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Weatherford Boys Take First at 2024 Weatherford Classic



Provided
After a three-day long tournament, the Weatherford Eagles Boys Basketball Team (pictured left) earned First Place after decimating the competition. They defeated the Tulsa Webster Warriors on Day 1, 67-23; then the Kip Charter Bulldogs on Day 2, 84-34; and finally, they won their matchup against the Guthrie Bluejays on Day 3, 52-36.

The Weatherford Lady Eagles Basketball Team put up a valiant effort as well, being crowned the Girls' Bracket Runner-Ups. After defeating the Piedmont Wildcats 57-33, then the Elgin Owls 59-61, they sadly fell to the Choctaw Yellowjackets in the finale 27-51.

If you missed any of the games, you can catch the Video On-Demand livestreams by visiting the website Wright.Media/

SWOSU Foundation Awards Two Scholarships

J. Boone Clemmons
SWOSU PR & Marketing

Raycee Marrow of Cyril, OK has been named the Bud and Wanda Smalley Memorial Scholar, stewarded by the SWOSU Foundation, Inc., for the 2023-2024 academic year. Marrow is a Senior at SWOSU majoring in Business.

The Bud & Wanda Smalley Memorial Scholarship Fund was established by Judy (Smalley) Wilkes (SWOSU Class of 1976 and Emeritus SWOSU Foundation, Inc. Trustee) and her husband, Mike Wilkes (SWOSU Class of 1975 and Past President of the SWOSU Alumni Association) of Oklahoma City.

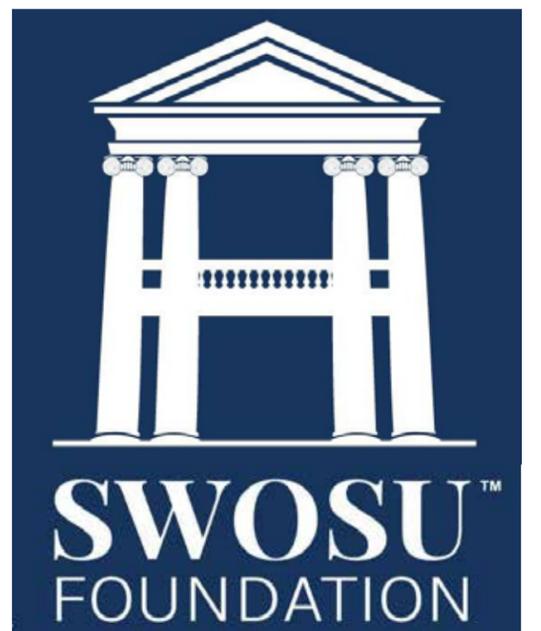
The fund provides scholarships to SWOSU students with a preference given to those students who graduated from high schools in Caddo County, Oklahoma. The Smalleys were champions of higher education; all four of their daughters, all four of the Smalley sons-in-law, and seven of their 10 grandchildren are SWOSU alumni.

SWOSU has also named Cayan Freeman of Balco, OK, and Tyler Hoffman of Weatherford, OK as the Johnny & Judy Beech Scholars for Academic Year 2023-2024. Both scholarship recipients are seniors at SWOSU. Freeman is studying Accounting and Hoffman is studying Business Management.

The Johnny & Judy Beech Scholarship was established in 2021 by Johnny and Judy Beech of Oklahoma City to provide financial support to SWOSU students studying in the disciplines of management, accounting, and parks and recreation management.

The Beeches are both alumni of SWOSU and have been active, generous members of both the SWOSU Alumni Association and the SWOSU Athletic Association.

For more info about any SWOSU Foundation funds, please contact the SWOSU Foundation, Inc., at (580) 774-3267 or visit www.SWOSUFoundation.com





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Susie Jones

Karen Sue "Susie" Jones was born March 26, 1950, in Seiling, to Norman Lee "Squint" and Thelma Maxine (Hurt) Sanders and passed away Tuesday, January 2, 2023, at Weatherford Regional Hospital, at the age of 73 years, 9 months and 6 days.



Susie was raised and attended school in Seiling. On October 24, 1966, she married Ronnie Jones and made their home in Thomas.

Susie was a beautician and ran her shop with a partner, Nola Dean Christensen.

She was active in her church with activities. Susie enjoyed gardening, raising calves, computer games and spending time with family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the First Baptist Church of Thomas or to the Awana's Club.

Susie is survived by her husband, Ronnie Jones of their home in Thomas; son, Ethan Jones of Thomas; brother, Gary Sanders and wife, Michele of Chester; sister, Cindy Redinger and husband, Wayne of Chester; granddaughter, Darsi (Jones) Tinnon and husband, Luke; and grandson, Gentry Jones. She was preceded in death by her parents, Squint and Maxine Sanders; son, Chris Jones; sister, Patricia M. Thompson; brother, Ronnie Sanders; brother-in-law, Roger Jones; and niece, Rhonda Gayle Sanders.

Walter Gosnell

Walter Lewis Gosnell was born May 18, 1947, in Watonga, to Elvovd James and Hazel Laverne (Crabb) Gosnell and passed away, Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at Weatherford Regional Hospital, at the age of 76 years, 7 months and 14 days.



Walter was raised and attended school in Isabella and later Fairview, graduating from Fairview High School in 1965. He moved to Oklahoma City to go to electronics school.

While in Oklahoma City he met Janet O'Hara and on August 12, 1967, married in Elk City and made their home in Oklahoma City.

In the spring of 1967, Walter started working at First National Bank and later for Penn Square Bank. In 1979, Walter worked for a bank in Atoka and later in Lawton. In 1984, they moved to Weatherford where he worked for City National Bank until he retired in 2013.

Walter enjoyed hunting, fishing, gardening, being outside, and spending time with family and friends.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Walter is survived by his wife of 56 years, Janet Gosnell of their home in Weatherford; son, John Gosnell and wife, Dawna of Tulsa; daughter, Jeannie Gosnell of Weatherford; and five grandchildren, Jacob Gosnell, Hannah Villaneueva and husband, Isaac, Caleb Gosnell, Abby Gosnell and Gracie Moonie.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Jim; and sister, Deanne.

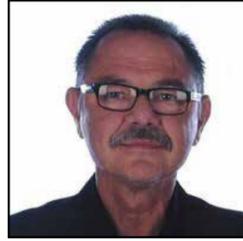
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John Kliever

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort but where he stands at times of challenges and controversy." – Martin Luther King, Jr. If this quote describes anyone, it would be John William Kliever, Jr. Even though he endured many trials in his life, he remained humble, strong, and steadfast in his faith.



John William Kliever, Jr., was born to John William Kliever, Sr. and Lillie B. (Reimer) Kliever on June 18, 1955, in Clinton, OK, and passed away on December 26, 2023, at his home south of Weatherford, OK, at the age of 68 years, 6 months, and 8 days.

John was raised on a farm just west of Weatherford, OK. John accepted the Lord at 9 years of age and was baptized into the Corn Mennonite Brethren Church. He attended Weatherford Public Schools from elementary through 9th grade, then transferred and graduated from Corn Bible Academy with the class of 1973. John attended Southwestern and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in 1977.

On December 27, 1976, John married the love of his life, Lorraine Schmidt in the Corn Mennonite Brethren Church. Six months after their marriage, they moved to Fresno, CA to work for the Mennonite Brethren Christian Service organization for 2 years. On December 16, 1978, their first child, Melissa Nicole, was born. When Melissa was 6 months old, John and Lori decided to move back home to Corn, OK. John began working for Cordell National Bank. On October 31, 1980, Kandice Marie was born. Kandice lived for only three and a half short months and passed away on February 17, 1981, from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Kandice's death was one of the first heartbreaks of John's life. John and Lori decided that despite the loss, they wanted to continue to grow their family. Kasey Dwayne was born on March 1, 1982. Three years later, on April 16, 1985, Bradley John was born. They felt that their family was complete. In 1987, John began working at First National Bank of Weatherford where he worked until his retirement in April of 2018.

The second biggest heartbreak of John's life happened on September 12, 2018, when his oldest son, Kasey, was killed in an auto/pedestrian accident. This time, the grief struck even harder. John considered Kasey to be one of his best friends. During one of John's recent surgeries, John's heart stopped beating and the medical team performed CPR on him for 7 minutes before they were able to revive him. After John woke up from this surgery, he insisted that he had seen Kasey and that Kasey is not dead! We believe that John and Kasey are rejoicing together in heaven.

John is survived by his wife of 47 years, Lori Kliever, of their home south of Weatherford; one son, Brad Kliever and wife, Jaye, of Des Moines, IA; one daughter, Melissa McCoy and husband, Josh of Thomas; daughter-in-law Haley Kliever of Hydro; brother Warren Kliever and wife, Eileen of Weatherford; five grandsons, Ryder McCoy, Maxwell McCoy, Tyler Kliever, Kace Kliever, and Krue Kliever; five granddaughters, LilyAnn McCoy, Sadie Kliever, Ryleigh McCoy, Kenna Kliever, and Rhett Kliever; and numerous extended family. John was preceded in death by his parents; son, Kasey Kliever; and daughter, Kandice Kliever.

Although John had an incredible testimony about all of the times God healed him and even brought him back to life, the part of his testimony that he considered the most amazing was how God walked with him through every valley, every hard time, and every loss. God never left his side.

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Donna Pryor

Donna Pryor, 56, Elk City, Oklahoma was born on June 5, 1967 at Woodland, California to Roy and Lois (Boswell) Pryor. She passed away on Friday, December 29, 2023 at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma surrounded by her loving family.



Donna married David Eugene Hunt on June 2009 at the Courthouse in Sayre, Oklahoma.

Donna was an adviser for the Boy Scouts in Carter, Oklahoma in the mid 1990's and was a member of the First Baptist Church, Carter, Oklahoma.

Donna was extremely adventurous and enjoyed traveling and walking around different places. She enjoyed playing bingo, and loved her cats and dogs and did a fundraiser for Saint Jude's Medical Research Foundation. Donna loved spending time with her family and friends and will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

Donna is survived by her husband, David Eugene Hunt of Elk City, Oklahoma; one son, James Decker of Elk City, Oklahoma; her mother, Lois Paschal of Elk City, Oklahoma; one brother, William "Will" Paschal and his wife Kathy of Elk City, Oklahoma; one sister, Paula Meyer of LaGrange, Missouri; one granddaughter, Katie Decker of Elk City, Oklahoma; three grandsons, Austin Decker of Elk City, Oklahoma, Hunter Decker of Elk City, Oklahoma, and Tyler Shelby of Elk City, Oklahoma; and many other relatives and friends.

She is preceded in death by David's maternal grandparents, TK and Violet Stone; and her mother-in-law, Barbara VanBuren.

Clay Blackwell

Clay Deward Blackwell was born October 14th, 1933 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Cairo May (Wilson) and William Sterling Blackwell. He passed away in Elk City, Oklahoma on Friday, January 5th, 2024 at the age of 90 years, 2 months and 22 days.



Clay came with his family in 1945 to Elk City with his father following his job with the gas company. He attended high school at Elk City graduating in 1952. Clay furthered his education at Central State University where he met Juanita Mary (Metcalf). They were later married on July 31st, 1954 at the First Christian Church in Elk City, Oklahoma. Clay and Nita had three children, Wade William Blackwell, born August 24th, 1957, Bryan Clay Blackwell, born April 22nd, 1959, and Suzanne (Blackwell) Lalk born October 9th, 1962. In 1955, Clay joined the United States Marine Corps where he saw service stateside in California, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio. He also served during the Vietnam era seeing one tour before being honorably discharged in 1976 as a Lt. Col. Throughout all the many states, Clay always remained active in youth sporting programs and could often be seen coaching football, basketball, and baseball teams that his children were involved in.

After his retirement Clay and Nita moved the family back to Elk City where he took over his mother's business, Cairo Blackwell Real Estate and Insurance Company. Clay continued in the real estate and insurance industry until 1980 when he formally retired. Shortly after retirement, Clay wasn't one to sit idle and became involved in prison ministries and together with Nita was very active in the Meals on Wheels program providing meals to many of the local residents. Clay also enjoyed trout fishing, traveling, sight seeing with Nita, and spending time with his family and friends.

With the passing of Clay, it ends the legacy of that generation of the Blackwell and Metcalf family in Elk City that began in 1945.

He is preceded in death by his parents and wife, Nita.

Clay is survived by 2 sons, Wade Blackwell and wife, Allison, Weatherford, OK and Bryan Blackwell and wife, Sherri, Keller, TX; 1 daughter, Sue Lalk and husband, Wayne, Hillsboro, MO; 10 grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren and 1 on the way and a host of other relatives and friends.

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SCAN ME

Oklahoman Becomes First to “Beat” Tetris



Chase Wright
Staff Writer

In a groundbreaking achievement, 13-year-old Willis Gibson from Oklahoma has become the first human to officially “beat” the original Nintendo version of Tetris in 34 years. Operating under the gamer alias “blue scuti,” Willis reached what gamers call a “kill screen” on Level 157, causing the Tetris code to glitch and crash the game. This accomplishment, highly coveted in the gaming world, proves that human players can push hardware and software to their limits and beyond.

Tetris, often considered unbeatable due to its lack of a scripted ending, continually challenges players with falling blocks that never cease. Previous attempts by top players to extend winning streaks resulted in reaching higher levels, but eventually, the game outlasted them all. Willis’s achievement, defying the game’s limits, has been recognized by Tetris CEO Maya Rogers as a “monumental achievement” on the eve of Tetris’ 40th anniversary. Willis’s journey to breaking Tetris records sheds light on the evolution of gaming strategies. Until 2011, players were stuck at level 29 due to the limitations of the controllers. Over the years, players devised techniques like “hypertapping” and “rolling” to overcome these input challenges at higher levels. In 2022, a player reached level 95.

However, bizarre quirks and difficulties emerged as players pushed the game’s limits.

By level 138, random color combinations would appear making the blocks almost impossible to make out, culminating in the need for an AI program named StackRabbit to break through certain obstacles.

Before StackRabbit, Tetris was thought of to be unbeatable, that was until StackRabbit managed to crash the game due to very specific triggered events. Gamers now had a view of what beating Tetris could mean, aside from levels and score, playing to make the game error and end would be the ultimate way to prove Tetris skill.

StackRabbit’s accomplishments inspired human players to map out scenarios leading to game-ending glitches. This collective effort, including the compilation of a detailed spreadsheet, set the stage for Willis to attempt his record-breaking run. The teenager’s reaction to the crash at Level 157, captured in a livestream video, reflects the shock and excitement surrounding this historic gaming moment.

In the ever-evolving landscape of video games, Willis Gibson’s triumph not only challenges the perceived unbeatability of Tetris but also showcases the resilience and determination of the human spirit in conquering digital challenges.



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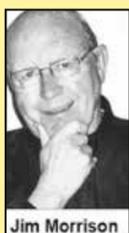
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HIGHER GROUND

How to Catch a Monkey



Jim Morrison

Monkeys are nimble, quick, very alert to motion, and most sensitive to smells. They are excellent climbers and can swing from limb to limb with the greatest of ease. This makes them hard to catch by normal means. But sources tell me there is a simple way that will work most of the time. First you find a jar with an opening just wide enough to allow a monkey to get his open hand through. Then place a banana in the jar. Bury the jar and with the opening just level with the ground. The monkey with his keen sense of smell will find the jar and with delight will place his hand inside the jar, holding the banana in his clenched fist. But alas! He cannot get his fist out of the jar without releasing his prize. So he clings to the banana and is so entrapped that he is easily

secured. So, you might try that the next time you try to catch a monkey.

The prophet Isaiah, preaching to the people of Judah, warned them of God’s judgment if they did not release their hold on their idols and godless lifestyle. “Woe to the obstinate people, declares the Lord, to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my spirit, heaping sin upon sin.” Isaiah 30:1

I have paraphrased and personalized this verse as follows: (God says) hard times and shame will come to those who are stubborn, hard-headed, and strong willed. If you reject my plans, doing what you want to do, thinking you have a better idea, you are headed for trouble. If you reject my counsel, thinking, “I don’t need God,” and join with those who think like that, you just heap up a mountain of sin which will only bring shame to your name. Then I reflect on this in prayer; “Lord, there are times when I don’t listen to you, when I want to do my thing. Please forgive me and teach me that my greatest joy and satisfaction in life comes when I recognize your Lordship and seek to follow your counsel. Help me to always remember that to fear You is the beginning of wisdom. Amen.”

I’m afraid there are times when I am like that monkey, refusing to turn loose of that which I prize and Satan captures me. It may be something as simple as an attitude. “I have a right to _____. {You fill in the blank.} “I want to win,” be it an argument, a game, the applause of man, building an empire, etc. It may be anything that keeps you from a life goal of knowing God in all His fullness. It can be lonely. Ann Graham Lotz describes it this way. “The journey of obedient faith has for me at times been a long walk in the same direction with nobody.” But Michael Card says, “It’s hard to imagine the freedom we find from the things we leave behind.”

Isaiah had hard things to say to his people in warning them of judgment to come. Yet he could not leave them without hope. In Isa.30:30 he says, “Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!”

May we all learn to trust Him, turn loose of that which traps us, and run with patience the race set before us.

To comment: Jnm77@att.net

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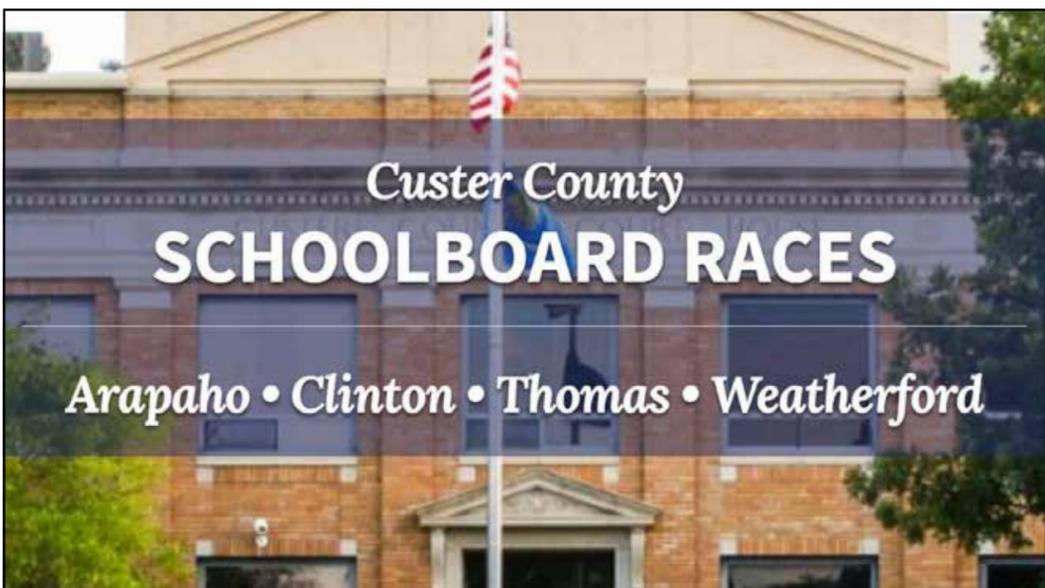
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Mike Smith
News Director

Four Board of Education seats recently went up for grabs in Custer County.

There is a three-way race for board seat #1 for Weatherford Public Schools. The candidates include Renee Soto, Brandy D. Chase, and Matthew Fast. That race will be on the ballot in February. Two other races will be decided in April.

Lisa Grant and Kyle King have filed for seat 4 for

Weatherford Public Schools.

The other April race will be for seat 4 in the Clinton School District as Cara Lea Kreizenbeck and Charlene Wassana have filed for the seat.

Kelby Don Jinkens and Robert Frymire filed, uncontested, for open seats in the Thomas-Fay-Custer school district. Burke Eagan was the lone candidate to file in the Arapaho-Butler School District.



Dr. Lovell Talks Funding for Hodge Building with Rotary International

The Southwestern / SWOSU

SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell was the guest speaker at the most recent Weatherford Rotary meeting. Dr. Lovell spoke about the upcoming construction of the Jerry & Marilyn Hodge Center for Pharmacy and Rural Health, which will begin construction in February. “We are going to be a little short on funding,” she explained. “There may be a few rooms that we don’t build out, but we will figure it out as we go along.” Dr. Lovell says the building is expected to be complete in 2 years. To help with funding, Dr. Lovell suggests getting in contact with the SWOSU Foundation by calling 580-774-3267 or visiting SWOSUfoundation.com



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ELK CITY / 2024 PROJECTS - With the turn of the calendar to 2024, Elk City is gearing up for several major projects this year. City Manager Tom Ivester says these projects will include road and sidewalk upgrades to a portion of Main Street, along with upgrades to the Police Department, among other department buildings, and airport improvements. Many of the projects are scheduled to begin this summer.

CLINTON / BLUEPEAK RATES - Monthly television rates for Bluepeak subscribers in Clinton will increase beginning February 1st. In a letter to the city, Bluepeak officials say the cost of traditional cable channels, broadcast networks, and sports channels continue to rise and found it necessary to increase TV package rates. Bluepeak says depending on your package, rates will increase anywhere from \$12 to \$25 per month beginning next month. However, Bluepeak officials say there will not be a rate increase for the internet.

WEATHERFORD / TEACHER OF THE YEAR Weatherford Public Schools recently named its District Teacher of the Year. Interim Superintendent Richard Brownen says it’s Taylor Sossamon from Weatherford High School, citing his “excellent relationships with the students and their parents alike” and his “discipline approach” to his job. Sossamon is in charge of weightlifting and coaches Football at Weatherford High School.

WATONGA / BOUNDARIES - Watonga City Council will consider an ordinance at its January 16th meeting to amend the boundaries of the four wards within the city, according to Mayor Bill Seitter. Public comment about the proposed wards can be made to the Watonga City Clerk. The council will meet on January 16 at 6 pm.

CLINTON/ROAD PROJECT - Clinton Mayor David Berrong looks ahead to a big road project in Clinton. As part of an 8-year plan with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, this project will include a new exit and offramp. A wider southern route that will pass by the Water Zoo and LaQuinta Inn will also be included. “I’m proud that we can maintain that balance with ODOT,” says Berrong. We’re writing a check [for \$6 million] that won’t be burdensome on our city people.” Total costs are expected to be under \$60 million. Bids are expected to go out later this year.

WRH / REVIEWS - Weatherford Regional Hospital’s program for engaging patients to leave feedback for the hospital has been paying off, according to hospital CEO Brian Denton. “Over the last six months, because we’ve been asking our patients to provide feedback on Google Reviews, we’ve changed our star rating from 1.8 to 4.1 since August,” Denton explains, adding that the hospital has also been seeing more consistent patient volumes since the end of November.



WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

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Happy Birthday Wishes for January 10th - Ardean Atteberry, Bernard Boeckman, Anthony Davenport, Harold Griffin, Charla Holland, Bruce K asper, Kimberly King, Summer Megli, Rick Reynolds, Martha Sauer, Madella Shelton, Robert Skipworth, Denise Slagle; **January 11** - Codie Adcock, Sue Brandhorst, Skylar Cannon, Bobby Green, Marvin Hines, Paula Jeffers, Chuck Maddox, Robert Mayfield, Ona Mcconnell, Marie Jack, Olson Jack, Olson Charles Sewell, James Taylor, Logan Taylor, Daniel Torres; **January 12** - Max Davis, Todd Earp, Alisha Edmondson, Evie Ellis, Julianna Gallegos, Keren Martinez, Raja Matthews, Jodi McKinnon, Jacque Morlan, Blake O’Neale, Debbie Redinger, Joe Sullivan, Kale Visnieski, Eric Willis; **January 13** - Dale Durnell, Leah Gibson, Kenny Gipson, Judy Hartsell, Bill Hayes, Allen Helt, Rod Jones, Jamie Lovecchio, Diane Peoples, Memaw Radke, Jancene Sandlin, Darwin Scheffe, Billy Scott, Bryan Wood; **January 14** - Grey Adkins, Billie Anderson, Chris Brotherton, Chuck Estes, Jim Loomis, Brittany McBroom, Michael Miller, Debra Norseworthy, Janie Penner, Gary Pigg, Nathan Villines; **January 15** - Martha Barber, Kaye Black, Steven Buckner, Jason Daniel, Robert Deela, Ramona Duff, Rocky Hylton, Cherise Musselman, Shawn Smith, Cheryl Stephens; **January 16** - Marybeth Cornell, Ester Demetreu, Linda Dimitris, Zoe Jackson, Joni Johson, Garrison Mendoza, Landon Smith, Anna Tags, Yolanda Vasquez, Alice Whitetail, Barbara Williams, Titan Yoder.

Mason Jones, Ben Smith Tabbed First Bulldogs of the Week in '24

Grant Kopycinski
Sports Information Graduate Asst.

Mason Jones and Ben Smith of SWOSU Basketball have been named the first recipients of the Bulldogs of the Week award in 2024, brought to you by Wright Media, the home of SWOSU Athletics for both livestream and radio broadcasts.

Jones (Panhandle, TX) averaged a team best 14.0 points per game last week with identical 14-point performances against Southern Arkansas and Arkansas-Monticello. She scored with efficiency all week, finishing the two games 10-of-14 from the field and 6-for-9 from beyond the arc. In six GAC games so far this season, Jones is shooting a steaming 59% overall and 54% from deep.

Smith (Edmond, Okla.) scored 20-plus points in back-to-back games for the first time this year after putting up 24 points against SAU and then 21 against UAM two days later. He did so on 16-of-26 shooting including 5-of-8 from the three-point line. His 17.9 points per game currently rests him fifth in the GAC in scoring.



Jim Olsen Files Bill to Display Ten Commandments in Classrooms

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Rep. Jim Olsen, R-Roland, has filed legislation to require the Ten Commandments be displayed in all public school classrooms in Oklahoma.

House Bill 2962, filed Friday, would require each classroom to clearly display a poster or framed copy of the Ten Commandments.

The bill requires the Commandments to measure out to at least 16 inches wide and 20 inches tall, beginning in the 2024-2025 school year. The bill also outlines the specific text to be used for the display.

“The Ten Commandments is one of the foundations of our nation,” Olsen said. “Publicly and proudly displaying them in public school classrooms will

serve as a reminder of the ethics of our state and country as students and teachers go about their day. It is my prayer that this display would inspire our young people during their formative years and encourage them to lead moral, principled lives.”

Olsen said the Ten Commandments was referenced by the Founding Fathers as a code of morality and was taught in public schools for hundreds of years. Early textbooks like the New England Primer, first published in 1687, and the McGuffey Readers, first published in 1836, were widely used and included teachings of the Ten Commandments.

HB-2962 is available to be heard after the legislative session commences on Monday, February 5.

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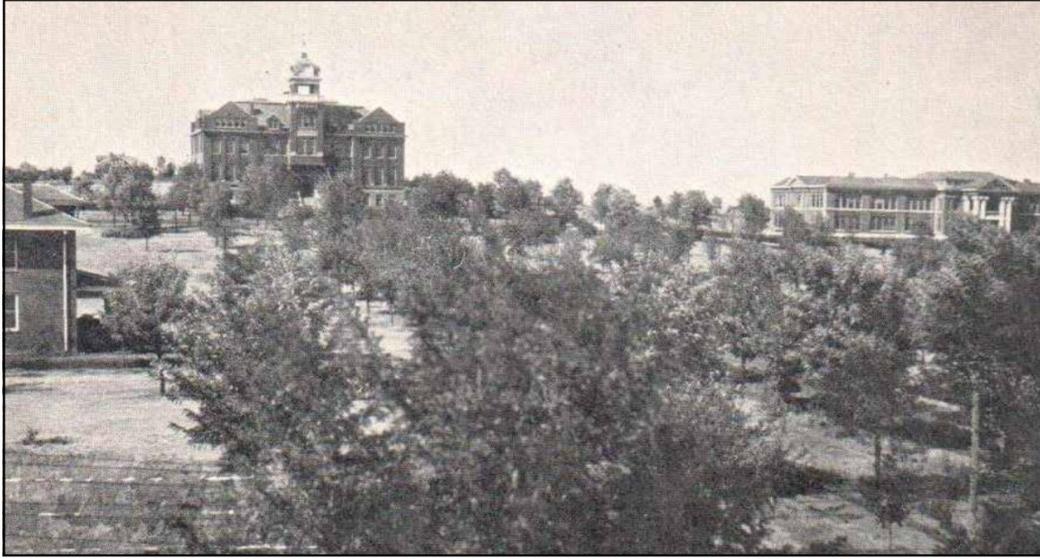
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Oklahoma History: Striving for a Higher Education in the Sooner State



Provided by Kathy Hetrick / SWOSU

The Burton House, Old Science Building, and the original Administration Building of SWOSU.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

After the Organic Act established the Oklahoma Territory, a legislative staff formed to help create a more systematic governing body.

President Benjamin Harrison appointed George W. Steele as the new governor of the Oklahoma Territory, which would see tremendous advances in available public works/systems.

The territory, with many fresh faces from the Land Run of 1889, was in dire need of schools and forms of higher education.

Governor Steele worked for seventeen months. During his time, he was a major advocate for public schools and universities.

By his urging, the First Oklahoma Territorial legislature set up three collegiate schools in December of 1890.

The three universities were the Norman Territorial University (which would later become the University of Oklahoma), the Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College (that would go on to form Oklahoma State University), and the Central State Normal School in Edmond (University of Central Oklahoma).

For these collegiate level schools to be at the same level of the rest of the country, they would need knowledgeable and well-trained teachers. So, two additional “teacher training” schools were opened a few years later; these normal schools were dubbed Northwestern State Normal (Northwestern Oklahoma State University) in Alva which opened in 1897 and Southwestern State Normal (now Southwestern Oklahoma State University) in Weatherford in 1901.

The legislation also established a college in Langston in 1897 for African Americans: Colored Agricultural and Normal University (Langston University).

As part of the push for “equal” opportunity, a secondary institution, the University Preparatory School at Tonkawa, was created in 1901 to prep high school graduates for entry to the University of Oklahoma.

Quickly after the establishment of these colleges and secondary schools, Oklahoma Territory found itself preparing for statehood. Part of the proposed entry as a state to the United States would see the territory combine with the remaining portion of Indian Territory. Early discussions between the territories were heated due to the feeling of an educational imbalance as most of the college and university locations would be on the western side. As part of a compromise, “Oklahoma Territory offered to duplicate in the eastern part of the new state the number and types of institutions that existed in the west side” (Oklahoma History Society).

The agreement was signed, and the First Oklahoma Legislature established a list of schools for the east. The colleges created were the Oklahoma Industrial Institute and College for Girls (University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) in Chickasha and the Oklahoma School for Mines and Metallurgy (Eastern Oklahoma State College) in Wilburton. Then, three normal institutes were opened: East Central State Normal (East Central University) in Ada, Northeastern State Normal (Northeastern State University) in Tahlequah, and Southeastern State Normal (Southeastern Oklahoma State University) in Durant.

To match the preparatory school for OU, the secondary Eastern University Preparatory School was established in Claremore.

With the addition of these higher education schools, the legislation wanted to ensure more students had access to adequate preparation to any of the normal secondary or university options. To address this, the formation of six additional district schools were created in 1909 to get students ready for entry to Stillwater’s Oklahoma A&M and the other normal colleges.

These six district schools were split evenly between the western and eastern halves of the state. The sheer number of schools opened by the first legislature was quite unorthodox, not for the number of universities available but for the number of schools that existed in the public sector.

Oklahoma’s push to immediately establish a statewide system left the state trying to balance public school funding with a baseline and limited tax base.

Oklahoma would toe the line for another 50 years before the legislature would create a new institution. However, many of the already established schools would begin opening additional branches and supporting vocational schools. Eventually, new community colleges and university extensions were opened.

Today, Oklahoma is working on finding the financial and practical balance that would actively increase the amount of people who hold some form of a degree.

Currently, the site of Education Data has seen Oklahoma grow to state rank #35 for Higher Education, #18 in 2-Year-College-Graduation Rate, and #12 in Tuition and Fees. However, one component holding Oklahoma’s overall education rank down at #45 in Educational Attainment and #48 in Education Overall is its statuses in the Pre-K-12 category – in which it places #49. However, there are great strides being made.

In 1998, Oklahoma was the second state (behind Georgia) to offer free public prekindergarten to all four-year-olds, and in a 2023 long-term study featuring Tulsa, Oklahoma’s preschool program and published by Sage Journals and the American Educational Research Association (AERA), showed children who attended preschool programs were far more likely to go to college shortly after graduating high school. Other research found long-term benefits from preschool with high schoolers taking harder classes and earning more regardless of degree attainment.

With findings like these coming out, more states are following in Oklahoma’s footsteps and creating universal preschool programs for their children.

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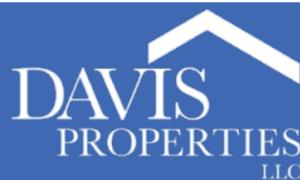




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Lady Bulldogs Bounce Back, Beat UAM 74-69



Jon Chidester
 Sports Asst. AD

SWOSU Women's Basketball used the best shooting performance of the season to take down Arkansas-Monticello on the road, 74-69.

The win earns the Lady Bulldogs a split on the first Arkansas road trip of the season and moves them to 7-5 on the year and 4-2 in GAC play. It was a strong response after suffering the worst defeat of the year to Southern Arkansas (88-55) two days prior.

In the game, SWOSU shot a season high 46% from the field and found success inside the arc with 32 points in the paint and another 18 at the foul line. The Lady Dawgs also set a new season best in both free throw attempts, 29, and makes, 18 for a 62% clip.

After a slow burn first quarter where teams combined to score just 19 points, things got rolling in the second when SWOSU shot a game high 58% from the field to build a 35-27 halftime lead.

UAM used a 13-2 third quarter run to take a brief lead after halftime, but SWOSU settled back down and led 55-51 heading into the fourth.

The Lady Bulldogs pushed their lead back out to double digits in the fourth quarter and endured a pair of UAM pushes with timely answers to avoid any chance of a Blossom comeback.

Libbi Zinn turned in her third double-digit scoring performance of the season with a 17-point scoring day to lead the team, a new season high. Mason Jones added 14 of her own on 5-of-6 shooting from the field. Averi Zinn gave 12 more.

SWOSU was outrebounded 32-29 but won the turnover battle 21-16.

Up next on the schedule will be back-to-back home games next Thursday (1/11) and Saturday (1/13) against Arkadelphia foes Henderson State and Ouachita Baptist. 16 GAC games remain in the regular season.

Bulldogs Fall to Weevils in Closing Seconds



Jon Chidester
 Sports Asst. AD

SWOSU Men's Basketball needed one final stop on defense against Arkansas-Monticello to force overtime, and nearly had it, but a putback layup after an offensive rebound with one second remaining allowed UAM to earn the win in regulation, 56-54.

In a game where the Dawgs played from behind nearly the entire way, SWOSU grinded out a double-digit halftime deficit and overcame a slow opening half that saw just 12 points of offensive production. The Bulldogs trailed 25-12 after 20 minutes but found rhythm in the second half.

After the intermission, SWOSU shot an even 50% from the field and eventually had the game tied with 2:16 remaining. MJ Warrior had the game tied again after a driving layup with 12 seconds left before the final possession of the game commenced.

On the other end, with seconds ticking away, UAM settled for a pull up jump shot that missed everything

but backboard which allowed the ball to ricochet directly into a crashing Weevil rebounder who was able to lay the ball back up with just 1.4 seconds remaining. A half-court heave at the buzzer did not go in and SWOSU fell in heart breaking fashion as UAM breathed a sigh of relief.

Ben Smith led the Dawgs with 21 points on 6-of-11 shooting and an 8-for-10 day at the foul line. Denali Alexander was SWOSU's other double-digit performer with 10 points.

For the game, SWOSU finished at 41% (16-39) shooting overall and 31% (5-16) from the three-point line. Monticello was also 41% (20-49) for the game but was held to 24% (4-17) from deep.

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