnston says there was also tree damage at the Clinton Golf Course. He says the city will work with its insurance company in an effort to rebuild from damage sustained at the airport. No injuries were reported.

CLINTON/EXT 65- ODOT Division 5 engineer Brent Almquist says a meeting was held recently on a 30% plan review for the exit 65/65a project at Clinton. Almquist says there's still a lot of work left to do before the project is let out for bid in 2024. Almquist says actual construction likely won't occur until 2025.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/WATER STUDY- Weatherford Mayor Mike Brown and Clinton Mayor David Berrong spoke to county commissioners earlier this week about a water line study between Clinton and Weatherford. Brown says that if the water line is feasible they would need help from the county and state government funding the project. Both cities are funding a feasibility study to determine if a pipe line that would allow water transfer between the two cities is possible. Berrong and Brown said the study could take up to 180 days.

CUSTER COUNTY/LAWTER ROAD- During an economic development meeting in Weatherford, Custer County Commissioner Bruce Walker provided an update on the Lawter Road expansion project. Walker says bids for the work should go out next year.

IBC CLOSINGS- Three IBC Bank branch locations in Western Oklahoma will close effective December 30th. IBC officials say the branch locations in Weatherford, Clinton and Elk City will be among seven Oklahoma locations that will close. IBC is also planning to close some of its locations in the state of Texas.

WEATHERFORD SB/PRISMS- The Weatherford School Board of Education approved an agreement with Prisms for the 2021-2022 school year. Superintendent Jill Henderson says it's a pilot program where Weatherford students would be the first in Oklahoma to participate in the program, which offers a new innovative way of learning math. There are 20 other schools districts across the country that are using the program.

WEATHERFORD PD/DRUG BUST- Two people were arrested by Weatherford police in connection with a drug bust during a traffic stop. Police Detective Matt Bartel says Steven Dimitrius Frazier of Florida and Rose Lance of the State of California were apprehended on trafficking allegations after being found in possession of 52 pounds of marijuana.

WEATHERFORD/INDUSTRIAL TRUST PROJECT- Weatherford Economic Development Director Yolanda Creswell says the Weatherford Industrial Trust is working to move forward on the development of 70 acres, north of the existing technology and industrial park. The city of Weatherford was provided a \$2.8 million grant for the development of the new industrial park.

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Happy Birthday Wishes for October 20th-Tina Bowman, Justin Branson, Kathy Kasper, Brenda Kimble, Eric Martin, Lauren Moshier, Loretta Propps, Janet Smith, Donnie Soddors, Pat Suderman; **October 21st-** Kallie Brooks, Jack Golden, Mikaela Sandlin, Audrey Vincent; **October 22nd-** Felicia Alcelfo, Skyler Barnhill, Chad Clark, Roger Duncan II, Norma Hinojosa, Wes Hixon, Racquel Javorsky, Kim Mullins, Ben Sanders, Esther Switzer, Michelle Walls, Carlee Young; **October 23rd-**Morgan Clothier, Jett Entz, Alvin Epp, Janis Koch, Andy Koch, Harold Miller, Kierston Rodriguez, Brian Seeman, Larry Don Terrel, Ramona Tharp, Jerri Ynguanzo; **October 24th-** Michael Blagg, Dusty Brodrick, Bob Crum, Kenneth Garling Jr., Amy Palmer, Delaney Smith, Mariah Ynguanzo; **October 25th-** Jeannie Adams, Adeline Bieberich, Ann Brown, Maurice Gabriel, Kelsey Hampton, Danielle Harrington, Linda Hertzler-Crum, Jennifer Johnson, Teresa Seagress, Catrina Womack; **October 26th-** Abigail Agan, Ollie Brooks, Orpa Epp, Shanda Izaguirre, Cathy Jean Miller, Addison Grace Moore, Jesse Quintero---

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'01 Chevy Venture Van- \$2,000. (580) 613-0108

'09 Buick Lacrosse- 115k miles, white, new tires, leather, fully loaded, runs good \$6,450. 580-330-3489

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SPORTS *Presented by:*

Women's Rodeo Team Claims Victory, Men Third in Stillwater

William Soule
SWOSU Sports Information Graduate Assistant

SWOSU Rodeo had a very successful trip to the Oklahoma State rodeo as the Lady Bulldogs won their side of the competition and the men had their best finish of the season so far by claiming third.

Alli Masters lead the way for the women's team, finishing second in the All-Around competition with 135.00 total points. She placed third in Breakaway Roping, missing out on a tie for first place by 0.1 seconds after recording the best time in the long round, and she also finished sixth in the Goat Tying competition with a 14.9 average time.

But it was a total team effort from the Lady Bulldogs to take first place. In Breakaway Roping, Masters was joined on the leaderboard by Winter Williams who wound up in a tie for fifth and Hadley Teut who had an average score that put her in seventh place.

Head Coach Mike Visnieski's team dominated the Barrel Racing competition. Sadie Wolaver earned her second straight win in Barrel Racing with a time

of 31.85 and her teammate Abby Hepper came in right on her heels with a 32.03 time that earned her second place. Hadley Tate also got on the board with an eighth-place finish.

The Bulldogs also got three competitors in the top-eight on the Goat Tying leaderboard. Jillian Kostrzewski was the highest finisher amongst the three with 14.8 average time, good for fifth place. Alli Masters placed in sixth and Hadley Teut placed in eighth with a 15.9 average time.

On the men's side of the rodeo, SWOSU had their best finish of the season with their 397.50 point third-place finish. They finished just two and a half points shy of sharing in the spoils, as Northeastern Oklahoma A&M and Southeastern Oklahoma State tied for first on 400 points.

The team's best event was Bareback Riding. George Thomas finished second with a score of 143.0, two points behind the first-place finisher. Jesse Troyer earned a spot in eighth-place with a 129.0 total score.

Brayden Tanner was another second-place finisher for the Bulldogs when he finished second in the Steer



Wrestling competition. Marley Berger placed in third in the Tie Down Roping competition with a total time of 18.5. Wrapping up the scorers for the Bulldogs, Tanner Edwards got on the final board in the Saddle Bronc event in ninth with a total score of 71.0.

SWOSU Rodeo has a couple of weeks away from competition before they travel to Alva to participate in the Northwestern Oklahoma State Rodeo October 28-30.

SWOSU Bulldogs Unable to Tackle Southern Nazarene

William Soule
SWOSU Sports Information Graduate Assistant

The Bulldogs were unable to overcome costly errors in all three phases of the game and they are defeated on the road 30-22 against Southern Nazarene.

The game could not have started any worse for SWOSU. On the opening kickoff, Southern Nazarene's Josh Johnson returned the kick 99 yards to give the advantage to the Crimson Storm right from the jump.

As they've done time and time again this year, this team got up off the mat and battled. The very next drive the Bulldogs drove down the field and scored. A balanced attack highlighted by a Tanner Griffin 31-yard pass to Justin Bailey led to a one-yard



touchdown run for Ethan Hyché, his first collegiate touchdown.

Back to back scoring drives in the second quarter were capped off by touchdowns from Kenny Graham and Anthony Love to give SWOSU a 19-14 lead late in the half. The SWOSU defense found its groove in the second quarter as well, holding the Southern Nazarene offense to just 35 total yards and no points. An RJ Powell sack on third down forced a punt and that led to the second SWOU touchdown of the quarter.

The defense then stopped the Crimson Storm on fourth down with only forty seconds left in the half. As time was about to expire, a Tanner Griffin pass was intercepted and returned for a touchdown to give Southern Nazarene the lead halfway through the game.

The second half started brightly for the Bulldogs. SWOSU's defensive line did a good job in the pass rush throughout the night, and on Southern Nazarene's first offensive possession that work paid off in a big way. Junior defensive lineman Nate Burnard got to the quarterback on third down and forced a fumble that he also recovered to give the Bulldogs great field position on the Crimson Storm's 18-yard line. The field position would turn into three points and a lead once again for SWOSU.

It would be all Crimson Storm from that point on however. As the issues that have plagued SWOSU all season continued to rear their ugly head. A total of only 40 yards in the second half from the Bulldog offense wasn't enough to hold their lead, and Southern Nazarene would score two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to take the lead and put the game away.

Special teams mishaps made life more difficult for the Bulldogs time and time again on Thursday night. A mishandled extra point, a missed field goal, and multiple mismanaged kickoffs cost SWOSU points and field position.

The team will have to regroup and use the extra time to get ready for East Central next Saturday, October 23 back in Weatherford at 2:00 pm.

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Mott and McGuirk Named Bulldogs of the Week

LACY MOTT
BRENNA MCGUIRK

BULLDOGS OF THE WEEK
Week 7 - October 11-16

William Soule
SWOSU Sports Information Graduate Assistant

Lacy Mott of SWOSU Volleyball and Brenna McGuirk of SWOSU Soccer have been named this week's Bulldogs Of The Week.

The award is brought to you by Wright Wradio, the home of the Bulldogs over the airwaves on both 95.5 'The Coyote' and 100.3 'Coyote Classic'.

Lacy Mott, a freshman from Waxahachie, Texas, had a great weekend against two quality opponents at home for SWOSU Volleyball. Mott racked up 19 kills hitting at .387 hitting percentage. She played

a tremendous part in the Dawgs going 2-0 on the weekend with not only her hitting at the outside position, but also had 21 digs and 3 service aces as well.

Brenna McGuirk, a sophomore from Albuquerque, New Mexico, had a hat trick on Thursday against Southern Nazarene where the Bulldogs scored 10 goals, 3rd most in program history. McGuirk played a great game at the forward position with 6 shots and 3 shots on goal that all found the back of the net.

WILDFIRES

Continued from Page 2

safety officer and operations branch director. Multiple employees achieved new qualifications levels while on out-of-state assignments. Personnel and equipment travelling out-of-state are funded through cooperative agreements with the federal government, allowing the benefit of training and gaining experience at no cost to the State of Oklahoma.

"In addition to honing our skills, another important reason we assist other states with wildfires when needed is that we know that at some point, they'll be here to help us," said Goeller.

Oklahomans only have to look back a few years to remember the extreme wildfire activity that took place in northwest parts of the state. During 2016 – 2018, OFS utilized incident management team personnel from nearly 40 states to help manage and suppress the catastrophic wildfires that burned more than 1.5 million acres of land, destroying livestock, homes and various types of infrastructure. The wildland firefighting world is in many ways a small community in which everyone helps everyone, knowing they may be next to need assistance. While wildfire activity in Oklahoma has been relatively mild over the past few years, Oklahoma Forestry Services continues to maintain a high state of preparedness for response.

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Oklahoma History: The USS Oklahoma

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

The USS Oklahoma was one of the only two Nevada-class battleships made for the U.S. Navy. The Nevada-class comprised of both the Nevada and Oklahoma, were significant advancements in the world of battleship design. These two battleships, referred to as “dreadnoughts” were built right before the start of WWI and were the first in the world to pull off the now famous “all or nothing” armor scheme. Tailored for long-range fights, the battleships birthed new ideas with their armor scheme and turret design. The Oklahoma’s keel was laid on October 26th, 1912, in New Jersey, laying down the keel is the ceremonial start to a ship’s build. She launched on March 23, 1914.

The two dreadnoughts joined together with another squadron to form Battleship Division 6, and during WWI escorted the largest and most valuable convoys to ensure their protection if any German capital ships got through the British Grand Fleet. No ship got through, so the dreadnoughts never had to retaliate. Before the Paris Peace Conference, the pair of sister ships formed a fleet of 10 battleships that escorted President Woodrow Wilson.

Following the war, the Nevada was transferred to the Pacific Fleet in 1919, with the Oklahoma joining in 1921. Both ships received overhauls and began partaking in trainings and ceremonies around the world, from the Peruvian Centennial in 1923 to trainings near Australia and New Zealand to serving on a European tour to guard duty outside Spain during its civil war to Bilbao in 1936 to rescue American citizens and other refugees. The Oklahoma returned to the Pacific on October 24th, 1936.

Stationed with her sister, the pair spent the next few years operating with training exercises. During their training days, the Oklahoma had new upgrades installed including additional Anti-Air artillery and armor. During a west coast storm in 1941, she lost her starboard propeller and sailed to San Francisco for repairs. In mid-October 1941, repaired and ready, the Oklahoma headed on to Hawaii. Both dreadnoughts were moored in Battleship Row in Pearl Harbor when the sirens rang out on December 7th, 1941.

The Oklahoma was beside the USS Maryland and protected her flank. The Oklahoma appeared to be the focus of Akagi and Kaga torpedo planes first and she took on three hits within seconds. The first attack wave was over, but the ship began to capsize. Hit by two more torpedoes and strafing fire from Zero fighters, the men onboard were forced to abandon ship. Twelve minutes passed and the Oklahoma had rolled over completely. They believe she was hit another one or two times during the transition. Most of the crew who had been fortunate enough to



The USS Oklahoma sinks in the waters of Pearl Harbor during the infamous Japanese sneak attack that inevitably brought the United States into World War II.

escape, assisted the other ships like the Maryland. In total, the USS Oklahoma lost 429 officers and men, trapped below the surface as the ship filled with water. Rescue efforts began immediately but progress was slow and went into the night. A few of the rescue attempts worked, like the one from a civilian yard worker named Julio DeCastro who was able to free “32 people by cutting open the very thick hull with pneumatic jackhammers, crowbars, and maces”.

The lost members of the U.S. military are remembered, and many have been posthumously awarded or recognized in various ways. Following the attack, clean-up crews began the arduous task of cleanup and assessment. Some of the ships lost at Pearl Harbor were salvaged or repaired, while others could only be parted. The Oklahoma was towed, drydocked and analyzed. The understanding hit that the damage she had suffered was too great, and she would not be “modernized” like some of her sister ships. On September 1st, 1944, she was decommissioned. While moving her from Pearl Harbor to San Francisco, a storm hit the tugs off the coast of Hawaii and the ship began to list. The Oklahoma began to sink straight down. The tugs were drug backwards at a speed of 15 knots and were ordered to loosen the cables and ultimately dropped them completely at the end. The position of her hull was unknown.

In 2006, the U.S. Navy was able to recover parts of the Oklahoma in Pearl Harbor and transported the parts to memorials. Her bell and screws are on display at the Kirkpatrick Science Museum in Oklahoma City, and her aft wheel is at the Oklahoma History Center. In December 2007, a memorial for the crew members was erected by the USS Missouri on Ford Island. Initially, only 35 of the missing crew were identified, leaving 388 that were not. However, over the years, identifications were done with DNA testing, and by December 2019, 236 were identified. 152 remain unknown.

In the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor, her sister ship Nevada received a full modernization and began preparations for the Normandy Invasion by April 1944. She was the only battleship present for both Pearl Harbor and the landings. The Naval Encyclopedia explained that the Nevada was “chosen by Rear Admiral Morton Deyo as his flagship for the operation”. From June D-Day, 6th, to June 17th, she provided artillery support inland. She left for resupply and returned on June 25th and resumed fire. The German defense attempted to end her onslaught and she was near missed 27 times, but she remained true. She aimed her guns to the shore batteries and levied salvo after salvo from as far as 17 nautical miles. Troops reported the awe at her fire and described it as “incredibly accurate”. Some of the targets she hit were no more than 600 yards from the front lines of the Allies.

In August, the second operation landing of the Invasion began, and the Nevada proved why she and the Oklahoma were one-of-a-kind dreadnoughts. Teaming up with other battleships, heavy cruisers, and destroyers for support, the 2nd wave commenced, and the Nevada began a duel with “Big Willie”. Big Willie was a fortress sporting two twin turrets with the range of almost 19 nautical miles. They commanded every approach to Toulon, were embedded into the rocky sides, and were fortified with heavy plate. A series of duels went on between the bombardment force with the Nevada and the Toulon defense team for days. On the 5th day, the Nevada struck the “most damaging” blow to the fort. Toulon and the fort fell.

Post WWII, the Nevada, at almost 33 years old, was assigned as an experiment against atomic bombs effectiveness and had two tests against her. One, dropped from an air bombardier, missed by around 1,500 yards, and the other, detonated below the water, she survived with some damage. She was decommissioned in August of 1946 at Pearl Harbor. Two years later, she was assigned target practice for three Navy vessels. They could not sink her. She was given a coup de grâce with an aerial torpedo. On May 11th, 2020, an expedition discovered her wreck 15,400 feet below the surface off the coast of Hawaii. She remained in “excellent condition, and, in a rarity for battleships, is sitting straight side up”.

Today, the U.S. Navy announced the first vessel of Block V of their Virginia-class submarines will be named Oklahoma. The Virginia class is the latest submarine model with new stealth, intelligence, and weapon systems technology. Block V subs will have increased size and firepower, putting them as the U.S.’s second-largest submarine. Expectations are that Block V will triple shore targets for Virginia-class subs and may be the first to utilize a new payload module. Construction is currently ongoing for the two subs of Block V, the Oklahoma and the Arizona.

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