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SWOSU and WHS Celebrate the Classes of 2024 Last Weekend



SWOSU hosted the Spring 2024 commencement ceremonies this past weekend at the Pioneer Event Center on the SWOSU campus. Three ceremonies were held over Friday and Saturday with thousands of guests in attendance over the weekend.

Weatherford High School Senior Avry Nailon gives the camera a double thumbs up while waiting to graduate this past Saturday.



Guests wait for SWOSU's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences commencement ceremony to begin.

Weatherford High School also held their 2024 graduation ceremony at the PCEC on SWOSU's Campus this past Saturday. Pictured above, Weatherford High School Seniors gather before their graduation ceremony begins.

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Myrna Albright

Myrna Rae Albright was born on January 20, 1937 to Ray H. and Opal Gladys (Eads) Griffin in Weatherford, Oklahoma and passed away on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, at the age of 87 years, 3 months and 15 days.



Myrna was raised in Weatherford and attended Weatherford High School, graduating with the Class of 1954. On July 17, 1954 she married Glenn Richard Albright in Weatherford, Oklahoma, and they made their home in Norman.

Over the years, the family lived in Dallas, Denver, and Houston but in 1972 the family returned to Weatherford. She attended college and completed her degree in 1981 and she worked as an executive secretary at 3M in Weatherford.

Glenn and Myrna soon moved to Elk City for a short time before moving to Sidney, OH. They returned to Oklahoma in 1992 and over the years have lived in Elk City, Shawnee, and eventually Edmond where they moved to be close to family. Myrna was a member of PEO, enjoyed painting, and had a love for all animals.

Myrna is preceded in death by her parents, Ray and Opal Griffin; husband, Glenn Albright; one son, Scott Albright; one sister, Ann Goad, and one son-in-law, Roy Canard.

Myrna is survived by one daughter, Kari Canard of Edmond, OK; three grandchildren, Aaron Canard and wife Nicole of Corona, CA and their children Liam and Noah, Trey Canard and wife Hannah of Edmond, OK and their children August and Willow, and Jaxon Canard of Edmond, OK

Memorial may be made to the Tipton Children's Home, PO Box 370, Tipton, OK 73570.

Laquita Littlebird

Laquita Ann Littlebird was born September 7, 1946, in Mena, Arkansas, to Harley and Oma Nola (Holsted) Jones and passed away, Thursday, May 2, 2024, in the Weatherford Regional Hospital, at the age of 77 years, 7 months and 25 days.



Laquita was raised and attended school in Carnegie, graduating with the Class of 1964. She earned a Bachelor Degree in Education from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Laquita taught for a few years in Carnegie then moved to Weatherford.

In 1984, she married Tony Littlebird of Weatherford. She worked as a realtor and went back to school where Laquita earned her Master's Degree in Special Education from SWOSU. She went to nursing school in 2005-2006 and received her L.P.N. certification.

Laquita worked in the VA Hospital where she was proud of the high standard of care for the veterans. Laquita enjoyed playing at the casino, shopping at the Et Cetera shop, playing card games, and spending time with family and friends. Memorials may be made to: WOCS – Western Oklahoma Christian School.

Laquita is survived by her daughter; Allison O'Donnell and husband Devin of Boise, ID; sister, Evanghn Sanders of Burleson, TX; daughter-in-law, Mikki Penner; and six grandchildren: Emersen, Erileigh, London, and Caedmon O'Donnell, all of Boise, ID; and Lachlan and Isla Penner.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Tony; son, Brady Penner; four sisters; and two brothers.

Denise Hamburger

Denise Loreen Hamburger was born on December 9, 1951, in Crawfordsville, Indiana to the late Cecil and Emma Cox and passed away at the age of 72 on Saturday, May 11, 2024, at her home.



Denise was raised in Waynetown, Indiana and lived with the family of the late Bob and Ruth Donnelly beginning at the age of twelve. The Donnelly's all agreed that Denise "completed the family!" She graduated from Waynetown High School in 1970 and then went on to obtain her bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Oklahoma State University. Denise moved to Weatherford, Oklahoma to begin teaching in the Business Department at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Denise met Terry Hamburger at a SWOSU basketball game. Terry and Denise were married on November 26, 1977, and she moved to Terry's family farm southwest of Weatherford.

Denise retired from teaching at SWOSU in 2005 and shortly after accepted a position of music secretary at the First Baptist Church Weatherford where she worked for the last 19 years. She enjoyed being outside and gardening.

Denise served in her church with various ministries including Women on Mission, providing birthday party supplies for local children in foster care, vacation bible school, decorating the church for Christmas, and many other countless activities.

She was a loyal and true fan of the Oklahoma State University Cowboys, the OKC Thunder, and the Chicago Cubs. But Denise's biggest passion was her family, especially her five grandchildren. She never missed an event and showered each of them with unconditional love.

Denise is survived by her husband, Terry, and two children and their families: Jacob and Lacy Hamburger of Weatherford, Oklahoma and Clay and Ellen Mol of Hydro, Oklahoma; five grandchildren: Aspen, Jace and Zack Hamburger of Weatherford and Jentry and Tucker Mol of Hydro; five siblings: Ron Cox of Schneider, Indiana, Don Cox and wife Dee of Billings, Montana, Rick Cox and wife Carol of Lebanon, Indiana, Linn Ball of Broken Arrow, OK and Bill Donnelly of Bixby, OK along with many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by parents: Cecil Cox, Emma Cox, and Bob and Ruth Donnelly; one sister: Linda Cox Duncan; and Doris Cox, Bill Ball, Gayle Donnelly, and two nephews.

Memorials can be marked for missions at the First Baptist Church Weatherford.

The family would like to thank all of the health care workers, family, and friends who have helped Denise and our family over the years and especially during and after her treatments. Words cannot express our love, gratitude, and appreciation.

Pat Swanson

Patsy Jean "Pat" Swanson was born October 9, 1935, in Lawton, to Louis William "L.W." and Minnie Clyde (Beasley) Harned and passed away Friday, May 3, 2024, at Oxford Springs Assisted Living in Weatherford, at the age of 88 years, 6 months and 25 days.



Pat was raised and attended school in Lawton. On May 17, 1952, she married Paul Edwin Swanson and made their home in Lawton. Soon, Paul was stationed in New York where they lived for a few years before returning to Lawton where their sons were born. In 1964, they moved to Weatherford to raise their family. Pat was a loving mother and wife.

She went to beauty school in Clinton. She opened her beauty salon, "Pat's Place," and ran it for 22 years. After retiring from the salon, she worked as a custodian for Weatherford Public Schools for several years.

Pat cherished the moments spent with her granddaughters Holly and Morgan, as well as the trips to Branson alongside her dear husband Paul. They shared a love for traveling and embarking on cruises, making it a tradition to plan a vacation every year.

Her heart overflowed with affection for children, family, and close friends, but she held a special place in her heart for her "adopted" granddaughter Casandra (Sissy). From babysitting Casandra at just 6 months old, a unique bond blossomed between the two and Casandra's family.

Pat's interests included cooking, baking, the color green, sweets, calligraphy, sewing, tending to their yard, and enjoying quality time with loved ones on the back patio.

She was a remarkable Nana to Casandra, Gustavo Aguiñaga, Jr., and all who had the pleasure of knowing her. Pat had a passion for collecting frogs, evident in the green "frog" room in her home.

Pat was preceded in death by her parents; husband Paul; two sons, Mike and Blake; granddaughter, Morgan; and siblings, Frances Watkins, Pauline Caldwell, Christine Myers, Bill Harned, and Wesley Harned.

She is survived by brother Don Harned (Butch) of OKC; three nieces: Karen Harned Severson and husband David, Mary Joyce McKinley and husband John, and Donna Pollick; nephews: Keith Watkins and Robert Meyer.

She is also survived by her two "adopted daughters," who she called "her girls:" Marla Pankratz and husband Denny, and Veronica Aguiñaga and husband Gustavo; as well as their five children: Emma (Pankratz) Mullins and husband Trey, Joshua Pankratz, Chelsie Pankratz, Gustavo Aguiñaga Jr. and Casandra Aguiñaga

Larry Gaines

Larry Gene Gaines, 77, of Elk City, OK, was born July 1, 1946 in Merced, California. He is the son of Glen Trafton and Norma Lee (Adkins) Gaines. He went to his heavenly home on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at his residence in Elk City, OK, surrounded by his loving family.



Larry married his best friend and soul mate, Janice Viola (Clayton) on August 30, 1979 at Reno, Nevada.

Larry had a super spicy witt and enjoyed playing on the computer, going to the casino and horse-races. He was an avid fan of the San Francisco 49ers football team and the San Francisco Giants baseball team. Larry could be found spending time at the cattle farm.

He loved spending time with his children, grandchildren, family, and friends. Larry will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Cherishing his memory is his loving wife, Janice Gaines of the home, Elk City, OK; three sons, Steve Gaines of Wallace, CA, Gregg Gaines of Rathdrum, Idaho, Mathew Gaines of Sayre, OK; one step-son, Michael Smith of Sacramento, CA; and one sister, Glenna Havercroft of Merced, California;

He is also survived by eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren; as well as numerous other relatives and friends.

Larry is preceded in death by his parents, Glen Trafton Gaines and Norma Lee (Adkins) Gaines.

Memorials can be made to the charity of choice in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648. We invite you to leave a message of condolence, sympathy, or memory of Larry at www.martin-duggerfuneralhome.com.

Betty Owens

Betty Pearl Owens was born February 27, 1938, in Clinton, to John Wilbert and Alva Ruth (Thompson) Wilson and passed away Thursday, May 9, 2024, at Weatherford Regional Hospital, at the age of 86 years, 2 months and 10 days.



Betty was raised and attended school in Foss, graduating with the Class of 1956. On June 7, 1957, Betty married Charles Andrew Owens and they made their home in Clinton. Charles and Betty raised their family in Clinton, before moving to Hydro. They attended the First Baptist Church in Hydro where Betty taught Sunday School for many years.

Betty enjoyed crocheting, baking and decorating cakes, and collecting windmills and bells. She loved sitting on her deck, enjoying being outside in her garden and visits to her son's farm. Betty will be remembered for her love of her grandchildren, family and friends.

Betty is survived by four sons, Chuck Owens and wife, Nan of Hydro, Johnny Owens of Hydro, Elvis Owens and wife, Jammie of Poteau; and Raymond Owens of Weatherford; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; granddaughter, Kris Weaver; brother, Jim Wilson; and sister, Louise Glover.



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SWOSU Installs New Video Scoreboard for Milam Stadium



Courtesy SWOSU Athletics

Photos show workers installing the new video board for the 2024 season at SWOSU's Milam Stadium in Weatherford.

Weatherford Celebrating Rt. 66's 98th Anniversary Friday, May 31

Weatherford Chamber of Commerce

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Mark your calendars and make some room for some cake and ice cream because the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce is celebrating the Mother Road's 98th birthday in style. Beginning at 5:30pm on Friday, May 31st at Heritage park near City Hall in Weatherford, the Birthday Bash will feature the 3rd annual homemade ice cream contest, live music from the Slim Picken's Band, food trucks, vendor booths, and free birthday cake.

"It will be the third annual ice cream contest event," said Weatherford Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kim Silman who is coordinating the event. Wristbands will be on sale to taste the ice cream at the event which start at \$5 for individuals and \$10 for families. "We will have a non-profit winner, and of course a for-profit winner, which will be voted on by a panel of judges. And then we will also have a People's Choice Award which will be determined by the guests,"

added Silman.

Guests who purchase wristbands will be given a ticket to use to vote on which ice cream they liked best. Along with the ice cream, the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce will be serving birthday cake to any any interested guest for free. There will also be food trucks that would make any foodie salivate, with burgers, tacos, and various other treats.

"We're just super excited to continue this tradition," said Silman. Silman also noted that the proceeds from this event as well as the Halloween themed Boo-Bash happening later this year will be used to create monuments in anticipation of Route 66's centennial that's slated to occur in 2026.

For more information you can visit the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page by searching Weatherford Area Chamber of Commerce or by giving them a call at 580-772-7744.

HIGHER GROUND

On Satisfaction



Jim Morrison

Mother's Day! For those of us who will soon join our mothers in their heaven abode, it may conjure up memories of sacrifice, tender love, doing without and putting up with.

My mother went home to be with the Lord over 40 years ago. But I still see her trudging down a cotton field, row after row in the hot sun. Then going home to prepare supper for the family of 5 kids and dad. Sometimes the evening would find her soaking her aching feet in a small basin. But I don't remember her complaining. It was the role she would play as Mom in difficult times on the farm. She did what she could. She had only a 7th grade education but was proud of the education we kids were getting.

It all began in 1928, not a good year to get

married. What had seemed to be prosperous times suddenly imploded as the stock market crashed in '29 that sent shock waves throughout the country--particularly in rural areas when the price of cotton plummeted.

In 1935, before I was born the family left the farm to start over in Arizona where my uncle had work. I was born in 1937. I'm sure it was not a planned event. They didn't need another mouth to feed. Dad found work where he could--often for a dollar a day. I'm too young to remember those days. There were no food stamps or food resource centers in those days. Somehow, God provided and we grew stronger in the fact that mom and dad loved us and were there for us. We were poor in many ways but far richer than many today who grow up in single parent homes, often left to fend for themselves.

As the clouds of war approached, Dad found regular work in a munitions plant near Pryor. I remember the evening when we learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I didn't realize it's significance--only that it was a big deal. By 1943 Dad had enough of working for wages and we had accumulated a little cash so it was back to Western Oklahoma where he grew up, hoping to find a farm.

That is where Mom's field work began. I was too small to leave at home so Mom made me a little sack and I began my career as a cotton picker at 6 years of age. I was so short that I didn't have to bend over to reach the bolls so I didn't see it as a problem. If such records were kept, I probably set a world's record of puling 200 lbs. one day as a six-year-old.

I didn't always appreciate it at the time but I am grateful that I learned to do hard things and to get by with little.

Why am I sharing all this nostalgia? The main reason is that I never really appreciated what Mom and Dad went through to provide for us kids. As I look back, I never really thanked them in a heartfelt way. I took so much for granted. Toward the end Mom wound up living in a nursing home for 10 years with rheumatoid arthritis, twisted limbs, finally unable to walk; often writhing in pain for hours. I wish I could thank her again for all she went through to keep the family together and love on us as best she could.

I'll do that one day, the next chance I get. It might not be very long. Maybe some of you need to do that before it is too late.

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Weatherford Ladies' Soccer Season Ends After State Championship Loss



Courtesy Jimmy Busellato

The Weatherford Lady Eagles' Soccer season came to a close after falling to the Oologah-Talala Mustangs 1-2 at the 4A Girls Soccer State Championship Game at Taft Stadium in OKC. The girls finish their season with an overall record of 16-3.



Courtesy Jimmy Busellato

Weatherford High School students travelled to Taft Stadium to cheer on the Lady Eagles with a cutout of Weatherford Striker Braelee Epp.

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CADDO CO / UNRUH - A Hydro man is charged in Caddo County District Court with a total of 25 sex-related crimes, including two counts of first-degree rape, 11 counts of lewd acts, and 12 counts of child sex abuse. 36-year-old Shawn Unruh allegedly committed sexual abuse dating back to January 2018 until his recent arrest by Caddo County authorities. A preliminary hearing conference is planned for June 27th.

CLINTON / HAY BALE FIRE - The Clinton Fire Department was called to battle some 300 hay bales on fire north of Clinton Regional Hospital on 28th Street, just past the River Bridge. Fire Chief Brett Russell says it appears that lightning started the blaze. He described the scene as "quite the light show when we pulled up."

CORDELL / CLEAN UP - Clean-up from a recent tornado in Cordell went quickly, says Washita County Emergency Management Director Kenneth Trent. "Everybody stepped up to help haul off approximately 100 loads of debris, Trent explained, "Things are looking good. Things are just about back to normal." The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been on-site to assess the damage. 50 houses were negatively affected by the storm. Businesses that were affected are waiting on insurance.

SWOSU / GOLF TORNADO - The SWOSU Women's Golf team took shelter in their hotel from a tornado that struck Bartlesville, OK. They were attending a recently held NCAA Central Region Tournament. The Tulsa Weather Team provided adequate warnings for the weather, 30 minutes before the storm arrived, reports Head Coach Brad Fleetwood. Storm damage at the Hillcrest Country Club delayed round two of the NCAA Central Region Tournament.

SWOSU / PROMOTIONS - Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the SWOSU Foundation have announced the promotion of key personnel in the SWOSU Office of Institutional Advancement. *Erin Adams* has been promoted to Director of Development & Engagement; *Clarke Hale* has been promoted to senior Director for Major Gifts & Donor Relations; *Jessica Heard-Perry* will assume the Director of Advancement Operations role; and *Kari Jones* has been promoted to Director of Advancement Projects & Executive Assistant.

WEATHERFORD / MAYOR ELECTION Weatherford Mayor Mike Brown says he plans to seek re-election. Brown is focused on building new sidewalks, repairing Route 66, and finishing the YMCA Community Center. The filing period for mayor begins in June.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

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Alcohol causing problems? Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information. **Christian Free Store** - Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875. **Alfalfa, OK, Community Center** "Bible Study," Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public. **OK Parkinson's Alliance**, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org. **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 May 15 - Taylor Boyd, Whitney Roper, Anthony Sperle; **May 16** - Ray Bagby, Chris Gregston, Buddy Holman, Katrina Howry, Carrin Klien, Jay Moore, Beth Perkins; **May 17** - Hannah Austin, Robert Crain, Deanna Davis, Andy Gonzales, Monty McCrary, Riane McNaught, Peggy Sellers, Joselyn Sperle, Susan Thomas, Elijah Yoder; **May 18** - Jenisa Atha, Tina Magpie, Florence Miller, Isaac Rhoads, Sharon Streck, Robert Toahty; **May 19** - Michael Bowman, Carol Christensem. Miranda Sebastian, Cheryl Wedel, Hath Whitefield, Noel Williams; **May 20** - Jeremy Biswell, Marlen Lehman, Addison Miller, Garrett Payne, LuCretia Schapansky, Chris Tackitt, Alexis Talamante, Elsie Thomason; **May 21** - Bradley Burger, Jamie Carrizales, Kathie Conner, Jeremy Hammonds, Allison Hayes, Alissa Lynch, Myles Madden, Kaylee Maddox, Jessica Phillips, Audrina Thompson;

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2014 Ford Focus - \$6,500. 580-330-3489.

2001 Honda 600CC - Navy Blue. 16k miles, \$2,000. 405-892-8301

2003 Chevy Trailblazer - good tires. \$5,750. 580-330-3489

4-Michelin used passenger tires - 20 inch. 580-393-1444.

Motorized Mountain Bike - Comes with detachable 1-wheel trailer. Lots of extras. Low miles. \$600. 580-890-9442.

2009 Mercury Grand Marquis LS - \$3,750 OBO. 580-330-3489.

For Sale - Porsch 924, good engine. Dune Buggy frame. Buy both for \$1,000! Contact 405-639-9667.

FURNITURE & APPLIANCES

Riverside Roll Top Oak Desk - Beautiful 1980's model. \$300. 580-772-7357.

Thomasville Dining Set - Has 6 chairs (2 with arm rests). Table comes with heat-insulating cover. Dark cherry color theme. Like new. \$1,500. 580-890-0004.

3 Handheld Vacuums - \$30 each. 580-613-0108.

Widescreen TV - 93" CRT. Mitsubishi. \$499. Contact at 580-772-7997.

Pulaski Accent Chest - four drawers. Brown reddish. \$450. 580-890-0004

Mirrors! Large, framed: \$50; Full length: \$10. 580-613-0108

Full-Sized Headboard - Silver Beaded. \$25. 580-890-0004.

Swivel Bar Stools - Black, \$100. 580-890-0004.
Coil roofing air nailgun - like new, with 3 boxes of coil nails. \$250. 580-330-1437.

Chairs for Sale! Swivel (\$20), Rocking (\$65) and Adirondack Patio Chairs (\$65). Contact 580-613-0108.

FOR SALE - Young Children's Wood Rocking Horse. Like new. \$45. 580-613-0108.

Adjustable Electric Fan - Both head and feet can be adjusted. Full-Size. Call 580-819-0484 for details and pricing.

Queen-Size Headboard - Match Leather. \$25. 580-890-0004.

Entertainment Center, \$100. **Gun Cabinet**, \$500. **White Armoire**, \$275. 580-330-1437.

Furniture! 7-Piece Tiger Oak Dinette Pioneer hutch buffet table and 4 chairs. Devilled glass and mirrors fruit motif. \$2,000. Call 580-772-4297.

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8N Ford tractor - Good condition. \$1,500. Call me at 580-729-0001.

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Troybilt Garden Tiller - 7HP motor, like new. \$600. Contact 580-729-0001.

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ANIMALS AND PETS

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Great Pyrenees - Free to a good home. Would make good farm dogs. 580-330-8658.

Large Metal Birdcage - \$120 New asking \$80. 5-6 ft tall. 580-613-0108

Jack Russell Puppies - wormed, tails doct, claws removed. \$400. Call 580-301-0253.

ADOPTABLE ANIMALS at the Friends For Life Animal Society. Kittens, cats, puppies and dogs available. Browse our animals at our website www.okfflas.org

Doghouse - Shingled Roof and Gabled. \$155. 580-613-0108.

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Oklahoma History: Washita County and the Clinton-Sherman AFB



Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society



Courtesy US Geographical Survey

One of the U.S. Air Force's "Strategic Air Force (SAC) Tankers," among other US and UK planes not pictured, were put on display for the Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base's "open house show," circa 1959.

Clinton-Sherman Airport, OK-17. Circa Feb. 1995

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

The Oklahoma Air & Space Port is a public-use airport known as the Naval Air Station Clinton, later renamed to the Clinton-Sherman Industrial Airpark. Located in Foss, OK (near Burns Flat, located about 15 miles southwest of Clinton), the airport has had a colorful history of uses and, all the while, maintained its status as a premier airstrip for different operations.

Today it continues to serve as a strategic and one-of-a-kind port and base for testing, licensing, and training in use by branches of the Department of Defense, Boeing, and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.

The port was originally built in 1942, but was not officially established until October of 1943 during the height of World War II as "Naval Air Station Clinton."

The base would close for nearly a decade following the resolution to the war. Ownership was transferred to the city of Clinton, OK, on January 27, 1949. The only caveat: the government could dawn control of it at any point if a national emergency required it.

Despite it no longer being a national Base, the federal government still invested its resources into improving it, especially with the Cold War on the horizon and world-ending nuclear annihilation become more and more of a potential reality.

On September 15, 1954--the same month that the base was repurposed as a Strategic Air Command (SAC) base--the federal government began an extension of one of its runway to be nearly 3 miles long.

During this period, the air station had multiple facilities and strips built, acted as a salvage site, and became a site for the Air Force to develop and train specialized air equipment. This is also the period in which the base underwent its most recent change to become the Clinton-Sherman AFB.

Before its inactivation in 1969, bombardment squadrons used the site to practice new strategic readiness and training and acted to support operations of the Air Force globally.

The main group, the 70th Bombardment Wing, loaned several aircraft, crew, and maintenance personnel during 1968-1969 for combat operations in Asia.

After being labeled as inactive on December 31, 1969, the base's operation was put under the ownership of the city of Clinton for the second time in its life.

Later, in 1999, Oklahoma Senate Bill 720 created the Oklahoma Space Industry Development Authority (OSIDA), and shortly after, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) granted a license to them to use the port and designated it as a licensed orbital launch site. The reason: the port has access to "The Infinity One", the longest air strip (152 miles long and 50 miles wide) that is not in restricted airspace and not in a Military Operations Area (MoA). It is one of only 12 licensed FAA launch sites in the U.S.

Soon, different aerospace companies began conducting tests for astronautical prototyping. One of these companies was Armadillo-Aerospace, who used the base for space prototypes like its lunar lander. Their tests ended in 2009.

Alongside sub-orbital testing, many attempts were made to establishing a rocket racing league on the base. The first of these was established in 2005, with plans to race rocket-powered aircraft in a closed-circuit track. The rocket racers would be viewable by the public live and virtually through devices with internet access. Three prototypes were created and tested, but funding failed during plans to host their 2008 inaugural race. Additional funding was picked up, and one exhibition race was held in 2010. Unfortunately, funding again ran out before another race could be held and by 2014, the league ended.

The company Boeing picked up use of the base to test their autonomous landing system for their jumbo jets. By 2015, they were also using the site for proficiency training, flight tests, and recertification flights.

Other aircraft manufacturers and companies began to do the same, and the Department of Defense is still using it for flight training crews to this day.

The bunker facilities created prior are now used as the Law Enforcement Driver Training Center for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol and the Oklahoma Department of Safety. The annual Cadet Lawman Academy for high schoolers uses the site for their summer programs. According to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the facility is recognized as one of the top law enforcement driving centers in the nation.

In a 12 month operation period ending in June of 2020, the port saw over 30,000 successful operations. Today, the north and west WWII runways, while unused, can still be seen from aerial photographs.




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VIOLINIST, ENTERTAINER

An OKC native, Kyle Dillingham started playing violin at the age of 9. While in high school, he was featured twice on Nashville's Grande Ole Opry, performing with Hank Thompson and Roy Clark.

He received his Bachelor's in instrumental music performance from Oklahoma City University. He has taken his music to 42 countries, earning him the title of Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador.

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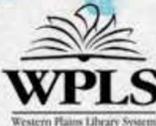
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Train to Volunteer for Western Oklahoma Courts on July 1, 2024



CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteers are concerned citizens who are trained to be the eyes and ears of the juvenile court judge. These everyday heroes interview the children, their families and anyone who has information regarding the family. They read and study all reports pertaining to the families then report their findings to the court and make recommendations concerning the best interest of these children who have been abused and/or neglected.

CASA of Western Oklahoma is dedicated to improving the lives of the children in the Oklahoma

foster care system in Beckham, Custer, Dewey, Roger Mills, and Washita Counties. Our specially trained volunteers strive to become a positive, stable influence for children while ensuring they have a voice in the courts and the services they need for a stable future.

Executive Director, Jackie Aaron, stated that in 2023, 69 CASA of Western Oklahoma volunteers served 200 children on 90 cases in our service area. Unfortunately, this number represents only a percentage of the children that are currently in the foster care system in our area.

We are seeking individuals that might be interested in becoming a CASA volunteer to help close this gap while serving the needs of these children. Each CASA volunteer dramatically improves the lives of children experiencing foster care by working with the child until they are placed in a safe, permanent home. CASA volunteers often become the one constant adult presence in the child's life. CASA of Western Oklahoma worked with over 200 children in 2023 and the need remains great for more volunteers.

CASA Volunteers must be 21 years of age, be willing to commit to at least a year of service, participate in a free in-depth training, and pass an OSBI and national background check. CASA volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. Many work full-time along with volunteering as a CASA while others work part-time, are retired, or are college students. The common thread that links all volunteers together is the desire to make a difference in the life of an abused child.

Flex Training offers flexibility and fewer hours in the classroom. Half of the training is online at your own pace and the other half is in-person. This option gives our volunteers more flexibility.

Volunteer as a CASA - Stand up for a child today. Your advocacy gives children in the foster care system a voice. Helping a child begins in your heart — for more information about becoming a CASA or other ways to help visit www.casawok.org or email Tamra Misak at tamra.misak@casawok.org.



Crystal Hamons / Volunteer Coordinator

Carrie Schmidt was the volunteer of the month for Connections Food & Resource Center for April. Carrie is a wonderful volunteer and has a very caring heart. She volunteers because she enjoys serving others and she looks forward to visiting with everyone.

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Krystal Blackwell / WW

The Weatherford Chamber of Commerce recently presented the Connections Food & Resource Center with a \$7,000 check from the 2024 Pickleball Paddle Battle Tournament held in April.

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Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Women's Golf finished second place at the 2024 NCAA Division II Central Region Championship and in doing so, secured a spot at the national tournament for the third time in program history.

The Lady Bulldogs were one of nine qualified teams in the regional tournament field, held May 6-8 at Hilcrest Country Club. Henderson State won the tournament by six strokes after catching SWOSU on the leaderboard in Wednesday's final round. Seven strokes behind the Lady Bulldogs sat Rogers State.

The top three finishing teams (mentioned above) will advance to the NCAA Division II National Championships in Winter Garden, Florida, on May 21-25.

SWOSU entered Wednesday's third and final round with a four-stroke lead after shooting the lowest team score in each of the first two rounds before HSU overtook them in the final 18 holes of play. Two Lady Bulldogs finished inside the top-5 – Rebecca Lau in fourth and Freya Sala who tied for fifth.

Lau was tied for the lead after the first round after she

shot an even-par 72 on Monday. She added two strokes to her second round and two more in her final round and was +6 in the tournament. She birdied nine times in three rounds – the fourth most in the entire field.

Sala climbed the leaderboard from 19th all the way to fifth by tournament's end after shooting a 78 in her opening round. She carded a two-over 74 in round two before firing a one-under 71 in the final round – SWOSU's lowest day three score of any golfer. Sala faced 12 total par-5s in the tournament and performed the best out of the entire field in those holes at three-under par.

Megan Brown finished tied for 14th in the tournament. She had a share of the lead with Lau after 18 holes but fell off with an additional 12 strokes added to her final two rounds. Ashlyn Acosta, T-20th, and Drew Dodgion, T-35th, rounded out the team.

For the first time since 2019, SWOSU will advance to the NCAA Division II National Championships held at Orange County National this year. The program has competed at the national tournament two other times, finishing tied for fourth in 2019 and 12th in 2014.

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SWOSU Athletes Earn All-Conference Status



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Baseball had three named All-Great American Conference selections on Wednesday night, announced at the league's awards banquet prior to the start of the second weekend of the conference tournament. Headlining the trio was first team selection Jackson Syring, with Marco Barrera on the second team and Geoff Marlow as an honorable mention nod.

Syring (Derby, Kan.) batted .394 on the year with 12 home runs, 19 doubles, three triples, and 57 RBI. He ranked second in the GAC in doubles, third in batting average, and fourth in RBIs. Syring ended the season with a 39-game streak of reaching base safely and at one point this year rode a 15-game hitting streak. His 69 hits led the team, and he had 23 different games this season where he had at least two hits – highlighted by his 5-for-5 day against Newman when he blasted four home runs.

Barrera (Wilmington, Calif.) started the season slow with just four hits through the first 14 games before catching fire from game 15 and on. He belted his first home run of the season in game 15 against Ouachita on February 23 which seemingly snapped him out of the funk, and he went on to hit .423 in the final 35 games of the season. On the season, Barrera batted .376 with 12 home runs, 14 doubles, and 40 RBI. His 22 stolen bases led the league, and he was 10th in the GAC in batting average.

Marlow (Flower Mound, Texas) batted .359 with a league-leading 20 doubles. His team high 14 home runs ranked him fifth in the conference, and he was just inside the top-15 in the league in batting average. Marlow had two or more RBI in 16 games this year, a number that led the Bulldog lineup. Like Syring, he ended the season having reached base safely in 20 consecutive contests. At one point this year, he had built a 12-game hit streak.

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